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DIFFICULTY AND SWEETNESS OF GOD'S WILL

By John Kay, 1847 *Gos. Standard*

Never scarce in all my life did I, under
God the Spirit, labour under a doctrine of
Scripture more than the one just below. If you
observe, therein is inexperienced Christianity
since the creation of the world. Therein you
will observe lukewarmness, and rebellion, and
all manner of things, good and bad, equally
cut at or supported. The text is this:
*"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of
Christ, saluteth you, always labouring
fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand
perfect and complete in all the will of God."*
— Col. 4:12.

From this text I gather what has stunned
me many a time, namely, that God has a will.
And that Will also embraces the minutest
circumstance of our lives, both of bitters and
sweets, joys and sorrows. If five sparrows are
sold for two farthings, and, as we are assured,
are not forgotten by the Heavenly Father; if
the very hairs of our head are all numbered; if
every idle word and every secret thought is
taken into account; I gather from this that the
Infinite God is no careless Looker-on,
observing and regulating the affairs of the
sons of men.

The stature is fixed; the number of our
days is appointed, also the boundaries of our
habitations, — our days of sorrow and joy,
our sinkings and risings, our pleasures and
pains. And are all these, even to the least, the
smallest circumstances, appointed executively
or permissively of God, even to the most
exact and nice degree? Is it all weighed out
unalterably by Him by whom "actions (not
notions) are weighed?" O tremendous "deep!"

I have been long convinced of the folly of
striving against God. I believe I pass a good
part of my time in communion with God, the
Appointer of all things executively or
permissively. And how do I pass that time in
communion? In dictating? No. I know God
has a will, as Epaphras says. My employment
in the communion with God is, to find out by
the Holy Spirit's goings experimentally in my

soul, what that will is? Thus, Enoch, Abraham, and Noah “walked” with God. People walking always together are likely to know a good deal of one another, how certain I am that I shall have all the trouble I am to have! How this makes me cleave with purpose of heart to God! “I have stuck unto Thy testimonies.” Epaphras labours fervently for all the will of God to be done in us. O the terrible deep!

I have known the time when I have been brimful of trouble, my heart almost fit to break. And yet I durst not lift up my little finger to alter anything without God. And I have found that God can alter things better than I can. How He can speak to men (and to me too) out of the whirlwind, or melt them sweetly in the sunshine, to mold them to His secret Will!

O how my soul trembles with adoration before Him! Now those who tremble at His threatenings, and those who tremble with delight at His consolations; those who tremble at their own ignorance and a sense of God’s superior wisdom. at their own infinitely less than littleness, (for we are five hundred or ten thousand talents terribly in debt!) and at God’s unsearchable greatness; those tremblers thus, these are the men, that living so near God get acquainted by secret revelation as to what God’s Will is.

Epaphras laboured fervently to this end in his prayers. As Hart says,

“Accomplish in me all Thy Will.”

But it may be objected. if none besides we are elected, bought with a price, and redeemed this in particular redemption, that it is a needs-be we must fall into all the sin we are redeemed from. But does that encourage me in sin? Just the reverse. I know I shall have the rod for my sin. I know it killed the Beloved Redeemer. Thus love and fear both make me watch, fight, groan. wrestle, and struggle unto blood against sin, and die, in Christ to it, in evangelical crucifixion and mortification thereto; insomuch so, that Arminians who trust less or more to their own righteousness, and bitterly reject Christ’s righteousness imputed by gift as the only

possible foundation and salvation; these Arminians, I have long perceived, with their wretched self-righteousness, have not a fiftieth part of the tenderness of conscience that the elect feel.

Epaphras’s fervent labouring certainly embraces both the sorrows and joys we are predestinated to go through. be. fore we launch out of time into the next world.

Epaphras’s fervent labouring in his prayers embraces all things that the elect have to go through, and must go through in the time-state of this present world. And who is sufficient for these things? Excruciating bitters and insupportable sweets; “Stay me with flagons; comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love;” and “rivers of tears running down one’s eyes” spiritually, because of insupportable troubles: every-day trouble less or more; all is included: as is also everyday comfort more or less; which quickened souls must go through, in their being God’s “workmanship.” All, all the wondrous catalogue is included in the wondrous grasp of Epaphras’s ample prayer!

And who, I ask again, is sufficient for these things? God “will spue” (vulgar word for our refined hypocrisy!) lukewarm Christians out of His mouth. (Rev. 3:16) He will fill backsliders with their own ways. He will keep rebels in a dry land. He will let foolish virgins and wise ones slumber together in professedly experimental churches, for some deep purpose. He will maul the head of pride. He will work contrition, poorness, and trembling, into the souls of His people.

And herein let me make a remark or two. Contrition, poverty, and trembling, which spiritually our first Adam’s nature huffs at, are in the sight of God of great price. God will “look” at them. When alas! the brightest mere head-knowledge shall pass away as of not the slightest account with God, like the idle noise of a jingling bell or a sounding cymbal.

O the glories, beauties, and grace of riping to stand complete and perfect in all the Will of God! O the labour, continuing, and fervency to this wonderful end! The text says

Epaphras was “always” at it, at this prayer. “Thy Will be done” is the A and Z of the alphabet. All his modes in “prayers,” he was thus enabled to drive to this end. And O the immortal sweetness of success and triumph herein, in which severity and comeliness shine! He himself was winning the prize, and travailing for it for others of the elect.

Now, any one “saluting” saints with this doctrine is not well received by many. Here were no perverse loopholes for rebellion, carnality [!!], worldliness, free-will, self-righteousness, or antinomianism. Here, like racers running a race, as Paul says, we are reminded that many run in a race who are never to win. Here a saint is cautioned to cleanse his way taking heed thereto according to the word of God. Here the noble Epaphras cautions any one to see whether any part at all of God’s word is against him. “All the will of God.” Crucifixion, and making dead, or mortifying, to the world and the flesh, as well as salvation by grace without works, (“the body is of Christ,”) and keeping ourselves from idols, and being crucified to the flesh and the world, thus in a victory and triumph over inordinate affections, &c.; these and such like are the glorious effects. Glorious! for destitute of oil, the foolish virgins, (sound in every thing but the secret life of God in Christ within) I say, these foolish virgins have neither the body actual nor the effects, and it is to be feared they are among us in rightly constituted experimental churches. What is to become of the brains of the notional Calvinist? the false fire of the Arminian freewiller? in all their shades, splits, divisions, and denomination? But I must leave them as ripening for the knife of final slaughter, and drop a few words more to those who are planted and riping as really elect in God’s garden.

You may see by Epaphras’s prayer that God intends to realize in you the drift of what is written in Scripture. Now ask you plainly, can you see your character as in a looking-glass in Scripture, as there written of the saints, by the hand of God Himself? I shall conclude with this, that “God is not mocked.”

And, ask your conscience, reader; and the beginning, middle, and end of religion shall be gradually and finally fulfilled in the elect of God, as Epaphras prayed for, and as Scripture sets forth; while all prating fools, as Solomon calls them, and notional and stony-ground, and thorny ground hearers, as the Lord calls them; yes. those even who are thus possessed of, even as Dr. Goodwin justly calls it, “the shallow enlightenings of the Holy Ghost,” (short of the exceeding greatness of His power, which letter is confined to the elect alone;) all those, I say, mentioned in Hebrews 6:5,6, 10: 26, are not included at all in Epaphras’s prayer as above; for it would have been better for those not to have known the way of Christ in the shallow enlightenings of the Spirit, who have lamps burning with outward apparent consistency, and who never get at all in wars, changes, and victories, to the marrow hinted at in Epaphras’s prayer.

Abingdon,

I.K.

Selected from: *The Gospel Standard*,
February. 1647.

The Gospel Standard is a Strict Baptists publication in England. Begun in 1836, it has continued upon free grace to now.

A Right to eternal Glory, through the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST, proved to be confitent with the absolute Freedom and Sovereignty of divine Grace, as the Origin of it.

IN A SHORT
DISCOURSE
ON
TITUS iii. 7.

By JOHN BRINE.

L O N D O N:
Printed for GEORGE KEITH, in
Gracechurch-street;
And told by JOHN EYNON, Printfeller, the
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[Editor's Note: We realize that the following article may be a bit difficult for some of our readers. however, it is a very rare document, written by John Brine iii 1762, in early modern English style. John Brine was contemporary with John Gill, and some who are familiar with his works consider him a better and more sound writer than Gill. Since this work is rare, we will print it that it may be shared with the public once again, and thus preserved as a major contribution to the church by this early Particular Baptist minister.

We certainly hope the reader will find the material God-honoring and profitable to the soul. We will compose the article in modern

English rather than its original style to make it more readable. However we will use the capital case as in the original edition, as well as all italicized words and phrases. The only other change we make is that we will have to cite the Scriptural references within the text rather than as a footnote, since we are not prepared with our equipment to footnote very readily.

The reader will notice that John Brine establishes that the sinner's justification is founded upon the meritorious work of Christ and His righteousness imputed to the sinner by free, sovereign, and immutable grace. Particularly, he advances that precious doctrine of the *eternal justification* held by John Gill and all sound Baptists of the past and present. It is also noteworthy that he includes in his view the eternal vital union of the saint with Christ as one of the aspects of eternal justification. In these points, most modern "Calvinists" have long rejected them as "hyper-Calvinistic" or "hardshellism." Nevertheless, they are divinely revealed to God's people, and clearly established in the Scriptures when rightly understood. For be it from Old School Baptists to be ashamed of that in which our souls take delight and find comfort — call it hyper-calvinism, hardshellism, or antinomianism!]

TITUS III. 7

"That being justified by His Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life."

IN these Words four Things, in general, are to be observed.

I. The Benefit of our Justification. *That being justified.*

II. The Cause of that Benefit, viz. The Grace of God. *That being justified by his Grace.*

III. The Consequence of our Justification. *We are made Heirs of Life thereby.*

IV. That Life, whereof we are made

Heirs, is *eternal*.

I. The first Thing observable in the Text is the glorious Benefit of our Justification. *That being justified*. This consists of two Branches:

First, Acquittance from Guilt.

Secondly, The Constitution of our Persons righteous, and accounting Ok esteeming us righteous thereupon.

First, Acquittance from Guilt is one Branch of our Justification. By Guilt I understand, Actions which agree not with the Law, that is the Rule of our Conduct. Every Individual of Mankind is chargeable with Sin: *For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. Now we know, that what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped and all the World may become guilty before God.* (Romans 3:23). Our offences are exceedingly numerous, they are *more than the Hairs of our Heads*, and cannot be numbered by us; No Man is able to reckon up his sinful Thoughts, irregular Desires, and unlawful Delights. And every Breach of the divine Law, renders us worthy of Death. According to the just Constitution of God, in the Law, *the Wages of Sin is Death*. Not only temporal, but also eternal, the Opposite of eternal Life.

Hence we must conclude, that our Condition is very deplorable. As guilty we can have no Foundation in ourselves to hope for Acceptance with our Maker, or the Communication of Favours from Him; but on the contrary, we have just Reason to dread his Anger, and expect the Infliction of Punishment, at his Hand. Consequently, without Remission, we must be miserable for ever. Sin unpardoned will eternally deprive us of all Hope of being happy, and subject us to inconceivable and endless Misery. They are the only happy Persons in the World, whose Crimes are remitted to them. No guilty Creature can possibly enjoy Happiness, without a full Discharge of that Guilt, which

he hath contracted. And no Sinner can make Compensation for his Offences, nor devise a Method whereby Forgiveness may be obtained.

God in infinite Mercy decreed to pardon Sin, and in his immense Wisdom, he contrived a Way, wherein we are acquitted of our Guilt, without the least Prejudice to His Law, or Dishonour to His Justice. *He was in CHRIST, reconciling the World to himself, i.e. drawing the Plan of their Reconciliation, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* (2 Cor. v.19.) It was his gracious Purpose that CHRIST should bear our Sins, and suffer that Penalty in our stead, which they demerited. Unto which the Blessed JESUS agreed, in the Council of Peace, held between the Father and himself. In this Contrivance, GOD *hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence.* (Eph. i.8.) It is the *Wisdom of God, in a Mystery, his hidden Wisdom, which he ordained before the World, to our Glory.* (1 Cor. ii.7.) For this was a Resolution to commend his Love to our Persons, and fully manifest his just Indignation against our Sins.

CHRIST, *who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us.* (2 Cor. v.21.) The Lord *laid on him*, or made to meet in him *the Iniquities of us all* (Isaiah liii.6.) He *bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*. Our Guilt was transferred from us, and imputed to him by the Father. And CHRIST voluntarily took it upon himself, or consented to bear it.

The human Will of our Saviour was all Submission to the sovereign Pleasure of the Father, in this wonderful Transaction. He was not in the least Degree reluctant to come under the Charge and Imputation of our Crimes, in order to make Atonement for them.

In Consequence of our Sins being placed to the Account of CHRIST, he sustained such Punishment, which they demerited. *He was made a Curse for us.* (Gal. iii:13.) And *the Sword of divine Justice was awakened against, and smote him.* (Zech. xiii.7.) His Sufferings and Death, therefore, were properly penal. And by Reason of the infinite Dignity of His Person, real and infinite Merit attended his Sufferings; so that the Law and Justice of

God are fully satisfied for our whole Guilt.

Hence, *God is just in justifying those who believe in JESUS.* (Rom. iii.26.) He is not only *faithful*; but also *just to forgive us our Sins*, on this Foundation. Justice directs to the Impunity of a Sinner, upon Satisfaction being made for his Offences. *All who believe are justified from all Things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The Law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better Hope did. CHRIST, by one Offering, hath perfected for ever them that are Sanctified.* It was not possible, that the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats should take away Sin. But CHRIST put away Sins by the Sacrifice of himself In him we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sin. His Blood cleanseth from all Sins. Our Iniquities are forgiven, and our Sins are covered, in Virtue thereof.

Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through Him. (Rom. v.9.) *All Trespasses are forgiven us.* (Col. ii.13.) *No Sin can be laid to our Charge, CHRIST, having loved us, and washed us from our Sins, in his own Blood.* (Rev. i.6.) Divine Pardon is a Discharge of all Guilt It includes our Sins before and after Conversion: Sins of Omission and Commission: Sins of Heart and Life. This Branch of our Justification may be included in the Text. But I humbly apprehend it is not principally intended therein. My Reason for which is, what immediately follows, *viz, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.* And, therefore, I conceive, that Branch of Justification is chiefly designed, upon which follows our Right to future Blessedness. Now, Acquittance from Guilt does not give a Sinner a Title to Happiness. It indeeds frees him from an Obnoxiousness to suffering Penalty; but a Right to the Enjoyment of Glory cannot result from that.

Secondly, the other Branch of our Justification is, the Constitution of our Persons righteous, and accounting, or esteeming us righteous thereupon. *We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our*

Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags. Defects and Blemishes attend all the Duties which we perform. Our sinful Neglects are many, and in numerous Instances our Actions are materially evil. For, *in many Things we offend all. There is not a just Man that liveth and sinneth not.* The divine Law-giver is of *purser Eyes than to behold Iniquity.* None, therefore, could possibly determine how we may be justified by our Maker; which Job strongly expresses. *I know it is so of a Truth; but how should Man be just with God?.* (Job. ix. 2.) The sacred Gospel clearly resolves this most important Question. By acquainting us with the Imputation of a Righteousness to us, which is without Works. *Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will impute Righteousness without Works.* (Rom. iv.6.) Righteousness consists of Works, which are good, and agree with the Law, that is the Rule of our Conduct. And, therefore, the Phrase, “without Works,” must be understood of our own personal Obedience. For, in no other Sense can it be true, that, that Righteousness, which God imputes to us, is without Works. *In the Lord we have Righteousness.* And CHRIST is of *God made unto us Righteousness.* Which is a Benefit distinct from Sanctification: That includes a Principle of Holiness, and holy Actions springing from that Principle. As Righteousness and Sanctification are not the same, but distinct Benefits: CHRIST in being made Righteousness, is not made Sanctification; and in being made Sanctification, he is not made Righteousness. Our Righteousness is in him, as a representative Head; our Sanctification is in him, as a Head of Influence. He is made Righteousness to us by Imputation; he is made Sanctification to us in a Way of Communicationt (sic). Hence it is evident, that Righteousness designs that which remains in CHRIST subjectively, and which we do not become the Subjects of, or it is not inherently in us. It will eternally abide in CHRIST, as its proper Subject, though it is graciously imputed to us. Consequently, Righteousness means the Holiness of CHRIST’S Nature, and his Obedience to the

Law. *By the Disobedience of one, many were made Sinners, and by the Obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* (Rom. v.19.) On Account hereof, our precious Saviour bears the Title of *the Lord our Righteousness.* (Jer. xxiii.6.) In the Lord all the Seed of *Israel* are justified, and shall glory. In these two Things consists our Justification, as we are Sinners: the Non-imputation of Sin, and the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ to us, whereupon God esteems us just and righteous.

II. The Cause of our Justification is the Grace of God. *That being justified by his Grace.*

1. Grace is Favour, which is absolutely free, and undeserved. Its Objects are not considered as Subjects of any amiable Qualifications moving unto it. The Love of God, from which our Salvation springs, has no Cause out of himself. It is his good Pleasure, a kind Act of his sovereign Will towards us. *He hath Mercy, because he will have Mercy; and he hath compassion, because he will have compassion.* No other Reason thereof can be assigned. There was no Fitness in us to be beloved of God. On the contrary, we were the Subjects of such detestable Qualities, as rendered us deserving of his awful Displeasure. And, therefore, his Love to us is justly denominated "Grace." It is Kindness and Favour above all Motive, or Inducement, in those, whom it respects. Without Love of that Kind in the Heart of God to us, our Recovery from Ruin had been absolutely impossible.

2. The Divine Father, who is the first Person, in the adorable Godhead, is intended. This is clear in the Context. For he is distinguished from the Holy Spirit, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *The Kindness and Love of GOD our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy he hath saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and the Renewing of the Holy Ghost: Which he shed on us abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour.* That Person is designed, who shed forth the Holy

Spirit, and who sheds him forth through CHRIST upon the Saints. And, therefore, neither the Spirit, nor CHRIST, is the Person, concerning whose Grace the Apostle here speaks; but the Divine Father, as distinct and distinguished from them both.

3. Our Justification is founded in, and takes its Rise from the Grace of God the Father. His absolutely free and unmerited Love is the Origin of it. That most important Branch of our Salvation, entirely springs from his Sovereign Good Will and Pleasure. His Will to justify us was not caused by any Thing out of Himself, which is in us, or in our blessed Saviour. His Decree to acquit us of our Guilt, and to constitute us righteous, was an Act of pure Favour, without any external moving Cause. None, I hope, will think, that I detract from the Honour of CHRIST, either in his Obedience, or Sacrifice, by attributing our Justification to the mere Love, and absolutely free Favour of God, as the proper and only Source of it. In Order to clear up, and represent this momentous Point in a plain and easy Light, I would propose to Consideration the following Particulars:

(I.) The Father ordained the human Nature of CHRIST unto a most near and ineffable Union with his Divine Person. *He was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest for us in these last Times.* (I Pet. i. 19,20.) *The Word, which was in the Beginning with God, and which was God, was made flesh.* (John i.1, 14.) He became Man, by the Assumption of human Nature, according to the Appointment of the Father. And that Nature, which he assumed hath its subsistence in his divine Person, and is one with him. This Union of the divine and human Natures, in the Person of the Mediator, is the Mystery and Glory of our holy Religion. *Without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh.* (I Tim. iii. 16.) Herein consists the highest Glory of CHRIST as Man. For, in Consequence of it, he became *Heir of all Things, and by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than the Angels.* (Heb. i.2) This made him *rich, though for our Sakes he became poor,*

that through his Poverty we might be rich. This Decree of the Father concerning CHRIST, as Man, was the highest Act of free, sovereign Grace, that he ever did, or will put forth. And evident it is, that Grace lies at the Bottom of our whole Salvation. Yea, that is the whole and entire Foundation thereof.

[1.] This Appointment of the Father was an Act of infinite Love and Grace, with Respect to CHRIST himself, the Object of it. His human Nature being the curious Workmanship of the Spirit, and filled with his supernatural Graces, there was a Meetness in him to be personally united with the eternal Son of God; but not a Worthiness and Desert of that Dignity.

And this Meetness in his human Nature, for that Union with the Son of God, was the Effect of mere Favour towards him. Nothing which CHRIST did, nor any Thing which he suffered, in Obedience to the Father's Will, induced him to ordain his human Nature unto that Union; in Consequence whereof, he becomes entitled to such Glory, wherein he cannot possibly have a Rival, or Partner. Our Saviour hath this Glory, by Donation from the Father, as the Fruit of his eternal Love to him. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me, for [or, because] thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.* (John xvii.24.) Free, absolutely free Love, in the Heart of the Father towards CHRIST, as Man, is that Fountain from which springs his highest Dignity, in his mediatorial Capacity.

Long since, *Austin*, that Champion for the free Grace of God, well improved this, as an Argument in Proof, and Confirmation of free Favour, being the Cause of the Blessedness and Glory of the Saints. And indeed, if CHRIST, the Head, possesses his superior, and greatest Glory, as the Effect of divine Grace to him, it is unreasonable to suppose that his Members do not owe their eternal Felicity, unto the Grace of God, as the Origin and Cause thereof. CHRIST, as Man, will for ever adore the Love of the Father to him, which he displayed in the gracious Ordination

of his human Nature unto a Union with his divine Person; whereby, he not only became entitled to the greatest Glory, but also fit and capable of acting as a Redeemer to the Church.

[2.] This Purpose of the Father was an Act of infinite Love to us. His End in appointing the human Nature of CHRIST unto a Union with his divine Person, was, that he might be the Saviour of his Body, the Church. Which, without that Union, he could not have been. It is true indeed, that his human Nature, without subsisting in his divine Person, might have been upheld by Omnipotent Power, in obeying and suffering; but in that Case, his Obedience and Sufferings could not have *availed to our Pardon and Acceptance*, because the Value of both, arises from his Divinity. What a glorious Instance, therefore, of sovereign Grace was it in God towards us, to resolve upon the Union of the Man CHRIST JESUS with his eternal Son, that he might be capable of rescuing us from Ruin, and bringing us to Glory, in a Way, which is infinitely honourable to his own Perfections! May our souls eternally admire this Grace of the Father! which shines most brightly in this wonderful Design! both with Respect to CHRIST and the Church!

2. It was an Act of absolutely free Favour in God to decree that CHRIST, as he is both God and Man, should be a Representative Head unto us. This was his gracious Determination from everlasting. The Act of eternal Election, (Eph. i.4,5,6,) terminated upon CHRIST and his People. He and they were chosen by the Father in the same Act. *According as He hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World.* We, therefore, were IN CHRIST from Eternity, in some Sense; for otherwise, it can't be true, that God chosen us IN him. [Ed. note: Thus we see that Elders Dudley and Gilbert Beebe were NOT introducing a strange *new doctrine* in 1846 as the Clark Baptists, *Primitive Baptist* and old *Zion's Landmark* then claimed. The doctrine of eternal vital union is at least as ancient as the apostle Paul, and as "Old School Baptists" as John Brine in 1752!

It is the kingpin of the doctrines of free grace rightly understood, and ought to be given more serious study today.] The Father chose him, as Head, and chose us in him, as his Members. CHRIST is the Father's *Elect* (Isai. xlii. 1.) In that gracious Purpose he was constituted a Representative Head to all those Persons, whom it respected. And they were therein *blessed with all spiritual blessing* in him (Eph. i. 1,) as such a Head to them. And *they are saved and called with a holy Calling, according to Grace, which was given them IN CHRIST before the World began* (2 Tim. i.9.) This Relation subsisting between CHRIST and the Elect, as Head and Members, is that Foundation on which his Obedience and Sufferings are placed to their Account, in Order to their Acceptance with God, and the Remission of all their Sins. They were IN CHRIST of the divine Father, by a sovereign Appointment of his in Eternity. And in Consequence of that, CHRIST is of him made unto them *Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption* (I Cor. i.30.) Their Union with him, as a Representative Head to them, therefore, was antecedent unto, and is the Ground on which they partake of all his saving Benefits. Now, what but infinite and sovereign Love in God towards them, could be the Cause of his ordaining CHRIST to be such a Head to them, and that they should be his Members? Nothing in them could induct him to form this Design in their Favour. This is an Honour, whereof they were absolutely unworthy. And a Security entirely undeserved. The Grace of the divine Father, therefore, in this Decree and Appointment, is most eminently conspicuous. It is the Result of his absolute Pleasure, without any external Motive: Consequently, our Justification through the Righteousness of CHRIST must be the Effect of his Grace. His Love towards us is the Reason of his making CHRIST Righteousness unto us, in Order to our Justification.

3. It was an Act of sovereign Favour towards us, to decree that CHRIST should become a Subject of the Law, in Order to obey it, as our Representative. This clearly

appears, by considering the Nature of the Law: The Person of *CHRIST*; and the End of his coming under Subjection to it, respecting us.

[1.] The Law, or Covenant of Works, requires Obedience, as a Condition of Life. According to that Constitution, a Right to Happiness results from an universal Observance of its Precepts, and cannot be had without it. *The Man that doeth them, shall live in them.* Obey, and live; sin, and die, are the Terms of that Covenant: And, therefore, without a punctual and constant Obedience to ALL its Commands, a Title to the Enjoyment of Good, cannot accrue to the Subjects of it.

[2.] CHRIST is God and Man united; and his human Nature by Reason of its Subsistence in his divine Person, had an unalienable Right to Life and Glory, antecedent (*prior to*) unto his coming under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works. And his Subjection to that Covenant was not upon his own Account, to acquire a Right to Life for himself. That would have been incompatible with the Dignity of his Person. When he was *found in the Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, in becoming obedient* to the Covenant of Works, which, without a special Appointment of God, would have had no Concern with him, who is *the Man GOD'S Fellow*. Sovereign Favour raised him above the State of a mere Creature, by a personal Union with the eternal Son of God; and being thus advanced to Dignity, far superior to what Angels or Men can claim, divine Sovereignty resolved upon his Subjection to the Law for our Sakes. Which was such a glorious Instance of Grace in God towards us, as demands our highest Praises for evermore. May our Souls live in the Contemplation and Admiration thereof, while we are in this mortal State! How is *the Law magnified, and made honourable*, by CHRIST'S Subjection to it, and his perfect Obedience unto all its Commands, who is God, as well as Man. The infinite Dignity of his Person reflects infinite Glory upon the Law, in coming under its Obligation. Provision, therefore, was made, in the Covenant of Grace, for the Honour of the

Covenant of Works. For it was agreed on, in the Covenant of Grace, between the Father and CHRIST, that he should, as our Representative, be made under the Law, and obey it for us. Herein Grace and Holiness shine forth with equal lustre, Mercy and Justice receive the same Glory, in this wonderful Constitution. *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other,* (Psalm lxxxv. 10) in this Contrivance.

[3.] The important End of CHRIST'S becoming subject to the Law, respecting us, was our Justification. He being our Representative, as he came under the Obligation of the Covenant of Works, his Obedience to its Precepts is placed to our Account, on that Foundation. What he acted in the Capacity of a Representative Head, it is fit, that it should be put to the Account of those whom he did represent. And without that no wise End could be brought about, by his being constituted such a Head, and yielding Obedience to the Law, in that Capacity. His Righteousness, upon the Foot of Right, becomes theirs, to whom he is such a Head; and their Justification, in Consequence thereof, is an Act of Justice. Sovereign Grace made the Obedience of CHRIST ours, by Appointing him to be our Representative; and divine Justice accepts of and justifies us, through that Obedience. *In the Lord we have Righteousness. In the Lord we are justified, and may glory.* Oh what Love, what Wisdom, what Holiness, are herein displayed! This Way of our Justification, which is so honourable to the Law, so glorifying to the Grace of God, and which agrees with his Justice, will eternally fill the Minds of Angels and Saints with holy Wonder and Adoration.

(4.) It is of the Sovereign and distinguishing Grace of God, that we are in CHRIST JESUS, as a Representative Head, in Distinction from others. This honour and Security none could claim. God was under no Obligation to form such a Design in Favour of any: it was an Act of undeserving Goodness to decree, that CHRIST should be, and act in the Capacity of a Head to some of the sons of

Men, with a View to their Justification and Salvation. And it was absolutely free with God to determine unto what Number of the human Race he should be a Representative Head, in obeying the Law, that his Obedience of Right might become theirs, and in Justice be imputed to them. From hence, it is evident, that it is unwarrantable, yea, blasphemous Boldness, to suggest, that it is dishonourable to the Perfections of Deity to conceive, that, that number is small. For, if God was not obligated to make Provision for the Justification and eternal Salvation of any Sinner, the Glory of no divine Attribute can be obscured, by the Smallness of the Number, for whom such Provision is made. It is also exceedingly clear, that God acted in a sovereignly gracious Manner, in fixing upon the Individuals of Mankind, to whom CHRIST should be a Head, in Order to their Security and Happiness. His Choice of them from among others unto a Union with Christ, as his Members, was an Act of his absolute Pleasure. No Reason can be assigned why *Peter*, rather than *Judas*, should be united unto CHRIST, and be represented by him, in his Obedience to the Law, but the sovereign Will of God so determining it. Election unto this Dignity was of pure Grace, and without any Inducement in the Persons who are included in that Degree.

III. The Consequence of our Justification: We are made Heirs of Life thereby. In Order to make this evident, I argue as follows:

I. Right to Life results from perfect Obedience, according to the legal Constitution. If the Terms of the Covenant of Works are fulfilled, upon which it promises Life, a Right to the Enjoyment of Life must spring from thence. This I suppose, would not be called into Question, if we ourselves perfectly obeyed the Commands of that Covenant. *The man that doeth them shall Live in them.* Now CHRIST being our Representative, in obeying the Law, his obedience is to be considered as ours; and, therefore, in Consequence of that, we become entitled to Life, no less than if we had obeyed it in our own Persons. The Grace of God

makes the Righteousness of CHRIST ours; and, in Virtue thereof, we have a proper Claim to Life, even according to the Covenant of Works! For a Title to Life springs from having such a Righteousness as that Covenant requires, with Respect to the Matter and Extent of it, whether it be wrought out by ourselves, or by another for us, as our Representative. *Adam* being our Representative, in his Disobedience, we came under a Sentence of Death, which was annexed to the Breach of the Covenant of Works. And Christ being our Representative, in his Obedience, we have a Title to Life, a Promise of which was annexed to that Covenant unto a perfect Observance of its Precepts. As our Saviour fulfilled the prescriptive Part of the Law for us; in Consequence thereof, we have a proper Claim to Life, according to the Promise in that Constitution.

2. The Reasoning of the Apostle on the Effect of *Adam's* Disobedience, and the Effect of CHRIST'S Obedience, in my humble Opinion, most clearly proves the Truth of the Point for which I plead. The Entrance of Death into the World by Sin. Not as a Mean of Conveyance, but as a procuring Cause. *Death reigned even over them, that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's transgression.* And this Reign of Death *was through his Offence.* For, *through the Offence of one, many are dead.* His Sin is not a Medium of the Reign of Death. It properly demerits Death: And its dominion over us is founded in Justice, in Consequence of that Sin being ours. *Adam* sinning, as the Representative Head of Men, they were made Sinners thereby; and, therefore *Judgment*, according to Equity, came upon them to *Condemnation.* Now, as Death reigns through *Adam's* Sin, so *the Grace of GOD reigns unto Life, through the Righteousness of CHRIST.* Not as a Mean of the Conveyance of Life, but as a procuring Cause of it. For, *by one Righteousness (dikaiosunh) is our Justification of Life.* *Adam's* offence, according to Justice, subjects to Death; on the contrary, the Righteousness of CHRIST,

according to Justice, entitles to Life. If it is the Design of the Apostle in this Context (Romans v.12,) to prove, that *Adam's* Offence was a procuring Cause of Death, it is reasonable to conclude, that it was his Intention to prove, that the Righteousness of CHRIST is a procuring Cause of Life. To deny that the Righteousness of CHRIST is a procuring Cause of Life, would oblige us to allow of Impropriety in the Apostle's Reasoning. For, if we receive Life, through the Righteousness of Christ, as a Mean by which it is conveyed to us, and not as a procuring Cause, it is not properly compared with *Adam's* Offence, as a procuring Cause of Death.

3. The Hope of eternal Life is called *the Hope of Righteousness.* And the Crown of immortal Glory is a *Crown of Righteousness*, given by the Lord, as a *righteous Judge.* Righteousness, therefore, is the Foundation of a just Claim to eternal Life, and it is agreeable to Justice to bestow it upon those who are made righteous by the Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST to them. It is an Act of Justice in the Lord, the righteous Judge, to sentence to eternal Death, on Account of Sin; it also is an Act of Justice in him to confer eternal Life, on Account of Righteousness. Our Right to Glory through the Obedience of CHRIST, as a meritorious Cause, is the Contrivance of immense Wisdom, it is the Design of Sovereign Grace, and perfectly corresponds with infinite Justice. What a solid Basis is this for the Faith and Hope of the Saints!

4. To deny that there is proper Merit, or Desert, in CHRIST'S Obedience, is a blasphemous Detraction from the Glory of it. For it is reducing of it unto a Level with the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature. A proper Desert of the Enjoyment of Good cannot attend the Obedience of the most holy Creature; but the Obedience of CHRIST, by Reason of the infinite Dignity of his Person, hath proper Desert, Merit, and Value in it. If it hath not, there is no Excellency therein, transcending the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature. To suppose which, is as great a

Diminution of it as is possible, allowing it to be compleat. For, Nothing more lessening could be thought of his Obedience, if he had been Man only. And, if there is any Desert in his Obedience, because he is God, that Desert arising from the Divinity of his Person must be infinite. For my Part, I am free to declare, that there is not any Thing which I have arrived unto a fuller Satisfaction of the Truth of, than the Doctrines of CHRIST'S proper Deity, and the proper infinite Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings. Nor shall I call into Question the Verity of the one, or the other, until I renounce the whole Gospel. This strong Way of speaking arises from such a Zeal in me for the Honour of a dear Redeemer, which, I trust, will not be found a mistaken one.

Object. 1. It hath been said, *if the Obedience of CHRIST is imputed to us, we are made Meritours thereby*. I answer, a Mentor is one who merits. We do not Merit, by having the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST placed to our Account. He merited in yielding Obedience; but with no Propriety can it be said, that we merit, because his meritorious Obedience is imputed to us. Meriting is peculiar to CHRIST, the Person obeying; and, therefore, the Persons for whom he obeyed are not made Meritours, by the Imputation of his Obedience to them. The Imputation of his Obedience to us does not cause us to merit, and we cannot be made Meritours by that which does not cause us to merit. The Imputation of CHRIST'S Obedience does not cause us to merit; and, consequently, we are not made Meritours by the Imputation of his meritorious Righteousness to us. This Objection is of so trifling a Nature, that it is not a little strange, that it should be thought of Weight, by any Person of a tolerable Capacity.

Object. 2. *If CHRIST by his Obedience merited eternal Life for us, or procured thereby a Right to Glory on our Account, then our future Blessedness is not of the free Grace of GOD; for that which is merited, cannot be of free and undeserved Favour. Merit and Grace are inconsistent*. I answer:

1. If we were caused to merit Glory by

the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST, being made ours, this Objection would have Force in it; but as we are not caused to merit Glory by the Imputation of the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST to us, there is not the least Degree of Force in it. For eternal Life and Glory are as absolutely free, in Regard to us, as if no meritorious Cause thereof subsisted. By the Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST to us we do not become the Subjects of it, or it is not inherent in us, in Consequence of that Imputation. And as his Righteousness itself is not inherent in us, so the Merit of his Righteousness is not inherent in us; and, therefore, notwithstanding the Imputation of his meritorious Righteousness to us, we are not made subjectively deserving of eternal Life. As the Righteousness of CHRIST cannot be made ours subjectively, so the Desert of his Righteousness cannot be made subjectively ours. Hence, it is evident, that in our own Persons we remain destitute of a Desert of eternal Life, although the Righteousness of CHRIST is imputed to us, which is deserving of that Life. And to confer eternal Life upon us merely on Account of a Righteousness, which is not our own, but another's, is an Act of free Favour towards us, though that Righteousness properly merits and deserves it. Since, by the Imputation of that Righteousness, we do not become the Subjects of its Merit, or Desert. 2. It was Sovereign Grace which provided the Righteousness of CHRIST for us, and made it ours. This, I hope, is clearly explained, and solidly proved above. And, therefore, I can't help saying, that the Objection is weak, though it may affect some for whom I have a Regard. It is an old, self-evident, and approved Axiom, or Rule, that *the Cause of a Cause, is the Cause of that which is caused*. This is true in Things natural, moral, and spiritual. Now, let us apply it to the Point under Consideration. CHRIST'S Obedience is a meritorious Cause of eternal Life. The Cause of that Cause, is the absolutely free Love and Favour of God. (I.) Towards CHRIST. It was an Act of Sovereign Love, to

ordain his human Nature unto a Union with his divine Person; from which Union springs the whole Merit of his Obedience. And, therefore, his Capacity to merit, in obeying, was founded in Grace towards himself, as Man. (2.) It was an Act of Sovereign Grace to decree, that his meritorious Obedience should be ours. Free, glorious Grace appointed him to be our Representative Head, and us to be his Members. And, consequently, divine Grace is the Origin from which flows that Right to Glory, which we have through the Obedience of CHRIST: Free Grace being the Cause of the meritorious Cause of our Right to eternal Glory, it is the Cause of that Right. (3.) The Glory of free Grace is so far from being eclipsed herein, that it appears the more illustrious. For, as *the Gift of Righteousness is a Gift by Grace*, by how much the more deserving that Righteousness is, by so much the more is the Grace of God magnified, in the Gift thereof. If the Elect had been brought to Glory, without a Righteousness meritorious of that Glory, the Grace of God would not have been so illustriously displayed, in bringing them unto the Enjoyment of eternal Blessedness. So far is it from being true, that the Grace of God, and the proper Merit of CHRIST, are inconsistent in this wonderful Affair. (4.) As the Pardon of Sin was properly merited, by the atoning Sacrifice of CHRIST, and yet, Remission is of free Grace; so though the Obedience of CHRIST properly merited eternal Life, notwithstanding that, it is of free Grace. The Reason of which is the same in both, *viz*, this: Free Grace provided the Sacrifice of CHRIST for us; and, therefore, our Pardon is of Grace, though properly merited by his Sacrifice: And free Grace provided the Obedience of CHRIST for us; and, therefore, eternal Life is of Grace, notwithstanding it was properly merited by his Obedience. It is a futious Objection of the *Socinians*, that the Pardon of Sin is not of the Grace of God, if CHRIST merited it by his Sufferings and Death, because his Death was the Effect of divine Grace towards us. And it is a very weak Objection of some others, that eternal Glory cannot be of Grace, if CHRIST

merited it by his Obedience, because his Obedience was the Effect of divine Grace towards us. It is no Detraction from the Glory of the free Grace of God in our Pardon, to assert, that, that Sacrifice which it provided did merit Forgiveness. Nor is it and Diminution of the Glory of the free Grace of God, in our everlasting Felicity, to affirm, that, that Obedience, which it provided, did merit endless Happiness for us. In this Doctrine the Glory of the Grace of the divine Father is exalted, and the due Honour of a dear Redeemer is maintained in perfect Agreement the one with the other. Those who deny, that CHRIST merited by his Obedience, cannot attribute any Excellency to it, surpassing the perfect Obedience of a mere Creature; and, therefore, thereby they dishonour him infinitely. I do not say designedly, but consequentially, it may be through Inattention, or a Want of solid Judgment, in *comparing spiritual Things with spiritual*.

IV. That Life whereof we are made Heirs *is eternal*. It is *eternal Glory* unto which we are *called by the GOD of all Grace* (I Pet. v.10;) that is designed. The Saints upon Death immediately take Possession of complete Felicity in their Souls. All corrupt Habits are expelled instantaneously. And the Principle of Grace is ripened into Glory. Their Communion with the divine Father, the Lord Jesus CHRIST, and the Holy Spirit, is most intimate, and uninterrupted. Their Bodies, which now sleep in the Dust, shall be raised from the State of the Dead, and rendered *immortal, spiritual, and glorious*, fit Receptacles for their perfected Minds, be reunited with them; and they will be consummately happy for evermore.

I. They will for ever enjoy a perfectly clear Sense of the Love of each divine Person, as displayed in the Design and Accomplishment of their Salvation. Those imperfect Views, which they now have thereof, by Faith, fill them with ineffable Joy. What Delight, what Adoration will their Souls be possessed of, when their Prospects thereof will be perfectly clear, extensive, and

uninterrupted! This is a State of Happiness far transcending what is promised in the Covenant of Works.

2. In Heaven they will behold most dearly the Glory of a dear Redeemer. The Glory of his Person, as God and Man united. The Rays of his Divinity shining through his human Nature, subsisting in his divine Person. And that Glory which accrues to him from glorifying the Father in the Work of Redemption. Doubtless they will be filled with inconceivable Pleasure, when they see the blessed *Jesus crowned with Glory and Honour*, who was *crowned with Thorns*, for their Sakes. This Part of their future Felicity was unknown to the Covenant of Works, and surpasses in Excellency that Life which is promised therein.

3. The Saints, in the heavenly State, will have a dear and constant Sense of their near Union with CHRIST, as he is God and Man united. The Union of his human Nature with his divine Person is his highest Glory as Man. And their Union with him, as his Person is so constituted, is the solid Foundation of their Security; and it is their greatest Honour, yea, that is, the Ground of the intimate Communion which they will enjoy with God unto Eternity. This Union is represented by that of a Vine and its Branches. By that of the natural Head and its Body. The Elect compose a mystical Body, whereof CHRIST is the Head. And the same Spirit is upon Head and Members: *There is one Body, and there is one Spirit*. By a conjugal Union:

The Church is the *Lamb's Wife*. *We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*. Oh! What a Dignity is this, to be thus united unto him, who is the Man *GOD'S fellow*. A Sense of it will raise and maintain in the Minds of the blessed holy Admiration to all Eternity. This likewise is a Branch of our endless Felicity, wherewith the Covenant of Works was wholly unacquainted.

4. Hereafter we shall in a perfect Manner discern how all the Perfections of God are glorified, in bringing us unto this blissful State, by the Mediation of CHRIST. His Sovereignty, Grace, Kindness, Mercy,

Holiness, Justice, Truth, and absolute Immutability. This also was unknown to the Covenant of Works.

A Right to Life we have, according to the Promise of that Covenant, on the Foundation of CHRIST'S Obedience to it for us, as our Representative. But it is unto a Life far exceeding in Glory the Life which that Covenant promises. And it is fit and condecant that the Righteousness of CHRIST should entitle us to a Life superior in Excellency and Glory to that Life, which is promised therein. For, though the Obedience of CHRIST did not exceed the Commands of that Covenant materially, yet, in Value, Worth, and Dignity, it infinitely exceeds what that Covenant requires, because of the infinite Greatness of his Person. And, as the Grace of the Father is the Origin, from which the meritorious Obedience of CHRIST springs, in Heaven it will clearly appear, that *he is all in all*. All in CHRIST, the Head, and all in his Members. That his free and sovereign Favour is the Foundation of the highest Glory of CHRIST, and of the everlasting Happiness of the Elect, through his meritorious Obedience. For the Merit of it is founded in the Grace of the Father towards CHRIST himself, as Man, and towards them, which also made his Obedience theirs. And, therefore, CHRIST and the Church will for ever unite in Ascriptions of Praise and Glory to the divine Father, as he is ALL IN ALL

FINIS

TO OUR YOUNG SUBSCRIBERS

The following article is selected because it is a very fundamental article of the historic Christian faith, and sets forth the doctrine of the New Birth in the view which Predestinarians hold to be the true Biblical doctrine unmixed by modern humanism and missionism.

It was written by Gilbert Beebe as a fairly "young man," being 33 years of age at the time of its publication in the *SIGNS of The*

Times, which he edited. Gilbert Beebe was born on November 25, 1800, and died in 1881. He was the foremost spokesman for the Old School Baptists in the New England and upper Middle states in the East. He greatly opposed the rise of the modern missionary movement, and clearly saw it was fully anti-Christian in motive from its origin; the "benevolent so-called" movement, which fostered the sentimental liberal free-willism of the present evil day; and Arminian Pelagianism as the doctrine of devils, and its entire brood of duty-religion, free offer salvation, and conditionalism. He insisted upon an experimental knowledge of Christ within the soul prior to church membership, and saw clearly the need for experimental vital union of the believer to Christ for life and salvation. He was dearly an Absolute Predestinarian, and defended this precious truth to his dying breath. In short, he was a consistent defender of the faith once delivered to the saints.

We invite your study of this vital subject, in-depth, with him in the pages following. You will find the doctrine of regeneration founded squarely upon the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit's work, even as divine election is of the sovereign Will of the Father, and redemption is the sovereign work of Christ alone. Thus, the Three-In-One Godhead is set forth as the Author and Finisher of our Faith and our salvation wholly of the eternal Godhead. *'Salvation is of the Lord.'*

THE NEW BIRTH

Gilbert Beebe, Sept. 11, 1833

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii.3 *"It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."* — John vi. 63.

Having in our preceding numbers briefly touched upon those subjects which are calculated to show the necessity of a radical change being wrought in those *totally depraved* beings who are, and were, "ordained

to eternal life," (Acts 13:48) in order to prepare them for the knowledge, love and enjoyment of spiritual things, we have now to treat upon the sovereign, irresistible, and, in all cases, effectual work of the Holy Ghost in quickening the elect of God.

The absolute necessity of the new-birth is established by the declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ which we have placed at the head of this article. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not, (said the Master,) that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The very laws of our existence, as well as the analogy of the figure of a "birth," employed to shew the nature of this radical change, forbids the idea of its being wrought by the subject on whom it is wrought. There is nothing in nature that possesses power of itself to produce any radical change in itself; hence, although man is a changable being in many respects, yet he remains *man* still.

The thoughts of his heart are evil, and that continually; therefore he is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 7:7,8); but even if this were not the case universally in nature, yet it must be admitted that if the elect were their own agents in this spiritual birth, then this work could not possibly bear the least analogy to the natural birth, from which the figure is taken, and in which the child which is born has not the least agency, but is altogether PASSIVE. But could the analogy of our Lord's figure (birth,) be preserved, and yet the sinner be an active agent in his own regeneration and quickening, this would be no radical change, nor would it give to him a place among the *sons of God*; it would constitute him his own son, and of course an heir to the inheritance of his own corrupt, degenerate nature, and to all his estate of sin and misery. It would constitute him his own father, and give him a place in the generation *next* succeeding; but being begotten by himself he must of necessity be begotten in his own image and likeness, &c. But we find all these Arminian (freewillers) absurdities concerning the "agency" of the

creature in regeneration put to silence by the Word and Testimony of God. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." On this divine authority we ground our evidence that the regeneration and quickening of the elect of God is the work of the Holy Ghost. We will now consider that in the work of *quicken*ing the elect of God,

The Holy Ghost is Sovereign

The sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in the regeneration and spiritual birth of the elect is abundantly shown by our Lord in these words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth (pleases,) and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:3-6). By the figure here employed, the subject is reduced to the capacity of the weakest child of God. Where does the wind blow? where it listeth; and it is even so with the Spirit. If the Holy Ghost has (as many pretend to believe and say.) listed or engaged in the quickening conversion, or regeneration of all mankind, it follows by the immutable truth of God that there it will blow; i.e., be effectual; then it follows that all mankind will assuredly be saved; the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ would then be nullified, inasmuch as sinners uninterested in that atonement can and will be quickened by the Holy Ghost, and the word falsified, which declares that "the wicked shall be cast into hell with all the nations that forget God." How shocking would be the consequence; yea, what a terrible tornado would be the result, should the mighty rushing wind list and blow at the same time from every point of the compass; yet not so shocking as the chaotic situation into which the Scriptures of truth would be thrown, if it could be proved that the Holy Ghost was otherwise than sovereign in his operation on the heart, in the new birth, or by proving that He had undertaken the regeneration of all mankind.

When the fierce north wind, blowing all before it, bends its course onward to the south, what human means can be employed to change the direction of its course, and cause it to blow from the south to the north? Surely no

rational intelligence can be so stupid as to undertake the task. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," in spite of all the exertions of a *means-using* generation; it is sovereign in its course; none can change it, nor effectually resist it. Who will dare to say that the natural wind is more powerful or more sovereign than the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost has listed in the work of quickening all the elect of God. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," &c. Not all the powers that can be, can alter the course of the divine Spirit from the elect of God to the reprobate part of mankind. As it has listed, so it does, and so it will continue to quicken every one that is born of the Spirit, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Again, the Spirit in this work is sovereign, as it relates to the individual on whom He operates. He speaks the word, and it stands fast; He commands, and it is done. Not as some would blasphemously represent the Spirit, in the attribute of a beggar, or a supplicant before the sinner's heart, wooing, beseeching, and striving to get the sinner's consent, and in many, or any cases, getting discouraged and abandoning the undertaking. Would this be blowing where it "listed?" Surely not. They can possess no adequate idea of the Spirit, or of His work, who suppose that the number of the quickened shall be in proportion to the amount of means employed by mankind, or that protracted meetings, ["revivals"] anxious benches [mourner's benches], submission chairs [altar calls], benevolent religious societies [auxiliary organizations for social "gospel" political and evangelistic fund raisings], (so called), or any other human inventions, can change the sovereign course of the Eternal Spirit from any of those on whom He has listed, or engaged to apply the atoning blood of Jesus experimentally, or add one to the number of those originally "ordained to eternal life." "Predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL." (Eph. 1:4-11; Romans 8:28-33) If then, we admit the sovereignty of the work of the Holy Ghost in the new birth, why talk about the use of

means to produce it? If it depends on the performance of conditions, or the use of means on our part, the Holy Ghost ceases to be a sovereign in the work, and all must turn at last upon the pivot of works, and our Bible must be forced to read, "It is of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God that sheweth mercy." Could any thing be more absurd? Away with these yea and nay systems of the present day, which, like the *Baptist Repository*, (a Missionary Baptist publication. — Ed.) will on one page tell us that regeneration is the sovereign work of the Omnipotent God, and anon, insert upon the other that souls may be rescued from a burning hell by the efforts of men and the use of money, but:

The Holy Ghost Is Irresistible

Can any thing be more preposterous than to say that the Holy Ghost is God, Omnipotent, &c., and yet that He may be so resisted or opposed in His work, as to fail in the accomplishment of His designs? If so, the term "omnipotent" has lost its meaning.

By the Spirit's irresistible work, we would not be understood to mean that He works in unison with the feelings and disposition of the human heart; no, "the natural mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7-8), says the apostle; hence all the powers of human nature are arrayed in opposition to the Spirit's work, in vain attempts to resist the Holy Ghost. The "strong man armed, keeps the palace until a stronger comes;" he then is subdued, and "his goods are spoiled." Saul's last breath was slaughter against the saints, and persecution against Christ. Paul's first breath was prayer and submission to the irresistible power by which at midday he was brought to the ground! But by the term, we mean that He shall accomplish all that He has undertaken, and that there is no power in heaven, earth or hell, that can effectually resist the Holy Ghost.

For example, while Arminians, Deists and devils, by all their united efforts stand in opposition to the method of God's saving grace, and the work of the adorable Spirit, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, God

will have them in derision. He will still move on His undisturbed purpose and grace; none shall let, none shall hinder; "The wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." That the Spirit is irresistible in this work, we call to witness the experience of (not those *mushroom converts*, of human means,) but all such as have passed from death unto life, and know the Lord Jesus, and the power of His resurrection. The child of God will tell us, "I was an enemy to God by wicked works; I was in love with sin, an enemy to holiness; there was no fear of God before my eyes. In short, I was dead in trespasses and sins; but about midday, O king, a light shone around me, and I heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Yes," says the poor soul, "I was suddenly arrested, an awful trembling shook my frame, I felt myself undone, my sins in all their magnitude rushed in order before my affrighted eyes; loud peals of thunder from Mount Sinai caused me to tremble exceedingly, and quake, while vivid flashes of divine wrath taught me the dreadful reality, I am a sinner. There is a hell, a burning lake; I feel it this moment in my very soul. Whither, O whither shall I flee from the wrath of God? If up to heaven I direct my course, God is there. I dread to meet Him. O ye rocks and mountains, shew pity and fall upon me; hide, O hide me from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." In this condition, the poor wretch will not require knives or lancets, anxious benches nor Arminian (free-willer's) task-masters, to persuade him to "*agonize!*" We risk nothing when we say that such a soul WILL testify that the Spirit's work upon the heart is IRRESISTIBLE. The Spirit having thus quickened the man, the vital (living) principle implanted is manifested by a struggle for deliverance, for light, for freedom; but all in vain he prays; the heavens are as brass, the earth is as the dust; his prayers are shut out. He flies to the law, but

"Justice cries with frowning face,
This mountain is no hiding place;

He reads; the promise meets his eye,
But cannot reach his case."

Thus burdened with guilt, and pressed down with woe, he sinks, despairs and dies. Here let us leave him one moment, (for we cannot help him; his case is desperate; no eye can pity, no arm can relieve him,) while we enquire, Dear Reader, if the quickened sinner be thus helpless, thus destitute of power, if he that is made alive by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, and slain by the law, can do NOTHING, what canst thou do? What can that poor soul do who has NEVER been quickened, nor made to feel one spark of any thing more than totally depraved human nature? Now let us look back, and enquire what has become of that poor soul we left in the "valley of death." Behold he is raised from the dead! The same irresistible Spirit which brought Jesus again from the dead, has raised him up. He is a new creature; old things are done away. He is no longer an Arminian, no longer a work-monger; he is stripped of his filthy rags; he is clothed, and in his right mind. Lo, he sits at Jesus's feet: his feet are placed upon a Rock, his goings are established, and a new song is in his mouth. He no longer sings, "Do, do, do," but he sings, "It is done, it is finished." "The Lord has taken me out of an horrible pit," &c. But whence this glorious change? He that brought to the birth, gave strength to bring forth. Hence the soul was, and is delivered; the Spirit applied the cleansing blood of the Lamb; and he is washed and made clean; the Spirit gave him eyes, and he saw Jesus; the Spirit gave him faith, and he embraced Him as his Saviour, his Lord and his God..

*The Work of the Spirit is, in all cases,
EFFECTUAL*

If this position be not correct, there must be some case or cases where the work of the Spirit has proved ineffectual. We call for such a case to be produced. Where has the Spirit EVER wrought ineffectually in ANY case? Such an example, we bless God, cannot be found; and if there could, it would make all heaven shudder; for the very instant that the

Holy Ghost fails to accomplish any thing which He has undertaken to do, that moment He ceases to be God, ceases to be Omnipotent, immutable and perfect. If there is any thing which the Holy Ghost cannot effectually perform, we speak with reverence, He cannot be omnipotent. But He was omnipotent once, when He spake the world into existence; hence there must have been a change, and He is no longer immutable (unchangeable). That change must be for the better or for the worse; if for the better, He was once imperfect; for nothing can be perfect if it can admit of improvement; and if by an improvement He is proved once to have been imperfect, then His truth falls prostrate at once; for He has declared that He is the "Lord that changeth not." But if the change be for the worse, (since for the better it cannot be,) then it amounts to the same thing. Hence we say that if ONE single instance can be produced in which it can be established that the Holy Ghost has worked ineffectually in attempting the quickening of a soul, i.e., failed to effect His design, this would make all heaven shudder.

Again, let us admit what has been proved, and what we cannot deny, viz.. that it "is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;" and then if we prove that the Spirit's work has been ineffectual in any ONE case, the same arguments will also prove the Spirit's work ineffectual in EVERY case; for human nature is in ALL cases precisely the same; all are on a level as to moral holiness, or unholiness; all are alike depraved and sold under sin; all are alike without strength in themselves. The unavoidable consequence then is, if the Spirit's exertion fails in ONE case, it fails in ALL; for the SAME CAUSE under the SAME CIRCUMSTANCES must invariably produce the SAME EFFECTS. How dreadful then would be the reflection that ONE poor soul for whom Christ died, and in whose heart the Eternal Spirit had wrought a work of grace, had failed to realize those blessings which were by the Spirit intended, seeing by this awful catastrophe the whole plain (sic) of salvation must inevitably fall

through, and not a soul be saved. But once more; if it can be established that the work of the Spirit has been effectual in the case of Paul, Peter, James or John, or any other individual, the point is forever established, and we fearlessly bid defiance to all earth and hell to controvert or gainsay our position.

But laying aside all our arguments, and reasoning on the subject, we will be able to establish this point by the positive declaration of the word of God: "For as the Father raised up the dead and quickened them, even so the Son QUICKENETH WHOM HE WILL." (John 5:24). But we enquire, Whom WILL the Son quicken by His Spirit? He has left His Will on record in these very words: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast GIVEN ME be with Me where I am," etc. (John 17:24). And in regard to the efficacy of this quickening power, the apostle was confident, and so are we, of this very thing, that He who "began the good work WILL PERFORM IT until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6) And the blessed Master has said, "ALL that the Father GIVETH ME SHALL COME to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

selected from the *Editorials of Gilbert Beebe*, Volume 1, pages 96-104.

We understand that the first four volumes of the *Editorials of Gilbert Beebe* are now in print. We commend Elder James Poole, and those who are blessed with a mind to financially help him in this expensive undertaking for this work to date. Those who wish to encourage him ought to write him at P.O. Box 1250, Salisbury, Md.21801.

We hope he will continue to add to this precious collection until all ten or twelve volumes have been made available to us and our spiritual children.

CAST DOWN, BUT BLESSED WITH ASSURANCE

By W.W. Hudson

"Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up from the depths of the earth."

— Psalms 71:20.

As the Lord blesses us, let us consider the first expression of this text: "Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles." We believe this has reference to those who have been quickened and made alive by the Spirit of God, and have been taught the truth by the Lord experimentally. They have been through the experience of being brought from the bondage of darkness into the marvelous light. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." (Col. 1:13). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9). Let us keep in mind that both of these Scriptures have reference to those who have experienced this deliverance from darkness into light. We may think of it as being brought from law to grace. "...the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24.)

Sometimes the Scripture has reference to those who have already been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, as in this text: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction" (Heb. 10:32.) This shows that one experiences afflictions after the Lord has already enlightened him, and this is vital to the poor child of God. The world hates the light, and the world hated Jesus, who is the Light of the world. In due time the Lord enlightens His people, blesses them to walk in good works which the world despises. The world lies in darkness and hates the light. Jesus said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have CHOSEN YOU OUT

OF the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19.) Those who are blessed to walk in good works or live a Christian life will certainly expect opposition by the world. Why? Let us see what the Lord has inspired to be written: “Yea, and ALL that will live **GODLY IN Christ SHALL** suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12.)

The Scriptures show that the children of God cannot expect an easy life here upon this earth. Jesus said, “. . .in this world ye **SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION**: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33.) The Lord has chosen His people out of the furnace of affliction (Isaiah 48:10.) It is written: “Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it” (Matt. 7:14.) Webster says that “strait” means “narrow, restricted, tight, and a situation of perplexity or distress.” [So does the Greek New Testament concordances Ed.] Dear Reader, does this adequately describe your travels?

As we consider the setting of this text, we understand the writer to acknowledge that the Lord had been with Him in all his trials; yea, “Thou hast shewed me” these troubles, though “sore troubles” they were. This is a great comfort to the living, is it not? As it is written: “Casting all your cares upon Him; for He careth for you” (I Peter 5:7.) The Lord does not forsake His people. Jesus said, “. . . I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20.) In our feelings there may be many times when we feel that the Lord has forsaken us, but He is tenderly watching over us still.

“Shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.” What is one’s condition in this text? He is cast down. Have we traveled that pathway also? Dear Reader, after you have been taught the truth of free grace and experienced a great season of rejoicing when the Lord blessed you to sit in heavenly places; then later have you not often had the sad experience of being cast down in the bed of sorrow? Notice the Scripture shows that one has the confidence that the Lord would deliver

him again. At this setting of the text, the Lord blessed him with a sweet assurance that the Lord would deliver him in due time. We think of the sweet assurance that Paul had when the Lord blessed him to write these comforting words: “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” (Phil. 1:6.) No conditions here; no work the creature is performing. The Lord began the good work and the Lord carries it through: “will perform it.” We believe this to mean that the Lord completes a work that He has begun. It is the Spirit of God that begins a good work experimentally in one. We know that the works of the flesh “are as filthy rags in the sight of God.” One sees that he is a wretched and ruined sinner in the hands of a living and Holy GOD. He sees that he is guilty and has to beg for mercy. In time the Lord shows him that Jesus is his Saviour. He is blessed with peace with God through Jesus. “Having made peace through the blood of His cross, . . .” (Col. 1:20.) This Scripture shows that the righteous blood of Jesus has washed away the sins of God’s people. “. . . unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5.)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1.) This Scripture expresses what one feels in his own experience. It is the Spirit of God that blesses us to be justified when Christ is presented to us as our Saviour. We feel this wonderful blessing of having peace with God through Jesus Christ. Again, let us look to Jesus who ever lives to make intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Notice the expression: “*Shalt quicken me again.*” We understand this to mean that the Lord would deliver him again. This shows that the children of God experience uprisings and downittings as they travel upon this earth; or there may be seasons of rejoicing and seasons of mourning; or we may experience the winter and spring season within our souls. We believe the Scriptures teach our experiences. “But we had the sentence of

death IN ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (II Cor. 1:9-10.) The Lord delivered His people from so great a death by sending Jesus to die in the room and stead of His people. The expression ‘doth deliver,’ we understand to mean that the Lord delivers His people from their daily trials, even as they experience the same precious truth. The expression “in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us,” we understand to mean deliverances from all our future trials too. This could also apply to our final deliverance — the glorious resurrection of the dead,-See I Cor.15: 51.57)

Finally, let us consider again: Even though the writer was cast down, he was blessed with the confidence and assurance that the Lord had not forsaken him and would deliver him in due time. We think of this Scripture: “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Psalm 118:6). Keep in mind that the children of God are not always blessed with this great degree of assurance that is mentioned in the text. But as it pleases Him, He grants it time and again as it is needed as He grants to us the measure of faith.

PARTICULARS OF POPE JOAN

Translated by Augustus Toplady

It has been confidently asserted, by some modern members of the Romish communion, that the story, concerning pope Joan, is a mere fiction, invented by Protestants to blacken the infallible Church. In opposition to which insinuation, I here insert the following extract, copied, *verbatim*, by my own hand, from that scarce and curious old book, entitled, *The Nuremburgh Chronicle*: which was printed at Nuremburgh, in the year of our Lord 1493; in a Popish city. by Popish printers, and compiled by Popish hands, no less than four and twenty years before the first dawn of the Reformation which Luther afterwards began.

The reader will find the following succinct history of this famous female pope in the above work. page 169,b.

[The Latin text begins here, followed by the English translation as follows: - S.C.P.]

Translation of the Text

“John of English descent, but said to have been born at Mentz. obtained the Popedom by sinister arts: for. she palmed herself upon the world as a man. when, in reality, she was a woman. In her youth, she accompanied a learned lover of her’s, to Athens: and there, by attending the lectures of the best literary professors, she made so great a progress in erudition, that, on her arrival in Rome, she had few equals. and no superiors, in all kinds of theological knowledge. By her learned lectures, and by her masterly disputations, she acquired so much esteem and authority, that, on the death of Leo, she was, by universal consent (as Martinus affirms), created Pope.

“Some time after her elevation to the pontifical dignity, she became criminally familiar with one of her domestics; and pregnancy was the consequence. She took care, by every precaution, to conceal this circumstance, as long as possible: until, at last, as she was walking [in public procession] to the Lateran Church [in Rome], she was suddenly seized with labour-pains, and brought forth her infant, in that part of the street which lies between the Theatre and the Church of St. Clement. She died on the spot; having held the Popedom two years, one month, and four days.

“Some writers affirm, that, to this very day, [1493], whenever the pope walks in procession to the Lateran Church, he constantly goes thither by another way, to avoid reviving the memory of the above-mentioned detestable event; and that, in order to prevent a similar imposition” [i.e. in order that the infallible Church may not again mistake the sex of her popes], “the new-elected Pontiff is properly examined, by the junior deacon, at the time of his holiness’s

first enthronement in St. Peter's chair; the seat whereof is perforated for that purpose."

Thus far the *Nuremburgh Chronicle*. To which I add the following indisputable particulars.

1. This said Mrs. Joan (who called herself John VIII) was successor, in the popedom, to Leo IV. who died, A.D. 855, and she herself was succeeded by Benedict III.

2. Not only do many grave Roman Catholic historians assert the fact; but the fact itself has also exercised the wits of more than a few ingenious poets of that communion. Witness the following epigrammatic verse:

*Papa pater patrum peperit papissa
papellum.*

Not to mention those lines of Mantuan, who was himself a Carmelite friar, and who represents pope Joan and her lover hanging in the ante-chamber of hell:

*Hic pendebat adhuc, sexum mentita
virilem,*

*Faemina, cui trilici Phrygiam diademate
mitram*

Suspendebat apex; et pontificis adulter.

3. The statue of this she-pope remained, in the cathedral church of Sienna, so low down, as until about the year 1677: when it was demolished, in order to stifle all memory of an incident so disastrous and dishonourable to the holy see.

The Reader should be apprized, that a wooden print, representing the said lady and her child, was inserted originally, and still remains, in the *Nuremburgh Chronicle* above-mentioned.

Was not at least *this pope* the Whore of Babylon?

The above information is trivia, in so far as the true Church is concerned. What do we have to do with those without? The reason for printing it is to make another point entirely, *i.e.*,

There are those who pride themselves upon a *serial succession* of their

denominational order from their present form and constitution all the way back to Christ and the church He set up in the earth. Instead of their view producing humility, it creates a spirit of boasting; and this boasting upon a thoroughly false premise.

The Romish Religious Order claims its perpetuity back to "St. Peter" and from thence to Christ. In the center of its arrogant claim lies the above historical episode; along with many others too numerous to print. When anyone, including Predestinarian Old School Baptists, began to look at any claims they may suppose themselves to possess based upon who preceded them in succession, they had best be careful they do not claim more than they wish to own! The church of Jesus Christ cannot be traced *through* man — not even "good" men; but it is found *IN* Christ. The Church is His body; bone of His bone and one with Him. They were united to Him in His Seed-Substance before the world was ever formed; the life which produced them into His heavenly kingdom is spiritual, or divine, or eternal life - the same which was for them *IN* Him in divine election; their experimental union with and in Him is by that very life; and thus they are mere members of a great body, a household, a family, the Church. This "Church" is ONE in both TIME and SPACE. It is, as salt, sprinkled throughout the ages of man, and "in every nation, tribe, kinsman, tongue, "etc. Those who have gone on before are still *IN THE CHURCH*; and those who are here now are *IN THE CHURCH*. The church still has the same original apostles and they, through their words, still judge the twelve spiritual tribes of Israel — every member of the church is judged according to the same rule of the Gospel they have bequest to us.

There has never been but one true church founded upon the earth. To trace one's *serial succession* from another body of people, there must be an assumption that the body of people became extinct. The church never has, nor ever will, cease to exist. Those who go out of it to establish a "true church" in succession of it "went out that it might be manifest that they

were not of us.” For, “doubtless if they had been of us, they would have remained with us” - to paraphrase the apostle John.

When these religious historians attempt to trace their “links” or “ties” to some body of people they assume to be the “true church”, they are proving conclusively that they are on the outside of it; and any “linkage” they find invariably must be of one who has either been *excluded from her* or else *departed* from her. In any regard, those “links” are as the She-Pope above. They only create an arrogancy which leads to a bigotted position, and a legalistic, rather than experimental, claim on religion.