

# **GOD'S DETERMINATE COUNSEL, CREATIVE DECREE AND COMPREHENSIVE PREDESTINATION**

**By  
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## **FOREWORD:**

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). But, have many ever asked, "What about "before God created the heaven and the earth"? That is an interesting question and the search for its' answer is a fruitful endeavor indeed. It cannot be assumed that God, after an eternity of silence and perhaps inactivity, suddenly just declared all things into existence with no forethought, design, or purpose in mind, can it? Among men, before one begins anything, he puts some thought into it; and most often he has a purpose in mind. If he is really serious about what he is planning to do, he is likely to plan as many details as he believes is necessary to accomplish his task, and also plan for interfering "contingences." The more serious he is about the project, the more care he puts into the planning stage. No one would consider this point to be irrelevant. So why would anyone object to the viewpoint that in creating this vast universe, the eternal God took all the task seriously, and planned precisely what He would create, for whom He would create it, and all the details necessary to accomplish His eternal purpose? Surely the reader would not: would you? This, then, is the subject of this article. What did God do before He created it, and how successful is He?

The following Scriptures are given as a foundation for our discussion on the relationship of God's decrees, eternal council, determinate counsel, foreknowledge and comprehensive predestination of all things, whereby God is not the author of sin.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23).

"For to do whatsoever Thy hand and counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

"- being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all

things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (Hebrews 6:18).

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:10- 11).

"- and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6: 13).

An analysis of the above texts demonstrates the following things quite readily. God's counsel is determining of all things. It is immutable or unchangeable. It is established in a council between more than one constituent parties of the Godhead (the counsel of peace shall be between them both, which necessitates a "council" to establish it). It is infallible – it shall come to pass. It makes use of means, or instrumentalities. ("the man of the east that executes it") It is connected to God's foreknowledge, and that foreknowledge is knowledge of all things beforehand. At the least, that much is evident from the above selection of Scriptures.

On a practical level, when a soul is made to know and feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin and his total lack of ability to save himself, and thus is made to cry out to God to have mercy on his poor soul, how does predestination benefit him directly? Isaiah records, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). There is an absolute and certain rendezvous between the hearing, the answer, and the call. How can God do that unless He has foreknowledge of that call, and has in fact, ordained it in His own eternal counsel, as well as its answer? And how "can they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?" If we ascribe any part of salvation to predestination, then we are forced to acknowledge that even the smallest and most minute details of it are embraced in it as well.

There have been many individuals, and many ways these individuals have used, to destroy the doctrine of God's foreknowledge of all things, and/or His determination of all things. The above texts can stand alone to refute any such attempts of an unregenerate mind. The plain, or self-evident truth, is,

that God's determinate counsel, foreknowledge, and predestination are inseparable entities of the divine Mind, and are inclusive of all things that have, are, or ever will exist. This we hope to establish. While some charge the above as being "Calvinism," (which they disdain) it is just as much the position of "Hypercalvinists," "Augustinians", and "Thomists" alike. Basically, it is the truth of the Christian faith, even if denied or disputed by most called "Christians". It is the foundation principle of Chapter Three of the major "Christian" confessions of faith in America. (London Baptist Confession, Westminster Confession, and Savoy Confession.) This is the topic, then, of this short treatise.

Before entering further into this discussion, let us preface it with this brief notation: If one relegates all things evil, wicked, and contrary to God's moral law to men or devils, he leaves very little else under the dominion of his Maker. One need not then speak of God as being a "sovereign," for certainly He would not be. Those who have advocated God's sovereignty over all things have been so evilly treated for their belief they have become hesitant to mention His sovereignty in this area. On the one hand, they do not wish to encourage men to sin, which is commendable, because men are judged for such acts and stand accountable to God for them; and on the other hand, to leave this subject in complete silence is to fail to "declare the whole counsel of God." The Scriptures give a balance to these otherwise extreme positions (in man's mind), and so must we. The doctrine of the predestination of all things, when correctly understood, does not make or imply that God is the author of sin. On the contrary, it fully establishes the accountability of men to their Creator, for they are subjected to His law. To suggest otherwise is to reveal one's own ignorance on the subject of predestination. First: Sin is not a created thing or being. The Bible clearly identifies sin to be the "transgression of the law of God" (1 John 3:4). Paul declares, "Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). Had the Lord God not prohibited that one single thing, thus making a "law," sin would have never entered into the world or death by sin. This fact is self-evident and indisputable. The Lord God declared that everything He made was "good." The man was "upright," the ground was good, the trees of the garden were all good, the fruit of the trees were good, and we surmise that originally, the serpent was "good" – at least for whatever purpose God had made him. The law, or command, was "just, holy, and good" as well. How then did sin enter the garden under such perfect conditions? It entered by the transgression of that one law. Who did it: God or man? You know the answer. Second, in that first transgression, and every transgression since then, God did not

infuse sin, nor force sin upon any man. Man acted freely according to his nature before the fall, and men act according to their fallen nature since the fall. God cannot be the "author of sin," simply because IF He commands anyone to commit an act forbidden by His published law, that act is not now forbidden to him, and hence cannot be a "sin." The second command negates the antecedent command, and thus is to be obeyed. God can do this because He is the only Lawgiver. An illustration is at hand: According to the law, a priest or Levite is commanded to "take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife" (Leviticus 21:13,14). Yet, God commanded Hosea, saying, "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing the Lord So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son" (Hosea 1:2,3). No matter how one wishes to approach that text, yet, was it a sin for Hosea to take a wife of whoredoms (plural) as commanded by God?

Would it not have been a sin if he had not obeyed the Lord? The point being made is that God is the Lawgiver, and as such, His law does not bind Him. It bound His creatures under Him. Therefore, God cannot be the author of anyone's sin, plain and simply put, for that is impossible for a Lawgiver to do. He is the one commanding, and His commandments are to be obeyed. That is the role of a sovereign. So, as you read this article, please continuously recall that we do not take the position that God is the author of sin. In so doing, the reader may not draw false conclusions about what we do write herein. Now, we will continue on with our topic.

### **FIRST: GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE:**

God's foreknowledge must be based upon something. That something must be knowable by Him. If it is argued, as it is by some, that God merely saw things coming "down the pike," and then reacted to it, (or did nothing at all) rather than determine it, then His foreknowledge is only telescopic. Such a view leaves God, as if with arms folded, a bystander observing inevitably undetermined events transpiring. In relation to "evil" events, it makes Him a complacent accessory to the crime. Those that think they are honoring God by denying His sovereignty over sin are not helping themselves when they know that He could have prevented it, but that He did not! In principle, such a position differs none at all from the Arminian who claims that God will not interfere in man's "freedom of choice" by divine election and effectual

calling. He certainly has power to prevent any, or all, evil deeds, and has done so many times. Where is there a true believer that has not had his evil tendencies interrupted and restrained by God's grace? Those who will limit God's activity believe these forces that are combined in their intricate patterns of events to bring them to pass is left believing they come strictly by chance, or the old heathen goddess of Fate. Hence, limited predestinarians are Fatalists, if not worse, atheists.

If God allows things to come to pass in the absence of His determinate counsel, He is not the "one only true and living God" — He is not the one in charge! There has to be another one out there somewhere bringing these events to pass that God merely foresees. When we consider that there is far more sin and wickedness in the earth than righteousness, that someone, or thing, would surely be the dominant influence over the universe. He, She, or It, must either be the Goddess of Fate, Satan, astrology or someone of greater power than God. Again, the above texts allow no such views. There is but one only true and living God. In the modern shallow views of far too many "Christians", denial of God's sovereign reign over all things is due in great part to the limited understanding they have of God's eternal counsel. It seems as though they never give it any thought, and if they do, it is but fleeting.

## **SECOND: GOD'S COUNCIL AND HIS DETERMINATE COUNSEL**

There seems to this writer an orderly arrangement to this subject. God's council seems to be necessary for a "counsel" to have been formed. In that council, God's counsel is automatically determinate in its very nature. His determinate counsel, is an eternal purpose, therefore, and is the basis for His eternal purpose to bring all things into existence according to that counsel. One could say "eternal plan," but that is misleading because it suggest a planning stage, which is inconsistent with His attributes as God. But, His creative decree commenced bringing into reality all things in His determinate counsel and by His predestination (which is not causative, but consist of providence, grace, and the interstitial workings of secondary causes) this eternal counsel is according to the good pleasure of His own will. It is certain that in Ephesians 1:11, this purpose of His own will embraces all things. Paul said it did! (Some unlearned Primitive Baptist ministers say it don't! It is amazing what sophistry they use to deny the plain teaching of God's word.) However, the quickened child of God is bound thereby to believe it. Let us, then, take each of these concepts in the order

respectively given above.

### **THIRD: GOD'S ETERNAL COUNCIL**

There are very few, if any, free grace believers that do not believe in a covenant of grace between the Father and the Son, which covenant was established before the creation of the world. It is perfectly consistent for God to determine to do something before He does it! It is quite foolish to say that He determined to do something after He did it! The fact of an establishment of a covenant implies a coming together for the purpose of making the agreements of such a covenant. This writer has difficulty agreeing with the way in which John Gill states this covenant, but has no disagreement with the fact of such a covenant. God speaks to man in terms that man can understand (anthropomorphism- speaking in the form of man's speech) but Dr. Gill seems to be even more anthropomorphic than the Scriptures, when he says, " –it "was necessary that the will of the Son should be "expressed, and His approbation and consent had; for "which this council was called and held." This appears to present God in the tri-personality trinity, as separate Gods being called together, sitting down around a table and planning and scheming as men would do in forming a council to make a plan, a contract, or an agreement. God "is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" (Job 23:13). It is the writer's opinion that God being eternal and unchangeable, then so is His mind and thought. If He presents "thoughts" to us, it is for our understanding Him as finite creatures, but in reality, He possesses one eternal Mind. This seems to be the meaning of this passage: "The Lord of Host hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14: 24), where His thought is synonymous with His eternal purpose. Be that as it may, the fact that there is a covenant of grace within the Godhead, whereby the "counsel of peace shall be between them both" gives substance to there having been, at least in the form of speaking, a council where roles were assigned to the different parties in the Godhead. This council, of course, preceded the formation of His eternal counsel (plan), and the creative decree to put into force the consequent counsel of His will. As the psalmist wrote, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

This council seems to be alluded to in the text, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send Me" (Isaiah 6:8). I say, seems to be alluded to, because the New

Testament says, "Then said I, Lo I come, ( in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrew 10:7 & Psalm 40:7). Again, it is implied in the very beginning, when the Lord God said, "Let us make man after our own image," and seems to be an agreement between parties to do so. Again, this was during the deliberation of the Godhead in council together, whereby His counsel was determined, and prior to His creative decree — "before the foundation of the world." This is confirmed in the bringing of the First Begotten into the world, for it was by an agreement, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifices and offerings Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me" (Hebrews 10: 5). (He did not say, "Thou prepared for me a body"; but "a body Thou hast prepared Me." There seems to be a difference in these two thoughts.)

Without going specifically into the New Covenant and its agreements, we point out only that such appears a product of an Eternal Council, and in that council, there was an agreement, not only to the parts each party would perform, but also the creation and establishment of all things necessary to bring this counsel to fulfillment. It is here that the comprehensiveness of predestination is necessary. This, of course, was inclusive of all things, because the recipients of that covenant agreement are all sprinkled throughout all ages and in all countries, and the "bounds of their habitation" are determined. Paul preached this in Athens, saying, in part, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). When did He determine the appointed times? When did He set the bounds of men's habitation? Surely it must have been in the Eternal Council before He set out to create the world and all things in it. See how minute this determinate counsel is! How inclusive it is? No wonder Paul expresses it as inclusive of "all things," for certainly it must if it is to be settled and all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

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When considering God's council, keep in mind that this is in the planning stage (speaking as a man) prior to the creation of the universe and all things in it. The results of this council are the full, complete, and comprehensive total of all that the Godhead will create, establish, control, direct, and produce for His own glory. The finished, or conclusive scheme of the Godhead is now His "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11). That eternal purpose is none other than His determinate counsel.

**Next to be discussed is:**

#### **FOURTH: GOD'S DETERMINATE COUNSEL**

God's determinate counsel is a direct product of His eternal council and the covenant agreement with His Son Jesus Christ. When we speak of it

embracing all things, all persons, and all events, we are considering it in the full picture, not in some isolated events. There are innumerable details; many brush strokes, to putting together such a massive picture. We are attempting to express history itself, from creation to glorification, yet must be consensus historians, because no one can truly write "history." We must speak of bits and pieces. Included in this determinate counsel when it was completed, we have revealed many things that free grace believers often speak. "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" is said of Christ's words (Matthew 13:35). "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25: 34). The glory of the Son of God was included in that counsel (John 17:24). All God's elect people were "chosen in Him from the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Christ was "foreordained before the foundation of the world" (I Peter 1:20) and the elects' names were then written in the Book of Life of the Lamb "from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 17:8). If for no other reason (yet there are many), the existence of nonelect individuals to be brought into the world serve as a channel for the production of the elect in this world throughout history. Why? Because the elect are from "every nation, kindred, tribe and people." In the purpose of God, it was in the eternal council that Christ became the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). All of these, and many more, are revealed to us, but His eternal counsel included the whole of all creation from eternity past to eternity future (if it is legitimate to use such an expression) much of which is not revealed to us.

To illustrate: It is revealed that in God's determinate counsel that in all the land of Egypt not a dog would wag its tongue as the horde of Israelites and strangers left that nation following the first Passover (Exodus 11:7). It was fulfilled accordingly, in time, and not a dog sounded the alarm for the Egyptians. But, tell me, dear friend, was the active purpose of choking down the dog's nature the end itself? Was it not for a greater purpose than this? It was one small tiny bit in the total events of God's determinate counsel. It played its specific role — that is true. It surely was one of those "all things that work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose". It was "an interstitial relationship of secondary causes". I doubt God was merely playing with dogs that night! Again, that "little bitty" worm that cut down Jonah's gourd was in God's determinate counsel, but was it the main event that day? Or that specially prepared whale that swallowed him? Of course it was not. In your own life, the day your

father proposed to your mother, and she consented — was that the end of the whole purpose? If so, what are you doing here? Was it necessary for your father and mother to meet? It surely must have been. Was it an accident? I speak foolishly, for there is no such thing! But they are interstitial working together of secondary causes and they are provided for in the eternal counsel of God as means to bring to pass His own will. Again, keep in mind that God designed these interstitial and minute events of secondary causes before He actually created the world, and they are all part and partial of His creative decree when He put the same into force "in the beginning."

Hopefully the reader can grasp the point being made: The determinate counsel of God must be inclusive of all things or only chaos would reign. Time itself is one of the most important components of secondary causes as means to establish an orderly arrangement of those events found in God's eternal counsel. Can you imagine the chaos if all things took place at once!

Again, we must eat, for we are created that way. The small nitrogen fixation microbes are necessary for other plants to feed upon the soil's nutrients, or else they would die. Without them, so would we! Can any sensible person think that each microbe is not covered by the determinate counsel of God, in all ages past, present, and to come, as surely as the sparrows, whom our Lord said not one would fall without the heavenly Father? If God prevented a single fly to be found in all the land of Goshen (Exodus 8:22), surely He has a purpose for all things else. It is difficult to separate unbelieving "children of God" (if such can exist) from outright Atheists, when those identified with "Christian churches" deny the full extent of God's sovereign dominion over all things. It is certain that such give aid and comfort to the enemies of God by denying the comprehensive predestination of God over all His works. It is certain that the ungodly, wicked, and unbelievers all deny the comprehensive predestination of all things! Why would a child of God agree with such infidels? It is obvious they have no light or understanding, yet even infidels talk seriously about the environmental balance in nature. Should Christians be less predestinarian than infidels, Marxists, environmental extremists, and unbelievers? What is to separate them from the ungodly world if they all agree to limit God's sovereignty?

#### **FIFTH: GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE**

Once the determinate counsel of God was formed ("I speak as a man") He set it in motion by His creative decree: "And let there be light, etc." The

Book of Genesis is the historical narrative of the genesis of this counsel in operation as it pertains to man. Our forefathers expressed their belief of this event, writing, "God hath decreed all things whatsoever comes to pass", etc. (London Confession, Chapter 3). The expression "God bath decreed" utilizes a word often misused. For instance, many say, "God has predestinated all things whatsoever comes to pass," believing that this is what the Confession meant. It has also led to the belief that predestination is causative. But, this is not the case. A decree is "an authoritative order having the force of law." "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). A decree is an ordinance of God or man in some position of authority. Look at some of these: "But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king made a decree to build this house of God" (Ezra 5:13). Again, "Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter. Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon" (Ezra 5:17 & 6:1). In God's creative decree, the entire and full determinate counsel of God relating to the creation and historical events of this creation was commanded and set in motion and order, from the formation of the elliptical orbits of the planets, their suns, moons, stars, atoms, molecules, their locations on all minute moments in time, relations between and among each and every part, etc. "God hath decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass" says it all. When our forefathers referred to God's creation being in continual process throughout time, they were applying this concept. God is still creating the world, insofar as He is now continuing the process determined in His eternal council and established in His determinate counsel, and this through His daily providence, grace, and interstitial working together of secondary causes yet bringing them to fulfillment. HOW this decree is carried out involves every created thing, being, and event, from the genetic code in man or beasts, (determining that a child's right arm and hand grows the exact length and at the exact same time as the left, etc., et. al.), and the environmental influences of family, culture, personal experiences and knowledge, etc., is embraced in the terms predestination, providence, grace and secondary causes as they influence each other and each event in the whole of God's eternal counsel. All these actions are interstitially knit together as to be necessary in the order determined. One cannot drive his car to the market to buy a loaf of bread unless someone discovered oil, many others drilled and pumped it, and still many others refined and marketed it and he put it in his automobile. He need

not expect to buy his loaf of bread unless someone planted and harvested the grain and someone else refined and marketed it, and someone baked and marketed the bread. All things necessary in the process is absolutely necessary to one driving to market and buying the loaf, of bread. If this is so in natural things so insignificant, how much more necessary is it in the creating of such a magnificently ordered universe. For one to deny God's comprehensive predestination of all things is to portray oneself as a simpleton. Keep in mind that the determinate counsel of God and His eternal purpose are the same, and were formed before the world began in His eternal council, and the Bible teaches that it embraced "all things". Some refer to this as God's "plan," but we do not like to use this unbiblical expression. Men plan, God purposes.

How extensive does the Bible present the determinate counsel of God? Well, for starters, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23). If I even mention the clause, "and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," immediately there will be a host of unbelievers who would howl at the moon, and exclaim: "He makes God the author of sin!" It is said by some that we "believe that God predestinated all things, both good and evil" and they place the emphasis on "the evil." Strangely, they never attempt to explain this clause themselves! If they did, they too, would be charged with "making God the author of sin," and this terrorizes them into a denial of the plain statement of the apostle Peter! Denying this clause, denies both the determinate counsel of God and His foreknowledge! You cannot have the one without the other. Prejudice against the truth of God is so great that one dares not even discuss any element of it, lest he is charged with making God the author of sin! From thence is the silence on the subject in modern pulpits. This fear has shut the mouth of many a preacher! No wonder that so many are as ignorant of God's Almighty power, wisdom and understanding as they are today.

Consider this: That all the activities of men, their minds and motives compiled together daily amounts to the overwhelming presence of sin as compared with righteousness, that to relegate God and His counsel from them is to place God in charge of "the few acres of sandpit on the back forty" and allow men and/or Satan to control the rest! How does this render praise to God? Were all these activities and motives carefully considered by God before He issued His creative decree? Were any needful event overlooked, scratched, or left out of His determinate counsel? Did new

conditions develop that necessitated God making changes in His determinate counsel as these conditions appeared? If so, then God and His counsel are not immutable, as Paul declared. (Hebrews 6 : 1 8)

The clause, "ye by wicked hands has seized and slain" that the apostle Peter gives, acknowledges that all the events of that horrific day were so much in the hands of God that each and every event that transpired was determined, foreknown, prophesied, and fulfilled exactly as God had purposed it. Of all events of divine prophecy, none are given in such minute details as those regarding the crucifixion of Christ. There is revealed more of God's foreknowledge of His determinate counsel in the Scriptures than of any other subject. Yet, none of these smaller details recorded as absolutely necessary to the "accomplishment of His death at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31) are the end game of His eternal purpose. They were interstitially related secondary causes. As bits and pieces, they played their significant roles, yes, but were ancillary to the great scheme of God's salvation of His people in Christ Jesus by the sacrifice of His dear Son for His elect people, and His glorification therein. We must not, yea, we cannot deny the instrumentality of these wicked hands, under the absolute control of God, nor can we put the greater emphasis upon them either. But to speak the truth, we dare not neglect it for fear of what infidels will say of us. There are plenty of them already saying it anyway!

## **SIXTH: EXAMPLES OF GOD'S DETERMINATE COUNSEL**

In God's determinate counsel, we can provide the following examples:

As early as our first parents, this event at the cross is prophesied, as many think, in the curse the Lord God placed upon the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). This curse, as all know, (but many will not admit), was due to the wickedness of the serpent, and as such was instrumental in man's fall, and ultimately at the cross, to Christ's sufferings and death. Note that I said "instrumentally," and ancillary, to that great event. Not that any glory is to be ascribed to this Evil, but only the infamy is his. But none can truthfully deny that Satan played the role that the determinate counsel of God had ordained for him to play (For proof, see Psalm 109), and that Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8) in the same purpose or

determinate counsel of God. One was absolutely necessary for the other to have been fulfilled.

In the genealogy of our Lord Jesus, it is written: "Abraham begat Isaac" (Matthew 1:2). Can any deny, then, that the determinate counsel of God played a significant part in that unusual event centuries earlier when Abraham was one-hundred years old, and "at the set time" Sarah gave birth to Isaac? (Genesis 21:2) Or, in the same genealogy when Isaac begat Jacob, is there any doubt that this event was not by the determinate counsel of God, when Abraham's servant bowed before his master's God and prayed, "Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou HAST APPOINTED for Thy servant Isaac" (Genesis 24:14)? Do I hear someone saying, "That was not predestinated"? Read what immediately occurred, "And it came to pass, BEFORE HE HAD DONE SPEAKING, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham 's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder." "And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, DRINK, MY LORD: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I WILL DRAW WATER FOR THY CAMEL ALSO, until they have done drinking" (Genesis 24: 18-19). Can you imagine how much water a camel can drink? Or how much many camels can drink? What a test this was! Deny it if you can, but this link is essential to that event when He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" thousands of years later at the cross of our Lord. We would sound foolish to an unbeliever, yet it is true, that every step of these camels, and the direction they traveled, and the precise timing of their arrival with that of Rebekah's were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God also! Without this link in the events of history so long before, the crucifixion of Christ would not have been possible. But then, a Conditional preacher once wrote: "God is working together for His people the all things of His foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification." (Elder Ronald Lawrence in "The Reformed Movement," page 99) It would surprise him to know he agreed with those he despises as "Absoluters." They too, believe that all things that God foreknew and predestinated "works together for good to them that love God."

Of that predestinated union, Jacob was born, and he had twelve sons. One, through whom our Lord was to be born, was Judah (Matthew 1:2). Judah had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er died without offspring. Onan died without issue too. Judah promised Shelah to Er's wife, Tamar, but forgot his promise and married her to another. The prophecy was that the Lord Jesus, Shiloh, would come from Judah (Genesis 49:10), and now all three of his sons are without issue. What now becomes of God's determinate counsel? What happened to His foreknowledge? If these were defeated, then it could truthfully be said that the predestination of God did not cover all things. But if not, it must be acknowledged that it does. Did these things go awry? Not so! "Oh, no, no, no! Not this way! Don't go there! Oh, my, oh my! Lord have mercy, he's "gon'na" go there!" Here it is, my friend, believe it or not. "Let God be true and every man a liar. " The widowed Tamar, knowing that her father-in-law, Judah, was going to Timnath to shear sheep, removed her widow's garments, and seeing Judah coming down the road, covered her face with a veil and played the harlot. Judah went in to his daughter-in-law, and she took his signet, bracelets, and staff as a pledge until he could send her the price of harlotry. She returned home, and later was found expecting a child. When Judah would have her killed, she presented the pledge: "By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave not to Shelah my son" (Genesis 38:11-26). Tamar gave birth to twins, Pharez and Zerah (verses 29,30). Now, let us return to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as recorded in Matthew 1: 3, "And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom." It would have totally destroyed the lineage of our Lord, and the determinate counsel of God, as well as put the lie to His possessing a foreknowledge of future events, had Judah not produced an issue as foretold in the sacred text. None, absolutely none, can intelligently deny that even in this link, it was as much "by wicked hands," that Judah fulfilled the prophecy and Tamar had a child by incest as it was that Christ was crucified by "wicked hands." And none can successfully deny that Judah, Tamar, and Pharez, and these incidences in their private lives were all included in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus would not have existed had it not been fulfilled as God had determined in His counsel, and by His foreknowledge it was foretold of the generation of Jesus Christ through Judah. Now, if you have a problem with this text, or the writer's use of these texts, why not make an effort to reconcile them to the view of limited predestination and/or conditional time salvation? Isn't that a fair challenge? But I forewarn you. If

you attempt it, you will also be charged with making God the author of sin, and you'll never get one of your opponents to give you a fair hearing no matter what you come up with – not one. You will find, as we have, that they are virtually brain dead! They seem not to have the mental capacity to think clearly on the subject, or else, are so afraid of man, that they dare not!

Now, we could go down through the entire generation of Jesus Christ as recorded in both Matthew and Luke, and high-lite each link, and tell you of some strange things that occurred by the determinate counsel of God and embraced in His infinite foreknowledge. Just to mention a few briefly lest we weary you too much: What of the harlot Rahab, the mother of Boaz, the father of Jesse, who was the father of David; Of Ruth lying under the cover with Boaz all night (Ruth 3: 1-10); David and Bathsheba (II Samuel 12:24); Manasses (II Kings 20:21); Or Judas, of whom David said, "Set Thou a wicked man over Him: and let Satan stand at His right hand" (Psalm 109:6), and "Let his days be few; and let another take his office" (verse 8). etc. All these events were only ancillary to the great accomplishment of Christ in the salvation of His people, but they were as necessary in their own place and time as the crucifixion itself This latter event was the greatest wickedness ever committed by mortal man, and the Scripture is emphatic: "For of a TRUTH against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE" (Acts 4:27-28). To deny that it was predestinated is to be downright ignorant! The incidental meeting of Herod's or Pilate's parents were absolutely necessary as secondary causes if the scene of these events were ever to occur. Deny it if you can.

"Ah, Ha!" One may say. "This writer believes God is the author of sin." Did he really say any such a how-do-you-do? The decree of God does not in the least create the wicked motives that drive depraved men to evil! We have noted that Satan tempted Eve and she enticed Adam and thus brought sin into the world. Sin is not a created thing – NOTE: I wrote: "SIN IS NOT A CREATED THING" –it is the "transgression of the law of God" (I John 3:4). It finds them where they are, totally depraved, (as all are) and uses them as instruments to fulfill His own counsel. Look at some of these. In the case of Judas, Satan entered into him, and guided him in such a fashion that he unwittingly fulfilled Psalm 109. That is not why he did it. He had other base motives – money! Read all of Psalm 109 if you wish to see the minute

details of Judas' offense and punishment. He was cursed, his grandfathers (on both sides) were cursed, his children were cursed, and his mother was cursed; and his children made vagabonds and beggars (verse 9-12). There was no forgiveness for the sins of his fathers or his mother (verse 14) and his name was cut off from the earth in the next generation (verse 13). It is obvious that the prophecies were based upon God's foreknowledge, which in turn, was founded upon His eternal counsel. This counsel was formed before He created anything.

Again, in the case of Judah, of David, and many others, did they not demonstrate exactly what the Scriptures teach relative to sin? "But every man is tempted when he is drawn away g. f his OWN LUST and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, IT bringeth forth SIN: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15). Does this sound as if we make God the author of sin when we declare the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God so enlists, directs, limits, utilizes, and get His own glory out of the evil acts of men and devils? Or out of the orbits of the celestial bodies? Or out of the molecular movements of atoms, neutrons, and molecules? Or out of chemical balances and imbalances of the elements? Or out of the rise and fall of nations and empires? "The powers that be are ordained of God." When did He ordain them? "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17). How can one think He is wrong to get glory for Himself out of our sinful acts? My goodness! Where else can He get it? He certainly cannot get it from the righteous acts of men, for "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3: 10). If one thinks this makes God the author of sin, he reads far more into what we have said than we have written! It is not the author that is having a problem dealing with the texts: it is those whose minds leap to false conclusions to rob God of His glory that have the problem. They wish to limit God so they can boast in their supposed abilities, obedience, and conditional blessings. My, my, my!

In the counsel of God "between them both," God did determine a counsel in which He also decreed its fulfillment. "Predestination" is the term for the interstitial relationship of all the parts that bring God's counsel into fulfillment. If it is His counsel, it becomes quite obvious that this counsel is His eternal purpose. That is why the text says, "Remember the former things of old: for I AM GOD, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none

like Me," and He next tells us how we can know that He is God: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: . . . I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have **PURPOSED IT**, I will also **DO IT**" (Isaiah 46: 9-11). No one but God can do this. And it is God that does it, too. If one reads the whole context in Isaiah 46, he discovers that the reason for God giving this description of Himself was for the comfort and edification of His people. There can be no comfort for those who deny his eternal counsel, foreknowledge of that counsel, and the predestination necessary for bringing it to pass compassing all things. Predestination can be said to be "a rendezvous of all the direct and secondary causes coming together to fulfill a divine purpose." The end of each singular event is brought to pass by the interstitial workings of all the necessary secondary causes, and in the aggregate, all these singular events themselves are secondary causes for other events in the larger picture of things. That His counsel embraces "all things," cannot be Biblically denied. And if He were ignorant of His own counsel, then there could be no foreknowledge, nor certainty, to any thing, and His purpose is really nonexistent. It is predestination that brings all the necessary events together to fulfill any single purpose of His eternal counsel, and therefore must be as inclusive as His eternal purpose. This purpose, according to Paul embraces "all things." "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who **WORKETH ALL THINGS** after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). Isn't it strange that anyone reading this can limited God's predestination to four or five minor things, leaving the overwhelming number of necessary events totally uncertain, or left to haphazard or chance! Where is there any praise to God for the greater number of daily events, if we give Him praise for almost nothing comparatively speaking? Even our own salvation is not anthropomorphic, or man-centered: It is "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:5). Why are we instructed to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15), unless His Will governs all things? In fact, how can anyone say "Thank you, Lord" for anything other than the three or four things he believes is predestinated? For what shall a man pray, if God has nothing to do with the event that answers his request? See how limited (or no) predestination leads to atheism or infidelity? Maybe that is what is wrong with this ungrateful modern self-willed society!

When we consider God's foreknowledge, we must see it in at least two different ways. First, there is knowledge according to approbation. It is in

this sense that God is said to have loved us "with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness drawn thee"(Jeremiah 31:3). Second, there is knowledge according to foresight, or prescience. In the latter case, there must be something knowable in existence, or to come into existence, for one to be able to know it. If there is no such event as a cow giving birth to an automobile, then God cannot foreknow it. It is not knowable. If it is not certain to come into existence, again, it is not knowable, and cannot be covered in God foreknowledge of future events. If it is not certain to come to pass, then God cannot foresee it; and if He cannot foresee it, then He cannot foretell it. The fact that He does foretell future events is the very proof that He is God and that He can, and does, foresee all things, and foretells us what He would have us to know about any of them. He declares it before it comes to pass that we might know that, as God, He knows it. He knows it, because His counsel determined that it come to pass (His determinate counsel). In this section, we will briefly touch on some of the many things that God determined to come to pass and therefore foreknew and foretold of them beforehand. Since the Biblical record is full of examples, we must be selective in the ones we use.

One of the most well known events is that recorded in Genesis 15. God said to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall afflict them four hundred years," etc. (verse 13). How did God know this? How did He know how long? He knew it because it was sure, or certain, to come to pass. Why was it sure, or certain? It was predestinated to come to pass according to His determinate counsel. It was contained in His creative decree at the beginning of the world. "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again"(verse 16). And they did just that! Was that a good guess, or was it infinite foreknowledge? Again, in the life of Abraham, "And God said, Sarah thy wife will bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac" (Genesis 17:10). Did she bare a son in her old age? Did Abraham name Sarah's son Isaac? And of Ishmael, the bondwoman's son, it is written, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (verse 20). Did he? "And these are the sons of Ishmael:" Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah" (Genesis 25:13-17). Did I count correctly — twelve? How in the world could God know the exact number of sons yet unborn that this child would eventually have, unless it was predestinated according to His determinate counsel and known in His foreknowledge? Is

God a mere inactive and unconcerned bystander in the history of man? Surely one must admit that He is not. God gave to Joseph a series of dreams that he related to Jacob and his brothers. These dreams caused great enmity against him by his brothers, who eventually sold him to Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. Can you believe they could have sold him to someone in Yemen? The inspired narrative of Joseph's captivity, and many of the obscure details of God's providence and grace are recorded, showing the predestination of God fulfilling His determinate counsel in bringing those dreams to fulfillment, and preserving and developing the nation of Israel; even as Ishmael's Arabian nation was being developed during the same period.

### **SEVENTH: PROPHECY AND PREDESTINATION**

Tell me, my friend, do you think the Middle East conflict between these two nations is a mere co-incidence? As Isaac's wife, Rebekah was expecting a child, she conceived twins, and they struggled in her womb. She went to enquire of the Lord, and the answer was: "Two NATIONS are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). These "two nations" are Israel, descended from Isaac and Jacob, and Arabia, descended from Ishmael and Esau. When Isaac blessed his sons, the blessing given to Esau was "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven (Arabs were Bedouin, or nomads, in general, until after W.W.II.), from above: And by thy SWORD shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (Genesis 27:39,40). Esau, who is Edom, (Genesis 25:30) "went unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham 's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife" (Genesis 28:9). That struggle was determined in God's eternal counsel and was according to His foreknowledge revealed to us in the Scriptures and has been predestinated and sustained for these thirty-seven hundred years. It's being foretold shows that it is certainly of God's determinate counsel, and the prophecies clearly declare His foreknowledge of these events down to this present day. The Arabs (Ishmaelites), as a people, lived by the sword, and it is yet their national symbol throughout their conquered world. Their religious evangelism is by the sword, and "In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance (This writer believes this is Mohammed, who was a Catholic

priest), and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his POLICY (Islamic Law) also he shall cause craft (craftiness) to prosper in his hand; and he shall magna himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand" (Daniel 8: 23-25). We are now experiencing the Ishmaelites' "Third Jihad" and it may be a very long sustained period of violence, yet in the end, "he shall be broken without hand." Now, whether the writer's take on this prophecy is correct or not, yet it is proper to raise this question: If it isn't predestinated, how can it be foretold? If there is no comprehensive predestination embracing all things, how can there be any foundation to prophecy? Prophecy declares the predestination of God's determinate counsel on the one hand, and reveals His foreknowledge on the other. They are inseparable. Invariably, prophecy relates to very minute and precise events that God has chosen to reveal to us of His own determinant counsel. There seems no other reason for prophecy than to reveal God's comprehensive predestination and foreknowledge of all His determination of future events. If one does not believe in the comprehensiveness of predestination to embrace all things, he need not concern himself with studying any prophecies.

All the many events foretold of the coming of the Messiah, of His sufferings and death, His resurrection and glorification, of His redemption of His people and their certain salvation, as well as the rise and fall of empires, the coming of antichrist, and of the persecution of the saints – all of these must be founded upon certainties. These certainties are made so by the determinate counsel of God. The determinate counsel of God is made certain by God eternal decree that set them into motion in the "beginning of the creation of God." (Psalm 2:7). Without this, there can be no foreknowledge of any future event.

God's eternal and determinate counsel is expressed by God's eternal purpose. By it being so inclusive of all things, then it is often expressed in somewhat segmented sub-purposes. All through the Bible, God speaks of this and that as being His purpose. We are aware that He does not sit around changing His mind, planning new things, forgetting former purposes, etc. He is of one mind. He is unchangeable. He cannot learn something new. He cannot, in reality, forget something that He has known. Therefore, any expression of His purpose, or purposes, expresses some aspect of His determinate counsel

formed before He created the world. Why is this so? It is so because "every purpose is established by counsel" (Proverb 20:18). Not only is this so, but in an orderly manner God's purpose for any specific thing or event has a set time to transpire. "To EVERY THING there is a season, and a TIME TO EVERY PURPOSE under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 17, and 8:6). That is very specific. It embraces every precise event of every moment of time. God is a God of order. This is the reason that our scientists can predict the location of any celestial body with precision, or predict time so accurately as to adjust our clocks at the end of each calendar year with accuracy, predict the arrival of Halley's comet, publish the rise and fall of the tides in all the oceans and seas with their time and heights, and the movement of the eclipses of planets. No one seems to object to God ordering the mechanics of His universe so absolutely and with perfect precision - except atheists. It is only when His orderly arrangement of human behavior is insisted upon do we find outrage. Why? Because man wants a free will, and he does not want "this Man to reign over us." If he can but eliminate all adverse things from God's predestination, he can thus almost fully dethrone Him altogether! That is men's goal. This basically is the underlying motive for the anti-Christian's limited predestination. But is there not something praiseworthy for the child of God in God's eternal purpose? Surely. "And we know," (at least Predestinarians do), "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE"- His eternal purpose. (Romans 8:28). Was that not included in His determinate counsel from the beginning? Long, long before one of God's elect was ever born, His name was written in the Book of Life of the Lamb, and in time, he is "called" according to God's "purpose," or counsel. In fact, such as are called are called of God "Who bath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own PURPOSE AND GRACE, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN" (II Timothy 1:9).

Wasn't that when He, in council, determined His counsel, and commenced His creative decree? I think so.

What was the purpose of the coming of Christ and His sacrificial death? We know that He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Was He not slain for the sins of His people? Then must they be sinners! John tells us, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). Isn't sin the work of the devil? So, even this proves that God's determinate counsel included the ungodly works of that

howling mob in Jerusalem when our Lord was crucified, and God's gracious design in our salvation by the sufferings of Jesus. It is certain from both of these texts that comprehensive predestination includes the "sins of His people" and "the works of the devil," otherwise the texts are superfluous. It is also certain that a Bible believer cannot Scripturally deny this to be true. For if Christ came to save sinners, and this determined before God created the world, then there had to be sinners in His view in His determinate counsel to be saved. If Christ came to "destroy the works of the devil," and John said so, and if this determination was before He created the world, then His eternal counsel had to have included both the devil and his works. There is no consistent way to deny this hypothesis. ( Doesn't it hurt to think!)

The eternal Godhead in council together, determined the creation of all things, and in that derived counsel determined just how to bring about His eternal Mind to the praise of His own glory. By His own eternal decree, He set in motion His determinate counsel just as He had purposed, and predestinated all the means to the end that He determined with perfect precision, so that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Even when they can't see or understand how it could be so.) and to His own good pleasure, to the "praise of the glory of His grace." This writer can see nothing in this glorious scheme that could in the least be dishonoring to His majesty, honor, glory, and praise. On the contrary, to any degree that this scheme is denied, he finds it dishonoring to the God of all grace who deserved our highest praise. In any denial of this blessed truth, at least some merit must be attributed either to man or the devil, neither of which deserves any honor or glory in the work of salvation.

### **EIGHTH: CHRISTIAN COMFORT DRAWN FROM THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL OF GOD**

It is difficult to see how there can be any comfort for the struggling child of God in any scheme of salvation based upon the works of the creature, or in anything that gives some honor to the devil. If the devil was able, contrary to the determinate counsel of God, to enter paradise and bring such a disastrous consequence to God's best and perfect intentions in His creation, then who is to say that he cannot enter the heavenly paradise with the same awesome results? Either it was God's will, when He created the "crooked serpent," to use him to bring about the salvation of God's elect from sin and misery and get glory thereby, or it was not. There is no alternative to this proposition. If the devil in some wise interrupted God's gracious work, or caused God to

rush in with an emergency contingent work, surely the old serpent is wiser than God, and the otherwise safe condition of God's people is left in doubt. To this writer, such a condition poses a very difficult condition from which to draw comfort. But when he considers that "from the beginning" God created the crooked serpent to get honor for Himself in the manifestation of all His gracious and glorious attributes; His love, mercy, longsuffering, gentleness, power to save and to keep His promise, His vigilance, and daily providence to His people, such is an enormous comforting thought. Just to know that God is truly GOD, and as a God, He provides all that a God is expected to provide to His people is truly comforting. Any shortcomings or imperfections in God or His counsel have ramification too great to provide any security, and therefore, comfort to a believer. There can be no greater sense of security to a believer than to be able to rest in His absolute and comprehensive sovereignty.

Every elect child of God must "go through much tribulation to enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22 and Revelation 7:14). That tribulation is sufficient without the additional trial of unbelief in God's ability to "keep that which" he "has committed unto" God, which is the keeping of His soul unto the day of redemption of His body in the resurrection. If God was unable to prevent the fall of Adam, or unable to adequately protect him from the subtle wiles of the devil in the morning of creation, then the child of God has good cause to fear that all his doubts, tribulations, and struggles to be delivered from sin unto salvation will surely be aborted, and hell his certain portion. Again, believing that God has never "blinked," and all things without any exceptions are under His absolute control and direction, and completely provided for in His eternal counsel and foreknowledge to the good of His people, takes away the uncertainty of infidel unbelief. This, too, is a source of comfort for the struggling child of God, when giving earnest "diligence to make his calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10). But if his calling and election is unsure to begin with, due to some imperfection in God or in His wisdom or His power, what kind of result can he expect on his part in this struggle? Needless to say, there can be no well-founded comfort in such consideration. God's own perfection is the grounds of one's eternal security. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6), simply because He is fully able to do so. He is God – emphatically. He is a sovereign over all His works. That, too, is a source of comfort found only in an understanding of God's determinate counsel, fore-knowledge, and the comprehensive predestination of all things by an unchangeable and

perfect God.

This writer is aware this short treatise will not open any blind eyes to the truth; it cannot rectify a human heart; it will never make one be more thoughtful of divine things; and it can never cause anyone to give all praise unto God. More than likely, some reader will still insist that the writer makes God the author of sin, and will tell others so. Men are born liars. (Psalm 58:3): The wicked "are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies". So, such behavior is expected. But it is hoped that for anyone desiring to magnify God in his heart, and render all praise, honor, and glory to His blessed name, that it will provide some scriptural basis for his hope in the absolute sovereignty of Almighty God.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, ands Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1: 16-17). Paul here made certain to leave nothing out of these "all things" lest freewillers deny its full extent. Even the rabid Conditionalist cannot limit this "all things." Hence: the comprehensive predestination of all things, whether good, evil, indifferent, or merely trivial (in man's view). Predestination must include all things contained in God's determinate counsel. It must embrace all the things flowing from God's creative decree, which decree is yet incomplete in its fulfillment. It is a composite of all secondary causes in operation every moment of time fulfilling God's eternal decree. And as set forth herein, it does not in the least make God the author and approver of sin. Sin is, exactly as John said it was, "the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), and this only a creature under a law can commit. Therefore, the transgressor is always the author of sin; just as a criminal is always the author of a crime. In the first case, God is not the author, and in the second the state is not the criminal. Can the reader now conclude that He is, or that the views set forth herein make Him so? Again, it is certain that no puny man can "make God do or be anything," whether the "author of all good" or of "all evil." God is God exactly as He is and always has been.

Christ came into the world to save sinners, and this is what He did. He did it deliberately, on purpose, by all necessary and interstitial secondary causes brought together by the comprehensive predestination of all things in God's eternal purpose, and thereby manifested His love, wisdom, power, grace and mercy to such as are taught that they are the chief of sinners, in dire need for

His great salvation. Not a single person, thing, or event necessary to this end was left out, or failed. Every true believer full well knows that this is so. If the "gospel is hid, it is hid from them that are lost." There is a people of whom the apostle wrote: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2 : 1 1-12).

### **NINTH: GOD'S DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND GOOD WORKS**

"Good works are the fruit of faith and follow after justification, and not before," states many Baptists' Articles of Faith. The limited predestinarians, or, Conditionalists often use "good works" as the reason they object to the view of comprehensive predestination, falsely charging those they term "Absolutists" as not believing in good works. It is their straw man, or, euphuism, and used as a pretense to advocate their "conditional time salvation" heresy. It may seem strange to some readers that people would charge free grace believers in not believing in "good works," yet this is frequently done by Arminians and Calvinians alike. It can only be made by those who: (1) do not believe that God is the author of good works in His new creation, (2) deny the operation of the Holy Spirit in His people. (3) thinks that they perform good works of their own "freewill," (4) deny the "effectual working of His almighty power" to perform His own will and pleasure. (5) do not have the slightest idea what "good works" are, and /or (6) have never had an experience of grace wrought within their souls by the Spirit of God. The latter cannot persevere in grace unto glory, because they do not have it to begin with. Hence, they will even deny that doctrine outright!

Predestinarians do not subscribe to those things so commonly considered as "good works" as being such. The common notion of "good works" embrace some or all of the following: benevolent institutions and donations to their administrative apparatus and activities, doing "one's duty" (whatever that may mean!), singing "praise songs," doing one's duty, singing, shouting, or clapping to "praise bands," doing one's duty," "praise dancing," "praise stomping," doing one's "duty," evangelizing the goats to make sheep out of them, and "doing one's duty, etc. (You can add thousands or to this brief list!) While Arminians and Conditional Primitive Baptists embrace some or all of these, the Predestinarian Old School Baptists do not consider any of them to be "good works. "

Biblically, "good works" are ordained of God; wrought by the Spirit within the child of God, to fulfill God's determinate counsel according to the good pleasure of His own will, for each and every child of God. Instead of an enumerated list of works, good works are those by which God has ordained to fulfill His particular purpose at any given time, place, and by whomsoever He has pleased. An illustration is better here than a paragraph: If in God eternal purpose He has decreed help of some fashion to some afflicted creature at a given time and place, He has by His Spirit, providence or grace, put it in the heart of one to give the needed relief, that work will commence with God working "to will and to do" in the heart of that person, and guiding the direction of events to culminate in performance of that relief. Whatever it was, in God's eternal counsel, that was determined to be done for the needy one's relief is a good work. Insofar as the vessel used is yet a sinful person, "there is not a man that doeth good and sinneth not," and hence no praise is due the servant; but the work per se was a "good work" for it was ordained of God, and the person employed was "God's workmanship." (Ephesians 2:5-8).

A work is not a "good work" unless it is the work of God, simply because the creature is not good. The believer is an instrument in God's hand to fulfill His will, and to bring to pass some purpose God has ordained.

Free grace believers, perhaps far more than their supposed "free will" opponents, believe that God has ordained that His people perform those works He would have them to perform, when, where, and how He would have them to. All God's people perform "good works." All God's children are obedient children of God. [Everywhere the term "children of disobedience" is mentioned in the New Testament, it has reference to reprobates, not God's elect! Check those passages and their context!] These good works are as much a part of, and provided in, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God as any of those wicked acts committed in the crucifixion of Christ. When one considers how strong the word "ordain" is, then he must surely agree that there is no possibility that any should fall short in this blessing. The Bible doctrine is stated quite clearly in Ephesians 2:8-10. Before presenting the ordination to good works, the apostle first pointed out that one is saved strictly by grace in the absence of works, and gives the reason as being to prohibit men from boasting. It is, he wrote, by "grace through faith," and the apostle made it clear that the faith of which he referred was not the moral suasion of man. "It is the GIFT of God " As a

gift, it cannot be subjected to a meritorious status. But the apostle did not stop with this point. He pressed forward and coupled this point to its effect: "For we are HIS workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." That is strong, yet sweet doctrine! Few, precious few, Arminians or Calminians can take that kind of medicine! Paul teaches clearly that God's quickened elect are predestinated to perform good works. Not only so, yet in the performance of these works, they are only God's workmanship. He is using them to do certain works needful in His determinate counsel to fulfill His will. That word "workmanship" is a "manufacturer" of a product. The work they do is to "the praise of the glory of His grace." It is not a meritorious work to earn points for a crown to wear, lay up treasure in heaven, or obtain conditional blessing. God is using them, and these works they are blessed to perform, to fulfill His will and purpose. It can be pointed out here that in the first chapter of Ephesians, he taught that God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ had previously "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and these good works are such blessings as well as all others. Why? For these works are spiritually motivated. They have their origin and their performance in the will and purpose of God; and it is God who "works" them in His people. In fact, this same apostle, speaking of his own experience said, "For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18b). So what shall we say to those who believe it is left up to themselves to do good works unassisted by God, or refrain from doing them of their own "free will"? Certainly Paul did not subscribe to this kind of "bargain basement wheeling and dealing" with God for merchandise, or blessings (so-called) ! "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us." Upon what basis did the prophet believe this to be true? He tells us why he thought so: "for Thou also HAST WROUGHT ALL OUR WORKS IN US" (Isaiah 16:12). Few, very few, Arminians or Calminians know that passage is in the Bible. Fewer still believe it. Those who believe in comprehensive predestination feel the same way about good works and their relationship to their peace as Isaiah did. If God works all their good works in them, there is the best of reason to believe that all will "work together for good" and their best advantage. This being so of God's living children, then it is imperative that these works be exclusively by grace, and not by the natural abilities of the natural creature. And being "by grace," these works cannot be meritorious or conditional otherwise grace would not be "grace." To classify "good works" as acts meritorious of God's blessings in time or eternity, is totally contrary to the very principle of "grace." They cannot be by grace and by the works of the creature, for such are mutually exclusive to

each other. They are contrary to each to the other. Paul plainly taught: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh NOT, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4-5), and again he wrote: "if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Romans 11:6). In a nutshell, the principles of works and grace stand mutually exclusive. If the saints are ordained to good works, it follows then that these works, if good, are solely of grace and totally exclusive of conditional merit. It is for God Himself alone to work any of these good works in His people, and all must agree that He does not work evil in them. They are "His workmanship." There are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and these are ordained of God. Each and every one of God's elect have works assigned to them in God's determinate counsel, and at the appointed time, they will do whatever is appointed to them to do, and that by God working in them "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" to fulfill His will. The text declares that they are ordained to good works, therefore it is appropriate to ask, When did God ordain these works to be done by them? Was it "before the foundation of the world, or was it whenever they had a bright idea to do something in the investment department to earn a blessing or two? The Scripture affords the answer: "before the foundation of the world," when they were "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." That puts all of God's people's "good works" in His eternal purpose in His determinate counsel. Hence, as pointed out, at the appointed time and place in His decree, these works will be performed for whatever purpose God has for them, and by whomsoever He has been pleased to bless to do them, and to whatever end He so designed. All of them will absolutely, unfailingly, be done at the precise time, for the purposed end because God cannot fail. So to make this point as clear as the writer knows how, we say that every good work ever performed, or ever will be performed, was embraced in God's eternal purpose before He created the world. Every one of those good works is built into the eternal design of the creation of God, and will fall out according to the eternal blueprint. In fact, each of them is a part in that great encompassing and comprehensive predestination to fulfill His eternal will. They, as all things else, fall out according to His purpose, when and how and where and by which workmanship He purposed before the world began, and it will accomplish exactly what He intended for it to accomplish to His own eternal glory, and/or for their edification and good.

One thought might be needful here: Good works are not an enumerated list of "do's" with a list of "don'ts," for people to uniformly perform. They do not include such things as Sunday Schools, paying one's "tithes," driving soul-winners buses, supervising gyms for "the Lord", etc., as noted before. If the eternal God has ordained one of His children at some point in time as an instrument to fulfill a divine purpose, or whatever that work might entail, it is a "good" work. Some of these works, particularly of wicked men, when measured against the standard of God's Law, may be rightly considered by us as "bad," but when it "works together for good" to God's end, "God meant it for good to bring to pass" His own will. This is seen in the case of Joseph's brethren's wicked acts against him, as well as the whole horrific acts in the crucifixion of Christ. Surely it was "by wicked hands" the purpose of God was fulfilled, but every child of God is compelled to admit that the end of that wicked act was very "good," for by it they have salvation. In man's limited vision, which takes in moment-by-moment events, he is too prone and too quick to condemn things that are often approved of God. How many, many "Christians" will harshly judge one for drinking wine? Yet, not only did the Lord make it at the wedding at Cana, but also drank it, and as today, the Jews of old called Him "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." Such men could not consider the Lord turning water into wine as a "good work"! But it was.

Unlike those who charge the Predestinarians with not believing in good works, the Predestinarians understand that the elect were "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus before the world began," and that without it being by grace, there would be no way for the fallen creature to perform them at all. Unlike the "free will" advocates, the Predestinarians believe in both the total depravity and total inability, or helplessness, of natural man to perform spiritual works. For this to be done, he has to depend upon God to "work in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure," (Philippians 2:13) and desiring to be found faithful to Him by doing such, looks to God for it and its evidence to him of his sonship relation to God. At no point does the Predestinarian find cause to glory in his own flesh, or seek for rewards for having been blessed to do a "good work."

In the performance of external good works, one should consider that even the most precious and God-honoring work done by a fallen creature is performed in great imperfection. "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). The vehicle through which God does the work is unclean, and to that extent, so is the best work of a just

man. Hence, we conclude that these works by which God carries out His determinate counsel cannot be accepted for any form of justification, righteousness, or blessings. Until one, or unless one, first fulfills the law of God to perfection as required of him, he cannot boast that he has "performed his duty." Since none has ever perfectly obeyed the law, there is no possible foundation for merited blessings "in time" or eternal salvation by "doing your duty." This, surely, is the lesson the Savior was teaching in Luke 17:10, when He said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, `We are unprofitable servants: We have done which was our duty to do. " Upon the basis of this text alone, one ought to conclude that other than the Lord Jesus Christ, no one has ever done any duty, for none have done "all those things commanded" them to do. All the saints stand alike together, none having fulfilled all those things that are commanded them, and none have any grounds whatsoever to expect blessings as meritorious for what little they have done.

A driving force motivating a quickened child of God to perform good works are the admonitions, commandments, instruction, and rebukes given in the pages of the Scriptures. Many mistakenly assume that these are placed therein for a child of God to obey, or not obey "willy-nilly," and by obeying, merit blessings in "time salvation" (as they put it) for their performance of them. Yet they live no better, nor worse, lives on a daily basis than anyone else around them. They are not "outstandingly good folk," so to speak; nor are the Predestinarians. They appear very much alike in daily deportment (shamefully to admit).

We offer a different viewpoint for these admonitions and commandments than they. First, the child of God has an internal desire wrought by the indwelling Spirit to do God's will. They "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Where then shall one go to find what God's will is? There is no place else to reliably turn but to God's Word, and therein are His admonitions expressed; and therein are His rebukes for violations of that will of command. God has not left one of His children to speculate as to what is His will; nor given him permission to "invent" or devise "good works" out of his own carnal mind; or set about to earn "blessings" using Scripture texts as magical incantations to produce such. If we seek the will of God in our lives, it is plainly found in His holy Word, and nowhere else. To walk in gospel order, to love one another, to do good to all men, especially them that believe, be established in sound Biblical doctrine, and to bring praise to God in all things, is to do the good will of God. This, then, is truly "good works."

In considering this subject, one should not overlook the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, for in that aspect of one being God's workmanship, he certainly performs good works. All that he does, in some fashion or other, fulfills God's eternal purpose. Consider the child of God who is in Christ Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). The Lord Jesus taught His disciples, saying, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36), and the apostle tells us, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Few there is today that believe either what Jesus or Paul said here, and shamefully, their lives demonstrate their neglect! Nevertheless, again, the apostle said, "For we (he includes himself) must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God" (II Corinthians 5:10-11). What are these "good things done in the body"? Whatever they are they are "done in the body." Of them, God's people will give an account, and that "with joy." Are they "earned blessings"? Surely no living child would say so! Are they not those things the Holy Spirit has wrought in them? We believe they are.

When one mentions "good works," no one seems to mind whether these "duties" or works are Biblical or not. Nor do many consider as "good works" those things that God brings to pass through the instrumentality of men. Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife, which in turn landed him in prison for years. But it was there he interpreted the dreams of the butler and baker, and eventually this was brought at a timely manner to Pharaoh's attention, and to leadership in Egypt. May we not honestly consider the fleeing from lust and fornication/adultery a "good work," because it fulfilled God's eternal purpose? This purpose had previously been revealed to Abraham almost four hundred years earlier. Or, the wicked works of his brothers when they sold him to the Ishmeelites, who in turn took him to Egypt; of which deportment Joseph rightly said, "Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it J good" Here one needs no interpretation: that "evil work" in man's view and on his account was in God's account "good." Why was it good? Because it fulfilled the purpose of God to "save much people alive." So sometimes it is difficult to impossible to really determine what is a "good work" in God's sight.

When the apostle described his own experience, he wrote: "For I know that

in me [ dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but to perform that which I find not" (Romans 7:18). Notice the parenthetical express omitted above ]. It contains these words: "that is, in my flesh." The apostle was making a clarification: "In my carnal flesh there dwells no good thing, yet I cannot deny those "good things" that are of the Spirit that are in me." These good things that are in the child of God are there only by the work of God within him. And these works are all good, and for these "good things" the child of God will give an account in the day of judgment. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10: 10). All of God's children will have these good works for which to give account, because he has "received the things in his body, according to that he hath done" in the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose for him. We may consider the following, among many, as illustrations: divine life is a good work done in the body when one is called by grace; sanctification of the Spirit is a good work done in the body in that gracious work of conforming one to the image of Christ; the fruit of the Spirit (such as faith, hope, charity, patience, longsuffering, gentleness, humility, etc.) are all good works done in the body. All these "good things" are within the child of God, in his "body," and for which he can give account with joy. All these are "good works," and have their outward fruit unto God's free grace. From them flow many of the things God works, as an instrument, to fulfill His will. Those who believe in the comprehensive predestination of all things are as diligent in good works as any work-mongering freewiller! And that from a much more God-honoring motive.

### **TENTH: DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS**

The determinate counsel of God is His "eternal purpose" that He formed in the council of the eternal Godhead before the world was created. If we liken it to the man of whom Jesus said built his house on a rock, the determinate counsel covered all the finite details necessary to perfectly fulfill His purpose in creating and sustaining the universe, and all the interstitial events of time from the "beginning to the end," or consummation of all things.

A good architectural engineer will plan a building as precisely as his skills will allow. All measurements, stress factors, materials, places for lightening and plumbing fixtures, receptacles, gauges of wiring, windows, doors, etc.,

are blue-printed. Even a Conditionalist or Arminian preacher will allow this to be fair. One will hear no complaint that there is something wrong designing a building in such precise detail. It surely transcends the old fashion method of trial and error methods! But, alas, how these perfectionists will scream if anyone dare suggest that infinite wisdom Himself does the same, but with absolute perfection! Can one imagine such? Yet it is so throughout the country! The comprehensive predestinarian, however, insist upon it. God as easily designed the universe for all time and more precisely as any good architectural engineer designs a masterpiece building – except with perfection! Every small detail is predestinated exactly right to fulfill His eternal will. Unregenerate men who suppose they are God's ministers are implacable enemies to such a glorious concept. They will not have it under any circumstance, and being unable to refute the concept without exposing their simple-mindedness, they will heap all kinds of euphemisms on both the doctrine and those who have been taught it.

The word "predestination" is not an English word. Our native language did not have a single word to express the concept of God's full and complete, or comprehensive direction and control of His universal government. Wycliff had to translate the concept clumsily, and Tyndale at first had the same problem. Under Luther's influence at Marburg, Germany, Tyndale anglicized the Latin word, which in turn is a Latin form to express the Greek concept for the complete bringing to pass of all things necessary to a purposed end. God purposed all things, and predestination is the word that expresses the culmination of all things necessary to fulfill any one, or all, purpose(s) or event(s) in the grand totality of all of God's eternal purpose, or "determinate counsel."

We have expressed elsewhere in this article that predestination, per se, is not causative. It is, as one writer in this book pointed out, a word. It is a word expressive of a combination of factors, or causes, utilized by God, either directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a portion of, or an event of, His determinate counsel, or His "eternal purpose." We do not in this discussion wage war with those who believe it is causative, for the accumulated end collectively is causative. Insofar as one uses the word to express the finality of all factors collectively used by God to fulfill His purpose, we are content to defer to them. But in this treatise, our intent is to divide the concept into its component parts, and attribute causation to those immediate factors that directly bring God's eternal purpose to fruition. Therefore we are unwilling to dispute with anyone on this point, but rather express our view of the

subject in the following summary: For this end, we say predestination is not causative, because in any event foretold and fulfilled in the Bible, it was not "predestination" that brought it to pass, but all the other forces and factors God used in fulfilling His will. We follow this line of thought primarily because the "limited" Primitives' objection to it arises from their misunderstanding of the term. They believe predestination is causative, and in their belief that they should exonerate God (Who needs no defense!) from the charge of causing men to sin, they "throw out the baby with the wash." That is, they deny the truth of God's absolute sovereignty and government of His own universe, and commit most of its governance to either: man, the devil, or "chance." Whereas, if they understood that predestination is not causative; there would be no perceived problem to deal with to begin with. To better illustrate our point: The child of God is "predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ" (Romans 8:29). However, for this conformity to take place, it must be brought about by God's everlasting love, divine and unconditional election to grace and glory, effectual working of the Holy Spirit to life and salvation, sanctification by the Spirit and belief of the truth, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and glorification, which will be manifested upon the regeneration and resurrection of the saints from the grave. "Predestination" is the word used to embrace the whole combination of these and other factors necessary to fulfill the purpose of God that His saints be conformed to the image of His Son. The one word can be substituted for the combined number of necessary factors in their conformity to His image. But "predestination" per se did not do the work. God did.

Again, the child of God is "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself. " It is obvious that predestination does not do the adopting. The adopting is by Jesus Christ to Himself, and that adoption is of the body that will be redeemed at the regeneration and resurrection of the saints. Predestination comes into play in this work by the Holy Spirit: "and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting to wit, for the adoption of the body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:23-25). As one may see, it is not predestination that is the cause of one's adoption, but predestination expresses the certainty of all things necessarily involved in accomplishing the determined end. Let it be noted here, the child of God is born such by the Spirit and as such needs no adoption to be a child.

Adoption pertains to the body, (which has no inherent right to the inheritance of the saints), so that the body, soul, and spirit may inherit eternal life beyond the grave. And, he is predestinated to that "inheritance that is undefiled and fadeth not away, and reserved in heaven" for him.

Notice the following passages of Scripture relating to predestination: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1: 5,6). Here we have the word "predestinated " You will find that whatever is necessary to the end purposed is predestinated, and that end is stated: one's adoption in a manner that it should be to His praise and our acceptance in Him. This end is dependent upon many things, one of which is all that is necessary in making us "accepted in the Beloved" This, of course, embraces the imputation of our sins to Christ and His bearing the due penalty for them, the new birth and our conversion, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, His donation of His faith to us as a gift of God, etc. Taken all these together, these works of grace are necessary for our being "made acceptable in the Beloved " Collectively, the word to express all these is "predestination" and these are necessary to our adoption as children. As you may see, predestination, per se, in this text, is not causative, but it embraces the multiple facets that do cause our acceptance in Christ. God directs and controls all of these causes to His determined purpose.

Once again, we read: "In whom also we have obtained [past tense] an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ", (Ephesians 1:11). While composing this piece, the writer read an attack against predestination by a Primitive Baptist elder in Tennessee, who insisted the "all things" in this text did not mean "all things." He offered a free will alternative to what Paul wrote. However, Paul wrote by the inspiration of God and he by the carnal mind that is enmity to God's law, so we go with Paul here. Does the apostle define the term predestination here? Again, no, he doesn't. He assumes the reader knows what predestination means, and the first Christians in Rome were not Arminians or Conditionalist — thank goodness! They knew what he meant, and that he meant "all things," or he would have better expressed himself here. It is not causative in this place either. One end that is stated is our obtaining an inheritance, and another is that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. But predestination, per se, is not what does either of

these things. The life, obedience, suffering and death of Christ obtained (past tense) these for us, and these collectively with all related things together, were predestined.

In Romans 8:29, we find the word predestinate again, and that without a definition, and it too, is not causative. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Here, the end is stated: "that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. " Is it predestination that conforms one to the image of Christ, or is it the Spirit's work within the child of God? If He is to be the firstborn, then it is obvious that there must be many others born as His brethren. Predestination assures us that this is certain, and that all necessary events, persons, and causes will attend to this great end. In this case, the entire household of elect is included (as His brethren), and all things necessary for their natural birth, existence and the place and time and conduct and salvation are all embraced in that predestination. In the same text, "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called" [Many who insist that only these four or five things are "predestinated" deny that all the elect will be effectually called. But this text takes in all that were predestinated in that effectual call.] This phrase expresses the certainty of their effectual call to salvation. If we were to expound upon all that is contained in this short text, it would be a massive book of historical, genealogical and experimental data on all of God's dealings in bringing to pass His eternal purpose and good pleasure in the salvation of His Bride, the Church. The word "predestinate," is sufficient to cover the whole field of human existence and experiences, not only for "His brethren," but of all those who played any part as instruments in God's providence in their experiences in nature and in grace. It includes all the necessary events used by God in "bringing many sons unto glory." His eternal purpose, that is here predestinated, issues forth from His determinate counsel and foreknowledge agreed upon before the world was created.

There are two places in the Bible where the identically same Greek word is used that the Tyndale and King James translators rendered "predestinate" in the four places covered above. First, in Acts 4:28, the word is translated "determined " The text reads: "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined (predestinated) before to be done." The freewill argument that predestination never has anything to do with evil is hereby solidly refuted. In this passage, it is rather obvious that it is not causative, yet it embraces all of the most wicked, horrific, and cruel events ever committed

by men or devils. It refers directly to the culmination of all the events in the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. In this case, the word covers the combination of all these hellish events, and says that God's hand and counsel had predestinated, or determined them "before to be done." Predestination did not crucify Christ; but "wicked men by wicked hands put Him to death, and the sins of the elect were the cause of His sufferings and death. Yet, the string of events, persons, and circumstances of those terrible days, and all previous ones leading up to those events from the foundation of the world to that day, were "before determined." Or "predestinated" in God's determinate counsel.

Secondly, in I Corinthians 2:7, the word translated "ordained" is the same Greek word elsewhere rendered "predestinate" or "predestinated". It reads: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained (predestinated) before the world unto our glory." Notice again, that the definition of the word is not given. One who does not understand the comprehensive scope of the concept of predestination cannot possibly understand the text. The end, however, is given: "the wisdom of God in a mystery," and even the timing of when this predestination was determined — "before the world began." That, not incidentally, is the same time (so to speak) when God's eternal council formed His determinate counsel relative to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus "before the world began." It coincided with when God's people were chosen in Christ — before the foundation of the world. Here, in this text, we have both predestination and God's determinate counsel joined together at the same fountain of causes simultaneously. None can successfully dispute that predestination, when coupled with God's determinate counsel, must imperatively embrace "all things" in the most comprehensive manner possible. So, too, the apostle taught this merely uses that as a rationale for their wicked unbelief, and they will still hate His sovereignty. It may not really matter if God was the author of sin, since the Bible nowhere discusses it pro and con — some man or men threw that "boogerboo" into theological mix anyway. But the object is to set forth the concept of the comprehensive predestination of all things in its collective use of varying means utilized by God to fulfill His eternal and determinate counsel. — the good pleasure of His will. In this regard, predestination can be viewed as a rendezvous of all things necessary to fulfill God's decreed design at any and every event in time. It is an interstitial netting together of a great multitude of converging causes and events; the culmination of all previous causes and effects that bring to pass a given purpose of God in time; which time in itself is, in God's

controlling and directing hand, a vehicle for other events yet to come. Never does one single event stop with that effect. Invariably an event always leads to other events. These causes with their effects are effectively and sovereignly directed and controlled by God in a manner to bring about their determined end — to the praise of the glory of His grace and the overriding good of His body, the Church.

## **ELEVENTH: COMPREHENSIVE PREDESTINATION IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH**

Predestinarians seem to favor the history of Joseph, while Arminians and Conditionalists pass rapidly away from the Genesis narrative. None can Biblically or logically deny the comprehensive predestination of the many events recorded in Joseph's life that fulfilled God's previously revealed prophecy foretold to Abraham four generations earlier. For this reason, Conditionalists and other Arminians try to stay clear of that narrative. Here, we will but briefly select portions of that history to point out the varying means God used to fulfill His reveal purpose, and then pass on to another such inspired document. This, primarily, because all our likely readers are more familiar with these ancient events, since most of them are Bible readers. While many historical events were interstitially united leading up to God's revelation to Abram, we will forbear to center our attention to many of them: as Noah's salvation, the genealogy of his family down to Nahor, Abram and Sarai; Abram and Sarai's election of God to procreate a favored nation; and all the recorded incidences of Divine providence in their lives, etc. We here commence with God's precise and revealed counsel and foreknowledge of His directing their offspring in the four centuries to follow. In fact, seems to be the very purpose for this narrative in the Holy record, to demonstrate God's absolute sovereign governance of events producing the lineage of Christ.

In the first revelation to Abram, God said to him, "This" (Eliezer, Abram's servant) "shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (Genesis 15:4). Note that nothing is said at this time about Sarai conceiving a child. Only that Abram would father a seed. In the unfolding of events, Sarai gave Abram her maid-servant, Hagar, to Abram to father a child for herself. Thus, Ishmael will be a firstborn son, and according to the ancient law of primogeniture will, according to custom, inherit Abraham's property. (This contested right continues among Abraham's offspring to this very day, yet God intended a much different

outcome: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called.") So my first point is this: In the predestination of God, He will use the generation proceeding from Abram seminally to establish the basis of that future nation, and the resultant conflict over the inheritance rights between Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob. Just as providence had heretofore directed Abram and Sarai, now their genetic offspring will also be utilized sovereignly by God to His own purpose. "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell (or count) the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness. And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it"(Genesis 15:5-7). Here we see an integral part of predestination is the providence of God and His faithfulness in keeping His promise. It was God who, unwittingly to Abram, had brought him out of Ur and directed his way hitherto.

The prophetic promise most central to the narrative of Joseph follows: "And He said to Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs (a reference to Egypt); and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (verses 13-16). Even the concept of judgment against the Amorites is left until their iniquity has been fulfilled! See how precise the events are recorded. The reader that is familiar with this historical narrative can readily grasp the predestination of all things as he compares in his mind this prophecy with the fulfillment in Joseph's experiences. He can grasp the certainty of these prophetic events even before\_ they come to pass. Read the rest of the Book of Genesis and if you can still deny the absoluteness, or the comprehensiveness of predestination then you are "blinded" as the "rest of Israel." Before an infidel speaks, let us hasten to point out here: the "four hundred years" is the time period Abram's seed would "be afflicted" They will be in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. The "thirty years" were those years Joseph and his brethren were highly favored by the Assyrian pharaoh of Egypt. There is no contradiction between these two time periods. In fact, they are so precise in measurement as to necessitate absolute predestination as the only viable explanation for them! These foretold events will be brought to pass by a multitude of causes and effects and together they are "predestinated"

It was in the latter years of Jacob, Abraham's grandson that the pace began to hasten. Jacob's son, Joseph, was given dreams, and the details of that prophecy to Abram are fleshed out more and more as he relates his dreams to his family. These dreams angered his brothers, who in turn sold him to a passing caravan of Ishmeelites on their way to Egypt. Predestination utilized their envy and hatred, and the providence of God channeled them; the mercy of Judah attempting to spare his life could not change the course determined, and even the bartered price of twenty pieces of silver (the symbolic price of redemption), and Joseph is the catalyst to bring the family of Abram into Egypt precisely where and when God had revealed. So here we have God's providence, the enmity of man, traveling merchantmen, genealogy and genetics, international commerce, and a very special work of grace in Joseph with the overshadowing of the Almighty God as "his present help in time of need," all bent together to fulfill the prophecy made known to Abraham. That, dear reader, is comprehensive predestination in the raw!

In time, Joseph's dreams revealed seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, and he was elevated to the right hand of Pharaoh. It was the famine God sent to drive the family into Egypt. It was no "accident" that Jacob heard there was corn to be bought in Egypt! That is predestination. In time, Egypt is conquered by the Assyrians Empire [Kurds of today] and an Assyrian pharaoh who did not know Joseph, seeing the Hebrews were multiplying faster than the Assyrians, and fearful they would unite with the Egyptians to drive them out, began the attempted genocide, or holocaust, of the Jews. It is here the narrative of God fixed decrees raises up Moses as the Lawgiver to Israel.

But it is note-worthy that when Joseph's brothers learned that the viceroy in Egypt was Joseph, they were afraid, while Joseph was forgiving. When Jacob died, they thought, surely, now Joseph will avenge himself on us and they bowed before him. In Joseph's dream that they hated so badly, it was revealed: "Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words" (Genesis 37:7-8). His next dream was: "I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made

obeisance to me." (verse 9). Thus the foreknowledge of God was revealed, and thus it came to pass! That is predestination. There should be no doubt that Joseph was an absolute predestinarian. Hear him: "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but

God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:19-20). No Conditional Primitive Baptist would dare make such a statement as that! In fact, if this were written without italicized words with a Bible quote as its source, they would, to a preacher, accuse the writer as believing that God was the author of sin! They might do it anyway! That statement expresses fully the comprehensive predestination of both "good" and "evil." They thought to do "evil" to Joseph, and at the very same time, God "meant it for good"!

We must pause here and take a second look. His brothers meant it "for evil." Their own conscience condemned them for it. God was not the author of their sin. They were. Their sin arose from their carnal and depraved nature. They only could go but so far, and each effort to go further was prevented. Reuban wanted to set him free, but could not. They at first wanted to kill him, and could not. They put him in a pit to leave him to die, and could not. He had to go down into Egypt ahead of them. The caravan passed at the precise time and place for the transaction, and the Ishmeelites were willing to pay money for their cousin, take him into Egypt, and sell him as a slave. It could not have been otherwise! "The wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain." In the narrative, Joseph fully ascribed accountability to his brothers. Please read it again, maybe again, at least until you know that Predestinarians do not preach that God is the author of sin, and that man is fully accountable for his sinful actions! From now on, the reader may recognize a slanderer when he hears one suggest that Predestinarians "make God the author of sin." He then can "mark that man," and take anything else he says "with a grain of salt." What Joseph's brothers did was by the natural so-called "liberty" of their perverse, wicked, and fallen nature. They felt no coercion in doing it, but did it willingly; but only so far as God would allow. God did not put any different principle in their hearts than was already there. They, in fact, were born that way. But, pay close attention to the next statement, which is equally true: "God meant it for good!" God had a purpose to be fulfilled, and the text declares plainly what it was: "To bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." The revelation to Abraham four hundred years earlier was as much present in the mind of the eternal and unchangeable God as the day He spoke it. He would

be the father of "a great nation." They would be "strangers in a land not their own." The father and brothers would bow down before Joseph. It would be foolish to say these events could have been otherwise. It is equally foolish to say all the yesterdays could have been different "if"- That history, so poorly elaborated upon by this writer, is nevertheless why this narrative is so much loved by all comprehensive predestinarians and so neglected by opponents of the truth. God did precisely what He said He would do. And God used evil to perform that which is declaratively good! Who can find fault with his Maker?

Joseph was an Absoluter. Listen to him again: "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit Ea,' and ye shall carry up Ely bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Genesis 50: 25-26). It is certain Joseph was no Preterist – he decidedly believed in a bodily resurrection of the dead! He knew that God was faithful to Abraham, when He promised, "and afterward they shall return hither." Four hundred years ticked slowly away while the embalmed body waited for the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Predestination stood guard over the coffin. And then, suddenly, at the exact time to the day, we read: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" (Exodus 13:19). Please forgive this diversion, I just hardly can help doing it: Where are they that deny the resurrection of the body? They certainly do not believe as Joseph did! "Take me to my Canaan!" Do you know where your great, great, great grandfather of four hundred year ago is buried today? What a marvelous thing is this! Four hundred years watching over the bones of Joseph, the children of Israel left Egypt "in haste," but took time to go by the cemetery and pick up Joseph's bones and "carried him hence!" They did not forget! Listen, honestly: all those intricate and precise details, foretold because they were fore-ordained, and God would have us believe in His absolute and comprehensive government of His great universe. These things were written for us upon whom the end of the world has come. They prove the verity of our God and His faithfulness in fulfilling His own good pleasure. What kind of base creature would rebel against such a great Creator and Sustaining God as this, or "say unto Him, why hast thou made me thus"?

## **TWELFTH: THE PREDESTINATED FLIGHT OF AN ARROW**

One more Biblical illustration of the absolute sovereignty of God in the realm of nature and we close this article. By this illustration, we hope to prove that God is absolutely sovereign over "things." The "limited" predestinarians (if such can be said) say that God "has nothing to do with things," To them, He has too much else to do without concerning Himself with these little trivia "things." As one wrote: "Primitive Baptists believe that predestination has reference only to the final destiny of God's people, not to events of daily life." (Cited from Elder Lonnie Mazingo, from "The Reformed Movement Among The Primitive Baptist, by Jeff Patterson, page 42.) The former governor of Alabama wrote: "What then does the all things include? It includes every action of God necessary to bring about the five things mentioned. The all things are not successful because of our obedience or unsuccessful because of our disobedience." (ibid, page 97). So let us see if this Arminian theory will hold up to Bible revelation.

God reveals His will and He sometimes uses the instruments of the wicked (as Joseph's brothers) to fulfill His gracious designs. Our London Baptist forefathers pointed out that God did this, but did "no violence to the will" of corrupt men. In short, that God is not the author of sin, nor does the comprehensive predestination of all things imply such a thing. God does not put, by His Holy Spirit, evil thoughts or actions in the minds and hearts of men; but He does use these means to His own glory and His peoples' good, as it seems pleasing in His sight. Such is seen in the following inspired narrative.

The reader may wish to read I Kings 20, 21, and 22 together with II Chronicles 18 and compare the two accounts. This is a highly interesting point on God's absolute sovereignty over the wicked actions of wicked men, as well as His exacting justice in their punishment.

The narrative begins to unfold, with the Syrians under king Benhadad making war with Israel. Eventually, Judah will be drawn into the conflict as well. King Benhadad's troops were roundly defeated in the mountain ravines of Israel. Being both a superstitious pagan and a scientific minded man, he laid his defeat to Israel's God being the "God of the mountains," and his god was the "god of the plains." Therefore, to test his freewill hypothesis, he planned the next battle in the plains. He appeared rather scientific. He "numbered" this new army according to the number in the defeated army,

"horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (I Kings 20:25). So much for his empirical research! God was very displeased with this blasphemous experiment. "There came a man of God. And spake to the king of Israel (Ahab), and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (verse 28). There can be no better evidence than this! Does God have to do with more than "five things"? Does He bother with "things"? Let us see.

When king Benhadad saw that he was defeated, he sued for a conditional peace, which Ahab accepted. Again, a prophet is sent to Ahab, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thine hand a man I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people" (verse 42). In the end, Benhadad was utterly destroyed as God had appointed, but not by Ahab. From this date onward Ahab sold himself to wickedness beyond all sense of decency. His judgment will certainly be just.

God's law to Israel said in one article, "Thou shalt not covet." Covetousness seized upon Ahab in a most inordinate passion and he desired a vineyard next door to his property for an herb garden. The vineyard belonged to Naboth, who refused to sell it to him. This lust was so great that the king of Israel laid down in deep depression and refused to eat bread! He wanted that vineyard! The queen, Jezebel, as wicked a female as found in the sacred pages, a worshipper of Belial, conspired with the freewill preachers of her faith to falsely accuse Naboth and had him stoned to death. Then she gave the vineyard to Ahab. Happily he went down to possess his ill-gotten plot, and the Lord's prophet met him there. "Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (I Kings 21:19).

So here is a portion of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge made known ahead of time to the evil king. Lets read one more such prophecy. "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall ( Jezreel" (I Kings 21:23). Now if the dogs don't eat her, or if they eat her some place else, then the prophecy is uncertain as some people think. All these prophecies are expressions of the determinate counsel of God. By His foreknowledge, He reveals them in advance to sustain the verity of His word. "He spake, and it was done." Those who deny the comprehensive

predestination of God sometimes say, "God has nothing to do with these "timely things in our daily lives." Is it so? As one minister from Ohio once said at Kingsport, Tennessee, "If a man is run over by a car, God had nothing to do with it. It was not predestinated." But is this absurdity true? Not if said about our God. God has spoken of events that are yet to transpire in time. Does He have anything to do with the fulfillment of these prophecies? We shall see.

The war with Syria is renewed. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah paid a state visit to Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab talked Jehoshaphat into joining him in taking Ramah-Gilead from Syria. But Jehoshaphat desired to know God's will in the matter. "The king of Israel (Ahab) gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? (I Kings 22:6). Before finishing this quotation, let's look at the record in II Chronicles 18:18. "And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and all at Ramoth-Gilead? And one spake after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: Go out, and do even so" (II Chronicles 18:18-21). May no reader overlook this discussion between this spirit and the Lord, nor ignore what the Lord told him to do. Let Arminians and Conditionalists display their ignorance of the Bible and the truth, but God is fulfilling His own foretold decree precisely as He will.

The king of Judah was not satisfied. These prophets were the prophets of Beliel. He wanted a prophet of the Lord to enquire of the Lord in this matter. "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imlah. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so." So they called Micaiah and enquired of him. The messenger that went after him even suggested "Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good. And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that I will speak" (II Chronicle 18:12,13). Let us notice something here before proceeding. The spirit was to be a "lying spirit in all the prophets." So watch this: "The king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall

be delivered into your hand" (verse 14). We must let our opponents comment on that one! He lied! This message did not ring quite well in Ahab's ears. This just was not like Micaiah! He never prophesied good to Ahab, because there was nothing good about him for which to prophesy. Ahab's stunning reply: "And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord?" And to king Jehoshaphat, he said, "Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? " He had just prophesied "good" to the king, insofar as he prophesied what all the false prophets had also prophesied, but Ahab seems not to have believed him at all! Upon this, Micaiah prophesied: "And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his own house in peace" (I King 22:17). Ahab, being a freewiller of some sort, theologically, thought he could deceive the Lord. He said, "I will disguise myself; and enter into battle," but insisted Jehoshaphat dress himself in his royal robes! The Syrians were told not to fight against anyone except the king of Israel, but he was disguised as a common soldier. But the word of the Lord must be fulfilled, and predestination stood ready at hand to do just that! "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded" (I Kings 23:34). That, dear reader, is comprehensive predestination, as absolute as one can ever describe it! Here is a bowman, without aiming at a target, shoots an arrow "at a venture." As the arrow rises in its flight, a team of horses off in the distance saddening dash rapidly in the direction whereby the arrow will intercept the king of Israel at the exact place, time, and angle so the arrow will penetrate the armory harness and bring the charioteer down. The doomed king dashes rapidly in the correct direction and speed necessary. Every step of the cooperating team of horses, and the number of steps necessary have been determined, and is fulfilled. Any slower, or faster, or in the wrong direction by a small degree, and the random arrow would have missed the predestinated target. And it can to pass, "one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according to the word of the Lord which He spake" (verse 38). And we have read, "God has nothing to do with things in our daily life!" Can you believe a God-called minister can be this ignorant? But this is not the end of this narrative.

Later Jehoram, Ahab and Jezebel's son is killed in battle, and he was planted in Naboth's platt: "Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord" (II Kings 9:26). When this news reached Jezebel, Jehu called up to her window, and asked who was on his side. Two eunuchs looked down and he said to them, "Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot" "And they went down to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands" (verses 33-35). The dogs has eaten her, as the Lord had said. May we inquire: could these events have been otherwise? Were they uncertain? Could the players have done differently and brought about a different result? Think on these things awhile. Is it really true that the "all things" are limited to four or five insignificant things only? Is it true that God has abdicated His throne over the daily events of our lives? To whom has He delegated them? Our own miserable "free" wills? This writer cannot believe such atheistic views.

Are these narratives true, or Jewish fables? Let the reader decide. In the case of the lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets of Beliel, they were false prophets to begin with. They were professional liars. How can one fault God if it pleased Him to merely have these professional and skilled liars all tell the same lie at the same time? He did them no wrong. God merely used these liars as instruments to bring to pass His righteous judgment against the house of Ahab. The horses were instruments in His providential hand as secondary means to fulfill his will. Does He not have a right to do what he will with his horses? Ahab did. Why not God? The flight of the predestinated arrow was totally out of the control of the archer the moment it clear the bow, and its course was set by God. Did He not have a right to direct it to His target? The bowmen by trade always did the same. Why not God? The arranging of that narrow place in the harness of Ahab's armor at just the right angle and time and place to effectually penetrate the harness and end his life was of God. The horses were not that smart; the bowman shot at "a venture," so no one was left to fulfill the prophecy except the Lord. Was that wrong? How can one think so? Was not God extremely merciful? All the soldiers of Israel went home in peace without a single loss of life but that of Ahab! What could possibly be wrong with God conducting such a battle! Dogs licked up the blood of innocent Naboth and his sons, so what is so terrible about God making dog feed out of Jezebel? She was the

one that perjured Naboth and his sons to acquire his property. Was it not a balanced and fair judgment? Yet our humanistic and sentimental age has produced a brand of ministers who find such justice revolting, and will deny God's sovereign right over His own creation!

The Word of God records, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and all deep places" (Psalm 135:6). How does this square with God having nothing to do with things in our daily lives? Why will Arminians and Conditionalists wish to deny it? His wonderful work is so pervasive that He reveals, "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tanifue is of the Lord" (Proverbs 16:1). Is there a Conditionalists or Arminian anywhere that actually believes this passage? How many "Christians" would one think knew this Biblical truth, or would stay consistent with it in his mental processes? Again, think on this one soberly. God prepares every man's heart, or seat of affections and desires, and even selects the words men speak to one another, according to this text. One cannot help but wonder how many honestly believe it! Men are unconscious of God's influence in their daily lives. Elder Hunt's remarks indicate that is rather general among his acquaintances. They surely feel free in making the choices of words they wish to utter, but the choice they make is "of the Lord" to whatever end He pleases. Let us look at an example the Holy Writ provides us ready at hand: When Solomon allowed his wives to set up altars and worship strange gods in Israel, God told him: "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen" (I King 11:13). In fulfillment of this promise, his son, Rehoboam was called to meet with Jeroboam and all Israel. Israel petitioned Rehoboam to lighten the tax burden Solomon had yoked upon them. The king listened to the counsel of the old men who had served Solomon, and they gave him "good counsel." He enquired of the young men, and they gave him "bad counsel," saying that he should answer the people roughly, "For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (II Chronicles 10:11). Now read this next passage with care, considering the Scripture that says, "the preparations of the heart, and answer of the tongue is of the Lord " We read why he took the evil, and rather stupid counsel: So the king hearkened not unto the people: for it was of the Lord, that the Lord might perform His word, which He spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? And

we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents" (II Chronicles 10:15-16). Israel left the kingdom of David, and Rehoboam ruled over the single tribe of Judah as the Lord promised Solomon, while Israel elect his servant, Jeroboam as its king. Look at this narrative. The Lord put in Rehoboam's mind to take the evil counsel of the young men, in order to fulfill His purpose in the division of the kingdom of David. The king had no "free" will in this matter. The whole preparation of the hearts of the king and his young counselors was of the Lord, and the answer of all their tongues "was of God, that the Lord might perform His Word" What then shall one say of those who think God has nothing to do with our daily affairs! While God did not make these men wicked, He surely used their wickedness to His own end. In separating Judah from Israel, a Judah's freedom lasted one hundred and twenty years after Israel's conquest and extinction and became, as historians call them, "the ten lost tribes." The Jews, however, still exist! This is what we mean when we speak of comprehensive predestination of God over the evil acts of men. This view is fully supported in His Word: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself: even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4). Our Lord says, basically the same thing in Matthew 10:19, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" Even your words, Conditionalists and Arminians, are not your own, although you surely think they are!

Predestinarians are unable to deny what the Lord has so clearly revealed about evil. He said, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah 45:6). We cannot help to wonder how many modern "Christians" believe Isaiah. This writer recalls the first time that verse was presented to him. Elder John R. Gilpin of Ashland Kentucky quoted it in 1954, and explained that the "evil" in this text did not mean "sin." According to him, the Hebrew word use here, "Ra," was never translated "sin." I later found that he might have had a Scofield Reference Bible, for its footnotes on the text say the same thing. However, neither of them was honest in their translation. To say it "never" was translated sin suggests they looked up each reference, and if they had done this, they would also have known how it was used. The word "Ra" is often translated "wicked," "wickedness," in the following texts: The first place it is used is in, of all places, Genesis 2:9: "The tree of knowledge of good and evil (Ra)." To say that God did not create "evil," or "wickedness," is to flatly dispute the Bible itself. In Genesis

6:5, we find it translated this way: "And God saw that the wickedness (Ra) of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil (Ra) continually." Mr. Scofield was somewhat deceitful here, for he certainly should have known this when first used, it was translated in these verses as both "wickedness" and "evil." True, he was correct that it is "never translated sin," but should have given how it was used. Obviously it should not be translated "sin," because "sin is the transgression of the law of God," and therefore it should not have been so used. God "created Ra or evil, or wickedness." (See Genesis 2:17; 3:5; and 22; 8:21; 44:4; 48: 16; 50:15,17,20. That is ten times in Genesis alone! As one can see, God does make choices for us; puts thoughts into our minds; controls the wicked motives of our corrupt hearts; and directs our decisions in such a way as to fulfill His will and leave us with our supposed "free" volition!

What minister has never gone before his congregation without a plea that God give him what He would have the people to hear? "Lord, what would you have me to preach?" Even Conditionalists become absolute predestinarians on their knees before the Sovereign God of the universe! If God has nothing to do with our daily lives, why in this world do they pray for His guidance! Or, when we follow the admonition of James to preface our speech with "The Lord willing," what is he teaching? That God has nothing to do with us going today to this city or to that? The implication is clear: God directly controls the thoughts and intentions of men's minds and hearts. Our prayers indicate that this is so! When we examine the Scriptures thusly, we must inevitably conclude that predestination is as comprehensive as God is incomprehensible. He did not change upon His creation of man or devils. He is as He was from eternity – absolute.

The infinite unlimited and eternal mind of the Great Jehovah embraced all His creation from the commencement to the consummation, and those portions thereof that He is pleased to reveal to man has been foretold by His prophets and apostles, who were "moved by the Holy Ghost to write" what they did, and they desired to look into the things of which they spoke. As the purpose of God is fulfilled, those men, things, and events necessary to be brought together as cause or causes to produce the desired effects are embraced in the term "predestination."

The prefixes "absolute" and "comprehensive" are used as adjectives to predestination only because some shallow-minded and otherwise prejudices

men attempt to modify the definition of the word in order to rob God of His sovereign rule over His universe. The terms are used to mean, by those who use them, to express the concept of predestination consistent with God's unlimited power, wisdom, and perfections. Those who attempt to confine God to "five things of the all thinks," are an ancient people indeed: "Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78:41). The God that does "declare the end from the beginning," oftentimes reveals many of the events that lie between the beginning and the end, and He is able to do this as easily as He could create in the beginning what He pleased; and what He will conclude this creation with when He is finished with it in ages to come. There is "nothing hid from the eyes of Him in whom we have to do." The weapons of our warfare are not of ourselves, but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, (men's imaginations) and every high thing that exalt itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4,5).

**Finis**