

THE PREDESTINARIAN

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 2

“... to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us ... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.” **Luke 1:1-4.**

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TWIN DOCTRINES

In the attributes of God and in various graces of the Spirit, comparative and contrasting attributes and graces are often paired together. Our God is a God of mercy, and a God of wrath. He is love, and possesses a perfect hatred (Psa.139:22). So also, in the graces which a child of God experiences, where faith is; so is trust; where regeneration is, conversion follows; where true evangelical repentance is, so too is godly sorrow.

In the decree of God, where election is, so also is reprobation. There can be no “election” if all are chosen. If we ever sing the song of the Lamb of God, we shall sing of both election to grace and reprobation to damnation. That song states: “for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by thy blood *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9). To redeem *us* and not *them* is electing love; to redeem *out of* a people clearly indicates that some are not redeemed.

Both doctrines are, as is all Scripture, given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The glorious doctrine of election is the most loved doctrine in Holy Scripture; it is also the most hated by man. To the child of God, the subject of election is a clear message of the love, mercy, and longsuffering of God to poor hell-

deserving sinners. To the man of the world desiring both sin and salvation...or a later “chance to be saved when he is ready” . . . election is hated and feared. To this man, electing love is discriminating, unjust, and illogical, if electing love kindles such a violent negative reaction in the ungodly, then imagine what reprobation must do to the wicked!

There is a strong need to preach reprobation: the hatred of God, His wrath and anger, and His judgment. Never before in the annals of American religion has ungodliness plunged to such depths. This is due, in some part, to an almost total lack of gospel preaching in pagan America. God is viewed as loving all men without exception, coddling sinners, forgiving men *in* their sins, and in general enjoying the permissiveness of the ungodly. As their humanitarian judges, so is their humanitarian god!

To graciously understand and love the doctrine of election, one must be brought sovereignly by the Holy Spirit to experientially know he is a sinner, justly and deservedly condemned by God. In the bleakness of such despair, and finding no works suitable to appease an angry God, he is led unerringly by the Spirit to “fall upon the Rock” and find safety in Christ’ atoning death. With this experience, he knows the justice of God and has tasted the mercy of Christ. To reflect upon why he, and not others, finds abundant peace in salvation by free grace freely bestowed; leads the soul to admire and to rejoice in God’s election of grace. But, he equally can understand that multitudes are not given faith; have no godly wrought sorrow over sin; and possess no love of the Son of God. Thus, he can comprehend the doctrine of reprobation.

Election is a Biblical doctrine. The words *elect, election, chosen, the called, and ordained* are used more times in the Scripture than more popular concepts such as *hell, baptism, communion, and cross*. Why then is it neglected? Primarily because it is a doctrine of Christ and can not be used to scare men into religious institutions. It is a stumbling block to easy-decisionism and revivalism. It calls upon a man to *make thy calling and election sure*” (II Pet. 1:10), and if such a man is not called by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit he can not make his election sure. In making his election sure, he is not making it sure to God, but rather to himself ... searching out the evidences thereof. “For the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knows them that are His”. While it is true that election is an immanent act of God before the foundation of the world (Eph.1:4-6), and that calling is in time; yet there can be no utility in one’s attempting to be assured of election when his first concern should be whether God has called him. No man attempting to get “decisions-for-Christ “*can* afford to broach such a subject!

The ungodly invariably object to the doctrine that it increases or encourages sin. This certainly is not true in the lives of those who believe it. On

the contrary, it is the Freewillers, or “self-willed” individuals that “take care of Number 1” and do things “my way”. Not so, the election of grace: “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that *we should be holy and without blame* before Him in Love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to 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.” (Eph. 1:4-5). Does this sound as if the elect are chosen to abound in sin? God forbid! “For we are HIS workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which *God hath BEFORE ORDAINED (predestined)* that we should *walk in them.*”(Eph 2:10).

It is certain that if one performs good works, he performs that which God has ordained or predestined. If he is “chosen in Him that he be holy and without blame”, how then can it be said the doctrine tends to permissiveness? Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have *ALWAYS OBEYED*, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh *IN YOU* both to *WILL* and *TO DO* of His good pleasure”. (Phil. 2:12-13). What is the good pleasure of His will unless it be as Paul wrote saying: “For this is the *WILL OF GOD*, even your *SANCTIFICATION*, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.” (I Thess. 4:3). No, dear reader, the doctrine of election does not promote immorality. “Freewillism” is *that* culprit!

Reprobation concerns those not selected, or “chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world”. Common observation is that most are not righteous, nor chosen to salvation. It is a harsh -doctrine to those who love sin. This we freely admit. But just because it is harsh does not in the least mean it is to be ignored.

But, says one, “God would not be just to send a man to hell without giving him a chance.” We disagree with this. If God dealt with all men outside of election in Christ, and rendered to all that strict judgment: “the wages of sin is death”; then justice, not mercy, demands it. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. .who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death not only do the same, *but have pleasure* in them that do them.” (Rom.1:20-32)

If God merely left the wicked alone in this life He would still be just, for they are without excuse and knowing the judgment of God, not only commit sin but have pleasure in them that do it. Salvation is by *GRACE*, not by chance. Salvation is due to electing love; and judgment is earned by the Reprobate. “And

even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *gave them over* to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient:"(Rom. 1:28-31, see complete context).

What if God is willing to use these lovers of sin and wickedness to demonstrate His justice and power? Does He violate their will or "freedom" (so-called) to give them over to that which they love, desire, and in which they delight? Of course not. "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the *vessels of wrath FITTED* (made fit) to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the *vessels of mercy*, which He had *afore prepared* unto glory?" (Rom. 9:22-23. Read whole chapter for context)

The ninth chapter of Romans deals specifically with both election and reprobation in perhaps the most emphatic defense of any Biblical doctrine. "Therefore (speaking of God hardening Pharaoh's heart) hath He mercy on whom *He will have mercy*, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieth against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not a potter power over the clay, of the *same lump* to make one vessel *unto honour*, and another unto *dishonour*? (verses 18-21).

Again, in I Thessalonians, Paul joins the two doctrines together thus: "For God hath not *appointed us* to *wrath*, (as others) but to *obtain salvation* by our Lord Jesus Christ"(5:9). In II Thessalonians, he again joins the two together in an extensive context covering the whole of chapter 2. Of the reprobate, he declares the "man of sin" the "son of perdition" would deceive the reprobate saying: " . . . 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." (Verses 11-12), and: "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation* through *sanctification of the Spirit AND belief of the TRUTH*: whereunto HE CALLED YOU by our gospel, to obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 13-14). Thus, there is no escaping the truth of both election and reprobation.

Most people are familiar with the empty shallow morality (and immorality) of preaching done by modern evangelists and psychologists. Yet, the doctrine stated in the Scriptures addresses these religious peddlers in this wise: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were *before of old ordained* (foreordained) to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus

Christ.”(Jude 4)

We realize reprobation is not a popular evangelical subject in our day, yet, the contrast between the elect and reprobate; and the fact that it was God who made the difference is a well-spring of joy and praise in the heart of a child of God. In all justice, he knows that God could have (I speak as a man) left him “a vessel of wrath even as others”; that if it were not for God’s free and sovereign grace in providing a substitute sacrifice for his sins in the person of Jesus Christ, he would yet remain in his sins.

Surely if every pulpit in this land were to resound again with the balanced preaching of both doctrines, the effect should be as during the Great Awakening when it was done so powerfully and faithfully to the alarming and converting of multitudes. Even the soundest of ministers today appear afraid to alarm their hearers. Ministers should preach not fearing what man would do, for both children of grace and men of the world should know that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God”.

By an experience of grace one sees that it was the “good pleasure of God” according to His electing love and tender mercy that salvation is freely given to such who were “without strength”. To feel that God “calls not the righteous, but sinners to repentance”; and leaves the “ninety-and-nine” in the wilderness and turns to seek and to save *the one lost sheep*, is a humbling experience. An enlightened view of the naturally rebellious and sinful state from which one has been called (while yet in sin, without any commendable works) excludes all boasting and motivates to the highest praise of the God of all grace.

Brethren may it be given to us to think on these things so that our adoration of Christ might increase more and more as we see the approach of His glorious appearing with all His saints.—S.C.P.

FLYING WORMS

By V.C. Mayes

(Ed. Note: This article is used by permission of the author, and taken from a very delightful easy-reading book on the basic doctrines held by Baptists entitled *Leaves, Worms, Butterflies and T. U. L. I. P. S.* We highly recommend it for those interested in the “basics” of our faith. Address: Splendora Sales, Rt. 1, Box 283, Splendora, TX 77372 —\$6.50.)

TEXT: “So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” John 3:8.

The caterpillar, as soon as his desires are awakened in him, loves to eat leaves. Human beings, as soon as they are born, loves sin (Psa.58:3; see John

3:19). The caterpillar spends all of his wormly life eating leaves and loves every minute of it. He does it because it is his nature to do so. Because natural-born, unregenerate man is “shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin” (Psa 51:5), his inclinations are only to love the bitter leaves of sin. He cannot naturally know the things of God (I Cor. 2:14). He, too, is a *worm* of a different kind (Job 17:14; 25:6; Isa 41:14). And even the son of man, Jesus, who became sin for us (II Cor. 5:21) is represented as a worm (Psa. 22:6).

But the caterpillar can, with God-given ability, become something better and more useful. God has built into the caterpillar a trigger of some sort that causes this worm, at a designated time in his life, to become what we will call *sleepy*. One day, while eating leaves and enjoying every bite, he opens his mouth and yawns. He begins to spin out of his mouth a thread-like material which we call webbing. He spins out enough to build himself a house, seals himself in, and goes to sleep. When he wakes up, he discovers he is cramped and confined — almost helpless. He discovers he is no longer *only a worm* and cannot crawl and eat leaves which only a few days ago he loved so well. He can only nod his head up and down (like we say “yes”). The desire to nod his head becomes *irresistible*, and so he does. There is a saw-like horn on top of his head, and as he says “yes” with the up and down motion of his head, he cuts himself free. He discovers he is a new creature — a butterfly. He is something better and far more useful. He no longer mars and destroys the things he touches but has the potential of doing a work which butterflies can do but caterpillars cannot. In that newborn state, he is wet and almost helpless, but the means to *dry him out* has already been provided by God, and very shortly he is flying. Can you believe it? What only a few days ago was a worm is now a butterfly flying around sipping nectar from the tulips and at the same time beautifying the landscape. He had not *reborn* himself. But, in God’s own wonderful and inexplicable way, the worm has been changed into a butterfly.

I am thinking of another *worm* who had spent many years eating the bitter leaves of sin. He ignored the invitations (sic) of the born again-ones who were saying, “God can change your life”. And “You, too, can soar to greater heights of life and enjoy the nectar of God’s wonderful flowers of grace”. Then one day after being exposed to some very *special leaves* from the pages of God’s book,(sic) a change took place in him, and he discovered he, too, was helpless and hopeless. The power of God flooded his soul as the Sword of the Spirit cut into his innermost being. His blinded eyes were made to see. His deaf ears were made to hear. The grace of God was unfolded, and he began to hear and see the things of God (John 3:1-5; 1 Cor. 2-14). That which before had been *foolishness* to him had now been recognized as the power of God (Rom. 1:16; I Cor.1:21). He began to say “yes” to that to which his response had always before been “no”

His new eyes of faith could now see the sinless Jesus hanging on a cross suffering untold agony in the behalf of sinners. Permit me to say here that the worm of which I speak is this writer. I had really learned that the question put forth in song “Would He Devote His Sacred Head for Such a Worm as I” could be answered positively. *He loved me and gave himself for me*” (Gal. 2:20). Regeneration had taken place and “*life and immortality*” had been “brought to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10). The gospel shows the regenerated sinner what Jesus accomplished for him and the Holy Spirit “*bears witness with his spirit*” that he is a son of God (Rom.8:16). The gospel brings to light the new birth.

The scenes before me and the message which the Holy Spirit communicated to me made God’s love and mercy so unexplainably glorious that His grace was irresistible. It was to me what water is to a thirsty man, what bread is to a hungry man, what a lifeguard is to a drowning child, what a fireman’s net is to a mother with a baby in her arms on the ledge of a burning building, what the coal of fire was to Isaiah’s lip (Isa. 6:7). As God made Eve to appear in the eyes of the lonely Adam, as the offer of a hypodermic injection to alleviate the pain of a suffering victim, oh yes, and much more, so did the grace of God appear to this helpless, hopeless worm when the Spirit of God convicted me and made me aware of what it means to have wrath of God abiding on me (John 3:36). I, indeed, like any other creature of God facing the same situation, found His grace irresistible. God *dried me out* and otherwise helped me. I then discovered that I, too, could nod my head and immediately found myself sipping the satisfying nectar of God’s flowers of grace.

We do not know when God placed the spinning machine in the caterpillar nor what exactly caused his drowsiness that caused him to yawn and to spin the web. Maybe it was a special ingredient in the leaves. Who knows? We can be sure, however, that a caterpillar is changed to a butterfly, and in the process there must be the eating of leaves. That is God’s way of making butterflies.

“Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom.10:17). “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). “Being born again — by the word of God”(I Pet. 1:23). “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13) (Ed — See editor’s note.)

Dear reader, you can no more *will* yourself to be born again than you can will yourself to be born the first time. However, you can expose yourself to the *leaves* of the word of God. They will seem bitter to you in your wormlike condition. The Bible pays no compliments to us in our unregenerate state. “*All have sinned*” (Rom. 3:23). “*There is none* (not even one who is righteous, not one who understands, not one who is searching after God. They have all gone astray;

they have one and all become unprofitable, worthless-depraved) *righteous, no not one*". (Rom. 3:10). But God can change that by planting an incorruptible seed (I Peter 1:23) in you which will germinate and bring about a change which can truly be called *born again*. When this is done, you will have no trouble believing that Jesus died for you — and rose again the third day — believing that He is Christ. "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ IS (already) born of God.*" (Please read I John 5:1-5).

When once the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, and the preaching of the word of God, or other means which He may sovereignly choose, has removed the scales from your eyes, unstopped your deaf ears, and circumcised your heart (Eph. 1:18; John 8:43 & 47; compare Col. 2:11 with Acts 7:51) you will no longer enjoy the bitter leaves of sin and be repulsed by the nectar from the flowers of God's grace, but the order will be reversed. The nectar from Biblical *tulips* will become palatable and precious to your taste. — V.C.Mayes.

(Ed. Note: The position of the Predestinarian Baptists is that regeneration is by the Word of God, Christ, "which word is preached by the Gospel, and conversion is through the gospel. Both, are necessary and sure to the Elect. We do not believe the preached or written word can be received until there is first a spiritual life given by which one is then enabled to spiritually hear and believe. No offense is intended by this note.)

THE SOVEREIGN DECREES OF GOD

By Isaac Backus, 1773

(Isaac Backus was a Separate Baptist called out from the Congregationalist Puritans during the Great Awakening. He received immersion from the Baptists and became their first and greatest historians. He ardently defended the doctrines of grace, and worked steadfastly with John Leland and others to secure freedom of worship for our peoples. The copy here was found in the John C. Stennis Collection at Mississippi State University along with other writings of Backus in a colonial library.)

Beloved Friend,

Although we should endeavor to avoid all needless contention, yet the *faith once delivered to the saints* is sometimes treated in such a manner as to make it our incumbent duty *earnestly and publicly* to contend for it. Such a case I think is presented before us by means of a printed paper lately spread in Providence (R.I.) and towns adjacent which you have requested me to make some remarks upon. It begins in this manner:

On Traditional Zeal. Some good Christian pastors will not scruple to tell you that they could find no joy in their own state, no strength or comfort in their labors of love towards their flocks, but because they know and are assured from St. Paul that God never had, nor ever will have, mercy upon all men; but that an unknown multitude of them are, through all ages of the world, inevitably decreed to the eternal fire and damnation of Hell; and that an unknown number of others are elected to a certain, irresistible salvation. Wonder not, my friends, if the inquisition has its pious defenders, for inquisition, cruelty, and every barbarity that must have an end, is mere mercy if compared with this reprobation doctrine. And to be in love with it, to draw comfort from it, and to wish it Godspeed is a love that absolutely forbids the loving our neighbors as our selves and makes the scripture-wish, that all men might be saved, no less than a rebellion against God.

This writer's evident design is against the doctrine of particular election and efficacious grace in our salvation, and against those who preach it. And he takes the same method that the heathen persecutors did with the primitive Christians, viz., to cover them with skins of wild beast in order that they might be devoured by dogs, or if not, yet that they might be hated and avoided by all men. He asserts that some Christian pastors tell their people such a story as he has here related. If he can find any man upon earth that teaches so, he is welcome to correct him as much as he deserves, but till he exhibits his proof he ought to be accounted a blasphemer of God's sovereignty and a false accuser of Christ's ministers. Yea, out of his own mouth he is condemned, for as short as his paper is he has not been able to keep to one consistent story, but the same preachers that he accuses of rejoicing that God never will have mercy upon all men, when he comes to give us their own language it is, "O, the sweetness of God's election!" And neither the Devil nor any of his children will ever be able to make a rejoicing in God's *everlasting love to a chosen number* to be the same thing as it would be to rejoice in the destruction of the rest.

Our Lord says, "*Every one that doth evil hateth the light, but he that doth truth cometh to the light*"; and let the reader judge which of these characters suits the conduct of the writer before us. He cast out these horrid accusations against some good Christian pastors without naming any one, while his evident aim is against all that profess a sweetness in sovereign election; at the same time (like the savages) he tries to keep himself and his principles hid. Though it fares with him as it did with the old enemies of the *sure foundation* which God has laid in *Zion*, whose bed was shorter than a man could stretch upon it, and the covering narrower than that he could wrap himself in it. Isa. 28. For though by the title of his piece he would have people esteem him as a bold champion against *tradition* and a friend to Paul and the sacred writings, yet he does not so much as attempt to prove that sovereign decrees and irresistible grace are not

fully taught by them. No, instead of confusing us or defending himself by the sacred oracles, he, like those who prophesied out of the *deceit in their own hearts*, first makes his address to men's passions and exerts all his art to bring up the horrid ideas of an inevitable decreeing of multitudes to hellfire, of cruelty vastly worse than the inquisition, of God's sacrificing of myriads of his creatures to the Devil, etc., and having done his utmost thus to raise a tempest in the souls of men, he winds up by asserting that "The only possible way of avoiding every prevailing error and of finding every saving truth is to listen, solemnly, attentively to listen, agreeable to the written word, to the *still small voice within you*."

This is just like the old serpent who, with malicious reflections upon God's government and lying pretences of friendship to man, drew him into rebellion against God's *revealed will* and to gratify his own *heart's lust*. Yet from that day to this, when the tempter thinks it will serve his turn, he is very ready to catch at some Scripture *words*, to entice people into violations of the *truth* which is therein taught.

Let the pretended advocate for the truth now before us mean what he will by the *voice within*, yet when he or any others are brought solemnly and attentively to listen neither to reason, conscience, or the Spirit of God they will teach them that the way to avoid error and to find the truth in any case, is not first to inflame our passions before our judgments are well formed. No, for a gift will blind the eyes of the wise and pervert the words of the righteous; therefore we must have our eye single or else our *whole body* will be *full of darkness*. Hence appears the necessity of the Holy Spirit to renew us in the spirit of our minds and to guide our souls into all truth.

The grand contest ever since sin entered into the world has been between the will of the Creator and the will of the creature. But as it is too shocking for human nature to have it openly appear in that light, God's enemies in all ages have *made lies their refuge and under falsehood have hid themselves*. And in the controversy before us we may take notice of the following refuges of lies which the enemies of sovereign grace try to hide themselves in:

1. As the sacred writers often appealed to men's reason and conscience and exhorted the saints to regard the teachings of the Holy Spirit in their souls above all human authority on earth, deceivers of various denominations have caught at and perverted that sacred custom as a place for setting up a standard *in themselves* to decide every case so as not to admit anything for truth that does not agree with their *inward test*. But it is well known in our nation that in order for us to enjoy our just rights and liberties, rulers as well as subjects must be governed by known laws and established rules, and that for judges to assume a discretionary power to dispense with old laws or to make new ones as occasion

served would introduce arbitrary government, or rather a cruel tyranny. And were not people deluded with the religious names and great swelling words of deceivers, as their attempts to set up a *voice within* which speaks in any respects contrary to God's *written Word* would appear as arbitrary and tyrannical as any such proceedings of earthly judges can be. Those holy men whom God employed to write His Word had their authority so to do *confirmed by divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost*, and woe to that man who presumes either to add or take from those holy oracles.

2. The advocates for their own free will in opposition to sovereign grace have determined that the doctrine of *FIXED DECREES* in the divine mind concerning the future state of men, is consistent with the liberty of their own wills and with the proper influence of precepts and promises, rewards and punishments. And, having quoted a number of precepts with considerations to enforce them (of which the Bible is full) they boast that they have gained their argument, when in truth they have never touched the point in debate. We know, and as firmly hold as any free-willer on earth, that all men are under moral government where precepts and promises, exhortations, warnings, etc., have their proper place, and ought to influence us in all our conduct. And I believe from the bottom of my heart that God never did or ever will punish any but the guilty, and that he will finally reward every man according to his works. But in the present controversy the true state of the question is this, viz., Whether the whole plan of God's government and the final issue of every action through the universe has not been known and *FIXED* in His counsels from the beginning, so that *nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it?* (Eccls. 3:14). Or whether many events are not held in suspense and uncertainty in His infinite mind, till they are decided by the free will power of men? We hold the first, they the last side of this question. But instead of attending to the true state of the controversy, and instead of referring the decision of it to the divine oracles, *tradition* and *corruption* has carried them into the way which this writer pursues of representing our doctrine to be that God decrees some to misery in the same manner that He does others to happiness. Yea, this slanderer, in imitation of those who have gone before him, sets reprobation foremost and would have people believe that we hold God's first design to be the damnation of *multitudes* and then, secondly, the *irresistible salvation of a number!* Hoping no doubt by these horrid colorings to guard people sufficiently against all the Gospel weapons which are appointed to pull down the strongholds that are raised against the knowledge of God, and to cast down the *imagination*s which keep men's thoughts *too high* to yield their all to a meek and lowly Jesus (II Cor.10:4-5). Many in latter ages have carried their imaginations so high on this subject as,

3. To assume a dignity to themselves that they will not allow to the Eternal

God, for they claim a *self-determining power* in their own wills while they deny it to the Most High, and insist upon it that His choice of some men to salvation rather than others, is from either a foresight or aftersight of good dispositions and good doings in them more than others, so making that to be the cause of His choice which He declares is the effect of it, and representing that God is influenced in His work by motives *without* Himself, at the same time that they hold a power to determine all their own actions *within* themselves. Can any imagination ever be entertained more absurd or more contrary to Holy Writ than these are! (See Matt. 11:25-28; Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Per. 1:2; I John 4:19)

The people we are now speaking of commonly deny the doctrine of man's universal depravity, but if to claim a sovereignty to their own will, while they deny it to God, does not prove them to be rebels against Heaven, I know not what can do it.

Nebuchadnezzar made trial how it would do to ascribe all his achievements to himself, but after he had grazed among the beast of the field till seven times had passed over him, he declares that, "*All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as NOTHING (before the Most High) and He doth according to HIS WILL in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What dost Thou?*" (Dan. 4:35). Thus it happens that the "*hearts of the kings are in the hands of the Lord so that as rivers of water He turneth them whithersoever HE WILL*"; i.e., to act voluntarily as He designs to have them. From whence it appears evident that there is no inconsistency in holding *God's Decrees to be* immutable, and yet that men act as voluntarily *as if* it were not so. And the great reasoners on the other side cannot avoid this consequence, if they would once own that the will of man is always determined in its choice by motive or by what they at present prefer and think to be best, for that person must be stupid indeed who cannot see the HE in whom we live, move, and have our being, can at any time set things in such a view before our minds as to make us think it best to choose one way of acting rather than another. Though Balaam was so madly set after the wages of unrighteousness that he *would not* be turned even by the reproof of a dumb ass, yet when the Lord opened his eyes to see the angels with a drawn sword before him, he at once *chose* to fall to the earth or to turn back rather than run upon it (Num. 22:31, etc). In order therefore to keep up their conceit that FIXED DECREES interfere with men's liberty, some of their great "doctors" have:

4. Tried to shelter themselves in such a miserable refuge as to pretend that they have a power in their wills to act *with motive or against motive* just as the will pleases. But I suppose it is as great a piece of nonsense in itself to hold that a rational soul can act voluntarily in any case without or against motive, as it

would be to say there can be a rational action without any influence of reason in it! Thus professing themselves to be wise they become fools, for as Mr. Locke truly observes, even delirious persons are influenced by reason only they reason from wrong premises. As when such a man imagines that he is all made of glass, he is moved to act with the caution that would be necessary if the case were so. And the like may be said of other imaginations. And persons must be idiots and not reason at all, or else reason and motive will always influence their choice and conduct. Evil *imaginings* and *thoughts* always move men to act wickedly. (Gen. 4:5; and 13:21). But when any are brought to *know the truth* it makes *them free, free from sin, so as to become servants of righteousness*, (John 8:31; Rom. 6:18). The main objections I ever heard against sovereign election and certain salvation, by free grace alone, appear to me to spring from this root, viz., Man who was flattered with the motion of being *as gods* still conceits that he has a power *in himself* to do as he pleases, let that pleasure be to comply with or to disappoint God's designs; and therefore, if they are not disposed at present to engage in His service, that He must wait their leisure, and be ready, when ever they set about the work in good earnest, to grant them the assistance of His grace and, if they improve it well unto the end, then to receive them to His glory. But for my part I have no more notion of worshipping a deity that can possibly be mistaken or disappointed in any one event than I have of worshipping Baal, who could nor defend either his altar or grove when his votaries (small carved images) were asleep. (Judges 6:31).

Those who are determined to believe nothing but what they can comprehend, are determined to be idolaters, for 'tis certain that anything which can be comprehended by a finite mind cannot be the infinite Jehovah whose wisdom, knowledge, and judgments are *unsearchable and His ways past finding out; of whom, through whom and to whom are all things; to whom be glory forever, amen*" (Rom. 11:33-36). Thus to believe, adore, and obey is not, as many would have it, a sacrificing of reason to tradition and blind devotion; but the contrary. As, for instance, should any man conceit that he could not know whether or not there was light in the sun or warmth in the fire without looking through the one and running into the other, and should try the experiment till he became blind and burnt, he could not from thence convince me that I had lost both my sight and feeling because I still professed to enjoy great comfort in the cautious improvement of those blessings. Now the perfections of God are compared both to the sun and the fire, to teach us the importance of receiving His grace freely, of acting towards Him *uprightly*, and *servicing* of Him with *reverence and Godly fear*. (Psa.84:11; Heb. 12:28-29).

Some serious persons are afraid to give in to the doctrine of immutable decrees lest they should make God the author of sin, but Mr. Norton, one of the

fathers of this country, justly replied to this objection that sin is a defect, and God is the author of all efficiency but not of any defect at all. An illegitimate child is the creature of God, but its illegitimacy is wholly from its parents. It was their lusts which caused the *defect* or want of its being lawfully begotten. Yet the child is God's creature, and if He pleases He makes it a subject of His grace. The heat of the sun that attacks the secret virtues of the earth, is not the cause of the stink of the dunghill. And though carnal reasoners try to persuade people that to hold every event to be certain in the divine councils, takes away the guilt of evil actions, and the virtue of good ones; yet the Word of Truth abundantly shows the contrary. It shows that Joseph's brethren were as *verily guilty* in their actings against him as if they could have frustrated God's design, and yet that he overruled their *wrath* and *cruelty* towards their brother, for His own praise, (Psa 56:10) and to make Joseph much more of a public and extensive blessing than they could have made him in Canaan, if they had tried their uttermost for it. At the same time the sacred story clearly shows that they acted quite voluntarily, both in their wretched abuses to their brother, and in humbly prostrating themselves before him afterward. They acted by motive; when they first saw Joseph coming to them, they felt so that they thought they would slay him: But upon another view murder appeared so shocking that they thought it best to gratify themselves another way, which moved them to choose that way. On the other hand, when Joseph was tempted by his wicked mistress, though men were absent, yet God to whom he was under infinite obligation, was present to his thoughts, and that proved a sufficient motive to make him choose any suffering rather than to sin against such a glorious Being.

The inquiry and pursuit of all men is after *good*, and the believer finds it only in God, who is *good* and is always doing *good*, and this causes his soul to be in earnest to *learn his statutes* (Psa. 4:6-7 and 119:68). Others do not like to retain the true God in their knowledge; neither His nature nor His government appears good to their carnal minds. Therefore they worship and serve the creature instead of the Creator, setting up gain, honor, or pleasure as their chief good. Yet to appear nakedly irreligious, is too shocking to multitudes who at the same time are far from desiring to set the Lord always before them, so as to be influenced by Him in all their conduct. Therefore they choose their *idol* shepherds that will prophesy *smooth things* to them rather than faithful watchmen who represent the true character of the *Holy One of Israel before them*". (Isa. 30:8-11; Zech 11:17).

A darling topic with the carnal reasoners of our world is this, they say that either men are *able* to obey and serve God, or else, if they *cannot do it*, until God is pleased to convert them, they are not to blame for neglecting of it. But the truth is, the natural man *cannot serve God because he does love and serve an idol*.

And the soul before it is slain by the law, cannot be *married* to Christ because it is *wedded* to its own doings. (Matt. 6:24; Romans 7). Yet this inability is so far from being any just excuse that the more unable they are to love God or to believe in Christ the greater is their *condemnation* (John 3:16-19). And it is a most wicked device in the writer of the paper now in hand, to use the word *inevitable* concerning the reprobate and *irresistible* concerning the elect in such a manner as to exclude the idea of their own choice; whereas the vessels of wrath say, "We WILL walk after our own devices, and EVERYONE that doeth evil HATETH THE LIGHT"(Jere. 18:12; John 3:20). And vessels of mercy pursue the same ways till God works in them to *will and to do of His good pleasure*". (Phil. 2:13; Tit. 2:11-12). Therefore, though the final event is as certain to the one as the other, yet the manner of its accomplishments is vastly different. The vessels of wrath, "*after their hard and impenitent heart, treasure up wrath TO THEMSELVES, while God endureth with much long suffering with them, But he makes known the riches of His glory in effectually calling the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory.* (Rom. 2:5 and 9:22-24). And renewed souls are so far from assuming to themselves a power to be God's *counselors* or venturing to act upon *secret things which belong to Him*, that where He has told them of His designs concerning any future event they have not made the design of the great Ruler, but the laws He has given to His subjects the rule of their conduct; and the difference between subjects and rebels is discovered by this. As, for instance, God let David know that He designed to remove Saul and to make him king in his stead. Yet David refused to smite Saul when he had opportunity but left it with God to remove him in His own way. (I Sam. 24:12-13). Whereas when the Jews heard Caiphas' prophecy concerning the death of Jesus "*from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put Him to death,* (John 11:49-53). And God's accomplishing His infallible decrees in that great event, while the Jews were inexcusably guilty in their actings about it, are strongly asserted by the inspired apostle. "*Him, being delivered by time DETERMINATE COUNSEL and FOREKNOWLEDGE of God, YE have taken and BY WICKED HANDS have crucified and slain.*" (Acts 2:23).

They acted most wickedly in conspiring against our Saviour who was perfectly holy and harmless and constantly went about doing good. Yet God's purposes and promises were thereby *exactly accomplished* in bestowing infinite and eternal mercies upon guilty and miserable men. Pharaoh used great subtlety and cruelty in order to keep Israel in bondage and set up his will at the highest rate against releasing of them. Yet God in His Providence caused things to appear so to him and his subjects that they *voluntarily* furnished Israel with silver and gold, and "*Egypt was glad when they departed* Psalm 105:7-38, and that on the *selfsame day* which God had told Abraham of above four-hundred years before.

(Exo. 12:41).

These and many other instances of men's voluntary actions, the Lord declared with a perfect *exactness* before they came to pass, because He *knew* that with a *brazen obstinacy and willful treachery* they would rather give this *glory* to their *idol* than to Him. (Isa. 48:3-8). But the firm faith of the saints in every age in the certain accomplishment of God's promises, has made them the more watchful and active in the rational choice that He furnished them with for attaining the desired end. Jacob wrestled and prevailed with God, yet that did not make him neglect, but to wisely improve the best that he had in his power to calm his angry brother, and it had the desired effect. Paul believed God that the lives of all those who were with him in the ship should be saved, yet when the men who were skilled in managing the ship were about to leave it, he said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "*Except these abide in the ship ye CANNOT be saved*". (Acts 27:25-31). Here was a certainty of the event, and yet it is expressed conditionally, while *both were true*. It was true that all should be saved, and it was as true that the mariners must be instrumental of it.

Thus my dear friend, I have endeavored in as plain and brief a manner as I could, in the little time I had for it, opened and vindicated the great Scripture doctrine of GOD'S SOVEREIGN DECREES against a malicious attempt which has been made to vilify the same. It may well seem surprising to those who are acquainted with the *Seventeenth Article of the Church of England* to hear that a minister who has solemnly engaged to maintain the truth therein expressed, should have a great hand in spreading this blasphemous paper which is diametrically contrary thereto, as has evidently been the case. But I leave him and all others in the hand of a righteous and gracious God, and rest,

Yours, etc., Isaac Backus, 1773, Boston

(Ed. Note: Reference to the 17th Article of the Church of England suggests that Backus was replying to an Episcopal minister. Such ministers took a vow in ordination to defend these Articles of Communion, which reads:

XVII. Of Predestination and Election

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundation of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which he endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they he made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk

religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

Isn't that a BEAUTIFUL EXPRESSION of our faith also! We marvel that one should ever be so blind as to remove from such a faith to cheap freewillism! The men that drafted the above, KNEW SOMETHING EXCELLENT!

DOCTRINAL CONFESSION OF JOHN LELAND, 1772-1773

If Christ died for all the human family, with one and the same view, why is it the greater part of them live and die, without ever hearing of His name? if hearing of it is not necessary to salvation, why should so much time, expense and affliction, be imposed on the world? if Christ has suffered all that is necessary to make reconciliation to God, what has chilled His love, that, either by withholding the means for men to use to save themselves, or by limiting the displays of regenerating grace, by which He saves them, He should not save with ease, those who cost Him pain and blood? If Christ has not died for all, those for whom He did not die, have no more cause to complain than the felon has, because no other appears to die for his crimes; and yet, to a spectator, this looks like a respecting of persons.

The law of eternal right, will always be binding on rational beings, as long as the perfections of God, and the faculties of men exist. This law enjoins on all men to believe all that God reveals, and do all that He commands. That God revealed the true Messiah, and the Messiah gave infallible proofs that He was The Anointed, is certain; therefore, all who saw Him and His works, and did not

believe in Him gave God the lie; and, all who do not believe the record that God has given of His Son, make Him a liar. it is, moreover, true, that all who do not believe shall be damned; are condemned already. The light is not the condemnation, only by exposing the evil deed, of breaking the law. To believe that men will be condemned for simply not believing that Christ died for them, is preposterous; and, if He did not die for them, it would condemn them for not believing a lie. If a prince falls in with a family of vicious habits, and marries one of them, and frees her from her debts, and reclaims her from her vices; does this deliver the rest of her family from the restraints and penalties of the law? Can they justify themselves by pleading that the prince has married one of the family? That men were made good at first, is clear; and, that God requires them to be as good as He made them; and, in case they have relapsed, to cast away all their sins, make themselves new hearts, and renew right spirits within them, is also clear. But, from this, does it follow that men are bound to be better than Adam was, to possess eternal life — the unction from the Holy One — new covenant blessings, which came not by Adam, Abraham, or Moses, but by Jesus Christ? A question here arises, whether a destitution of the Holy Spirit, of the grace of eternal life, is a sin? That men will be condemned for their sins without it, is certain. But will they be condemned because God has not granted unto them repentance unto life, and given unto them the water that springs up to eternal life?

A word of experience, in the years 1772 - 73, etc., when my mind was so solemnly impressed with eternal realities, as to turn me from the power of Satan, unto the living God; whether from the Bible I read, the preaching I heard, the teaching of the Holy Spirit, or some other cause, I did as firmly believe the following articles, as I believed that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of sinners:

1. That all men were guilty sinners, and God would be just and clear, if He damned them all.

2. That Christ did, before the foundation of the world, predestinate a certain number of the human family for His bride, to bring to grace and glory.

3. That Jesus died for sinners, and for His elect sheep only.

4. That those for whom He did not die, had no cause to complain, as the law under which they were placed was altogether reasonable.

5. That Christ would always call His elect to Him while on earth, before they died.

6. That those whom He predestinated, redeemed and called, He would keep by His power, and bring them safe to glory.

7. That there would be a general resurrection, both of the just and the unjust.

8. That, following the resurrection, judgment would commence, when the righteous sheep would be placed on the right hand of Christ, and admitted into life eternal; and the wicked on the left hand, doomed to everlasting fire.

In the belief of those articles, and what was collateral therewith, I began my ministerial career in 1774, with but very little thought how many and weighty the consequences of these premises were. But, now after an experiment of fifty-seven years, and after going over the ground thousands of times, with all the research and candor in my power, I dare not pull up stakes and make a new start. Many uncertainties arise in my mind, many questions spring up that cannot answer; but every other system I explore has greater difficulties and worse conclusions.

Sometimes a query arises in my mind whether a gracious God could not have revealed His designs in a manner so clear that there could be no doubts and disputations about them? But, here I am checked. If revelation were otherwise, or if my capacity were so enlarged that I could solve every question that ever arose in my mind, that same enlargement of mind would unfold ten-thousand more questions, which, as yet I have no stretch of thought to conceive of. There would be no getting through the dark place, unless creatures should be omniscient.

The doctrine of the trinity is too profound for my intellect. That there are three that bear record in heaven, God has said, and I believe; and that is all. The Holy Ghost, in some places, seems to take the lead of the Father; (See Phil. 4:20; Col.1:8; 2:2; 3:17). Why should not the Arians, from this, believe that the Father was appointed by the Holy Ghost to do what He does? That Christ is the first - God over all - Ubiquity itself, I believe; and I have wished that those who deny that Jesus is Jehovah, would begin at the beginning of the Christian alphabet, and tell how a virgin could conceive and bear a child; if they can do that, they will as easily understand how the same child can be the Mighty God and everlasting Father.

The doctrine of redemption by the blood of Christ is the only foundation for the hope for pardon that I have; and yet, in all its ramifications, it absorbs

me. Why should God admit of a vicarious (substitutionary) atonement in the Christocracy, and forbid it in the Theocracy, and indeed in all civil governments? Is it possible for the guilt of criminals to be transferred to one who is innocent? If Christ had no guilt, in what did His sufferings consist? The principle of universal atonement (That Christ died for all mankind.--Ed.) and limited grace, (That is, Christ died for all, but grace is intended only for the elect, or Fullerism) which is now very popular, (in the Missionary movement), gives no relief to but one hitch of the mind. When the mind is burdened with the thought, "Why does God love Jacob more than Esau;" to answer, "a general atonement is made for all alike," may ease the first thought. But when we are told that many will gain *nothing* by the atonement but an aggravated *curse*, the heart sickens to think that God would be at so much expense to get a *pretence* to condemn men. In the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th of Romans, Paul rests the subject logically. He vindicates the Sovereignty of God with the hand of a master; but when he undertook to wade into the goodness and equity of Jehovah, he found the waters swell from the ankles to the knees—to the loins — to the heart; and, rising to the chin, before his mouth was stopped, he cried out, "Oh! the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." And there he has left me to grovel still. Notwithstanding I find myself at great loss about many things, yet, in one point of light, I rejoice that the ministration of life is hidden from the wise and prudent, and many of its essentials, or stronger points, from the saints of God. Sin has sunk men into such guilt and pollution, that any scheme which human minds can understand, would be utterly incompetent to restore. It requires a plan, formed in infinite wisdom, and executed in infinite wisdom and love, to meet the sinner's wants and relieve his woes; and if thus founded and executed, how incompetent the limited wisdom of man must be to comprehend it. In this view of the subject, if I could comprehend the gospel system, I should not dare to trust in it.

I have personally known more than one-thousand Baptist preachers in my life; nearly one-half of them have gone the way of all the earth; but a few remain who have been in the ministry as long as myself; and my departure is at hand. Soon I must test the reality of the religion I have preached to others, and feebly labored to possess myself. My only hope of acceptance with God is founded on the mercy of God, flowing through Christ. Unless my soul and my services are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and perfumed by the intercession of the Great High Priest, they will — they ought to be rejected.

Farewell, my friend; we are strangers to each other; nor do I expect to see your face in this world. Should we both be so favored of the Lord as to be admitted into Paradise, perhaps some friendly angel or kindred spirit may point

you out to me, and say, “This is James Whitsitt;” or will the knowledge of disembodied spirits be so intuitive, that they will know each other without introduction?

Many things have crowded into my mind while I have been writing, which I have entirely suppressed; and those articles that I have touched upon, have been so concisely handled, that I find by review, they are left obscure; but I never copy off, but trust to the original draught.

In unknown regions days and dates are unknown.

ASK NOT AFTER MY NAME, SEEING IT IS SECRET. (Written, 1829, published in 1832-John Leland)

NOTE ON LELAND

John Leland was a Separate Baptist minister during the Colonial and early Frontier periods. He was contemporary with such elders as Gilbert Beebe, Daniel Marshall, David and William Fristoe, Shubal Steam, David Benedict, Isaac Backus, and A.B. Semples.

The latter part of this period, from the 1790’s to the 1840’s, witnessed the Great Baptist Separation and beginning of the Great Apostasy in religion. It was characterized by innovations in practices, rise of strange freewill doctrines, and religious chaos which tore all existing religious societies asunder. As Leland expressed, it was “too late to begin anew” in the modern system.

Today, Primitive Baptists (in general) will not claim him, for he was evangelical . . . one of America’s greatest; and Missionary Baptists will not, nor can they, claim him, for he opposed the mission system and held steadfastly to Holy Spirit regeneration — which he had witnessed and depended wholly upon in his ministry. In the division, he cast his lot with the Old School party, submitting his name as endorsement of the Black Rock Address of 1832. Our brethren in Virginia will be most familiar with his name today, since many of our churches there were planted or gathered through his labors. We fully subscribe to the contents of these articles. — S.C. P.

A TRUE PEACEMAKER

By Woodrow Hudson

Bastrop, La.

“Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God”

Matthew 5:9.

It is wonderful to consider that the Lord blesses one to be a peacemaker. When one is blessed to that extent, he feels that peace within his soul. He is blessed with the indwelling Spirit of God within himself. “. . . he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”(John 16:14). The Spirit of truth, Holy Ghost, or Comforter dwells within the children of God.

One may pretend (outwardly) to be a peacemaker and still not know anything about the peace of God within his heart. One may pretend to love God, love the brethren and manifest an humble spirit and still not know anything about the love of God.

The following Scriptures describe those that only have a head knowledge and do not know anything about the love of God within their hearts: “. . .because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (II Thess. 2:10). “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.” (Isaiah 29:13) “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (II Peter 2:21-22). One who only has a head knowledge of the doctrines of grace cannot be a true peacemaker, can he?

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. (John 14:27). The Spirit of God blesses one with the love of God that is felt within, and he feels the peace within his soul that causes him to love others and to esteem others better than self. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:19). This wonderful feeling causes you to praise the Lord, does it not?

The Scriptures are inspired by the Word of God, and there is a purpose in all Scripture and there is profit in them. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (II Tim. 3:16) The Lord has a purpose in all exhortations that are mentioned in the Scriptures, as well as doctrine, instruction, etc. Why do the Scriptures exhort us to follow the things that make for peace? Please think on that question.

May the Lord bless us to examine ourselves: Do we have the desire to seek after peace and to do that which is acceptable in the sight of the Lord? If we have that desire to seek after peace, then we do not desire to “keep something going on or rocking the boat”, arguing, meddling into other people’s business, etc.

Are we contentious? If we love arguments, then we keep adding “fuel to the fire” in any situation. That being true, our works do not prove we are peacemakers.

If we have the desire to seek after peace, then we will not carry bad news or scatter seeds of discord. That being true, then our desire is to follow this Scripture and give it our careful consideration: “Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.” (Pro. 26:20-21) Webster says that strife means, “conflict, to struggle in opposition, to contend.”

Why argue? What does an argument accomplish? Arguments usually cause hard feelings, do they not? A true peacemaker avoids arguments by not arguing. “STRIVE not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm”. (Pro. 3:30) “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender STRIFES.” (II Tim. 2:23) Please notice the next verse: “And the servant of the Lord must not STRIVE: but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.” It is a wonderful feeling when the Lord blesses us to follow this Scripture: (No one can follow the teaching of the Scriptures unless he is led and directed by the Spirit of the Lord.) “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” (Rom. 12:18)

Have we been guilty of sowing seeds of discord among brethren? (Pro. 6:19) What causes one to be guilty of sowing seeds of discord? Either, that is his nature and he does not know anything about the love of God, or else he has been caught in the wrong spirit or caught in the snare of the devil: “giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” (I Tim. 4:1) “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they MAY RECOVER THEMSELVES OUT OF THE SNARE OF THE DEVIL, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (II Tim. 2:25-26) A true peacemaker is blessed by the Lord to refrain from sowing seeds of discord.

The Scriptures speak against meddling into other people’s business. In other words, it is wise for one to mind or handle his own business and not meddle into other people’s affairs. “He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.” (Prov. 26:17) It is written, “. . . let none of you suffer . . . as a busy body in other men’s matters.” (I Peter 4:15) Does not a busy body attempt to tend to other people’s business? How and why does one suffer? Does not this mean that God chastises the busybodies? The true peacemaker is blessed by the Lord to overcome the temptation to be a busybody into other people’s business.

Since the Scriptures advocate that it is prudent and wise for one to mind

his own business, then, a true peacemaker is blessed to take heed to these words that the Lord inspired: “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.” (I Thess 4:11)

A true peacemaker is blessed with the grace of God to follow this Scripture: “A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.” (Prov. 15:1).

What happens when we are guilty of offending one? The Scriptures tell us what happens to an offended brother: “A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.” (Prov. 18:19) May the Lord bless us with special grace to keep us from offending any of our brethren.

Do we love the presence of God, or do we love the prestige of men? Why was this exhortation written: “Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Gal. 5:26) A true peacemaker is blessed with a single eye to the glory and praise of the Lord.

Do we have the true love for our brethren? If we do, then we will rejoice with them and weep with them, and we will overlook their faults. “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” (I Peter 4:8; Rom.12:15)

If the Lord blesses us to follow these exhortations, then we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus who said: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.”(Matt. 5:16) We show what we are by our walk. Let us ask ourselves these questions: Do I have the love of God within my heart? Do I really desire to see peace among the brethren?

Do we desire to seek after peace or do we take pleasure in seeing strife among brethren? The brethren do not know what lies in our hearts, but the Lord knows. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3)

Did not Jesus set the best example for a peacemaker? “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an EXAMPLE, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously;” (I Pet. 2:21-24) “. . . and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.” (Psa. 69:9; and Rom. 15:3)

It was for the love of His people that Jesus bore and took all that was placed upon Him. Did not Jesus turn the other cheek? “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him

the other also.” (Man. 5:39)

May the Lord bless each of us to seek after the things that make for peace and carefully consider this Scripture: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” (Rom. 14:19)

May the Lord bless this article for the edification of the readers who will render all the praise, honor and glory unto the name of this wonderful God who has been so good to us.

--W.W. H.

A STUNNING ANALOGY

For years, as an educator, this editor has studied childhood habits and characteristics. Some are temporary, which with developing years and maturity are discarded. Others remain as a part of the child’s personality into adulthood. To illustrate and to draw a point for this article, I have selected two examples which most adults have noticed in children.

Annie and Brenda are very close friends. They share many experiences. One day, Annie becomes angry with Brenda; they are no longer on speaking terms. Cindy likes both Annie and Brenda. Cindy continues to play with Brenda, and immediately Annie is angry with Cindy. Cindy should not be playing with Brenda now that Annie is not. Cindy cannot be a friend to both. She must make a choice between them;

The playground bully pushes Billy down and hurts him. In frustration, Billy (later that morning) punches Henry in the nose after seeing him playing with the playground bully.

Perhaps they’ll outgrow these characteristics, if they do not first become nominal sovereign grace believers! We noted the same behavior among some of the sovereign grace Independents; among some Primitive Baptists; and among some Predestinarian Baptists. Elder John Doe gets angry with, or jealous of, Elder Smith. Elder Tinker loves them both. He visits Elder Smith’s church and preaches for them. Elder John Doe cuts him off from fellowship with his church, and all other churches with which he affiliates. It is called by some free grace men as a “bar of fellowship”; by some, “out of fellowship”; and by educators it is called “childhood behavior”.

Stunning analogy, isn’t it? There is no stronger “meat” for a child of God than Free Grace Doctrine. It certainly can’t be called the “milk of the Word”. Isn’t it tragic how hypocrisy stunts men’s’ growth into gospel maturity? Where are those things we read of in the New Testament: love, forgiveness, forbearance, long-suffering, tenderness, mercies, patience, etc? Are these things

mere abstractions to be entertained in our religious discussions? Are they not, rather, principles of grace which distinguish true believers from nominal believers? “By their fruit ye shall know them”. (Matt 7:16-20)

Most sovereign grace ministers are profound students of the Scriptures; they excel above Arminian free-willers as high as the heavens. Yet, they seem to overlook one of the most serious indictments in the Scriptures. “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church”. III John 9-10.

We believe these are the latter times for, “men have a form of godliness and deny the POWER thereof”; (II Tim.3:5) But, Ah how we should seek to adorn the gospel of FREE GRACE by our personal demonstration of those traits characteristic of our Lord. He LOVES us and gave Himself for us. He forgave us all our sins and transgressions. He was long-suffering towards us while we plunged head-long into rebellion. His patience is a precious heritage and grace to poor wayward sinners As Predestinarians, we say we believe that “He hath predestinated us to be CONFORMED to the IMAGE of His son” (Romans 8:29); but where is that image in such who behave contrary to the gospel towards their brethren?

Three sovereign grace brethren believe in the millennial reign of Christ. As they study together, they pull various books from the dusty shelves to aid in their Biblical research. Eventually one concludes the Lord will come BEFORE He sets up His reign on earth; another concludes He will come AFTER the great tribulation; and the last believes He will come DURING the great tribulation. Their “love” is shattered, and they refuse “to fellowship”. Each believes dogmatically he is correct; none realizes they could ALL be in error. The end of the matter finds brethren and churches isolated from one another.

In the upper Mid-Western states, the old school party of Regular Baptists were a numerous people in the late 1800’s. They were associated in the South with some calling themselves Predestinarian Baptists and some Primitive Baptists. Two of their elders, Elder J. H. Oliphant and Elder Silas Durand, engaged in a “friendly debate”. Elder Oliphant took the position that God’s people were “blessed for doing good works”. Elder Durand took the position that God’s people were “blessed to do good works” Before the debate ended, the Baptists were divided. Years later a friend of this writer reported that someone asked Elder Oliphant: “What exactly was the difference between you and Elder Durand?” The old elder replied sorrowfully. “A choice of words”. Elder Oliphant’s followers descended into the very Conditionalism they had opposed

only two decades earlier in the Regular Baptists; Elder Durand's followers devoured each other until today none are left.

Brethren, beware lest when you have received brethren to doubtful disputation, you finally have no brethren left! Then you will have your reward. You can then sit "under your vine and eat your own grapes" . . . if there are any left to eat. "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15)

At times as we watch children play we are reminded of some sovereign grace ministers. The children will usually get over it and be friends again. With sovereign grace folk, it sometimes gets worse. Now we know our Lord said: ". . . except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt 18:3. But we do not believe He was commending childish squabbling; rather, the thing which we believe to which He referred is the one thing lacking — childlike humility.

When children behave in an unruly manner, teachers and parents often sit down and talk with them; and often it helps. Christ has placed His baptized people under the church's discipline and care. When an elder or member behaves in a childish and graceless manner, his church should "sit him down and talk with him about it." If Elder John Doe was certain his church was faithful in discipline, he would not likely have breached the fellowship of the brethren. The fact that he did so is an indictment of the church of which he was a member. They, too, reaped the just reward of their carelessness.

This writer learned of a situation in a church in a neighboring state. A church there had two elders. After a time, the old preacher-jealousy raised its ungodly head. One day during conference, while one elder was away preaching the gospel, the other elder stood before the assembly and said: "All that are with me go outside. All that are with Elder so and so stay inside." No one moved. Finally, one faithful member answered humbly: "Elder, we were here before either of you, and we'll be here after both of you are gone. We love you both, but we aren't following either of you." The church convincingly settled that issue themselves. It is a pity that so few deal faithfully with their own elders and members, thus preventing a breach of fellowship.

When a minister or member departs from the truth of the gospel, the church also should prevent their laying hands upon the brethren; thus violating the Scripture, "Saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." (I Chr. 16:22). It need be done only ONCE! Elders are not dumb. . . they learn pretty FAST under necessity. —S.C.P.

THE CUP THE LORD TOOK

By Elder Grady E. Dearman

Adam and Eve — Husband and Wife Christ and the Church. These relationships are traced throughout the canon of Scripture; and have a common unifying theme: The unity of duality — the oneness of each pair named above. Adam and Eve, even BEFORE they came together as husband and wife, were ONE; for she had been IN him before she had been created. In God’s purpose they were one when the sleep descended upon Adam, and when his side was opened and the rib was removed; it was made (builded) into his wife. (Gen. 2:21-25). In like manner God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the second Adam, and when His side was opened and the “blood and water” came out; it was made (. . . I will build my church . . .) into His Bride. (John 3:5 & 29; 1 Cot. 12:27. Eph. 5:29-32).

It was the customary practice among the Hebrews (of old) for a man and woman to be promised (betrothed) to each for some time BEFORE they came together; the marriage having been contracted by the parents of both parties. Such an arrangement was binding upon both man and woman, and they were recognized as being husband and wife. (Matt. 1: 18-20). That the contract was binding caused Joseph, that just man, no small amount of worry; for he feared that his wife Mary was guilty of gross immorality. He thought about this and was unwilling to make her a public example, but was minded to put her away privily.

Christ and His Church are ONE. He is the Bridegroom who hath the Bride. Even BEFORE they come together, even before she is MADE; from eternity she is her Beloved’s (Cant. 6:3), and “...He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. . .” Eph. 1:4, 22-23.

There is no difference (other than gender) between a man and a woman who marry in this world. They both have a common ancestry: their fallen father Adam. From a polluted source they come forth, marry and reproduce their own kind, in an unbroken chain.

There is, however, a striking difference between the Bridegroom and His Bride. She was “shapen in iniquity” (Psa. 51:5) and in sin was born. Yet of her Bridegroom it was spoken by the angel “. . . that HOLY thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Luk. 1:35). Even so, the Bride is said to be “. . . His people” whom He shall save from their sins.

God is just. Every man shall bear his own burden. The son shall not be eternally condemned for the sin of his father; nor vice versa. It is an incontrovertible pillar of all law that the innocent are not punished for the crimes of the guilty. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him” (Isa. 53:10) He was

made in the likeness of sinful flesh but was without sin; Yet, "...He hath MADE Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". (II Cor. 5:21).

An interesting account of a husband and wife is found in Numbers 5:11-31. There is the narrative of a man who SUSPECTS his wife is guilty of infidelity. He brings her to the priest. The accusation is made and the priest begins a prescribed ritual: He pours holy water into an earthen vessel, puts into the water dust from the floor of the tabernacle. Then the priest charges her by an oath that if she be guilty of adultery the bitter water of the curse shall make her "thigh to rot and her belly to swell" and the woman shall say, "Amen, amen". "And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water:" The priest, then, shall cause the woman to drink the water which now contains the dust and the dissolved curses of handwriting of ordinances against her. The foregoing account relates the course which a suspicious husband could pursue. However, if it were certain knowledge that his wife had lain with another man; the matter was out of his hands: she would be put to death—"... so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." (Deuteronomy 22:22.)

Such is the situation of the Church: Her guilt is certain. There are no extenuating circumstances, no excuse can be found for her adultery. She must die, for "the wages of sin is death". Yet, Lo, love is stronger than death. God is love. He knew from eternity of the guilt of the Church and made preparation for His Son to drink that "bitter water". His body of sacrifice was that "earthen vessel" which blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross;" (Col. 2:14; Matt. 26:39-44). In that "earthen vessel" He prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42).

Imputation of the Bride's sin to Christ and the imputation of His righteousness to her has validity only in-so-far as God views the two as ONE within the bonds of a legal relationship. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4)

PREDESTINATION
By Elder Silas Durand
1901

There are dear brethren who have thought that when Paul said, "And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who

are **THE CALLED** according to His **PURPOSE**,” Rom. 8:28, He meant only “all good things.” I have always thought that He meant all the things that are connected with their experience of grace, from first to last, bitter as well as sweet, evil as well as good, as we distinguish the different things in our life and exercises, calling the afflicting sense of sin, evil, and the pleasant emotions of love and hope, good. I have thought He included “the sufferings of this present time,” and the vanity to which the new creature was made subject, not willingly, and “the bondage of corruption,” under which we groan within ourselves, and the infirmities which cause our supplications, the intercessions of the Spirit within us, to be “with groanings which cannot be uttered,” as well as the pleasant things that are given us by the way.

But let any candid man undertake to draw a line between those events, works, exercises, emotions, which **HE** would name “good things,” and those that **HE** would call evil or wicked things. Then let him name things which are on the dark side of the line, which are wicked, and which therefore he regards as outside of the purpose and predestination of God, and those things which are on the bright side, being good things, which do work together for good to them that love God.

Well, does the division answer his mind? Look over the dark list. Is there no good at all mixed up with the evil in any of those wicked works? Joseph’s brethren showed some good traits. Are they and their works all put on the dark side? They were kind to their father and to Benjamin, and when Joseph spoke roughly to them they felt sorry for what they had done to their brother, who was dead, as they thought. Besides, the very things in which they meant evil against Joseph, God meant unto good. Then that wicked thing worked for good, to save much people alive. Gen.50:20.

Do you know how to divide up those things so as to place them right? All through the Old Testament we find some very evil and wrong doings, which resulted in the opening of the eyes of others to the truth, and in bringing the doer of them down into depths, where he experienced true repentance and godly sorrow. Then the wicked men who with wicked hands crucified the dear Saviour, who was delivered unto them by “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” (Acts 2:23) did “what God’s hand and counsel determined before to be done.” (Acts 4:28).

Those who have been made alive unto God **HATE** and **ABHOR** wickedness in themselves and others. But would we dare to undertake to put this terribly wicked deed, and that of Joseph’s brethren, and that of Cyrus, “the ravenous bird from the east,” (Isa. 46:10-11) with many others, on that side of the line where those things are supposed to be which God did not predestinate? But some things seem to have just a little spice of wickedness in them, which is

mixed up with a good deal of kindness and generosity and self-sacrifice. We would hardly know how to take forth the good from the evil in them. Sometimes the two are so mixed up and interwoven together that we cannot tell how to divide justly; we have to leave that to the Word.

But look on the good side, have we got that all right and sure? You have placed one of my works there, for you have been very kind to me, and so all the brethren have, far more so than I deserve. But if you knew how many evil thoughts I had when I was doing that work which you have placed among the good things, you would change it, I am sure. That time I was enabled to preach so that your soul was refreshed and comforted, you did not know how much of vanity, unbelief, doubt, evil thoughts, there was in my heart. The work was good in itself, and was a work of obedience and of faith. The sermon was the truth, and I believe it was by the Spirit I was enabled to preach it. But what a tangle of briars and thorns in my own heart I had to encounter and go through while preaching that truth to which the carnal mind is enmity. But you have put these things, and the kind of act for that poor man, and the refraining from the utterance of the anger I felt once when reviled, all on the right side, and it really makes me tremble to see them there. You cannot sift the evil out of them, but I hope the blood of Jesus, that precious blood, washed them and me clean before God. I am afraid after all that you have placed a smaller proportion of your own works on the good side, among the good things, than you have of any your brethren.

We cannot divide between soul and spirit, only as the Lord gives us that sharp, dividing word in our souls. We cannot “take forth the precious from the vile,” only as the Spirit makes us speak as God’s mouth. Then we are always astonished to see so many things counted precious which we had thought were vile, and so many things which had appeared to us as pretty, and sweet, and good, now shown to be vile. When the King’s “reign in righteousness” is felt in our hearts, then we no more call the “vile person liberal”, nor the “curl bountiful,” but we see things as they are in the sight of God. (Isa. 32:1-7).

One thing we know, that all good is from God. He gives us every good gift and perfect gift, and with Him is no variableness nor shadow of turning. (James 1:17). He works the good pleasure of His goodness in us, if it is ever there. We know also that there would have been no evil or wicked thing in the world if God had purposed that there should not be. His purpose must have embraced whatever transpires. We believe, also, and know, that in the end of all things His wisdom and power will have been justified, the highest good for His people will have been accomplished, and the most exalted glory of His name attained. Does any Christian doubt this?

—FRAGMENTS

WHY THE TITLE OF THIS MAGAZINE?

Several subscribers have asked the above question. The editors gave much serious thought before affixing the word “Predestinarian” for the name of this publication. However, it is the best we could select to adequately express our faith and not conflict with other publications already in the field.

1st. We **ARE** decidedly Predestinarians, and not “Calvinists”. We are rather “hypercalvinists” in that we go “beyond John Calvin” both historically and confessionally. John Calvin did **NOT** invent the doctrines of grace . . . he advocated them.

2nd. We do **NOT** desire to attract any subscribers in large numbers who do not love the truth of free grace with their whole heart, soul, and spirit. Too many of the other kind might tempt us to water the truth down to “pea-soup”, and this has had a sad consequence in other publications.

Obviously, the title will shock both nominal church members and outright Freewillers, and prevent their support.

If you **KNOW** anyone who appears to honestly **LOVE** and **REJOICE** in the gospel of **FREE GRACE ONLY**, please send us their names and addresses so we might send them copies. This is the best support you can give us as we attempt to reach such precious people. We honestly believe we love the truth of sound doctrine, and all others who know the same.