

**GOD'S DECREE**  
**AND**  
**THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL**  
**THINGS**  
**A Compilation of Twenty-Six Authors**  
**From 1696 to 2005 on the Subject**  
**OF THE PREDESTINATION OF GOD**

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## FOREWORD

The editor has taken the following editorial liberty with the format of the contents of this section of the book containing the writings of Jonas C. Sikes: Originally, the contents were published in a series over several months, and were not divided into topics for easy reference. For the modern reader, the editor has combined all the separate articles in the series into one book, and has attempted to identify the places where various topics begin and end and inserted them for the reader's reference.

These topics are in bold headings and this enables the publisher to print a Table of Contents. We do not claim accuracy in identifying all the places for these headings, nor did the writer and previous publisher provide them.

The contents of the book were originally published by THE LONE PILGRIM periodical in Volumes 6, 9 & 10, 1928-1932, which periodical was edited by H. F. Hutchens, Selma, North Carolina.

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The section written by Jonas C. Sikes, on "God's Decree And Predestination of All Things," is one of the defining works produced during the Old School Baptist/Primitive Baptist Separation between 1900 and 1940 during the "Down-grade Period" in theology. The larger body of these Baptists embraced the divinity of the Progressive Era, which attempted to harmonize Calvinistic doctrines with Arminian views, and led to a form of "freewillism", or "calminianism", in what they termed "Conditional Time Salvation." The Sikes' articles set forth a wholesome defense of the original "Old School" or Predestinarian point of view.

The larger body of Old School Baptists became known as "the Limited," "Conditionalists", "Old Liner" [for they then lined their singing], or "Two Salvation Primitives." The smaller body was called "Absoluters," "Old Order," "Old School," or "Predestinarian Primitives."

It would border on the ridiculous to attempt to take the sublime and incomprehensible concept of predestination and attempt to explain it in simple enough language for the reader. However, it is possible to summarize it somewhat, so long as the reader understands that the subject is not conducive to carnal reasoning.

The "Limited" Baptists argue that the word "predestinate" is only found in four places in the Bible (10V) and never has reference to "things." They limit the concept of predestination to only four things: conformity to the image of Christ, effectual calling, justification, and glorification, all of which are experienced in "time." Hence, the origin of their term "time salvation." They make that aspect of experimental salvation to be conditional, or meritorious, by\_ human works through "duty-faith". This is the origin of their "conditional" "time salvationist" epitaph. All of the things that Christ did prior to time, and what He did in time, other than effectual grace, they call "eternal salvation." To them, this embraces election, redemption, and ransom by the blood, reconciliation, and sanctification, etc. What they leave out embraces the providence of God, the directing, controlling, and governing of all "timely" events, things of nature and His universal government of all creation. For this reason, their concept of predestination is much more narrow than that held to by the Predestinarian party.

Predestination is not an English word. It is an anglicized word drawn from two Latin words, and artificially used to express an otherwise unknown concept among our Anglo-Saxon forebears. This too, helps to limit the Conditionalists' concept to a more narrowly defined field. The Latin words are "prae" and "destinare" that translates into = before + to determine. This definition, too often heard among the "Limited," is that predestination merely means "before & destination."

When William Tyndale was translating the Bible into English, he had to improvise. We see his problem with expressing the concept of the interstitial interrelationship of all things in God's eternal counsel, in Jude 4. Look how clumsily he expressed it: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our

Lord Jesus Christ." The anglicized Latin word could have expressed the whole concept "before of old ordained" much better. They were predestinated to this end.

When he was translating the book of Acts while in Belgium, he ran into this concept again. Here is how he then translated the exact same Greek word he elsewhere translated "predestinate": "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28). Again, that exact same Greek word is found in 1 Corinthians 2:7. Here is how he translated it in this place: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

After the Catholic authorities ran him out of Belgium and having burned his printing press, Tyndale fled to Marburg, Germany (1522), where Martin Luther was translating the Greek Bible into German. It was there that he translated both Romans and Ephesians, and used the word Luther was using for the concept — predestinate, and understood it as "before determined to be done." Here we find him consistent when he translated Acts 4:28 "For to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done," which concept embraces all things necessary, interstitially, to bring His counsel to pass as He foreordained it to be.

The actual Greek word is *proorizo*, means to limit in advance, or predetermine. That word is the root word for our English word "horizon." In one sense, a horizon is limited. We can only see but so far upon the face of the earth. On the other hand, if we move in any direction, our horizon moves the exact distance as we moved, and thus it is unlimited. We can see the stars, moon, and suns in the heavens, and thus there is no such limitation as upon the face of the earth. Predestination embraces all the events, persons, things, and conditions utilized by God in fulfilling His determinate counsel, bringing them all to pass at the time and place eternally determined; and thus it includes all things without exception, because all things are contained in His one eternal and immutable mind. To use but one simple illustration: John Doe's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, which was so written "before the foundation of the world." John Doe, and his full and complete salvation, then, is embraced in God's eternal counsel. The entire lineage of individual men and women who procreated the prodigy of John Doe from Adam and Eve to John Doe's birth; their meeting, the place and time of each one to exist, the circumstances and the events that guided and directed their existence through the ages, etc., must have also been embraced in God's eternal counsel. One link being aborted would have unraveled the whole, and John Doe would have never existed, in spite of his name being written in the

Book of Life "from the foundation of the world." And I speak of only one such person! Predestination is not a narrow and limiting concept! It must embrace all things. So too, says our author in this great work. — The Editor.

**PREDESTINATION**  
**By Jonas C. Sikes,**  
**Being his first article on this subject,**  
**April, 1900**

I think it is hurtful and wrong to make a hobby of any one point of doctrine (even though it is the truth) to the exclusion of all others, yet I think we should preach a full gospel and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. But I think it is the best, yea, the wisest and only Scriptural course, when speaking on this or any other subject (and especially when we know that some of the dear saints differ from us), to be kind and gentle and meekly instruct them. It has been said, "good words do more than hard speeches." The warm sunshine on a Spring morning will make the farmer pull off his overcoat, while all the blustering winds of Winter will only make him draw it closer to him. If we would do as Solomon, we would seek to find out acceptable words, yet we should not go so far in that direction as to forsake the truth. He says, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which is written is upright, even words of truth." I think this would be a wise course for all of God's ministers, and I desire to follow it.

With this much said, I now desire to say something on the subject of predestination. I desire that after my departure my friends may have my views on this all-important subject. I think that the statement in the London Confession of Faith with reference to this subject is highly correct, i.e., that "this high mystery of predestination should be handled with special prudence-and care." How well I shall be able to succeed in doing this will be left for the readers to judge.

Predestination means a previous purpose or a previous determination; Webster defines it as the "purpose of God from eternity respecting all events." I accept this as its true meaning. Yet Webster was only a man and must not be considered as infallible in divine things. This doctrine can never be understood as long as we try to measure it by anything short of God Himself. The nearer we come to an understanding of Him, what He is, and the nature of His divine attributes, the nearer we will come to a full and complete understanding of this doctrine.

1<sup>st</sup>. God is eternal. Hence, His purposes or determinations must also be eternal, if He is eternally perfect in all His attributes. I shall not claim that His purpose is an attribute, but it is the outgrowth (to say the least of it) of wisdom, which is an attribute. And here I would note that when I say "wisdom," that I do not mean knowledge. Wisdom is one thing and knowledge is another, as you will find by consulting the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans. Wisdom in man is that natural attribute by which he is enabled to study or investigate and find out things that he would not otherwise know. Hence, when he gets to the limit of his wisdom or intellectual powers in an investigation he can go no further; he has found out all he can know about it. But if his wisdom had been perfect, he would have seen through the whole thing at a glance the first time it was presented to his mind. Hence, his knowledge of it would have been perfect. God being eternally perfect in wisdom has known all things. I shall not claim as to the order of time that God's wisdom is older than His knowledge, for then I would set up for a time a God of wisdom without any knowledge. But I will say that in the order of thought, wisdom is the real basis or foundation of all knowledge. Wisdom is the basic attribute of the Godhead, by which He is governed in all His other attributes. Without wisdom, power would be misused, love would be without a true guide, justice and judgment could not exist, mercy would be a misnomer; in fact, chaos would reign supreme, and "God" would be a name for nothing. So then, wisdom being the foundation of all that is right, I desire upon this foundation to build my structure.

It has been suggested by some, that if we could prove that the first transgression was predestinated, then the predestination of all things could be established. So to this end I shall first direct my attention. In the first place, I would ask, did not God know that if He made Adam as He did and placed him where he would be subjected to the evil influence of the Serpent, that he would transgress? If not, where is the perfection of His wisdom? If He did, why did He make him and place him thus? Was it because He was not able to make a perfect man; one that would not yield to temptation? one that could not be corrupted? If so, where is the perfection of His power? If He did not have the power then, and has never, nor will never increase in power, will He ever be able to take a poor, fallen wretch and make a perfect and incorruptible man out of him? I suppose, however, that all who claim to be Old School or Primitive Baptists will admit that He had both the wisdom and the power to have had it different, if He had willed it different, but this would be an admission that He did not will it different, which would be to say that He willed it to come to pass as it did. These are self-evident facts. If God willed it to be different from the way it came to pass, is it not remarkably

strange that He arranged things so that He knew that it would not work out as He intended it, when He could only have thought how He would have it to be, and said, "Let it be so," and it would have been so? It is a self-evident fact that needs no argument to prove it, that either the introduction of sin into the world was according to God's purpose, or else the whole covenant plan of redemption, the advent of Christ into the world, all of His righteous life, all His suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension are not the result of God's free and independent purpose, for it was to redeem man from the consequences of this act and its outgrowth that all the above took place. Hence, if the transgression was not a part of God's eternal purpose, then it follows that the covenant of redemption owes its existence (not to the free and independent purpose of God outside of an extraneous influence, but) to the act of a man by which it was made necessary and a way opened up for it to enter. So in order of thought it would stand thus: First, God determined to make a man. Second, He saw that man would transgress. Third, He devised a plan of redemption. This order cuts God's purpose in two, and sets them thus: First, God's free and independent purpose was to create man. Second, God's knowledge of man's independent act in transgression; and Third, God's necessitated purpose to redeem man was influenced by what He foresaw. If we follow this stream to its logical end, where will it empty? If God had rather sin had not entered the world, then it follows that there has never been a single act, or creature, or thing, in this universe that has been as God originally would rather have had it; because every act, creature, or thing, has been in some way affected by sin, which (according to that view) had rather had never existed. Even the earth, with which every living thing has to do, was cursed because of transgression, which God would rather have had different. Not even one act of the holy Son of God was as God would rather have had it, for His acts were to redeem sinners, when God had rather there had been no sinners to redeem. Nor throughout all eternity can anything be as it would have pleased God to have had it, for it will be one eternal song and shouts from the redeemed sinners praising Him for their redemption, when God had rather that man had never sinned. If this were so, then there would have been no redemption from sin and no shouting of praises by redeemed sinners. I shall trace this stream no farther at present, for I see from its course that it empties into the broad ocean of infidelity. But all of the above is true and much more that might be said, if God did not purpose that sin should enter the world.

It is said that God foreknew that man would sin and He therefore made arrangements to meet it. But stop, my brother, this "therefore" is what I object to. It says that the foreseen act of man was the cause of God making

the covenant, so you see at once that if this act of man was not embraced in God's purpose then the origin of the covenant is owing partly (to say the least of it) to something outside of God, or His purpose. This branch empties into the stream that we have just left, so we will quit it. You say that God foreknew that man would sin, so say I. But I would ask upon whom did this foreseen act of man then depend? Man was not yet created, and his existence depended yet wholly upon God and the fulfillment of His purpose, and surely none can think that man's act could ever have been, had there been no man to act. So then, this foreseen act of man could not have been any less dependent upon the fulfillment of God's purpose for existence than was the man by whom it was to come.

Having thus far confined myself to what seems to be self-evident facts and irresistible conclusions I will not notice some Scripture on the subject.

I will first call attention to Genesis 1:28: "And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." Now, the word, "replenish" means to "fill up." From this it will be seen that instead of God meaning for them to remain in the garden, He meant for them to fill up and inhabit the entire earth. To this we will add the 29th verse : "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, it shall be to you for meat " In the first place, we see from this, that man was intended to inhabit the entire earth, from the fact that the fruits that grow on all the face of the earth were to be meat, or food, for him. And in the second place, we see that the fruit of every tree on earth that bore seed was to be to them for meat. Some questions might arise in our minds right here. Was there any such tree in all the earth that yielded fruit as the tree of knowledge of good and evil? If so, was it to be for them for meat? If not, what does the above language mean? But I will pass this for the present.

We next call attention to Acts 17: 24-26: "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with man's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face ( the earth and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." It is clearly seen from this as well as from Genesis that God's purpose was (not that man should remain in the garden, but) that he should dwell on all the face of the earth. This is what Paul says that He made them for. Much might be said right here, but this article is going to grow

lengthy, so I pass on.

I will now call your attention to Genesis 2:5: "And there was not a man to till the ground." The next verse tells us of God watering the earth and making man. Now, what would we reasonably conclude from the above Scripture, was God's purpose for making man? I think all reasonable men would say, "to till the ground." The other passages referred to show that God purposed that man should dwell on all the face of the earth and all of the fruits of the various trees thereof should be to them for meat; while this one shows that God purposed that man should till the ground. Some say, "O, yes, this is all true, but it is because God foresaw that man would transgress that He purposed to scatter them on all the face of the earth and have them till the earth." But then we would be forced to admit one of two things, i.e. , that this foreseen transgression was a part of God's original purpose, or else the cause of this purpose to scatter them on all the face of the earth and that they should till the ground was outside of both God and His original purpose to make man. This again resolves itself into the absurd position that we have already noticed: First, That God freely and independently purposed to make man. Second, That He foresaw that man would not do as He willed for him to do. Third, That God was governed in all of His other purposes concerning man, both for time and eternity, by the foreseen act of man rather than His own sovereign and independent will and choice. But I must quit this part of the subject and notice for a while the reason why God created all things.

It is said by Solomon that, "The Lord has made all things for Himself yea even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverb 16:4). From this we learn that God made all things for Himself It is said in Revelation that "Thou hast made all things for Thyself and for Thy pleasure they are (now exist) and were created" (Revelation 4:11). From this we find that they were all created for His pleasure, and they are still existing for the same purpose. In Colossians, it is said, "All things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16). This is enough to prove that God had a use for all that He created. Now it is admitted by all that some men come into the world sinners, they live in sin and they die in sin and go to eternal perdition. Will someone please tell me whether or not God's purpose in creating them is or will be fulfilled in them?

God's purpose in time and all created things is, I think, for the manifestation of His own glory. In other words, to manifest Himself in all of His divine perfections and manifestly glorify Himself in all of His attributes. Now, we read of His own eternal purpose, His immutable counsel, the counsel of His will, etc., so in order of thought we say that God "held a council" in eternity.

He was guided by wisdom, and consulted His own will. In this council was considered all things that He now "works after the counsel of His own will." As a result of that council the world was created and all things therein. Now look at this creation as it fell from the plastic hand of the Creator. Is it not wonderful? Yea, marvelous! But how many of the attributes of the Godhead do you see manifested in this wonderful work? Only two: wisdom and power. Wisdom to contrive this wonderful plan and power to perform it. Wisdom and power are here manifested as being infinitely great, but love, mercy, justice, wrath, and His immortal purity are yet unknown to man and must remain so as long as man remains in his state of innocence. God can love man just the same in his upright as in his fallen state, but love cannot be manifested in its fullness so as to glorify God in this attribute. "If ye love them that Love you what reward have ye: do not even the Publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46,47). So God's love could not be manifested in its fullness on them that loved Him. "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die," so if Christ had died for a good man it would have manifested no more love than perhaps some men would have done, so then it must be true that for God's love to be manifested in its fullness man must fall from his "good" and upright state. Man fell, and it is said that "God commendeth His love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), also, that "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:1-5). Here we have His great love most gloriously manifested on fallen man.

Next we come to mercy. The above text says, "But God, who is rich in mercy. . ." Yes, He is rich in mercy, but how can mercy be bestowed on one who is not a sinner? How could the great richness of God's mercy ever have been manifested without a transgressor? But man transgressed and now God can "make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23). Yet notwithstanding the greatness of God's love, and the richness of His mercy, they must have been forever unknown and unappreciated if man had not become a sinner.

These two most glorious attributes, however, could not reach the case of, nor benefit, a sinner at the expense, or exclusion, of justice. Justice, in its greatness could not be manifested in a world of sinless, upright beings, but when man transgressed, she laid her iron hand upon him; love nor mercy can reach him only through justice. Behold what unrelenting justice! Before she will swerve one jot or one tittle, she will take the heir of heaven, the only Son of the Supreme Judge Himself, who sits upon the great white throne, and slay

Him for the crimes committed.

Love and mercy, guided by wisdom, offers Him as a ransom. Justice, guided by wisdom, accepts Him in behalf of all for whom He became a Surety. But God continues to show His wrath and make His power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Through all of this we can see God in His true character. His attributes are most gloriously manifested in the creation of the world and His dealings with sinners, and I feel sure that this course has been no second choice with Him!

Man may determine to do a thing and seeing that it will not work out as he desired it should, make some subsequent arrangements to meet and rectify in measure this foreseen, yet undesirable event. But the all-glorious eternal "I Am" has never been so hard-pressed as that! But this is exactly the light He must be held in by all who hold that He did not purpose that sin should exist. They must divide His purposes into two sets, anterior and posterior.

His anterior purpose being His purpose to create all things, which purposes would be absolutely free from, and independent of, and in no way influenced, or hampered by, any unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of His purpose. His posterior purposes being all such as relate to man as a sinner. The covenant of redemption and the punishment of sin go together. In fact, all of His dealings with man as a sinner from the morn of transgression to the eve of eternity would come under the head of His posterior purposes, being made as the result of, and to meet and deal with, an unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of, and in no way attributable to, His purpose.

Such a petty god may do to speculate upon, but it is not the God before whom the "four and twenty elders" fell down in wonder and admiration, and cast their glittering crowns before His throne, shouting, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" The man who believes that the transgression was a foreseen event not embraced in God's eternal purpose, and that the covenant was made to meet this exterior foreseen event, must admit that God has anterior and posterior purposes. He must admit that His anterior purposes are based on an interior cause (the counsel of His will), and His posterior purposes are based on an exterior cause (an unpurposed foreseen event). We are all bound to admit that in the order of thought God's knowledge of man's transgression was based on His determination to make man, for had there been no such determination to make man, there would

have been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress. If there had been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress, there would have been no covenant made to redeem man for transgression. So we are forced to either take the position that it was all from start to finish embraced in God's eternal and unchangeable purpose, or that He has anterior purposes based upon interior causes, and also posterior purposes based upon exterior causes. The latter is Arminianism straight, so you can see at a glance that I believe in the predestination of all things. I shall not try to add to the strength of this doctrine by the use of the term "absolute," nor diminish its force by the use of the term "permissive."

I have neither time nor inclination at present to enlarge upon this subject, for my article has grown too lengthy already. But I will say this much more: if the logic contained herein is true with reference to the first transgression, it is also true with reference to every other event of time. This is my first, and may be my last, upon this subject, but I desired to record my views upon it before I go hence. With me it is either an Almighty God who works all things after the counsel of His will, or no God at all. I fail to find any standing room between this and atheism.

If this scribble should help any poor, halting child to a better understanding of this profoundly deep and mysterious subject, I would be glad to hear from them. With love to all the household of faith, I remain a poor, unworthy sinner, saved by grace if saved at all.

### **GOD'S WORK IS STRANGE, WONDERFUL, AND EXCELLENT** **By Jonas C. Sikes, 1911**

"For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do HIS WORK, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth" (Isaiah 28:21). "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (verse 29).

The prophet Isaiah was a strong believer in God's determinate counsel extending to all events; this is clearly seen in all of his writings. In this text, the Lord rising up and being wroth was in order "that" He might do His work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act. It was that He might do this

Himself. "That" as it is used here, is in place of the preposition "for" and is used to signify purpose, or in other words, it introduces a clause expressing purpose; it means that God rose up and was wroth for the purpose expressed in the text.

This purpose, as more fully explained in the next verse, is a consumption even determined upon the whole earth. This text necessarily leads us to consider the nature and character of God and His eternal purpose as embraced in His determinate counsel. A wrong conception of the nature and character of God will necessarily lead us into a wrong conception of the nature and character of His purposes. The doctrine that a man preaches is a correct measuring rod with which one can correctly determine the length and breadth, height and depths of the perfection or imperfection of the God of his conception. If he conceives of God as being eternal, immutable and absolutely and eternally perfect in wisdom and in power, his doctrine will always conform to that thought, and thus will his conception of God be reflected in his every doctrinal utterance. To conceive of God as being eternally perfect in wisdom and power, then we must conceive of His purposes, decrees or determination, as originating in Himself, and as being based wholly upon the counsel of His will, which will was in no sense hampered, biased, by or influenced in its determination by any external cause, force, power, circumstances or events foreseen but undesired. To argue otherwise, is to impeach the eternal perfection of God. To say that He was "before all things," and that He is the "Creator of all things," "that are in heaven and that are in earth, that are visible and that are invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers" (Colossians 1:16), then to say that all or any part of these things that He created are not working exactly what He desired or intended when He made them, no more nor no less, is to say that He was either deficient in wisdom to devise a plan for their creation so that they would do exactly what He willed for them to do, no more no less, or He is deficient in power to so perform in the making of them as to so make them that they would do this and no more.

If we admit that God knew what the result would be if He made the world as He did, then we admit that He willed these results, or was powerless to prevent them. The first admits His predestination of all things, and the last admits that He is imperfect.

What intelligent man, going to make a machine or implement, does not first consult his will as to what he wants it to do? And having determined just what he wants it to do, does he not then engage his wisdom to devise a plan

for the making of it so that it will meet and perform the exact demands of his will? And having thus by his intelligent devised a plan to meet the demands of his will, does he not then, to the full extent of his power or ability so perform the task of making it as to make it so that it will do exactly what he willed for it to do? If he should see that if he makes it as he planned, it will not do what he willed or purposed for it to do, but will do that which he does not want it to do, will he not, if he is wise enough, so change his plan as that when it is made it will meet and perform the exact demands of his will? When it is done, and in operation, will it not, by its workings and movements reflect the exact character of the wisdom that planned it and the power or ability that made it? If it does what its maker did not will for it to do, do we not know at once that he made a mistake somewhere, either in his plan for it or in the making of it? And does not this mistake declare plainly that he is imperfect? Is God less intelligent than man? If what God has made is doing that which He did not will or purpose for it to do, and is leaving undone that which He did will or purpose for it to do, does not His perfection stand impeached by the workmanship of His hand just as truly as man's perfection does when judged by the same rule?

Paul gives us this rule to judge the perfection of God by when he says, "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" (Romans 1:20). The word power here means to present the perfection of His creative power which includes His will, wisdom and strength as they are brought to view in the things "that are made," they being the workmanship of His hand. We are justified then in judging of the perfection of God by the things that He made. The many, many places in the Scriptures that call our attention to God as the Creator of all things are to heighten our conception of His infinite perfection and greatness.

The man then who, with the book of nature open before him, will conclude that the things that God has made are doing more or less than He willed and arranged for in His divine plan, must and does deny the infinite perfection of God, and Paul says he is "without excuse" for so doing. These people, whom the prophet was speaking of in the text at the beginning of this article, belong to this class. It is said of them in the same chapter, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way: the priest and prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (Isaiah 28:7).

This is the exact condition of things today, and it is the cause of the great wrangle on the question of God's sovereignty and Conditionalism. This "wine and strong drink" does not mean literal wine and whiskey, but alludes to the doctrinal tenets that they have imbibed. They are drunk on the wine of the doctrine of Babylon. This causes them to err in vision when they look at the things that are made which are the works of God's hands, and to stumble in judgment, when they judge His perfection by the things that are made and conclude that they are doing much more on the one hand than their Maker designed, and much less on the other, and thus they impeach His perfection and sovereignty. In the 9th verse, the prophet ask, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? " Then He answers, "Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Thus we see at a glance, that doctrine is the thing under consideration. Not only do they err in vision and stumble in judgment when they look at the works of God and thus misjudge Him by His works, but when they read His word, they do the same thing, for we read in the 13th verse, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." Here, it is clear to be seen who it is that have erred in vision and stumbled in judgment. It is those who hold that the precepts of God as laid down in His word were intended for men to obey them and thus obtain the favor of God and escape the trouble and awful scourging which is here announced against this people. But it is most emphatically asserted in this verse that they were given unto this people for exactly the opposite purpose; for it is said that it was "that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and be snared, and taken." Those who deny the purpose of God in all things, even in the disobedience of men to the precepts of God, are the ones who are drunk on false doctrine, and therefore they err in vision and stumble in judgment. They are the class of whom Peter speaks when he says, "But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (1 Peter 2:7-8). Peter believed in the appointment of all things, even in relation to the disobedience of wicked men and here asserted that these people were appointed to disobedience.

Who can gainsay it but an infidel? Isaiah believed and asserted the same truth in the last verse that I have just cited from the 28th chapter; not only so, but also asserts that the consumption that shall come upon the whole earth is

determined of God. He does not stop at this, but when he makes this statement, he then goes out to men in their every day avocation and says, "Give ye ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my speech, doth the plowman plow all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he had made plain the face thereof doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cumin, and cast in the principle wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cartwheel turned about upon the cumin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff and the cumin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working"(Isaiah 28: 24-29). This is God's work even in the skills and activities of men in nature! How wonderful indeed is the determinate counsel of our God! There is nothing left out of it. It reaches to obedience (1 Peter 1:1), and to disobedience (1 Peter 2:8). It reaches to salvation (2 Thessalonians 2: 13), and to condemnation (2 Thessalonians 2:12 and Jude 4); to our every day avocations (Isaiah 28: 23,29). Yet in all of it God is just and right (Deuteronomy 32:1-4). But while this is true the carnal mind cannot see it; it is only seen by faith. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God through faith unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"

(Romans 1:16-17). The system then that God has devised is one, which none can see His righteousness in, only as it is revealed to them. It is no wonder then that the entire religious world unite in saying that if God has predestinated certain things, then He is unrighteous for His counsel, and as it is proclaimed in the true Gospel, is only known to those to whom God reveals it. The preacher who proclaims it must be in possession of the true faith of God's elect and the hearer who receives it must be in possession of the same; otherwise the preacher cannot preach it, and the hearer cannot receive it. Jesus says that, "wisdom is justified of her children" (Matthew 11:19). To justify the wisdom that devised such a scheme one must be born of the same wisdom.

If we proclaim that God has not purposed anything but righteousness, every one from the vilest wretch in a felon's cell to the most popular Doctor of Divinity in the throng of antichrist will join in one chorus of "Amens" to it; but if we declare that the eternal God in His determinate counsel has

determined just what shall be in the world, there is a howl goes up from the same class, that is heard throughout the land, declaring that God is unrighteous and there is no such thing as justice if this be true. But there are a few who can see the righteousness of God in such a gospel and they join in that sweet song, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." But let us drop back and considered more fully the language of the text. The prophet says, "I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a consumption even determined upon the whole earth." If the consumption was determined, a legitimate question arises here, "Who determined it?"

If God had determined this consumption upon the whole earth, when did He determine it, and by what was He moved to so do? Was it by the free and immutable counsel of His own will that He did it, or was He moved to do it by some extraneous or external cause or influence? If He is "without variableness or shadow of turning" (James 1:17), or if "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" (Job 23:13); or in other words if "same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8); free, immutable and absolutely independent, then He was Master of the surroundings, and was not moved in any degree by anything outside of Himself. If God was infinite in wisdom, then He was certainly wise enough to arrange a plan for creation so that all things embraced therein would work exactly and at all times just as He willed for them to work; and if He was unlimited in power, then He was fully able to make them so they would do this; Then if He did not thus make them, why did He not do it? Did He foreknow just what each of His creatures would do? If not, then He was not perfect in wisdom. Was He not able to make them so that they would do exactly to suit Him? If not He was not perfect in power. Would any intelligent being, who had the wisdom and the power to make a thing so that it would suit him in all its movements knowingly make it so that it would not do what he desired it should? That God did determine this consumption upon the whole earth we cannot deny. To say that He had rather the thing which it was to be a punishment for, had never existed, and that He was moved by them to determine this consummation is to impeach His perfection and say that He has anterior and posterior purposes, the former being based on the free and immutable counsel of His own will, and the latter upon some unpleasant foreseen events which He had much rather would never occur, but seeing that they would occur, He was moved thereby to make arrangements to accommodate them. And as at that time He alone existed, the indication would be, that He was unable to arrange in the making of the world so as to prevent their occurrence, but was forced out of necessity to meet these things

by new arrangements and do the best He could under the circumstances. Such an idea of God is preposterous. God says to those who hold such an idea, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Psalm 50:21b). To avoid this conclusion we are forced by the Scriptures to conclude that God's purpose or determinations are all of one age, and are all free and immutable, and are all based on one internal cause, the counsel of His own will. To argue that God had rather that sin, (the thing which this consumption is to destroy), had never entered the world, and that He was moved by foreseeing that it would come to determine all of His dealings with it and the subjects thereof, is to argue that God in all of His dealings with man as a sinner, has in every act of His done that which He would rather not have done, but was moved thereto by conditions thrust upon Him, which He would rather had never existed, I must conclude then, that such is not and cannot be true. But we cannot escape this position if we deny that His free and eternal purpose embraces all events.

I will say with Paul, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen" (Romans 11:34).

## **GOD'S DECREE AND THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS**

**By: Jonas C. Sikes, Sulphur Bluff, Texas  
1931-32**

## **PROPHECY EXPRESSES THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL OF GOD**

To all who love the truth, greetings:

With a felt sense of my weakness and an humble desire that the God of truth may enlighten me and direct my mind in the way of truth in a manner that it may be enlightening, strengthening and comforting to His people, and to silence and put to flight the enemies who are so loud and boisterous against the truth, I have decided to pen my thoughts on the doctrine of God's most holy, righteous, and sinless "decree of all things whatsoever come to pass." (London Baptist Confession Of Faith, 1689, Chapter III, paragraph 1)

To my mind, to deny that God predestinated all things is to deny the very existence of God Himself. To my mind, to say that an all-wise and all-powerful being would make a thing for Himself, and not make it so that it would operate to suit Himself, is unthinkable. I wish to ask all who may read this to stop and think. Would you, dear reader, do such a thing? You undertake to make a thing for yourself; you know how you want it to perform; just what you want it to do; and you know also what you do not want it to do. You are perfectly able to make it so that it will function exactly as you want it to, so that it will not do anything you rather it would not do. Would you willingly and knowingly use your wisdom and power to make it so that it would not do what you wanted it to do, but would do what you most rather it would not do? Would it not be absolute folly to do such a thing? Yet if you deny that the things that God made are not performing as He desired and intended for them to do, but to the contrary, are continually doing that which He rather they would not do, you are charging Him with such folly as you nor any other sane man would be guilty. A man might for lack of knowledge and ability to do otherwise, make a thing that will not fill the purpose for which he made it, and it may do that which he much rather would not be done. But his work brands him as an imperfect bungler and a failure. Any one seeing his machine in operation, and knowing what it was intended to do, would understand that he, as a mechanic, was a failure. He would understand that by the thing that the man made. If it was contrary to God's will for sin to enter the world, and for His creatures to do as they have done, and He had rather things had come to pass as they have and yet He willingly and knowingly used His wisdom and His power to make it so that it would not operate to suit Him, He made the most colossal blunder that was ever made. The perfect wisdom and almighty power of God forbids the thought of such folly to Him. And yet there is no escaping that awful charge against Him by those who deny the predestination of all things.

They admit that God knew that if He made the world as He did, that it would turn out as it has. They admit that He could have made it so that no sin could have entered it. They say that He had much rather man had kept the law and that none of his race had sinned, and yet they acknowledge that He willingly and knowingly made it so that sin was sure to enter and all mankind were sure to become sinners and commit every wicked act that they have done, when it would have suited Him much better for none of these things to ever have taken place.

Dear reader, my God is not guilty of such folly as that. No one who knows

our God can believe such foolishness. The Bible teaches as clearly as it teaches that there is a God, that all things are appointed by Him. God Himself says so. In Isaiah 44:7, he says: "And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them." Here, God Himself declares that He appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming and shall come. The old Geneva Bible which is 105 years older than the King James, reads thus: "And who is like Me, that shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order before Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And what is at hand, and what things are to come? Let them shew unto them." This is clearly set forth in Isaiah 46:9-10, where God Himself said again: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God and there is none else; I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10). If this language means anything it means, that His declaration of the end and the things that were not yet done in ancient times when He declared these things, were all embraced in His counsel, and when He declared them, He said "My counsel shall stand," meaning these things shall surely come to pass, for they are in My counsel and it shall stand. Reader, if this is not what it means, can you tell why when He made this declaration back in ancient times He said at the end of that declaration "My counsel shall stand"? What relation has His counsel and this declaration in connection, if He did not mean to emphasize the certainty of what He declared by saying "My counsel shall stand"? And why should that give any assurance whatever to their certainty if they were not determined in His counsel? There is no question in my mind but what all things were embraced in His determinate counsel, and back in the beginning, from the most ancient times, He declared the whole thing.

### **THE INSTRUMENTS OF WORKS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD**

In Genesis 3:15, God said to Satan, "and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." Here is a declaration, in a prophetic way of all that would come through Satan, and it was made "in the beginning" which is the most ancient of time; and it was made by God Himself. It declared the end, which will be the final destruction of Satan and all of his works, when all whose names are "not found written in the book of life" shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and Satan that deceived them shall be cast into the same lake. And in this shall be fulfilled another

declaration of God by the mouth of Isaiah, when he said: "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isaiah 27:1). To that end Jesus was made partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14b-15). All this was determined in God's counsel and declared from the beginning by Himself in a prophetic way, when He said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). Every sin that has ever been committed from that day to this has been the work of Satan who through that enmity, is striking at the Seed of the woman –the blessed Son of God. Not itemized and declared separately; but in the one short sentence is contained all things, both good and bad, that has since that time, and shall ever take place in time, "yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein" (London Baptist Confession, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1). All the works of Jesus Christ, and all the works of the devil, are embraced in that prophecy and its declaration. For all good works done by men are the `fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:11); God "working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:21). While all sin is by Satan, the "Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Every act of man, either good or bad, are by one of these two princes; all good, by Jesus Christ, the Prince of righteousness; and all sin or disobedience by Satan, the prince of all unrighteousness, and the enemy of all righteousness. The entire work of both was declared in this short declaration of God to Satan: It is like the word and saying of Christ; if all that is contained in it was brought out and itemized in specific detail, I suppose the world itself would not contain the book.

Let me say right here that all the words of God's mouth, whether written or spoken directly to the people or through the prophets are a declaration of the counsel of His will, what John the Baptist preached to the people was called the counsel of God, and it was said of those who rejected his preaching, that "They rejected the counsel of God"(Luke 7:30). That which is written in the scriptures is repeatedly called either that "which was determined," or the "counsel of God" In Matthew 26:24, it reads, "The Son of man goeth as it is written." And in Luke 22:22, I read: "And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined." Thus showing beyond a peradventure that, that which is

written is that which was determined. In Acts 4:27-28, it says Herod, who put to death all the male children of Bethlehem two years old and under, and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were "gathered together to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." And it is said in Acts 13:29, "And when they, (these men that had gathered together to do what God's counsel determined before to be done) had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree." It is made very plain here that which was written was what God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done; and when they had done it all, they took Him down from the tree. Yet they, who committed the act, did it "by wicked hands ye have seized and slain." Jesus said, "The Scriptures must be fulfilled" and again, He said, "And the Scriptures cannot be broken." It is not only a fact that the Scriptures will not be broken, but Jesus says they cannot be broken. If this is truth, then the men who do the wicked things that are told in the Scriptures cannot do otherwise.

Because we believe and teach this Biblical truth as set forth by the blessed Savior, the enemies of Jesus and all those who teach what He taught, have named us "Can't-help-its." But the Scripture is God's word, and David said, "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." The word "settled" here means, fixed, established, made certain, etc. If the word of God was settled or settled in heaven, who settled, or established it there? And when and how did he do it? Surely it was God that settled it in His counsel when He determined or purposed in Himself what should take place in time. Having thus established it, or settled it, He could declare it with certainty, saying, "My counsel shall stand. " And on this certain basis He could say by Isaiah, "The Lord of Host hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24). Again, "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." And again, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). Not one word that He has spoken has returned unto Him void. Not one word has failed to accomplish that which He pleased and not one word that has not prospered in the thing whereunto He sent. This is a wonderful statement from a wonderful God. The word that went out of His mouth to Adam in the garden, though Adam disobeyed, "it did not return unto Him void but it accomplished that which He pleased, and prospered in the thing whereunto He sent it." If He had not

forbade Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam would not have sinned in eating of it, hence no sin would have entered into the world, nor the remedy for sin determined in God's counsel would have been of no use, and not one of the human family would have shouted God's praises for their redemption from sin. For there would have been no sin, hence, no redemption from sin; and the admonition: "And now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen, "(Jude 24,25) would never have been given. And no voice of redeemed sinners would ever have been lifted in His praise, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

Dear children of God who have a precious hope that you are one of this number, would you wish it to be otherwise? You see what you would have missed if you had not been a convicted sinner. You can understand and appreciate what Paul meant when he said: "But GOD BE THANKED THAT YOU WERE THE SERVANTS OF SIN, but ye have obeyed FROM THE HEART that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). If God had nothing to do with you becoming the servant of sin; and did not purpose it, nor did not arrange for it in His counsel, and it was not His will for you to be such, then why in the name of reason, should you thank Him for it? How could you thank Him for your deliverance from it? If you feel He had nothing to do with it, and there is any thanks due for it, why not thank the devil and yourself for it? If sin had not entered the world, it is evidence that there would not have been any multiplication of the human family. And Adam and Eve would have remained childless and with no knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus said: "Except a corn (grain) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Jesus did not mean to teach them a lesson in the germination of wheat, but He expressed a universal law in nature, by which He meant to assure them that He must die, or there would be no spiritual multiplication. There would none to come forth in his image. There was no multiplication until Adam and Eve died in trespasses and sin. The desire that is necessary in order to the multiplication did not come until after the transgression. It then came as a part of the curse of the law. God said unto the woman, "I will greatly

multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be unto thy husband and he shall rule over thee." The desire, without which there would have been no multiplication, was given as a curse because of transgression. I doubt, even now, that there ever would be another child born into the world if that desire was entirely removed. If man had not been made subject to vanity, he would not have yielded to temptation, but he was made subject, not willingly (on his part, for he had no will in the matter) but by the reason of Him who subjected the same in hope (Romans 8:20).

God's desire and expectation was that a man subject to vanity would fill the purpose for which he was making him, and for that reason He made him that way. Adam could have made a world as easy as he could have kept that law. The idea that he was "able to stand, but liable to fall," is to my mind, very foolish. I mean absolute inability. He did have what is called relative ability, which means he had some of the qualifications necessary to enable him to keep the law (hence, his accountability), but not all of them. It takes three things to constitute absolute ability: they are physical, mental and moral. Physically, means strength to perform; mental means the knowledge of how; and the moral means the will or desire to perform. Any one of these three constitutes relative ability. And two of them constitute relative ability. But no one has ever done anything without all three of them in operation. The physical and the mental are used as agents to accomplish the desires of the moral. The moral (will) suggest what to do; the mental directs how to do it; and the physical performs the work. It took more mental ability to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge than it would to have let it alone. One who did not have knowledge enough to reach out his hand and take hold of the fruit and put it to his mouth, could have let it alone, and it took more physical power to eat it than it would to have let it alone, for a paralytic with the lock jaw could have let his hands hang limp at his side and his mouth remain closed; while the one who eats it must have the strength to eat it and the knowledge of how to perform in doing so. But the knowledge of how and the strength to perform will never do anything until the will suggest what to do. Adam possessed abundant knowledge and strength to have turned away and let it alone, if his will had suggested that; but he lacked the will. The will said eat it, and when the will says do a thing his wisdom and his strength will make the attempt, and if they can do so they will do just what the will has suggested. This is a law of nature, and they cannot do otherwise. They are made that way and they cannot help it. Adams' ability was all on the side of eating at the time he ate the fruit, and he had no ability whatever, to not eat at that time.

## **THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED**

If Adam was "able to stand" of himself without divine aid, then he possessed more ability than God thought Jesus Christ possessed. God said of Christ, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways" (Psalm 91:11) "and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6). Do you suppose, dear reader, that Adam possessed greater ability than Christ had? If not, and God thought it was necessary to uphold Jesus Christ and keep Him in all of His ways to prevent Him from stumbling and falling, do you suppose Adam was "able to stand" without any such divine aid? Such a thought is preposterous; and yet all who hold that Adam was able to stand, teach this absurd and ridiculous idea. Jesus said in John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing," yet men insist that Adam could of himself have kept the law. The evidence is that no man can do anything except what he does. Leaving out predestination entirely, if God knew what we would do, we cannot do otherwise. If we can do that which God did not think we would do, then we can deceive Him, and prove that He did not know anything about it at all; but only thought it and was mistaken. No need to say, "O, we could do differently from the way we do, but God knew that we would not." For that only means "O, we could fool God and prove that He did not know what we would do, but He knows we will not." There is no escaping the conclusion that if we can do different from the way God had a mind that we will do, then we can deceive Him and prove beyond a doubt that He was mistaken. If, in the six thousand years that the world has stood, with millions of men and billions of other things acting every moment of that time, and yet, none of them have ever done anything except that which He foreknew they would do; the logic of events teaches us that such is impossible. But if God has "declared from ancient times the things that are not yet done," and God cannot lie, then they cannot fail to come to pass just as He has declared them. For the Scriptures, which is God's Word and a declaration of His counsel cannot be broken. They must be fulfilled. Jesus said so, and Peter emphasized it in the case of Judas. He said, "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). Everything Judas did in that whole tragic scene at the crucifixion of Christ was minutely described in the Scriptures (Psalm 109: 6-20), and it was not only determined and written that it should be fulfilled, but it was "needful." If it is a fact that what was written concerning a wicked wretch as Judas, must needs be fulfilled then it is reasonable that all other Scriptures must needs be fulfilled as well.

The following statement of Jesus covers all of the scriptures. It says: "But the scriptures (not just a part of them) **MUST** be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49). These are God's words, a declaration of His counsel; and He has determined that shall be fulfilled. He absolutely decreed that the word which He sent out by His messengers – the prophets – shall be fulfilled, and He has so firmly fixed it that Jesus says the "scriptures **CANNOT** be broken" (John 10:35). If this is true – and it is – then not one thing that has been foretold by the prophets can fail to come to pass. Hence, the absolute predestination of things, whether appearing good or evil, that has been told by the prophets is the truth. And there is no room for a reasonable doubt, that in a general way, all things that ever take place are embraced in prophecy. Thousands of most wicked things that have ever occurred were foretold in the scriptures, and in many instances occurred when those wicked men fulfilled what was foretold of them. It is written in the New Testament that: "This was done **THAT** the scriptures might be fulfilled" (Matthew 26:54; Mark 14:49; 15:28; Luke 4:21; John 13:18; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28; and 19:36). "THA7", "as used in these places, introduces a clause expressing purpose. As, "The man traveled, **THAT** he might regain his health." Those scriptures do not mean that it was the purpose of wicked men that fulfilled them to fulfill the scriptures, but they mean that it was God's purposes being fulfilled. Through the entire scene, at the crucifixion of Christ as act after act of wickedness was committed, just as it was written in the scriptures that it should be. The writers that recorded the fulfillment of them said repeatedly, "This was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled." Meaning they were done for that purpose. And yet it is made very clear that it was not the purpose of those who did those things to "fulfill the scriptures;" for it is positively said of them that "Because they knew Him not, neither the voices of the prophets, which were read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him, and though they found no cause of death in Him yet they desired Pilate, that He should be put to death," (Acts 13:27-28), "And when they had **FULFILLED ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN OF HIM**, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre" (verse 28). This makes it very clear that God has purposed that everything, both good and "bad," shall come to pass just as He has declared them by the prophets. If all things foretold in the scriptures are purposes to come to pass just as He has foretold them, who has the right to say that all are not purposed of Him to come to pass just as they do? Jesus said in Matthew 23:34 and 35, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye **SHALL** kill and cruces, and some of them ye **SHALL** scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; **THAT** upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on

the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35). What did Jesus say that they should kill these prophets and wise men and scribes for? He says they SHALL do it "THAT upon them may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth." Did they kill righteous Abel? Here it is stated as His absolute purpose THAT they SHALL do this in order to bring down upon them all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zecharias. Just here I will ask those who charge that God would be unjust if He punished a man for that which that man could not help; could those men help what CAIN DID four thousand years before they were born? Not only are they held to account for the shedding of the blood of Abel, but for ALL the righteous blood from Abel down to this day, is to be visited upon them. Just here all the weak-kneed and faint-hearted will do like their forefathers did when Christ was here on earth. They will say, "These are hard saying, who can hear them?" and they will turn back and walk no more with Him. Here is expressed His absolute purpose that they shall kill these wise men, prophets and scribes, that He may visit them with the punishment due all the righteous blood that has been shed since the foundation of the world.

I have been in the Old School Baptist church 43 years. When I joined them, nearly all who called themselves Primitive or Old School Baptist, believed this hard doctrine. But I have lived to see thousands of them turn back and walk no more with us because of these hard sayings. But let us not stop here, for the half has not yet been told.

In Jeremiah 10:23, we read: "Lord, I know that the way of man is NOT IN HIMSELF; it is NOT IN MAN that walketh to DIRECT HIS STEPS." Now let us reason just a little on this text. Jeremiah says he knows that it is "NOT in man that walketh to direct his own steps." Did Jeremiah tell the truth? If he did, then every one who teaches that IT IS in man that walketh to direct his steps is teaching a falsehood. Every doctrine that is based on the idea that man can direct his own steps is based upon a falsehood.

The next thought then is if man does not and cannot direct his own steps, then by whom, are his steps directed? Solomon answers that question by saying: "A man's heart deviseth his way, but THE LORD DIRECTETH HIS STEPS" (Proverbs 16:9). We will add to this one more statement from Solomon. He says in Proverbs 20:24: "Man's goings are OF THE LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" MAN'S GOINGS (in the plural, not just one steps of his goings, but all of them) is OF THE LORD. In all candor and all seriousness, dear brethren, are not these three last

scriptures cited the truth? If they are, then beyond shadow of doubt, the predestination of all things is the truth. God does not just merely permit man to walk as he does, but He "directeth his steps." His "goings is of the Lord." Not one step has ever been taken by man on earth that God did not determine in His counsel to direct. If He did not determine in His course to direct the steps prior to man's going just what man's steps should be, then He determined something since then and was not of the same mind now that He was before. But He is an unchangeable God with an immutable purpose! (Hebrews 6:17).

Solomon said again, "There are many devices in a man 's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Proverb 19:21). David said in Psalm 33:10,11: "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Then he adds, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart unto ALL generations." Not one thought has God ever had concerning all generations that was not just what He had determined in His counsel! That counsel was so complete and all reaching, that God has never had a thought of anything that ever transpired in this world throughout all generations that was not embraced in His determinate counsel. Hence, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever. THE THOUGHTS of His heart unto all generations" (Psalm 33:11). Not AND the thought (singular) of His heart, but THE THOUGHTS (plural) of His heart. His counsel is the thoughts of His heart to all generations.

Isaiah said, "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought, so shall it comes to pass; as I HAVE PURPOSED, SO SHALL IT STAND" (Isaiah 14:24). Here again, His purpose and His thoughts are co-extensive. There is not a single thought of His heart unto all generations that He has not determined in His counsel shall stand and come to pass just as He thought it.

To illustrate, suppose that I, in my early life had sat down to study out my course for the future. I consult my will as to the end or goal, or final ambition toward which I shall strive, or devote my life in an effort to attain. And to the full extent of my wisdom and understanding, I think out and plan every detail of things in my domain that will come under my control, direction and supervision. To the full extent of my ability, I think out every thing that is necessary to be done by me or others who are, or will be, at my disposal, direction or control, and having thought it all out, and am satisfied that I have made no mistake, I determine that this course shall be carried out in every detail with perfect precision, in every thing that I shall do, and in every step

taken by those under my control. Of course, as a man I am imperfect. I will, in my deliberations, have many thoughts that I have to abandon. I find that they were not the right things to do. They would not work out the end desired. This is because of my imperfections. If I had been perfect in wisdom and understanding I would not have had any imperfect thoughts. God is said to be perfect in knowledge (Job 36:4). And His understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5). He never has to change His thoughts, abandon His thoughts, or take a second thought concerning any thing. For the accommodation of our finite minds, God has seen fit to set forth all of His entire course, both with regard to His own actions and the actions of all things else that come in His domain under His directions as His creatures, as having been thought out and determined by Him in counsel before the world began. In His course, His own will was His only counselor. In Isaiah 40:13,14, the very important and pertinent questions are asked: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord or being His counselor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding?"

The meaning of all these very pertinent questions is that no one taught Him anything. He has never consulted anything but His own will as to what the future should be. It was He Himself, who gave futurity to the things that are future. There would have been nothing in the future if He had not so willed, determined, planned, arranged for it to come and brought it to pass. Who, but an infidel, will deny this? If this is true, then the predestination of all things is the truth beyond a shadow of a doubt. These questions are pertinent to ask those who hold to the foreknowledge of God in all things, but deny His predestination of all things. They say that He foreknew just what men would do in time, because He had the power of foresight to look down into time and see just what man would do. He, therefore, according to them, foreknew all things.

When I was a small boy I had never seen an elephant. I lived near the turnpike between one county seat and another. There was a circus passing from one town to the other on the turnpike. Nearly everybody went out to the little village on the highway to see the circus, and especially the elephants, pass. The turnpike was perfectly straight for several miles. The merchant at the place had a telescope. Many of the larger ones present, who had never seen an elephant, looked through the telescope and saw the elephants at a distance and learned how they looked before they got there. But we little fellows had to wait until the elephants got there to see, and thereby learn how they looked. However, what they knew about how the elephants looked they

learned by seeing them before they got there, just as we learned it by seeing them when they got there. They learned how they looked by the telescopic view that they got of them before they got there. All Arminians in the universe who pretend to believe in the foreknowledge of God, claim He learned how things will be in time by seeing them coming before hand, just as these people learned how the elephants looked by seeing them coming before they got there. Under that theory, God as truly learned what He knows about actions of men by foreseeing them acting, as we learned it when seeing them act. Accordingly, their view is that God as surely learned from the creatures themselves as we learned it from them beside the turnpike. The difference is this: He has a telescopic vision and we have not.

All of you that teach that God foreknows things because He looked down before time and saw them coming, stand up here and behold your ugly old Arminian faces in the Bible looking-glass. Here it is: "Who taught Him knowledge and shewed unto Him the way of understanding?" Answer thou Him, will you? If a vision should open up to you so that you could look down to the tenth generations and see the people of that time in action just as they will be when that time shall arrive, you would learn from them by foreseeing them in action, just what their actions will be at that time. You learned it from them just as surely as those who live at that time and see them in action will learn it from them.

Truly did Moses say, "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deuteronomy 32:31). Our Rock God- challenges all who believe in such a god as that to produce one that can do as He does. He says, "And who, as I, shall call, and declare it, and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them" (Isaiah 44:7). This, our Rock (God) affirms that He not only appointed the ancient people, but He also appointed the things that are coming and shall come and He challenges them to show unto the people another god that can do such things. Not only did He appoint the things that are coming and shall come, or as the Geneva translation puts it, "Since I appointed the ancient people and what is at hand, and what things are to come" but He decreed them from ancient times. Our Lord is the only God that can and has done this, our enemies themselves being judges. They all deny that their god has done this. Shout on, ye dear old servants of the most high God, for if He is for us, who can be against us? One man with this God is greatly in the majority.

He has also "Declared from ancient times the THINGS that are not yet done"

(not saying, I see them fore-coming, and therefore I can declare them) but, saying, "My counsel shall stand and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE" (Isaiah 46:10). For further proof that the things God has declared by His prophets, are a declaration of His counsel, which He has declared shall stand, see Jeremiah 49:20. The greatest part of this chapter is a declaration by the prophet of the things that shall befall Edom. And in the 20th verse, the prophet said: "Therefore hear ye the COUNSEL OF THE LORD against Edom," meaning that all of this that God is declaring by him concerning Edom, is but a declaration of His counsel, which shall stand and surely come to pass. Then He begins the next chapter (50) by speaking against Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans. And He pronounces the most terrible things that shall come upon her by the hands of other nations. And in the 45th verse, He says, "Therefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord that He hath taken against Babylon, and His purposes that He hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans, etc." Here again that which is declared by the prophet is called the "counsel of the Lord," and in this place it is called His "purposes which He hath purposed." There is no room whatever for doubt that all prophecy is but the declaration of God's eternal counsel.

Again, this is clearly shown in Acts 4:24-28. In this scripture we have the Apostolic Confession of Faith and it declares very clearly just what I am herein declaring. It reads: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice TO GOD with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE" They did nothing there on that occasion, except what GOD'S HAND AND HIS COUNSEL, HAD PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED TO BE DONE. What was done by God's hand, as well as His counsel, to make those things that were done on that day, certain, was not done on that day, but was done before. Further on, I will show the part that God's hand took in determining beforehand the certainty of those things that took place on that day. But for the present I am showing that prophecy is only a declaration of God's counsel. In almost everything that they did on that occasion, was declared by those that recorded it, that this was done "that the scriptures might be fulfilled " And while what they did is what God's hand and COUNSEL determined before to be done, it is recorded

that when they did all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree. That which was written of Him was that which God had declared by the mouth of the prophets should be done to Him on that day. And it was what God's hand and His counsel had determined before should be done there and then.

It is recorded in Acts 3:18, "But those things, which God before spewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, HE HATH SO FULFILLED." I think I have clearly shown that prophecy is the determinate counsel of God revealed to the prophets, and declared by them. It is written, "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

The prophets are God's messengers, declaring His counsel, all of which must stand and be fulfilled, for it is written again: "He performeth the counsel of His messengers" (Isaiah 44:26). But let us turn back now and see what part God's hand took in determining before, the things which those men did, who met as one great mob, to put the blessed Son of God to death. The hand performed the same part that the hand of the watchmaker performed who designed and made the watch. Although the design might be perfect, yet if the hand was not able to do the work with precision, according to the design, the watch when completed, would not fill the purpose for which it was intended; hence, the hand defeated the purpose of the watchmaker, and determined it to be a failure. In the counsel of his will, the watchmaker had determined to make a perfect time piece; but his hand could not perform the task assigned to it, hence, his watch was a failure.

God, in the counsel of His will determined to make a world. Yea, to make THE WORLD with all of its various and intricate parts, His wisdom devised the plan for it, and His hand performed in the making of it with such perfect precision, that nothing ever failed to fill with perfect precision the place and time for which it was designed, and to do with perfect exactness, the thing or things for which it was intended. It is said in Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord bath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." David said that the wicked are God's sword (Psalm 17:13). He made them for "the day of evil; " and nearly five hundred years before the coming of Christ, God said by the mouth of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of host; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand on the little ones" (Zech. 13:7; see Mark 14:27). Could the sword have refused to obey His call and slept on over the time for which it was made? Nay, verily, God in His

counsel before He made the sword had determined where and when and for what purpose He would use it. And the workmanship of His hand was so perfect, that each of those wicked men that were to take part in the smiting, were born into the world at the right time, and were at the right place at the right time, and in the right frame of mind to do whatever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done. No human invention or creation has ever worked with such marvelous precision! Although it had been four thousand years since God's hand performed in the creation, yet everything worked with such wonderful precision that these men were there on the very day, and at the very hour that was set in God's counsel for them to be there, and do whatsoever His hand and His counsel had determined before to be done. They could not have done it one hour sooner, nor have put it off one hour later. They sought to do it before the hour had arrived, but Jesus said, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20). Jesus prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him (Mark 14:35). But it was not possible and it did not pass from Him. In John 12:27, He said, "Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." No, they could not have done it one hour sooner, nor have put it off one hour later. This must be what is called "Absolute Predestination." Every thing that God made works with as perfect precision as was manifested in this case.

David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). The firmament is here given as a specimen of God's handiwork. Was this spoken by inspiration? If so, we must accept it as a declaration of God's infallible truth. The word "handiwork", in theology, means the great arc or expanse over our heads, in which are placed the atmosphere, the clouds, and in which the stars appear to be placed and are really seen. There is not a thing in the firmament above us that is not governed in all of its movements according to God's absolute decree. In Psalm 148: David said that the angels and all of God's hosts (which include people), and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the heavens of heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens praise the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. "He hath also stablished them forever and ever. He hath made a decree which shall not pass."

He then goes on and includes fire and hail, snow and vapors, and stormy wind as fulfilling His word. There is not a body, and object, nor an element in the firmament, seen nor unseen, the course, movement, and effect of which is not in accordance with and embraced in God's "decree which shall not pass" (Psalm 148:6). Job said, "He made a decree for the rain, and way

for the lighting for His thunder" (Job 28:26). Now if the firmament sheweth God's handiwork (Psalm 19:1) and we find that every thing in the firmament is under, and moves according to God's unchangeable decree, it must follow as an irresistible conclusion that all His handiwork is the same way. The course and movement of all things made by His hand are established forever, and are under His decree that shall not pass. There is no escaping this conclusion if the firmament is a fair specimen of "His handiwork."

Why should inspiration call our attention to the firmament, in which everything that exists there, is under God's absolute and unchangeable decree, and where their every movement is unchangeably fixed, if it did not mean to convey the idea that all His handiworks are the same way? David said, "All Thy works shall praise Thee" (Psalm 145:10). "All Thy works" mean everything that He has made. This includes the devil and all wicked people. They all praise Him in magnifying His terrible justice in the condemnation of wickedness. They do not do so intelligently or intentionally, yet they all praise Him in the sense that they are exactly what He intended them to be, and are moving according as He determined. All things are exactly as He intended them to be, to the intent that they all bring forth praise to Him. In all His dealings with Pharaoh, it is said of God, "And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearken not unto them; as the Lord had said" (Exodus 7:13). Paul, in making reference to this incident wrote, "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Romans 9:17). Again, we see the same in the crucifixion of Christ, for it is written, "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28). It is in this way that God manifest both His mercy and His justice. His mercy and his justice are attributes of His divine nature and it was in this manner He is pleased to manifest them. Everything in this life is so unalterably fixed that man cannot by "taking thought" (Matthew 6:27) change the events that are to come on the morrow. Jesus in admonishing His disciples not to take any thought for the future of what they should eat, drink or wear, finally asked them, "Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? " (Matthew 6:28). Then He added, "If ye be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought of the rest?" (Luke 12:26). If the language of Jesus has any meaning whatever, men cannot change the least thing in the affairs of this life. This brings us back to the statement of Jeremiah, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

There is no doubt that Solomon told the truth when He said, "Many goings are of the Lord, how can a man then understand his own way? " (Proverbs 20:24). Solomon also said, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as rivers of waters, He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). This was proven in the case of Pharaoh, and in the case of Saul and others we could mention. If He turns the king's heart whithersoever He will, then He must also turn the hearts of the common people in the same way. And we are not lacking in proof on this point: David, speaking of the Egyptians in Psalms 105:25, said of God, "He turned their heart to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants." Stephen says, "The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live" (Acts 7:19). Keep in mind that God "turneth their heart" to do this. All the cruelties perpetrated and inflicted upon Israel in Egypt by the Egyptians, God turned their hearts to do it. They were doing just what He had turned their hearts to do, and just what He swore to Abraham that they should do. He swore to Abraham saying, "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). And when the set time came for it to begin, "He turned their hearts to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants." (Psalm 105:25).

Reader, what think you? Do you believe this, or are you an infidel? Here are four hundred years of wicked, cruel, and sinful treatment by a whole nation, to God's servants, which God had not only previously purposed and had sworn that they should do it, but which He turned their hearts to do. The man who can accept this (those who cannot are infidels, for this is the precise statement of the Bible) has no grounds whatever to raise any objections to the predestination of all things. For if God did purpose four hundred years of wickedness to be practiced by a nation, and turn their hearts to do this wickedness, and He still remain just, then every argument that has ever been made against the predestination of all things falls to the ground, and is swept away like chaff before the wind. These are stubborn facts that cannot be denied.

Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens." Let us keep in mind that we are now considering purposed things. "A time to every purpose under heaven."

Solomon was not talking about man's purpose, but of God's purposes. He then begins to numerate some of the things that are purposed and the first

things that he mentions are: "A time to be born, and a time to die." This proves beyond doubt that he is talking about things that God has purposed and the time for their occurrence, for we know that man does not purpose his own birth and the time for it.

He then proceeds to mention some things that are purposed and have a set time for their occurrence. He says, "A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

Solomon has here presented the things that men engage in here in this life, from the most trivial things, such as children gathering stones together and then casting them away. Even such things as one tearing a hole in his pants and having it sewed up ("A time to rend, and a time to sew), and on up to the greatest calamity that can befall a people, which is war. All these things are purposed of God, and the time set for them to take place. Solomon begins this statement by the most sweeping expression that he could employ: He says, "To EVERYTHING there is a SEASON and a time to EVERY purpose under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). The word season means a suitable time. Not only just a time set, but also a time that suits the One that set it for the occurrence of the thing purposed, or a proper time.

This brings us back again to the statement of Jeremiah: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). There is not a step in man's life from the cradle to the grave that the Lord does not direct. ("A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps" – Proverb 16:9; "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord" – Proverb 16:1; "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" – Proverb 16:33; "The Lord has made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" – Proverb 16:4). Even children gathering stones and casting them at birds are so directed in their movements that they cannot bring one sparrow to the ground unless God so directs. Jesus says: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one shall not fall without your Father." Then He adds: "But the very hairs of you head are numbered" (Matthew

10:29- 30).

Do you suppose God made the hairs of the head, and then counted them? My, wouldn't that be a job! Thousands of children being born each day and God counting the number of hairs each one has on its head? Perish the thought! They were numbered in His determinate counsel before He made the world. He determined the number of hairs that each head should have and that number is with Him in His perfect mind.

He even gave the seas their decreed places and broke up the fallow ground for them. God said by Jeremiah, "Will ye not fear Me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?" (Jeremiah 5:22). Also, God said to Job: "Oh who shut up the sea with doors, when it break forth as if it issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness as a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it MY DECREED PLACE, and set bars and doors, and said hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:10). Hence, every element in nature is under God's perpetual decree. The raging, heaving, tossing waves of the sea can neither go beyond nor stop short of the place that God has decreed for them. His decree says, "Hither to shalt thou come and no further." And every thing that lives and moves in the sea is also in His decree and has a time set by Him for them to take each and every particle of food that they eat. From the greatest monster to the smallest insect that moves in the sea, all wait upon the Lord to take their meat in due season. Did God purpose for them to eat? Then to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. David said: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works: in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both great and small beasts. There goeth the ships; there is that Leviathan, which Thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That THOU givest them they gather; Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good" (Psalm 104:24-28).

Due season here means the set of God. The ships' crews and passengers; the whale (leviathan) and everything that lives in the sea are included in this sweeping statement of the Psalmist as waiting upon God to give them meat at His appointed time. As every step of man is directed by Him, so too, every movement of these things that inhabit the sea are directed by Him.

Was it by chance that Jonah and the ship he was on, and the whale that God had prepared to swallow him, and the wind that rocked the floundering bark all met at the same place at the same time? Was it by chance that the ship's crew concluded that the storm had been sent because of some one on the ship? Have you ever in all of history read of another case where, in time of a storm, the mariners concluded that the storm had come because of some one that was on the vessel and cast lots to find out who it was and then cast overboard the one that the lot fell on? Was it by chance that they thought to cast lots in this case to see for whom the storm had been sent? Was it by chance that the lot fell on Jonah? Not at all! These things, like all things else, were what God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done. And all things in nature are His agents and are directed by His Providence to the carrying into effect "what His hand and His counsel determined before to be done."

We will next notice what the Lord Himself says about the king of Assyria and his people. In Isaiah 10, He says, "O Assyria, the ROD of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the street. Howbeit, HE MEANETH NOT SO, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart (already!) to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he sayeth, are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Charchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As MY HAND HATH FOUND THE KINGDOM OF THE IDOLS, AND WHOSE GRAVEN IMAGES DID EXCEL THEM OF JERUSALEM AND OF SAMARIA? Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the LORD HAS PERFORMED HIS WHOLE WORK UPON MOUNT ZION AND ON JERUSALEM, I WILL PUNISH THE STOUT HEART OF THE KING OF ASSYRIA AND THE GLORY OF HIS HIGH LOOKS. For he saith by the strength of MY HAND have I done it and by MY WISDOM; for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man, and MY HAND hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped." That is precisely what natural men would conclude.

Then God said: "Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith?"

Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were not wood?" This old king with all the arrogance of the devil himself, goes into Jerusalem and willfully murdered the inhabitants, robs them of all their honor, their young, their craftsmen, and treasures, takes all of their property that he wants and treads the people down like the mire of the street. He acted just as freely, and as cruelly and as wickedly as any one ever did in this world, and boasted of his wonderful wisdom and prudence; and yet God was using him, and directing his every step just as truly as any man ever used an ax, or a saw, or a rod, or a staff. If there is any meaning to God's own Word, He, Himself, was using this old king and his armies to accomplish His purposes on Israel, as surely and as truly as men use the ax, and the saw, and the rod, and the staff to accomplish their purposes. God's language will not allow of any other conclusion.

The language shows this king and his armies to be just as powerless to do more than God purposed or less than He purposed as the implements which He mention have in the hand of them that use them. No language could be used to state more positively that God absolutely purposed and directed every step of this old king and his armies in all that they did in this affair. And God Himself still further proves that the whole thing was decreed of Him before He quit speaking. For He goes on to say, "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of host, send among his fat ones, leanness; and under his glory He shall kindle a burning like unto fire, and the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His holy One for a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest and his fruitful field both soul and body, and they shall be as when a standard bearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Israel, unto the Mighty God. For though Thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return. The consumption DECREED shall overflow with righteousness."

What was the consumption decreed?

First: God decreed that the king of Assyria, and his hosts, should, after his own corrupt will and the evil desire of his own wicked and corrupt heart (for it was "In his heart to cut off nations not a few"), make a raid on Israel and overcome them by force, killing many of them, and taking many of them

captive, and entering to the city of Jerusalem, killing the people and treading the people, men, women and children, down like the mire of the street, taking the spoil and the prey, and gloating in his wicked deeds. Every thing he did in consuming of Israel, he did it to satisfy his own wicked desire for gain and self-exaltation. And in doing this he consumed Israel, killing many and carrying away captive as a prey and taking whatever he wanted of their possessions as spoil, acting under his own unrestrained lust, just like all other wicked men act in the practice of their wickedness, just as freely as men ever act, and his every act was decreed of God to consume Israel. And the consumption decreed was to overflow with righteousness (relative to the righteous judgment of God).

Did I say that he acted freely? Yes, in the doing of just what God's hand and His counsel had determined to be done. No more, nor no less. Free to do what God had decreed for him to do, but not free to not do it. If it is "not in man that walketh to direct his steps," as is affirmed by Jeremiah, but "God directeth his step," as Solomon asserts that He does, then we know that man is not free to take any steps, except what God directs. And as God does not wait for the time to arrive before He determines where He will direct man's steps, it follows that man's steps were predetermined of God.

I am aware that men, in their natural walk, think and feel that they direct their own steps. If the way is rough or muddy, they look where they place their feet, and they feel like it is left wholly with them as to where they step, but is that a fact? Not if Jeremiah and Solomon told the truth. Men not feeling, nor thinking, that God is directing their steps, do not prove that it is not true. The king of Assyria did not think so. God said, "Against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and take the prey and tread them down like the mire of the street" (Isaiah 10:6).

Then he adds: "Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is IN HIS HEART to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isaiah 10: 7-8). "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (verse 12). The king of Assyria felt sure that he, by his own wisdom and prudence, of which he boasted mightily, had directed his own steps in the whole affair. For he said, "By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent" (Isaiah 10:13). No man was ever more sure that he was a "free moral agent" than this man felt; and yet he was just as free as the ox, or the saw, or the rod, or the staff, is in the hands of him that uses it. His

freedom was only in the realm of God's will, or His determinate counsel. Beyond this, he was not free.

As Elder Walter Neal once said: when you go to the table and there is coffee, tea, milk and water on it, you take which ever you want to take, but what is it that controls your "want to"? There is some unseen influence that controls and shapes your mind and thus controls your action. Who is it that has control over all conditions, circumstances, and influence? Who was it that made it possible for these alternatives to exist? Who was it that made it possible for such things to affect your mind? Did He do it on purpose or accidentally?

Men always think when they are doing such things, that they are free to do them or let them alone. Herod and Pilate, and all the others, who took part in the crucifixion of Christ, thought they were freely directing their own steps in the matter. They never once thought God was directing their steps, and that they were doing what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

Joseph's brothers did not think that God was directing their steps and that they were fulfilling His purpose when they sold him and lied to their father about it (see Genesis 15:13 together with 37:28). But Joseph told them that they indeed thought an evil against him; but "God meant IT (their evil deed) unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive"

Pharaoh did not think that God was directing his steps, and that he was fulfilling God's purpose when he was refusing to let Israel go; but the Lord had told Moses to go and say unto him, "The Lord God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness" (Exodus 7:16).

God had previously told Moses however, that He would harden Pharaoh's heart that he should not let them go. "but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exodus 4:21). He finally told Moses to tell Pharaoh that, "In very deed for thus cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power, and that My Name may be declared throughout the earth" (Exodus 9:16). Every step that Pharaoh took in the drama was directed by the Lord for the fulfillment of this expressed purpose of God. For four hundred years prior to this time the Egyptians had thought that in their hatred and subtle dealings with Israel in the cruel afflictions that they heaped upon them, that they were directing their own steps. But they were only doing

what God had purposed, and had sworn to Abraham that they should do, and what He Himself had turned their hearts to do. He even told them how many years they would serve. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall sever them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. . . but in the fourth generation they shall come thither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15: 13, 16).

I know that the natural man cannot receive this, but it is God's truth as sure as the Bible is God's book. Even the natural man, though he cannot believe it, can find it clearly taught in the Bible if he will read the Bible.

### **THE "SHALLS" OF THE PROPHETS EXPRESS FUTURISTIC DETERMINATION**

In Daniel 12:10, we read: "Many shall be purified, made white and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Our limited brethren will readily agree that the first, second, fourth and fifth clauses of the above sentence are expressing the purpose of God, but they balk at the third —"but the wicked shall do wickedly"- Strange, isn't it?

Let us quote it again. "Many SHALL be purified, made white, and tried" Here are the three first clauses in the full sentence. Let one of those who claim to be "Primitive Baptist" get into a discussion with an old-time Arminian, and he will insist on the word shall as expressing determination when used in the second and third person. He will quote: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1: 23). He will insist, "All that the Father giveth unto Me shall come unto Me" (John 6:37), and, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). And again, "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation," etc. (John 5:24), and, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). Let his opponent say that these do not express purpose, but are merely foretelling, and it is possible for them to fail to come to pass, for sinners can refuse to be saved, and it is possible for the dead to fail to hear, and if they hear, they may not live. If his opponent says that these "shalls" only express possibilities, which may, or may not come to pass; or that it is possible for any or all of them to fail – all of which is true if they do not express determination, - he will surely object. It is not only possible, but is highly probable, if the scripture can fail to come to pass or be fulfilled. Let his opponent argue that

the three clauses first in the sentence that we are considering, do not express purpose, but only express a possibility that men can prevent, and he will vehemently deny it, and argue that these things (shalls) cannot fail to come to pass. He will argue that God has said they shall, and heaven and earth may pass away, but His word shall not fail. But let the same Primitive Baptist get into a discussion with an Old School, or real Primitive Baptist, who will argue that the next clause in the same sentence expresses purpose when it says, "But the wicked SHALL do wickedly," and he will then argue just as vehemently that the word SHALL in that clause does not express purpose. That the wicked could keep from doing wickedly, and brand all who say that the wicked can't help doing wickedly as "CAN'T HELP ITS."

### **THE "CAN'T HELP IT" CHARGE BY CONDITIONALISTS**

Let us see if they can help doing wickedly. Peter says of them: "Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin" (II Peter 2:14). Paul said, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Then the man who has no faith cannot do anything else but sin. Jesus, speaking of men, compares them to trees, and says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matthew 7: 15-19). Then Luke records, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil, for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:13cf).

In Matthew, it is recorded: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit also good, or else make the tree evil and his fruit also evil, for the tree is known by his fruit. O ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:33-35). We learn from these statements of Jesus, that an evil man can no more help doing that which is evil, than an evil tree can help bringing forth evil fruit. Has Jesus exaggerated things in His picture that He has drawn? It was the decree of God expressed in the creation, that every thing should: "bring forth after its kind" (Genesis 1:11; 12; 21; 24; 25). Jesus has argued this question on the basis of that decree, and says positively that they cannot

do otherwise. Who is it that is constantly declaring that God would be unjust if He punished a man for what he could not help, and that idea, as "Can't help it" doctrine? Let them tell how the evil tree can help bearing evil fruit, if they can, or brand Jesus as a "Can't help it." Can any of Adam's race help being sinners? Since they are born sinners, can they help sinning? Can those that are accustomed to doing evil learn to do well any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots? (Jeremiah 13:23).

The God-limiting Baptists claim to believe that God foreknew all things and that He chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and left no chance for the rest of the human family to be saved, and that He knew before He made Adam that he would sin, and He determined before He made him that He would condemn his whole posterity to death for the sin of this one man, Adam, although they would not be in existence when this one man committed this sin, and of course, they could not help it; yet He condemned all of his offspring to death for what they could not help, and determined that when He should bring time to an end, He would assign all mankind, except His elect, to everlasting torment, without ever giving them a shadow of a chance to escape it! And yet, when we declare our belief in the predestination of all things, they hold up their hands in holy (?) horror, and cry out, "Unjust, unjust, unjust."

They had no chance in the garden to keep from being made sinners by Adam; and they have had no chance since to change their sinful natures; and no more chance to not do evil than the evil tree has to not bear evil fruit.

Now as I have made this charge against the God-limiting Baptists, I will say that if any of them believe that any of Adam's race, except the elect, has ever had any chance whatever to escape everlasting punishment, and will write me and tell me when, where, and how they had that chance, I will correct that charge as publicly as I have made it. And if they believe that any of the human race could help being made sinners, and will explain how they could have helped it I will also withdraw that charge publicly. If they do not do that, my picture of their position will stand as stated.

But let us further consider the language of the prophets, and see if we cannot establish beyond doubt that the "shalls" in prophecy are used to express determination. When I was a boy, our schoolbooks, both our grammars and dictionaries taught us that shall, in the second and third person, denoted, or expressed, determination. And I have not yet been convinced that it is not the truth as regards prophecy.

We will start with the book of Daniel. The words shall and shalt, if I mistake not, occur 239 times in that book alone, and there is not a place in the entire book, when spoken by the prophet in the second and third person, but what is used to express God's purpose or determination of things that shall come in the future. Then there are only two or three places where it is used by any one else, where it was not used to express determination. The word does not occur in the first chapter, but it occurs 23 times in the second chapter. And in every place, except in the ninth verse, it expresses determination. In that place the king said to his wise men, "Tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can chew me the interpretation. " Even in this place it is used to emphasize the fact that they should tell him his dream or they should be put to death. The other 22 times "shalls" are spoken by Daniel, showing this king the interpretation of his dream, all of which was a revelation from God of the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, all of which God had determined. In the fourth chapter, in interpreting the king's dream, he tells the king: "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High which is come upon my Lord the king, that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will " (Daniel 4:24).

Earlier in the same chapter, Daniel tells him: "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17). Daniel used the word shall nine times in this fourth chapter, telling this king the things that the Most High has decreed shall come to pass.

We will step back to the second chapter. In it the king had a most wonderful dream, and it had gone from him and he demanded of the wise men of his kingdom who pretended they could interpret dreams, that they tell his dream and the interpretation thereof, and they could not do it, and he passed a decree to put all the wise men of his kingdom to death. But God gave Daniel the interpretation. In order to prove conclusively that God was revealing the things which He had decreed should come to pass, as He had declared them by Daniel, saying these things shall come to pass, and to show that these "shalls" were all intended to express God's decree of the thing contained in his dream, I will quote a part of Daniel's language. The first shall used by Daniel in this chapter, (that contains 23 "shalls") is in the twenty-eighth verse. It reads as follows: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets

and maketh known to King Nebuchadnezzar, what shall be in the latter days." In telling him of things God had shown should be in the latter days, he said: "Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them to pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the brass and the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and become as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Then he said, "This is the dream, and we will tell the king the interpretation thereof " He then tells the king what it means and in doing so, he tells the king of four kingdoms that shall rise up and go down, and he then says, "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand forever. For as much as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces, the iron, and the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath shown unto the king what shall come to pass hereafter, and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure. "

Can any one read this and not see that all these things are determined of God? In his other dream in the fourth chapter, Daniel told him that the thing that he gave as the interpretation was the decree of the Most High God. And yet this dream and its interpretation were of far greater importance than the other one. That only dealt with Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom and what men should do to him and it; while this one deals with Nebuchadnezzar and the ending of his kingdom, and the rise of four other natural kingdoms (Persian, Mede-Persian, Greece, and Rome) like his was, and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, which He said shall brake in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and shall stand forever.

If the things contained in his other dream were decreed of God, and Daniel said they were, then there cannot be any doubt but that every thing contained in this one was also decreed of God. Hence, every "shall" used by the prophet in the second and fourth chapters were used to express or declare God's decree, that which He had determined in His counsel. The third chapter has no word by the prophet in it, but it has the word "shall" in it six times, and five of them are used to express what the king had decreed, and the other means "can" or "is able." It says, "Where is the God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Keep in mind this was not a prophetic "shall."

This brings us to the fifth chapter of Daniel, which has but four "shalls" in it and they are the king's, and they tell what shall be done for the man who can read the handwriting on the wall. There is not a prophetic "shall" in it, but it proves the truth of the statement of Jeremiah when he said, "O Lord I know, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." When the king's wise men could not read the writing Daniel came forward and read it. But before he read it he told the king, Belshazzar, about his father, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, all of which was by the decree of the Most High, and said to him, "And thou, his son, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and hast brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, and thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor know; and the God in whose hand is thy breath, and WHOSE ARE ALL THY WAYS, hast thou not glorified " "And whose are all thy ways?" Yes, that is exactly what he said.

I must say that I have never read after a stronger Predestinarian than the prophet, Daniel. He even declares that all the ways of this old king are God's!

I would ask the objector to this doctrine, does God claim anything as His of which He did not even determine its existence? He claims by the mouth of His prophet Daniel that all this wicked king's ways are His. He must mean that they are His in the sense He purposed them in His determinate counsel where and when He determined all future, and which He directs in His universal Providence. If this is not true then I would be glad for any one who objects to this position to write me and tell me in what sense they are God's ways.

In the fifth chapter of Daniel, the word "shall" occurs five times; and the word "decree" eight times; and the word "purpose" one time; but there is not a prophetic "shall" in it. In the seventh chapter, the word "shall" occurs twenty times, and in every place it an expression of God's absolute decree.

### **GOD'S "SHALLS" AND HIS ABSOLUTE DECREE**

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, every place the word "shall" appears expresses God's absolute decree. I will quote the first two places and the last two following. The two first used are in the following quotation from Daniel's vision. He says: "I saw in the night vision, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him

dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (verses 13,14). These are the two first "shalls" and any one can see and know that they are expressing God's absolute decree of the coming of Christ and the setting up of and the perpetuity of His kingdom.

The last two say: "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey Him" (verse 27). No one, who is not biased by prejudice, can fail to see at a glance that God has here revealed to His prophet the things that He has determined should come to pass. If God had only determined that a part of the things which He showed Daniel in this vision should come to pass, but had not yet determined whether the other part should come to pass or not, then why did He move Daniel to declare that part which He had not yet determined should come to pass?

The eighth chapter of Daniel contains another vision of Daniel's wherein God is showing him what shall come to pass in the last end of the "indignation." At the end of Daniel's vision, he saw as it were, the appearance of a man, and he heard a man's voice, and it said, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision," so he, Gabriel, came near him and talked with him, and said, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation for at the time appointed the end shall be" (verse 19). Isaiah has prophesied of this indignation that shall be at the time appointed. God said, by the mouth of Isaiah: "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in My highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdom of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land "(Isaiah 13:3-5).

The weapons of His indignation are men. He called the Assyrian the "rod of His anger", and David says the "wicked is His sword." He calls Jacob His battle-ax and weapons of war (Jeremiah 51:20). When He has mustered His host for the battle, the weapons of His indignation, to punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, He tells how He will do it. He says: "Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed

to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished" (Isaiah 13:16).

How, and by whom, is this to come about? Listen: "BEHOLD I WILL STIR UP THE MEDES AGAINST THEM WHICH SHALL NOT REGARD SILVER, AND AS FOR GOLD, THEY SHALL NOT DELIGHT IN IT, THEIR BOWS ALSO SHALL DASH THE YOUNG MEN TO PIECES, AND THEY HAVE NO PITY ON THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB, THEIR EYE SHALL NOT SPARE CHILDREN"

(Isaiah 13: 17,18). "Behold I will" – God will do this. Is there a darker picture than this in the Bible? Surely there cannot be; and yet God has declared these things shall be done, and that He will do it. He Himself is to muster this army and be its commander-in-chief. He it is that collects His weapons of war and goes to the battle. He it is that stirs up the Medes, to dash Babylon's children to pieces, spoil their houses, and ravish their wives. This is the out-pouring of His indignation, and these men are the weapons of His indignation, and it is in the end of the indignation that it is appointed for what Daniel saw in his vision to take place. And, it took place. There cannot be a doubt but God predetermined this whole affair and foretold it by Isaiah and Daniel. Every "shall" in it was used to affirm that God had predetermined it.

### **PREDETERMINATION IN THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL**

We will now proceed with our examination of the Book of Daniel. The ninth chapter has the word "shall" in it ten times, and God Himself says that HE WILL bring every word of it to pass. Not that He merely foresaw (prescience) them coining and then declared them, but He determined that they should come. Every "shall" in it is spoken concerning the 70 years captivity that God had said by Jeremiah should come upon Israel, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. Daniel understood from the prophecy of Jeremiah that the 70 years were determined in which God would bring this to pass, and he was praying to God for Israel and for the city, and confessing his sins and the sins of his people. And while he was praying, the man Gabriel, whom he had seen in a former vision, came and said unto him, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth and I am come to shew thee; for thou are greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and

upon thy holy city, to FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION and to make an end to sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be 70 weeks and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for Himself; and the people of the prince shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined". (That is predestination as absolute as it can be expressed.)

I have quoted all of this that my readers may see that every one of these "shalls" express determination. The cutting off of Messiah means the crucifixion of Christ by those who "were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had before determined to be done, " and is here set forth as one of the things that was determined. Daniel referred us back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, so we will go back and see just what he said about it. When I have proven by the book of Jeremiah every word of which is the word of God Himself, I will then (God willing) finish my investigation of the Book of Daniel. It is certain that the Limited Primitive Baptists are completely wrong in claiming that God's predestination, or decree, has nothing to do "with things."

The proof of what I have said about the ninth chapter of Daniel is found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. I am aware that I am entering into a field that has been neglected in a great measure too long by our ministry. One thought that I have never heard advanced by any one is made very clear by God Himself in His talk with Jeremiah, when He made known to him that He had ordained him to be a prophet. I ask all who read this to with-hold judgment and not condemn the thought nor what I shall say until they hear my reason for saying it; when you have heard, I am sure that all except the infidels will accept it, for it is what the Bible says very plainly, and an infidel is one who disbelieves the scriptures. I am aware that many professing Christians are only infidels in disguise, who wear the name because it is popular to do so. If there are any such among those who bear the name of Old School or Primitive Baptist and this writing serves to unmask them, then I shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Now what I am going to

say is this: that God Himself asserts that He, Himself will fulfill, perform, or bring to pass all the word of His mouth that He speaks j His messengers. In Amos 3:7, it is written: "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets." All the Lord does then is revealed before hand to His prophets. He says in Isaiah 44:25,26, that it is Him "That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh divines mad; that turneth wise men backward and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of His servant, and PERFORMETH THE COUNSEL OF HIS MESSENGERS," etc.

Note you; He says He does this Himself. If He says that He does it, why should any one deny it and seek to cover up this truth? In Jeremiah 1, He says, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and ordained thee unto the nations" (verse 5). Then Jeremiah said: "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not unto Me, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put My word in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, TO ROOT OUT and to PULL DOWN, and to DESTROY and to THROW DOWN and to BUILD and to PLANT " Is not that, which you have set a man to do, what you have purposed shall be done? Then Jeremiah said: "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, "Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen: for I shall hasten My word to perform it." Here, before Jeremiah has ever spoken one word of prophecy the Lord said unto him: "I will put My words in thy mouth;" and also "I will hasten My word to perform it." The Lord then asked Jeremiah again, "What seest thou? " and Jeremiah answered, "I see a seething pot, and the face thereof is toward the north. Then the Lord said unto me, "out of the north an evil shall break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. For lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord, and they shall come and set every one on his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the wall thereof and against all the gates thereof, and against all the cities of Judah." God says HE will bring all of this about. Then He pleads and threatens through fourteen chapters, after telling them what He will visit, bring, or send upon them if they do not hearken and obey Him, notwithstanding He says in chapter 6, verse 10, their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot hearken. Yet because they did not hearken when they could not do it, He said to Jeremiah in the fifteenth chapter,

"Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, whither shall we go, then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, such as are for death, to death, and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are J the famine to the famine; and such as are J captivity, to captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth," etc. Can anyone doubt that God has purposed all of this? He told Jeremiah in the outset, before He had caused him to speak one word of prophecy, He would hasten to perform His word. And so far, in every threat He has made, He assured them, that He would bring it to pass, and every promise was what He would do to them if they did not listen. In the thirteenth chapter, He says to them: "And if thou say in thine heart, wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquities are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. " Here we have it from God Himself, that the people whom He said would Him and do good, than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots; and yet because of their disobedience that was appointed, He has appointed them to be slain by the sword, torn by the dogs, and devoured and destroyed by the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field, and His promise to Jeremiah is that HE WILL HASTEN HIS WORD TO PERFORM IT. From the first chapter to the twenty-fifth, where God promised the curse upon them because they had not hearkened, He says unto them, "Behold I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a perpetual desolation." God said He would do all of this. He will send and take all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, and He would bring them against these people, and He would utterly destroy them, and He would make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and a perpetual desolation. He goes on to tell them that they shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. That is a specific number of years. He then says that, "When the seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it a perpetual desolation." So far God has asserted that He will bring all these things to pass. Keep in mind that I have started in to prove that all prophecy is a declaration of the things that God not only foreknows will come to pass, but which He also has determined shall come to pass. Hence,

the "shalls" of prophecy are meant to express His determination that these things shall be fulfilled. When I have done this, I will have proved the predestination of all things to be the truth, and will have extracted the fangs from all the infidels who still want to pretend to believe the Bible. I do not, however, expect to cause any one to believe it who despises this God-honoring doctrine, for God says, "Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41). In this is another one of God's "shalls." It is scripture and it CANNOT be broken.

If there are still any of God's dear children that what I have written leaves them in doubt, I will say to such Doubting Thomases, listen to what God says next. He says: "And I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kingdoms shall serve themselves of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the work of their own hands" (Jeremiah 25: 13,14).

### **GOD USES MEN, BOTH GOOD AND EVIL, TO PERFORM HIS COUNSEL**

The above should forever settle it that God has determined that all prophecy shall be fulfilled: and that He Himself will bring it to pass. But stop, listen, and give particular attention to what I am now going to say. I do not believe that God acts differently in bringing these things to pass than He does in directing our steps in our every day life. Those men whom He says He will bring, or send, or stir up, or cause, to come to do these things act as freely as, and have no more thought that God is using them to fulfill His word and to carry out His purpose than does the bird that flies through the air, when He said, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, the staff in their hand is Mine indignation, I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of My wrath, will I give him a chore, to take the spoil and take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the street" (Isaiah 10:5).

God then adds to this, "Howbeit, HE MEANETH NOT SO, NEITHER DOTH HIS HEART THINK SO, but it is in his heart to cut off and destroy nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:7). God did not put in his heart to do it, for it was already in his heart to do that to any nation whenever opportunity was afforded him. Water will freely run down hill when it is not restrained from doing so, and so will the wicked. They freely do wickedly when they are not

restrained from doing so. God is not thereby the author of sin, if so be it that He does not restrain it from fulfilling His counsel.

David said, "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). God will restrain the wicked and allow them to do no more than will redound to His praise.

Let me be very clear on this point, for some have taken the position that the text in Isaiah, that says, "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou hast wrought all our works IN us"(Isaiah 26:12) means that He had wrought all their works in them "both good and evil." We hear this false charge leveled against us repeatedly from the Limited side. If that is the truth, then universalism is the truth. For the prophet said, "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace US, for Thou hast wrought all OUR works in US". His assurance that God would ordain peace for them was based on the fact that He had wrought, or worked, all their works in them. If all the works done by men, "both good and bad," are wrought, or worked, in them by the Lord, and He ordains peace for all whose works are all wrought in them by Him, it follows that He will ordain peace for all men since all works, "both good and evil" would have been wrought in men by Him.

But we have plenty of instances in the Bible of how God directs the steps of men in wickedness. In the case of Job, He turned all that Job had into the hands of Satan, and said unto him, "Behold all that he (Job) hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not thine hand. "(Job 1:12). Up to this time God had prospered Job, and the devil was barred from touching him or any thing that he possessed. The devil called it "having him hedged in." God has all men "hedged in," or out of Satan's reach, until He removes His hand. But as soon as God turned all that he had into the hands of the devil, the devil's servants came in and robbed him of his property and murdered his servants, and God also turned the forces of nature into his hands so that he burned up his sheep and his servants that looked after them, and an east wind blew down the house of his eldest son and killed all of his children, and then Job arose, when he heard of this, and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell upon the ground and worshiped God and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:20-21). What lessons are to be found in this story for our "admonition and learning"? Why is it in the Bible? Even though Satan is doing this, Job said the Lord did this. Did he tell the truth about it? If so, then you may see how God uses Satan and wicked men in accomplishing His purposes. Job said that God did it, and

the record says that, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged his God foolishly" (Job 1:22). If Job did not sin when he said God did it, and he did not charge God foolishly in what he said, then it was the truth. God did it. Again, when God had turned Job himself into the hands of Satan, and he afflicted him all over with sore boils, and his wife said to him, "Dust thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job said to her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speakest. What? Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Here again, it is recorded, "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips," meaning, Job told the truth. This must have been recorded for just such a time as now, when Satan's forces are trying to dethrone God and rule Him out of the affairs of men and devils. But He is still enthroned as high above Satan and men, as heaven is above the earth, doing "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 doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35) Job believed that God had appointed what was taking place with him and was also performing it; for he said, "He is in one mind and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He DOETH. For HE PERFORMETH the thing that is APPOINTED FOR ME, and many such things are with Him" (Job 23:13-14).

Dear reader, if all this was appointed for Job as he claimed, and God performed it, as Job sincerely believed; if God took away Job's children, his servants, and all his property, and afflicted him from head to foot (as Job said that He did), then is it not a fact that God uses wicked men, and even the devil, to accomplish His purposes? He claims that He does these things Himself!

Peter tells us that unbelievers and the disobedient are appointed to disobedience. ("And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" I Peter 2:7,8). But it does not follow that God works in them to disobey as He works in His children "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" which is well pleasing in His sight through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are often accused of believing this, but the accusation is false. It is stated very plainly in Ephesians that the "prince of the power of the air" works in the children of disobedience. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). God made every thing in the universe, and He made them for Himself, and He made them because He had a use for them. The psalmist said, "In wisdom

hast Thou made them all" (Psalm 104:24). If He made them for Himself, then who will deny that He made them suitable for the purpose for which He made them? And who will deny that He is using them for the purpose for which He made them? He even made the prince of the power of the air, which is the serpent, the devil and Satan, and dragon that is in the sea; and is called "leviathan" in Job 41, and in Isaiah 27. No one will take the position that an intelligent being would make a thing for himself, that he had no use for, or control over; and no intelligent man will take the position that any one making any thing for himself will not make it suitable for the place or purpose for which they are making it.

There are many, however, of late years that are denying that God made the devil! On this point hinges the concept of the predestination of all things. For if God did not make the devil, there is one thing in existence, the existence of which God did not predestinate. They knowingly take this position in order to deny God's sovereignty over most of what occurs. For proof that God made him, I will first quote John 1:3, "ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." The objector, however, argues that the last part of this text, which says "And without Him was not any thing made that was made," signifies that there is something that was not made. Listen to the first part of the text again: "For by Him were ALL things made." Do you see it? To argue that the last part implies there is something that was not made is to make the first part of the sentence to contradict the last. The man that cannot see this is blind to the first part that declares that God made all things, and cannot see the last part right. In Ephesians, Paul said of God, "Who CREATED ALL THINGS by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3: 9-11). Here is a wonderful text and it is most comprehensive in its fullness. It takes in the creation of all things and what they were created for which was that His church might know His manifold wisdom. Not merely know it according to His creative power: but that they may know it according to the eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. The world, even the wicked can see His manifold wisdom by seeing the things that He has made. Paul said in Romans, "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" (Romans 1:20). The world can see that it took wisdom and power to make the things that are made, but they do not see that these were all made to conform to God's eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. His church is to see all creation as it

relates to God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. They can see how wonderfully it became Him Lot: whom are all thins, in bringing many sons unto glory, by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. The revealing, or making His glory known, unto His chosen people, the church, by bringing them unto this glory by making Jesus Christ who in His eternal purpose, was to be the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, was the eternal purpose which He purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord. To this end, it is said "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isaiah 53:10). Understand it was the Lord that bruised Him and put Him to grief, and we do not have to guess at how He did it, for His decree in the beginning, was that Satan should be the instrument by which He should be bruised (Genesis 3:15), which bruising was completed when all the powers of hell were combined in the person of "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." When it was completed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "It is finished, and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Dear reader, what could you have ever known of the wonderful mercy and wrath of God, if sin had not entered into the world? But I hope to say more on this point before I am through.

In Colossians, it is written, "For by Him were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers; ALL THINGS were created BY HIM, and FOR HIM: and He is before all things, and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST" (Colossians 1:16-17). Reader, can you imagine why so many of the writers have stressed this point in their writings? Do you ever hear any one except those who believe in the predestination of all things stress it in these days? Paul said in I Corinthians 8:6; "But to us there is one God of whom are ALL THINGS. " And in Romans 2, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are ALL THINGS: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Again, in Revelations, "The four and twenty elders cast their crowns before His throne, crying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power, FOR THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelations 4:11).

### **GOD CREATED THE DEVIL AND USES HIM AS HIS OWN INSTRUMENT**

Trying to make the devil an uncreated and eternal being to get around the doctrine of the predestination of all things, therefore, is futile and unscriptural doctrine. If the devil is in heaven or in the earth, God made Him!

And if he is either visible or invisible, God made him. If he reigns on a throne, a principality, dominion, or had all power, God made him.

And if God made him, it was for God's "pleasure" that he was made, and it is for His pleasure that he now exists. This is what the Scriptures just quoted say. Who then will deny it?

But for the sake of doubting Thomas, we will give further proof. As has been quoted, "The Lord hath made ALL THINGS for Himself, yea even the wicked FOR the day of evil." In Job 41, he is presented as leviathan. In the last verse of this chapter God says of him: "He beheld all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride." This then is Satan himself; not a "whale." In the verse just above this one, God said; "There is not his like, who is MADE without fear" (verse 33). This verse shows that he was made, and none can deny that God made what was made. Verse 11 shows that he belongs to God, for He says, "Who hath presented Me that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is MINE." This creature or being that we are here discussing was made, and he belongs to God, and it is the king over all the children of pride. Is this not the devil? This verse proves beyond contradiction, that if there is such a thing as a devil under the whole heaven, he belongs to God, for God said, "whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine. " While this point is proven beyond a shadow of doubt, I will still show that this CREATURE that is called "leviathan" is the devil. Literally, "leviathan" means whale, but not in this case. There are thousands of whales, while this creature is spoken of in the singular, and there is not another one of "like", or of his kind, in all the earth, and he is the only thing that was made without fear, and the only creature who is a king over all the children of pride. We find him mentioned again in Isaiah 27. In this place he is presented with four names. The first given is leviathan, the second is a piercing serpent, the third is the crooked serpent, and the fourth is the dragon that is in the sea. In Job, where we first find him with the name leviathan, he was in the sea, for it said in that chapter, that, "He maketh the sea to boil like a pot of ointment." It is also said, "By his neeing a light doth shine and his eyes are like the eye lids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out" (Job 41:18). So we can see at once that he is not a natural whale. God asked here in this chapter, "What doth hinder that I should repay him? " In Isaiah 27, He has a set time to punish him. He says, In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, that crooked serpent, and He will destroy the dragon that is in the sea. " Notice that in this place he is called that crooked serpent. This signifies that there is but one "crooked serpent," as if there were more than one

serpent, but that crooked serpent would indicate that he has been spoken of somewhere before. We will try to find the place before we are through. In Revelations 20, we read, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations any more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season." There are several things to say about this yet, but not just here. We have traced leviathan on up to be that crooked serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea, and we have found him to be the devil and Satan, so now we will clinch the whole thing by finding who made him. In Job 27 it is said of God, "By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens, and His hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are part of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him, and the thunder of His power, who can understand?" It is, indeed, a very little portion that is heard of this God. There are not many who know anything about Him.

Surely no one who sees all this array of divine testimony will deny that the Bible teaches that God made all things, and that this also included the devil, whether they believe the Bible to be true or not. The foolish, silly and absurd thought, that Job intended in this language to drop from the wonderfully and stupendously great things that he has ascribed to God as the work of His hand, to the little and insignificant snake, is ridiculous. Listen to what Job says, "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth on nothing. He bindeth the waters up in His thick cloud, and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back

The fact that he has been let run loose for six thousand years, when God could have already bound him at His will, proves that He had a use from him being loose. And the fact that he must be loosed at the end of the thousand years, prove that God has a use for him loose in the world again at that time. God is the one loosing him and binding him.

Surely, surely, surely, none will think for a moment that after He has him bound He would then turn him loose again, if He did not have a use for him being loose again. The language of the Scripture, "That he shall deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled," proves that this is and yet will be his business until God binds him, and that it will be his business again after he is loosed again. That is what he is to be loosed for, according

to the scripture.

The seventh and eighth verses (of Revelation 20) says, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." No one can fail to see that he was turned loose for the purpose of deceiving the nations, that they may gather to battle against the saints, that God may destroy Gog and Magog from off the earth. The fact that God allowed him to deceive our mother Eve, and has allowed him to go on and will allow him to go on as a deceiver until a set time, when He will bind him for a set time, then loose him for a "little season" to deceive the nations, then destroy him, when He could have destroyed him before he deceived any one, had it been His will to do so, proves to any sane mind that He made him for that purpose and has been using him for that purpose, and will continue to use him as He sees fit until His set time to destroy him is come.

Why, O why, must he be loosed "for a little season to deceive the nations," if it is not God's will and purpose for him to do so? The echo is asking why? And why, O why, did He make him, and allow him to do as he has done, if it was not His will and purpose for him to do as he has done? The echo is asking why? But I feel sure that there will be no intelligent reply! Convince me that Satan out "generated" God in the Garden of Eden and got sin into the world contrary to God's will, and you, at the same time, destroy my hope of ever being free from sin and the power of Satan. For if when there were only two people in the world for God to watch over, and they were not sinners by nature nor by practice, and He was opposed in His will to them ever becoming sinners, and the devil put one over on Him then and deceived them and captivated them and with them their entire offspring, what hope can I possibly have that Satan will not out general God twain in all His undertakings? And since all men in their natures "are enemies to God by wicked works," (Colossians 1:21) and as such, "are children of their father, the devil, and the lust of their father they will do," (John 8:44) they are all, of course, on his side now. Did Satan, after all, win? Hence, if God could not manage, when there were only two to keep the devil from getting control of them contrary to His will, what ground can we now have to hope that God can now get them out of the devil's possession, since there are now so many of them, and all of them in league and in love with both the devil and with sin?

Don't tell me that God has promised to free us from sin and Satan, and,

therefore, He will do it; for if the devil got us into his possession contrary to God's will, power, and purpose, I have then no grounds for assurance that Satan will not hold us contrary to God's will still. And if God should get a few of us out of the devil's hands and get us to heaven, what assurance have we that we will not again become sinners and fall from our standing there and be finally lost? If it happened in the Garden, why could it not happen there too? Don't tell me that God will not let sin enter into heaven because it is contrary to His will, and He is fully able to prevent its entrance there now; if it entered the Garden in like manner already. For if you convince me that He let it enter the world contrary to His will and power and purpose when He was fully able to have prevented it, how can I know that He will not let it enter there the same way? If God did not "want" sin to enter the world, and the devil did; and God did not "want" any man to ever be a sinner, and the devil wanted all men to become sinners; and God did not "want" sin mixed in any of the affairs of men in this world, and the devil wanted it mixed in all the affairs of men in the world; and God did not "want" any man to ever die, and the devil wanted all men to die; does it not look like the devil has out-generated God in all things up to now and proved himself to be more wise and powerful than God?

Some people may rejoice in believing in such a God and such a devil as that, but there is no comfort in it for me. They can shout for their god, and I will shout for mine. My God is so great, and His Providential care, direction, supervision and control of and over all things is so perfect and complete, that a sparrow cannot fall on the ground without Him (Matthew 10:29).

### **GOD'S PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE IS BASED ON HIS ETERNAL COUNSEL**

I wish to quote again the language of the blessed Savior on this point. To my mind, it covers the whole question under discussion, and proves that He is the one who provides all things for His creatures. Jesus introduced this matter by telling His disciples to "take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and your body more than raiment?" Let us see if we can get at what Jesus means. Who made the body, and gave it life? Who prepared for its first food, and its clothing? Was it not God Himself? Hark; Do I hear the objector say that Adam and Eve made their first clothing? This is a mistake. They made aprons of fig leaves, but they would not do for clothing; for when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day, they were still naked, and afraid and went and hid among the trees of the Garden – fig leaves notwithstanding. Their fig leaf aprons were no good, and

God made them coats of skin and them upon them.

His next words prove that He means to teach that God Himself furnished their food and their clothing. He said: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, YET YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDETH THEM. Are ye not much better than they?" Can any one doubt that both the food and the clothing of the fowls of the air come according to God's pre-arranged plan? And does He not see to it the working of His providence, that their food and clothing (feathers) are furnished them? Not by them taking thought, but by divine providence in the fulfillment of God's purposes. Is He not teaching His disciples that it is the same with them and that it is not in their power to change it? What then is this we now hear, that God's predestination has nothing to do with "things;" or that God does not provide for "time salvation;" but that is left up to you to do?"

Listen to His next statement and you will see that it is absolutely true that God provides all things and this by His determinate counsel. He makes an interrogatory affirmation that they cannot change the least thing in the world from its pre-arranged course. He says: "Who of you by taking thought can add one cubit to your stature?" (Matthew 6: 27) Then He adds, according to Luke: "If ye then be not able to that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Food, drink and raiment are of far greater importance to you, my friend, than a little variation in your height; and yet you cannot change that thing that is of least importance to you, neither can you change the things that are of greater importance. Jesus is certainly teaching this.

Listen to His next statement. After assuring them that they cannot by taking thought, change the least thing, He then says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith" (Luke 12:28). How can any man read this and the many things that Jesus has referred to that are absolutely fixed and determined, and come to pass according to His unchangeable decree, and then deny what is so plainly taught by Him in these illustrations?

If God purposed the food and raiment for the lowly sparrow, and He feedeth them, as Jesus said that He does, then as He teaches that the life is more than food and the body more than raiment, He meant when He said not one shall

fall on the ground without your heavenly Father, that the ending of its life and the falling of its dead body to the ground, which is greater than the food and raiment, and for which they were prepared, were not left out of His pre-arranged plan and purpose. After He had made these statements, then He added, "But even the very hairs of your head are numbered" Will any one take the absurd position that God makes the head with its hairs and then counts them to find out their number? Or did He determine when He determined that a man should have hair, just what the number should be? Not one hair can fall without God (it does not say "knowing"), for He will watch over and bring them back in the resurrection, else we will be baldheaded.

Jesus said to His disciples, "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinfolks and friends, and some of you they shall cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for My name 's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:16-18). Many have been burned at the stake, yet not one "hair of your head shall perish"! Wondrous thought! It was after He had showed so plainly, that everything in connection with the life, the body, and its drink, food, clothing and its stature, were all unchangeably fixed in God's rearranged plan, and He, in His providence, brings them about according to His purpose, that He said; "But even the very hairs of your head are numbered; " showing that even the smallest things are determined by God.

Solomon said, "And I gave my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning ALL THINGS that are done under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 1:13). And he tells some of the things that he found. One was that every thing was purposed of God, and a time set for it. He said, "Moreover, I saw under the sun, the place of judgment, that wickedness was there: and the place of righteousness that iniquity was there, and I said in mine heart, that God will judge both the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and every work" (Ecclesiastes 3:17). In the beginning of this chapter, he said, "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven," then he enumerates many of the things that are purposed and a time set for them, and even brings into it so small a things as tearing your pants and the place being sewed up. And in a providential sense, He brings all to pass.

Let us see if I have exaggerated in this statement. God says, "I have declared the former things from the beginning and they went forth out of My mouth, and I shewed them: I DID THEM SUDDENLY and they came to pass" (Isaiah 48:3). And in the 46th chapter, that He "declared the things that are

not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I WILL DO all My pleasure." In the text above this one, He says that He declared the former things and did them, and they came to pass. And in this text, He says that He has declared the things that ARE NOT YET DONE, and that HE WILL DO ALL HIS PLEASURE. In other words, He declared the former things and also did them. He has declared the things that are not yet done and He will also do them too. In the 44th chapter, He has declared that He appointed the things that ARE coming (to pass now) and the things that shall come (to pass in the future). These Scriptures cover everything from the beginning to the end. They show very plainly that He has appointed every thing, and He declares everything and will bring it all to pass. For just under the text that says, "He has declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10), He says, "I have spoken it, I will also BRING IT TO PASS: I have PURPOSED it, I WILL ALSO DO IT"

What I am after in these texts is to show that all prophecy is a declaration of God's counsel, which He has determined shall come to pass, and as none will deny that God has determined or purposed that He will do Himself, I am selecting those scriptures where He says that He will bring or He has brought them to pass. I cannot use one half of the scriptures that He has declared Himself, that He has done, will do, or will bring to pass.

Just yesterday I found and marked 40 such places. I will give you a sample of them. In Ezekiel 5: 8-10, He says: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, and I will execute judgment in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. AND I WILL DO in thee that which I have not done and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the father shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers: and I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT IN THEE, and the whole remnant of thee will I SCATTER into all the winds." God says that He will do all of this.

Now we will have Jeremiah testify. In every verse he says the Lord did it, and in the eleventh he pours out his soul in sorrow for his people, because of the great afflictions that God had brought, "because they had not hearkened and obeyed Him," when He had said "their ear was uncircumcised and they COULD NOT HEARKEN" (Lamentation 2). Then he begins to tell of the deplorable condition that God had brought them into and he says, "Because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers where is corn and wine? When they swooned as the wounded

in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mother's bosom. What thing shall I take to witness for thee? What thing shall liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I equal to thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion?" Then he goes on to tell them how their enemies will rejoice over them, and then he says: "The Lord HATH DONE THAT WHICH HE HAD DEVISED: HE hath fulfilled His word that He commanded (the prophets to speak) in the days of old: He hath thrown down, and hath not pitied, and HE hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, and hath set up the horn of thine adversaries." God did all of this in fulfillment of His word that He commanded in days of old. This was accomplished by God Himself by the use of all the other nations of the earth just as He had said that He would do it. All of this was written by Jeremiah, and just what should be done unto Jerusalem and all Israel, and what God WOULD DO to those nations that He would use to fulfill His word concerning Jerusalem.

You will find in Jeremiah 25 that God said, "Behold I WILL SEND and TAKE all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, My servant, and will BRING them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof and against all these nations round about, and I WILL utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment and a hissing, and a perpetual desolation, and I WILL TAKE from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, and the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle, and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations SHALL serve the king of Babylon SEVENTY YEARS. And it shall come to pass that when seventy years are accomplished, I WILL punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for THEIR iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I WILL MAKE it a perpetual desolation, and I WILL bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah bath prophesied against all the nations." (In this prophecy, the Lord's dealings are as His dealings with the Assyrians, that I have covered earlier.)

The man who, with all proof before him, will deny that all prophecy is an expression, or a declaration, of the things that God has determined shall come to pass, has no grounds whatever, in truth, to say that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. For I can show ten places in the Bible where God says that He will bring such things to pass, to where he will find one where God has acknowledged Jesus Christ as His Son. He firmly declares here in Jeremiah 25, that HE will bring upon that land, and against all the other nations, ALL HIS WORDS that are written in this Book of Jeremiah. That

includes all that Jeremiah has ever prophesied, and God asserted most positively that HE would bring it to pass. If I should publicly and repeatedly declare my intentions to kill a man, and he should be found dead, and I should then declare that I did it, the very men who deny that God does these things that He has declared that He will do, would convict me in court on my own testimony without any corroborating testimony.

Listen, now, and God Himself will testify in His own behalf. He says: "For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the house of this city, and concerning the kings of Judah which are thrown down by the mounts and by the sword; They shall come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of MEN WHOM I HAVE SLAIN in anger and in My fury, and for whose wickedness I have hid My face from this city." Now as God Himself has said that HE WILL BRING to pass all that Jeremiah prophesied against Jerusalem and against all nations; and as He has affirmed that HE declared the former things and did them; and as He has declared the things that are not yet done and says He will bring them to pass and do them, that covers all prophecy and my point is absolutely proven that all prophecy is a declaration of God's determinate counsel. I could bring ten times as much proof as I have brought, but the man who will not believe these statements made by God Himself, would not believe if one should rise from the dead and declare them.

God has made an interrogatory affirmation by Amos, that there shall not be an evil in a city and He has not done it. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there BE EVIL IN A CITY, AND THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Amos 3:6) There is not a kingdom on earth where God does not rule; neither is there a ruler high or low, noble or base, that God has not set up.

### **ALL POLITICAL POWER IS ORDAINED OF GOD**

It is said, by Daniel, "He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and setteth up over it the basest of men, and giveth it to WHOSOEVER HE WILL" (Daniel 4:17). Paul, speaking of the laws and the officers that enforce them, said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be (not just some of them) are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power (law) resisteth the ordinance of God" (Romans 13:1, see also Colossians 1: 16,17).

Would you object then, if I should say there never was a law enacted that was not foreordained of God? Let me prove it before you have time to object. Listen, God says in Jeremiah 33:25, "If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances (laws) of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I WILL CAUSE their captivity to return, and I will have mercy on them." God promised in covenant, that they should return and He would have mercy on them. But here He affirms that He will not keep His promise, if He has not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth. Not some of them, but all of them. No matter what kind of laws they are, whether it is a decree by Cyrus or Darius for Israel's captivity to return, or statutes, He has appointed them. The "why" is His business. How does He rule in the kingdoms of men? It is by the appointing both the laws and the officers, and directing their steps, or heart, for "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23), "But the Lord directeth his steps" (Proverbs 16: 9), and "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: HE TURNETH IT WHITHERSOEVER HE WILL" (Proverbs 21:1).

Men, such as kings, think they are rulers, but they no more rule than did the king of Assyria when God sent him against Israel, to take the spoil and take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the street. He boasted of what he had done, but God said, "As if the ax should boast itself against him that heweth therewith."

King Nebuchadnezzar thought he ruled the world, and wanted to know where the God was that could deliver out of his hands, but God cast him down and made him to dwell with the beasts of the field, and made him eat grass like an ox, to teach him, "That the heavens rule" (Daniel 4: 15-17, 25). When he learned it by experience, like everyone must learn it who ever knows it, he wrote to all the people, nations and languages, that dwell upon the earth, and told them about this wonderful God, and told them that "All the inhabitants of the earth were reputed as nothing before Him, and He doeth 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 doest Thou" (Daniel 4:35). No man has the right to call into question anything God does.

### **THE LOT, OR VOTE, IS OF GOD'S DETERMINE COUNSEL**

We think, in this country, that we elect our own officers. We go to the polls

and cast our votes, like the votes, or lots, that were cast by the mariners of the vessel when Jonah was on the ship. The Lord rules in these matters, and we cast our votes so that the one WHOM HE HAS APPOINTED for the place gets it. God has already cast the lot of each man in the election, and disposes of it in accordance with the same when the set time comes. Solomon said, and I believe, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the WHOLE DISPOSING THEREOF IS OF THE LORD" (Proverbs 16:33). The simplest meaning of the word "lot", as used here, is the portion reserved by one for himself, or that which falls out, or is set apart to one or more, as their portion. "The LORD'S PORTION is His people. Jacob is THE LOT of His inheritance."

Here is an example of its' meaning: The lot here is the portion that God has set apart for Himself. When they cast lots on the ship to see for whose sake God had sent the storm, it fell on Jonah. The apostles believed that GOD directed the casting of lots, so they prayed to God, then cast their lots, and the lot fell to Matthias and the apostles accepted it as God's appointment, and then he was "numbered with the twelve" as being so ordained of God (Acts 1: 22).

The first place where the word "lot" occurs in the Bible is in Leviticus 16. God commanded by Moses, that they take two kids of the goats for an offering, and they should cast lots before the Lord to see which one of them should be for a sin offering and which one should be for a scapegoat. You may think to ask, Why, if God has fixed all things, should they go to this trouble, seeing that it is already fixed, and could not fall on the wrong one? I am glad to answer, that God, both for their sake, and for ours for whom it was written, chose to impress the fact upon their minds and upon ours who may read it, that the lot, even of two young goats, just alike, was fixed by Him. The lot is His portion, to do with as He pleases. The casting of the lot by them was as much fixed as the kid upon whom that lot was fixed. That is a part of what we mean by the "predestination of all things." It is inclusive of the whole. David said in Psalm 16:5,6; "The Lord is the PORTION of mine inheritance and of my CUP: Thou maintainest my LOT. The lines ARE FALLEN unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly inheritance." All of this that David is rejoicing over is that which God has apportioned, which is the lot that God has cast for him, and it fell to him in pleasant places.

He said, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." The cup holds that which is allotted to one as his portion. Again, in Psalm 11:6, "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible

tempest. This shall be the portion of their gm." Jeremiah said, also, "Babylon hath been a golden op in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken, the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad " "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand " One meaning of the word "golden," is something highly valuable. So Babylon has been highly valuable in the Lord's hand. If she has been a "golden cup" in His hand, and the nations have drunk from that cup, then the Lord put that cup to their mouth and made them drunk on its contents, for He held the cup in His hand while they drank, and He said, "The nations have drunken of her wine, therefore, the nations are mad" How many nations drank of that cup from the hand of the Lord? In Revelation 14:8, it is written, "She hath made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication." Remember that while she was doing this she was a valuable cup in the hand of the Lord. He held her to their mouth, just as the king of Assyria was an "ax, a saw, a rod, and a staff," in the hand of the Lord, and as the "wicked are His sword," and "Israel His battle ax." So Babylon was a valuable cup in His hand to make all the nations of the earth drunk on the wine of her fornication, and thus make them mad, that they might in their madness, destroy one another, and thus drink the wine of His wrath out of the "cup of His indignation" at HIS hand. This is their lot, which was "cast into the lap (divine providence), and the WHOLE disposing thereof is of the Lord"

When the lot is cast in any case or cause, the matter is settled by the casting of the lot." The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty" (Proverbs 18:18). All the land of Canaan was divided to Israel by casting of lots. The lot that fell to each one when the casting came was his portion. It fell to him, by the casting of the lots. (See Numbers 26 and Joshua chapter 16 through chapter 23.) When it fell to one by the casting of the lot, that lot belonged to him. God had spoken. He had by the lot revealed His will. The matter therefore was settled. The man could lease that land for forty-nine years, but at the end of that time it reverted to him or to his heirs. The idea in casting lots was to determine, settle and fix the thing, or things, for the future according to God's will. In the text under con-sideration, the lot is already cast. The lap is the lap of time. What is to be the lot of everyone is settled. It remains for God to determine that it comes to each one at the set time, for there is a set "time to every purpose under the sun."

In all the wonderful things that were revealed to Daniel, they were the lot, or settled arrangement of God. In different places it was said that these things "are determined," and in numbers of places it is said that they shall be at "the time appointed," and in the last verse in the last chapter it was said to Daniel,

"But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest (die) and stand in THY LOT at the end of the days." (In the resurrection)

When I left the discussion of the Book of Daniel, I was examining the ninth chapter in which the word "shall" occurs eleven times, in which he calls attention to the book of Jeremiah, in which God said that He would accomplish seventy years in the destruction of Jerusalem in a set time period. That seventy years had not been yet completed when he wrote. God's hand was heavy upon the Jews, and Daniel was fervently pleading with God to show mercy and forgive them, and God dispatched the angel Gabriel to inform him, and he informed him that seventy weeks were determined to make an end of these things that all the prophets had foretold and especially Jeremiah, which meant the absolute destruction of Jerusalem by all the armies of the north, during which seventy weeks the transgressions should be finished and the Messiah cut off to make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness and unto the end of the war that should be in progress at that time. The angel told him that these desolations WERE DETERMINED, not just foreseen. [Both the seventy weeks from the going into captivity to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the temple when the Jews returned, as well as the seventy weeks from the restoration to the Messiah were determined and revealed.] The seventy weeks were said to be determined, and therefore all that should take place during those seventy weeks were determined. God had said that HE would gather all the families of the north and Nebuchadnezzar, and bring them there and that He would bring to pass all that is written in the Book of Jeremiah the prophet. He says in the time of this great prince, which the Lord hath sent to destroy the city, that He shall cause the sacrifices and the oblations to cease, and for the overspreading of the abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that the consummation determined shall be poured upon the city.

This is the same type of destruction that is described by Isaiah, where God said He would send the Assyrian as the rod of His anger to take a spoil, and take the prey and tread them down like the mire of the street. In this He used him as an ax or a saw, or a rod or a staff, and made light of the king, which was this same Nebuchadnezzar, and said He would punish him because he said that it was by the strength of his own hand that he had done it, and by his wisdom. There cannot be a doubt but what this old king acted just as freely and as willing in this whole affair as any man ever acted in anything; and he felt proud of his achievements. He was the visible actor in the whole tragic scene, and did that work as truly as any man ever did anything in his

life. Yet back of him was the unseen hand of God, who in His all-wise Providence, rules, controls, guides and directs all creatures and things to His most holy ends. If language means any thing, God as certainly used this old king and his hosts to accomplish His purpose, as any man ever used any kind of an implement in his life for the accomplishment of his purpose and far more so, for if it is "not in man that walketh to direct his steps" then God is using both you and your ax just as surely as He was using that old king and his subjects, while they consumed and destroyed Israel.

Is this too hard? If it is, throw down the Book called the "Holy Bible," and declare yourself to be what you are: An infidel. God goes on to show that after He has used this old king with all his hosts, which were all the nations of his world at that time, and had made an utter destruction of Jerusalem, and brought on her the abomination of desolation as spoken by Daniel and Jeremiah, as well as Isaiah; He will then bring just as great a destruction on this old king and the city of Babylon and all the other nations over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled at that time. He said that He would consume them till they would be so few that a child may write them. Then He said that it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel and they that are escaped of the house of Judah shall no more stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth. "For though Thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall return: the consumption DECREED, SHALL OVERFLOW WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS. For the Lord God will make a consummation EVEN DETERMINED on the whole land" (Isaiah 10:22). This shows that all things connected with these entire affairs as had been spoken by the prophets, were determined in God's unchangeable decree, and were brought to pass by Him.

These men, kings and all others engaged in all these affairs, as free and willing and yet as wickedly as men ever acted in any thing in this world, and in so doing they were carrying out what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." They did just as John Gill said in 1735, concerning those who crucified Christ. He said: "Nothing was ever more peremptorily decreed and determined of God than was the crucifixion of Christ: yet men never acted more freely, nor more wickedly, than did the Jews in all those tragic scenes and circumstances." With all the above proof before us, there is no room left for doubt that God claims that HE did all these things Himself, even to the putting of Jesus Christ to death. For it is said in Isaiah 53, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief"

Now let us reason together over these things. If the Lord has done all these things and we cannot cavil over this point, for, He has had it recorded in His book that He did them, and he that denies the record that He has given of Himself makes Him a liar (I speak as a man), and we can't afford to do that. Then tell me, please, can you think of a more reasonable conclusion than that He, in His determinate counsel, determined just what should be, and take place in this world and then by

His own hand made every thing so perfect and complete and appointed all the laws, that He calls the "ordinances of heaven and earth" by which everything is governed in its action with such perfect precision that they are doing as those men did that crucified Christ, who did just what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done"? If you can, I am anxious to hear it. If there is any way that you can think of that involves Him less directly in the performance of these things, I would like to know it. There is not another truth in the Bible that is so often and emphatically asserted as this one. God has said this by nearly all of the prophets, and by some of them many times. If He does not do all these things in the sense that He predetermined them and gave to every thing its nature, and fixed the laws of nature by which all things are governed, then I cannot see how He can claim that He does all these things without being the direct and immediate actor in them. Ah, you say: You make God the author of sin! In no wise do I conclude the same as you. I yet know that Adam fell, and all his offspring in him. I yet know that man is wicked through and through by nature. I yet know that man would commit far more wickedness than he now does if God did not restrain him. And what wickedness man does, he does it from his own nature and for his own evil end. That God uses the wickedness of wicked men to fulfill His determinate counsel is no grounds to charge those sins to Him! God forbid! But to continue:

It is said that He causes the grass to grow for cattle, and herbs for the service of man, and oil that maketh his face to shine, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man (Psalm 104:15). It is a violation of the law of our country now to make wine [Ed. 1931-32 Prohibition]. Is He the actual, personal and immediate Maker of wine? That kind that makes glad the heart? Surely not: But He makes it in the same sense that He makes the grass to grow for the cattle. He decreed it and fixed the laws by which it is caused to grow.

Charles H. Spurgeon said in his first book of sermons, "I believe that the falling of the sheer leaf of the poplar is as fully ordained as the march of the devastating pestilence; that the chaff from the winnower, is steered in its

course as the stars of heaven; that the smallest spray that dash against the steamboat, has its orbit as the sun, moon and stars; that the smallest particle that floats in the sunbeam does not move one atom more than God designed it. It is either a mighty God that works all things after the counsel of His own will or no God at all. There is no standing room between this and Atheism. He that believes in a God at all must believe this truth."

I do not give this as proof, but as what I believe about it. But all things spoken by the prophets who prophesied of the calamities that should befall Israel and Jerusalem, and then what should befall the nations whom God should use in accomplishing this seventy years disaster upon her, are determined and shall be done. Jeremiah not only told the length of time that was determined to accomplish the determined consumption, just how it should be accomplished and by whom, but he shows that God has determined to bring it all to pass; and not only fulfill all His words concerning the things that should be done to Jerusalem and all Israel, but all His words concerning the other nations, even all that is written in the Book of Jeremiah. God has determined and declared that HE will bring every word of it to pass.

Isaiah declares that God Himself will do it by the use of Nebuchadnezzar, and all his hosts; not just as silent spectators, but as agents in His hand, as "the ax or the saw, the rod or the staff," accomplishing the decreed consumption that He said should overflow with righteousness (Isaiah 10).

Daniel shows that the same king with his mighty hosts from the north shall come as it is determined of God, and shall do just what the other prophets have declared shall be done, and the period determined for the accomplishment of all these things that are determined to come upon Jerusalem and Israel is seventy years, and that every thing connected with it has an appointed time to take place. He enlarges on it and shows the different kings that shall rise and fall (Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Romans) in the awful struggles that shall go on during this time, and he shows in all of it these things are all predetermined, and shall all take place at the appointed time, and yet, in all this wicked carnage and bloodshed, these wicked men shall do according to their wills. That in no wise makes God the author of their sins.

In the three last chapters, the word "shall" occurs one hundred and fifty-one times! It is the language of the angel Gabriel, who was sent to show Daniel that which God had determined should come to pass in the latter end of the Jewish nation, or kingdom, as it was written in the Holy Scriptures. These

things begin with Daniel's vision as recorded in the eighth chapter. Daniel had seen a great vision that he could not understand and as he sought for the meaning there stood before him, as the appearance of a man, and he heard a man's voice say, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." All that he saw in that vision were things that were determined and that had an appointed time to come to pass. And from thence forward, on through the Book of Daniel's very word of it, except Daniel's prayer and the few words spoken by Daniel to the angel, are the words of the angel telling Daniel the things that are determined, and that have a set time to come to pass. Five times before the close of the angel's talk he speaks of those things as having been determined. Four times it is said that they shall be at the "time appointed" And four times it is said those who do those things, shall do according to their will, and in chapter 11, verse 36, it says, "And the king shall do according to his will, and shall exalt himself, and magnify, himself above every god and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished for that that is determined, shall be done." The Book of Daniel should forever settle the controversy over the doctrine of the predestination of all things. The greater portion of these things that are determined and a time set for them to come to pass are wicked things. The greater portion has already been accomplished, and that at the exact time prophesied for them. While they are said to be determined and a time set for them, yet it is said that those who do them shall do according to their will. How then can it be said that those believing these things make God the author of sin, or charge them with being "can't-help-its"? In the last chapter and near the close, it is said, "And the wicked shall do wickedly and none of them shall understand" (Daniel 12:9b). God does not take a good man and make him do evil against his own will. He takes a wicked man ready at hand and uses him according to his own will. The wicked run greedily and willingly into these wicked deeds, and yet, they cannot exceed or go beyond that which God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. No man can exceed in actions that God's hand and His counsel determined "before to be done." Here is the basis, or foundation, of God's foreknowledge of all things.

There are only two positions that can be taken for a foundation or basis for the foreknowledge of all events. (1) One is that all things were going to happen anyway, and God foresaw, telescopically, what was going to come to pass and forewarned of them by the prophets. This of course, makes God a mere bystander in the affairs of His creation, divorced from any entanglement in any and all conditions, events, and behaviors of men, which conditions, events and behaviors are subjects of mere chance, and as such is

unpredictable.

(2) The other is that God in eternity, before He made the world, thought out without any outside help, counsel, or assistance, in His own mind by His own wisdom, and according to His own will the future with all future things and events. No one existed but Him, and it was just with Him and Him alone, as to whether there ever would be anything else or IV. It was with Him to determine just what should be in the future. It depended wholly upon Him to determine what He would make, how He would make it, and what He would make it for. The perfection of God forbids the thought that He would make any thing that He did not have a use for. No intelligent being would do that. His perfection forbids the thought that He would not make every thing suitable for the purpose for which He designed it. No intelligent being would do that. And no intelligent being would make a being for his own use, and make it so that it would do what he had rather it not do. No sane man would do that, and to charge God with doing that is to impeach and demean His perfection and charge Him with folly.

This being true, it follows that God, in the counsel of His will, before He made the world or brought time into being, determined to make the world and every thing that He did finally make; and fixed by an eternal decree the course, movements or actions of every thing that exists, fixing with perfect exactness the movements of everything that He made, by a decree that He says shall not pass (Psalm 148:6), and He affirms by Jeremiah that "If My covenant is not with day and night, and i f I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them" (Jeremiah 33: 25,26). This affirmation is so strong that it binds Him to break His covenant with David that was confirmed by His most solemn oath, if this is not true. The ordinances of heaven means the fixed and inexorable laws or decrees of God, according to which the sun, moon and stars are established in their courses and movements so that they never vary in the least from their courses, their movements nor their decreed effects. So true is this that the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). David said, "Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever; He hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Psalm 148:3-6). These things are all fixed and established forever by

the decreed ordinances of the Almighty Jehovah. Every element, and all the bodies that course through the heavens above us are under this perpetual decree of their Creator, which He says, "shall not pass." Not only has He appointed the ordinances of heaven by His unchangeable decree, but He affirms that He has also appointed the ordinances of earth. Every movement of His earthly creatures are as certainly determined as are the heavenly bodies. Man's goings are declared in Holy Writ to be, "of the Lord" (Proverb 20:24); "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). "The Lord directeth his steps" (Proverb 16:9). These are all positive statements by inspiration, and prove that God has as certainly determined the course of His earthly creatures as He has the heavenly bodies. There is no escape from this Biblical conclusion.

The poet, many years ago, expressed the exact truth on this subject when he said,

"Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore Him,  
Praise Him, angels in the height;  
Sun and moon rejoice before Him,  
Praise Him, all ye stars of light.  
Praise the Lord for He hath spoken,  
Worlds His mighty voice obey,  
Laws which never can be broken,  
For their guidance He has made.  
Praise the Lord for He is glorious,  
Never shall His promise fail,  
God doth make His saints victorious,  
Death and hell shall not prevail.  
Praise the God of our salvation,  
Hosts on high His power proclaim,  
Heaven and earth and all creation,  
Praise and magnify His Name."

God having determined in the counsel of His will, all that should ever exist in time, and every event that should ever take place in time, He therefore knew all things, just like He knew that the heavenly bodies would exist, and just what their movements would be. He knows it because He has so determined. He knew there would be a world, because He had determined it should exist, and how it should come into existence. He foreknew that the sun, moon, and the stars would exist and just what their every movement would be, because He did so determine. Surely no one would be so simple as

to say that God foresaw these things coming, and therefore He knew they would come. He knows every thing that will ever exist or take place because He determined in the counsel of His will that they should be. The other position is, that God determined to make a world and to populate the earth with people, but did not determine what these people should do, but looked on ahead and saw them all on the stage of action, and thereby learned from the creatures themselves just what they would do when they got here. This latter view certainly presents God as a pupil, time as a school room, and all the creatures of time as teachers, and that God looked clear through time before He gave it existence, and saw all the creatures of time in action before they had existence, and thereby learned in advance just what each would do, and that was moved by what He foresaw coming, that He had rather would not come, to make all the arrangement for salvation, and damnation, for a heaven and for a hell, that He has made. If this be true, then God's whole course of action in all that He has ever done, or ever will do, is the result of what He foresaw coming, that He rather would not come. There is no escaping this conclusion. If this is true, God has never had any thing, as He would have preferred to have it. His preference would have been to have a world into which sin would never enter, but He never had His preference there. He would have preferred a man that would not sin, but He failed there as well. He would have preferred, if these things are true, to populate heaven with people that had never been sinners, but He will never have or enjoy what He would have preferred in that matter. And He would have preferred no hell at all, but seeing that some would never be fit for heaven, He just had to accept the situation as He foresaw it coming, and do the best He could under the circumstances. That is not my God.

### **SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD AND THE ETERNAL COUNCIL OF GOD**

I am aware that as I follow my mind in this subject, some may entertain the thought that I take a light or permissive attitude towards sin. This is not the case, however. To ignore the entrance of sin into God's creation is to ignore a large portion of His determinate counsel and fail to set forth many of God's glorious attributes. It is without levity or permissiveness toward sin and evil that this discussion is pursued.

Some six or eight years ago, as I was on my way to a meeting in another county, I was thinking about God and His determinate counsel, and in my mind there came a picture of the seven Spirits of God in Council. In this picture, in my mind, the Will of God was the central figure in the group of

the Seven, and it faced four ways. Around it were grouped Wisdom, Power, Love and Mercy, Justice and Wrath. All of these constituted God in Council. At first, this picture was very dim in my mind, but gradually as the days passed by, it grew plainer, and its glory flamed with brightness. At the head of this stood Wisdom to preside over all their deliberations, that all things might be wisely planned, arranged and determined. On one side stood Love and Mercy, and on the other stood Justice and Wrath. And at the opposite side of the Will from Wisdom, stood Power, ready to carry into execution the findings of this Council. These seven Spirits, or attributes of God, were God in all His glorious fullness. He stood alone, unknown and unrevealed, save to Himself This Council was to devise a plan by which the glorious perfection of God in all of these attributes could most gloriously be revealed. This was the Will of God, as expressed in this Council. The plan that was agreed upon and determined in this Council, in which God's Will was the only counselor, was to make a world with every thing contained in it that was necessary for carrying into effect the object which they were seeking to accomplish. This object was the revealing, or making manifest the Glory of God as it will finally be revealed in and to the many sons, which He, in this Council, determined to bring unto glory, by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering: such were my cogitations as I looked upon the picture, as it presented itself to my mind. I fully believe that this picture represents the truth. I fully believe that God made everything in order to reveal or make known His glory. To this end and for this purpose He made the world and all it contains.

This is why David said, "All Thy works shall praise Thee and Thy saints shall praise Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (Psalm 145:10). All of these things are to reveal His glory. Everything that He created must, will, and does, praise the glorious WILL that suggested their creation, and the wisdom and the power that planned for and brought them into being.

Paul said the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). How could the wrath of God ever have been revealed had there been no ungodliness or unrighteousness for it to be revealed from heaven against? One of the meanings of the word "wrath," is the just punishment of a crime or an offense. No one could ever have known the justice of God, if there had been no right and wrong to judge between. And no one could have known the justice and righteousness of His wrath without an offender for it to be

manifested upon. And as mercy means a disposition to pass by the offenses of an offender and treat him better than he deserves, there could have been no manifestation of this attribute of God, had there been no offender for it to be manifested toward, or upon.

Creation alone manifested three, but only three, of the attributes of God. They are the Will, Wisdom, and His Power. The Will suggested the creation; the Wisdom planned it, and the Power performed the work of bringing things into being. All men, even the wicked, can see a great manifestation of these three attributes of God as they are wonderfully manifested in creation.

Paul said of those, whose ungodliness, and unrighteousness the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against; "For that which may be known of God (by creation), is manifested in them, for God hath shewed it unto them" (Romans 1:19). Then he tells how it was shown to them. He says, "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 (the wicked) are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Now let us take this rule by which Paul said the invisible things of Him are clearly seen and understood. He said they are understood by the things that are made. That which may be known of God by the wicked is clearly seen and understood by the things that are made.

His Will, Wisdom, and Power are seen and understood by what He has made. That is the way we judge a mechanic whom we have never seen, if we can see something that He has made, something of His Will, Wisdom, and mechanical Powers. For instance, we will take a watch. In the very face of it we see three of the invisible things of its maker. First, we see his will manifested. We see that his will was to make a timepiece, one that would keep time and mark or indicate the hours, minutes and seconds. Second, we see wisdom, the wisdom that devised the plan. If he was wise enough his plan will be perfect, or in others words, it will be planned so that if it is made according to the plan it will run perfectly and keep the time with perfect precision. We also see in the watch the mechanical power or ability of the maker. If his plan was correct, and his ability as a workman was equal to the occasion, his watch, when it is done, will mark him as a perfect watchmaker. But if it fails to keep correct time, it stamps him as a bungler and a failure. We understand this by the thing that he made. This is exactly the rule that Paul lays down by which even those who hold the truth in unrighteousness to judge and understand the invisible, will, wisdom and power of God. And they are made so plain that Paul said they are without excuse.

Dear reader, what do you clearly see as pertains to the Godhead, when you

look at the things He has made? Do you think they are doing with exact and perfect precision the things that the Will desired? If not, then by the same rule that you judged the watchmaker and stamped him as a bungler, would you not condemn God as a failure? If He is clearly seen and understood by the things that He made and they are not moving or doing what was in His Will for them to do, then you clearly see that He is a failure as a Creator. This rule is given us by inspiration and it must be our guide. I am fully satisfied, myself, that everything God made is doing exactly what the Creator willed and determined for them to do. Otherwise, if I judge Him by the rule Paul gave, I would be compelled to say that the works of His hand prove Him to be imperfect; that the things that He made do not perform as He willed they should perform, therefore they have proved from the first test, in the garden, to be unsatisfactory to Him that made them. God forbid that we should thus impeach Him!

In the Council of God's Will, when Wisdom, Power, Love, Mercy, Justice and Wrath all consulted the Will of God, they agreed on a plan that would manifest, or reveal, in a most glorious manner, each of them in the fullness of their perfection. To do this they determined to make a world into which sin would enter, so that the four attributes that were not brought out and revealed in creation could be made manifest. Had there been no sin, love would have never been revealed in its pleading and making the great sacrifice that it made for sinners; Mercy would not have been revealed in the forgiving and saving of unworthy objects; Justice could not have been revealed in the condemnation of sin; and Wrath could not have been revealed in the execution of those whom Justice condemned. So God would only have been manifested as a wise and powerful Creator who willed, planned, and made the world, with no apparent object in view than to show what He could do. There was no love, Mercy, Justice nor Wrath, revealed in creation. But let us suppose that God had made the world just as He did, but had determined not to reveal any of His attributes that were not revealed in creation, except Love and Mercy. When man sinned, what would have been the results? There would have been no Justice to condemn, nor Wrath to execute. So when Love plead for this salvation, all men would have been saved, none would have been condemned or executed, and universal salvation would have been the result, without any sacrifice being made to satisfy Justice or appease the Wrath of God. On the other hand, if Love and Mercy had been left out of the Council, and no arrangements made for their manifestation, the result would have been that when man sinned there would have been no Love to plead to Him and no Mercy to forgive. Justice would have condemned, Love would not have offered a sacrifice, and Wrath would have executed the sentence of

Justice and the whole race of man would have been lost, universal damnation would have been the result.

However, the plan agreed upon in the council of God, was to reveal the glory of God in all of His perfections.

"Truth, Wisdom, Power and Love,  
In all their glory shown,  
When Jesus left the courts above,  
And died to save His own"

Love, Mercy, Justice and Wrath, were gloriously revealed in the crucifixion of Christ, but they could not have been thus revealed, had there been no sin, for Jesus died for sinners. All who hold that God was unwilling for man to become a sinner, are bound to admit that if their theory is true, all the glorious things that God has done in planning and saving sinners, has been a matter of second choice with Him; for His first choice would have been that there be no sinners to redeem. But Paul does not state it that way. He says that, "For it became Him= for whom are all thing, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings "(Hebrews 2:10). It "became Him" to bring many sons unto glory in the very way He has and is doing it. The word "became" is the imperfect of "become," which means it was suitable, or befitting, for Him to accomplish the bringing of these many sons unto glory in this way. The way that He chose to do was firmly fixed in His determinate counsel before He made man. And when He made him, He made him so that he was sure to become a sinner. Why? Because He had determined to bring many sons unto glory by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. This was "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord "(Ephesians 3:11), and the way in which He had determined in council to make His glory known on the vessels of mercy which He had "afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23).

That the plan to save sinners was arranged before there were any sinners to save is evident, for Paul said they were "chosen in Christ before the world began" (Ephesians 1:3-5), and were "predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL." This plan then (instead of being a matter of second choice with Him and grievous to Him that it must be made as a necessity forced upon Him contrary to His will) was according to the good pleasure of His will, and was to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein

He hath made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:1-6). For this reason it is said, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isaiah 53:10).

In doing it the glory of His grace - the grace of love and the grace of mercy - was gloriously manifested in transaction, so much so, that Paul said, "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:10).

And what was all of this for? "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7). Here is the summary of the whole plan: His glory will shine through the ages to come in the revealing of the riches of His grace, which could not be revealed except upon sinners. In this wonderful plan, Jesus was foreordained as "a lamb without blemish and without spot, before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-21). Why make this arrangement before He made the man if the thing was in the least a displeasure or repugnant to Him? It is said, "an ounce of preventative is worth a pound of cure." If it did not suit Him for sin to come into the world, why did He not prevent it? If He could speak a world into existence, could He not as easily have kept sin out, as to allow it to enter the world? According to the Scripture, He "prepared a kingdom" for His sheep, "before the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34), and, also, a place for the goats. (Matthew 25:31-46) And it pleased Him to do this, for David said, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psalm 135:6).

This proves beyond all doubt, that it pleased Him to make a world into which sin would enter, and it further proves that it would not have pleased Him to have a world into which sin would not enter, or He certainly would have made that kind. To my mind, it is very unreasonable and silly to say that God foreknew that if He made the world as He did, sin would come into it and every thing transpire that has and will transpire, when He much rather it would not be so. Was He powerless to prevent it? Could He not have given man a nature that would not incline to sin? Knowing as He did that if Satan came in contact with the woman, he would beguile and deceive her, could He not have prevented it? Could He not have done as He has determined to do in the future, and bound Satan and put him in the bottomless pit and thus have prevented him from deceiving her?

Tell me, you who think that it would have suited God better for man to have

kept the law; do you think it would have been better for God to have bound Satan back there before he deceived anyone than to have allowed him to deceive them and bring about all the sin, wickedness, vice, and corruption that have come as a result of that act back in the Garden? There would have been no sickness, no death, no sorrow, no weeping, and no mourning, no sadness of heart, nor shedding of tears, no hell, no Savior of sinners, no shouts of praises to God and to the Lamb by redeemed sinners, hence, no heaven. In fact, don't you think God committed the greatest folly, and made the most colossal blunder that could have been made, when He failed to bind Satan back there, instead of waiting six thousand years or more later, and then binding him to prevent him from "deceiving the nations any more for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:3)?

First: Why not have bound him before he deceived anyone? Second: why loose him at the end of the thousand years? If God will get more glory to Himself through the redemption of sinners, than He would have gotten had there been no sin, don't you think that the devil will be entitled to some of the glory for his part in the matter? There would have been no opportunity for God to have gotten the glory that will shine forth out of the redemption of sinners, had there been no sinners to save, and if it was contrary to God's Will for man to sin, then, if Satan had not defeated God's Will by deceiving the woman, this glory never would have arisen to God out of the redemption of sinners. There would not have been any sons brought to glory by the making of the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. There would have been neither suffering nor salvation. If the devil brought about this condition contrary to God's Will, out of which God will get so much glory, don't you think God should thank him for it? God forbid such a position!

If your hope of heaven is based on the thought that you are redeemed sinner, which you could not be unless you had been a sinner, which you would not have been, had it not been for the part the devil played in making you a sinner, then don't you think you should say: "But the devil be thanked that I was the servant of sin," instead of the saying of Paul, "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you" (Romans 6:17). Paul made a great mistake if the devil brought sin about contrary to the will of God. No one who denies that we became sinners according to the will and purpose of God would ever say, as Paul did, "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin." According to their theory, Paul should have said, "The devil be damned that you were the servants of sin, but God be thanked that you have been

made free from sin, and yourselves be thanked that since being made free from sin, you have volunteered to become the servants of God, and as such have obeyed that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you . . . . and now being made free from sin and become the servants of God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end conditional time salvation."

How fittingly appropriate this would have been, if the theory of limited predestination and conditional time-salvation had been true. But thank God, it is not true; hence, Paul said, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:17-23).

Here we have the sequel of the whole matter: eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. God arranged the whole thing in His salvation for this special ending. "For it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). So He arranged for sin, that His Son might suffer for the sins of His people (being "slain from the foundation of the world" ( Revelation 13:8), and thus bring them to glory by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:10). And because of this, Paul said, "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin," for unless you had been sinners, you would never have been brought unto glory by the sufferings of Jesus Christ. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). There would have been no Jesus Christ; for "Jesus Christ" means "Savior anointed" and there could have been no Savior where there was no one to save as Savior means "one who saved." There could have been no salvation where there were no sinners, as "salvation" means, "The redemption of man from the bondage of sin and the liability of eternal death, and conferring upon him eternal happiness."

We are forced to take one of two positions relative to this matter. (1) We must either admit that the whole of it, both sin and salvation, were decreed and appointed of God in the free, eternal and immutable counsel of His Will; or, (2) that the devil is the first great cause of every purpose of God that relates to His dealing with man since He gave man the law in the garden. He was moved and induced to plan salvation by what He foresaw the devil would do. His purpose to save some and His purpose and to damn others were induced by the foreseen act of the devil in the Garden of Eden. There has never been a single word spoken, since God gave man the law in the Garden, by Himself, His prophets, His Son, His apostles, nor His ministers, that would have been spoken, had the devil not beguiled and deceived our Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Not one act of God since the world began would have been as it has been, had He not been influenced or moved to do it through the act of the devil in the Garden of Eden as the first cause of such act. Can you imagine the above to be the correct view of how sin entered into the world and death by sin, had God been forced to react to Satan's act as the origin of all these things?

Do you tell me that God is an independent sovereign? Not if His acts have all been induced, influenced and shaped by what the devil did in the Garden of Eden. All His acts determined in the counsel of His Will before the world began, were induced by His foreseeing this act of the devil in the Garden of Eden, if this act of the devil was not also embraced in the sovereign, free, and independent purpose of God. There is no escape from this conclusion. Either the devil acted freely and independently of God in his act of beguiling and deceiving the woman in the Garden and God foreseeing this act was moved thereby to hold a council and in that council was moved to make all His arrangements through time and on into eternity by His foreseen act of Satan, or the whole thing was arranged in God's free and independent purpose before the world began, and this act of Satan was according to the pre-arrangement, or determinate counsel, of God. If limited predestination is the truth, then God is but a pawn in the hands of Satan, and has been moved by the acts of Satan to do all that He has done, and will do, and God is playing a losing game, because the devil will have the majority of the men in his hands in the wind-up, contrary to God's Will and desire.

We must either admit that God has freely and unchangeably decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass, or admit that all of His actions in eternity in the counsel of His will in arranging for the salvation of sinners; the entire covenant of redemption; the determining of all of His acts in dealing with

sinner in time; and His dealing with His saints as redeemed sinners here in time and on into eternity; and His dealing with the wicked in their everlasting punishment as sinners, have all been and will all be caused or induced by the foreseen acts of Satan. If this is so, then there is no such Being as a sovereign and independent God For all of His thoughts, purposes, and actions, in time and in eternity have been and will be induced, shaped, and governed, by what He foresaw Satan would do.

Would it have been better for the world, and more pleasing to God, for sin to have not entered into the world? Did God do that which was best for His people and most suitable for His own glory when He let sin enter the world? If it would have been best for sin not to enter into the world, and God could have prevented its entrance, did He do the best that could have been done when He allowed it to enter? If all that He has done and will do is for the best, and yet He would not have done these things, had Satan not done what he did, don't you think you should credit Satan with being the first cause of God doing that which was best? These are some of the things one must seriously consider when discussing God's decree and predestination. Sin has to be considered. It plays too much a part of God's dealings with man to be lightly and frivolously shoved aside.

It cannot reasonably be denied that the foreseen act of Satan caused God to first think of arranging a plan to save sinners, and caused Him to consult his will, which resulted in the arranging of the covenant of redemption, if He was moved to do so by what He saw Satan would do. In such a case, if God had any plan, purpose, will, desire, or thought for the future that were eternal, free, independent and in no wise affected, caused, influenced or induced by what He foresaw Satan would do, then it is evident that such plan, purpose, will, desire, and thought, were abandoned, because of what He foresaw; and Satan, not the sovereign, free, immutable, and independent will of God, moved God to do all that He has done and will do concerning sin and sinners. Reason as we may, we cannot escape the conclusion under the idea of limited predestination, that Satan caused God to arrange the covenant of redemption and to do all that He has done or ever will do in His dealings with men as sinners. This being true, it logically follows, that as the entrance of sin into the world was not provided for as a free and independent purpose that any body should ever be everlastingly damned and punished; hence, there was no hell or place of punishment in His original Will, but the thought of punishment, and the preparing a place for that purpose was induced by the foreseen act of Satan in causing our fore-parents to sin. And if this is true, then it follows that God did not eternally, originally, freely and

independently hate, and/or will, the damnation of anyone. Then it further follows, logically, irresistibly, and inevitably, that He has changed somewhere along the line in His feelings, mind, purpose and will since His first thought of creating [sic] man. Reason as we may, we cannot escape this conclusion under the idea of limited predestination.

Nor is this all; for if God was moved, influenced or induced by what He foresaw Satan would do, to arrange to save some and damn others, then it follows as an irresistible conclusion, that if God ever had any plan for, or purpose of, or thought concerning the creation of man that was in no way affected, moved, induced, caused or influenced by what He foresaw Satan would do, then neither salvation nor damnation were thought of in such plan, purpose, or thought. For neither salvation nor damnation can be thought of separate and apart from sinners. Hence, it follows, that if God ever had any plan or purpose for the future that was free, eternal and independent of Satan and his works, He abandoned such plan or purpose because of what He foresaw coming independent of Himself or His organized plan or purpose, and adopted a contingency plan to meet the conditions that He saw would be thrust upon Him independent of His Will or desires. In other words, He abandoned all thought, plan or purpose of a sinless world and sinless men, if He ever had any such thought, plan or purpose, and devised a plan to meet the conditions, that unwillingly (on His part) was going to be thrust upon Him, and determined to accept the situation and do the best He could under the circumstances.

Taking this view of the matter, and seeing, according to this view, that God would have preferred that sin never enter the world, then, of course, He would have preferred that there be no sinners; hence, we are forced to conclude that His present plan to save the minor part of the human family, and to damn the rest, was a matter of second choice with Him, and was the best He could do under the circumstances.

There is no escaping these conclusions under the idea of limited predestination. Reason as we may, if we admit that salvation and damnation were both determined of God as a result of His foreseeing that the devil would lead man into sin contrary to His will, and outside of His purpose, then it follows that the devil is the great first cause of God determining to save a part of the human family and to damn the rest. These are the legitimate deductions from limited predestination, but, of course, the advocates of that theory do not avow these natural consequences. Yet they are inevitable, if that theory is true. The old-time Arminians are more

consistent than these, because they freely admit that God would have kept sin out of the world if He could. They freely admit that it would have been best for sin to have not entered the world; and that God would have prevented it if He had been able. In other words, according to Arminians, God would have done better if He could, while the limited predestinarians say that it would have been better for the world and would have pleased God better, if sin had not entered the world. And yet they admit that God could have prevented it if He would. In other words, they say that God could have done better than He did if He would. If they admit that it would have pleased God better, and would have been better for man for sin to have not entered the world, and then admit that God could have kept it out if He would, they say plainly that God could have done better than He did if He would. Their doctrine says that He could have kept sin out of the world if He would. And it also says that it would have been better for sin to have never entered the world. All of these positions mean that God could have done better than He did. The man who holds to that theory must think that if it had been him, instead of God, that made the world, and he had been infinite in wisdom and almighty in power, he could and would have kept sin out of the world; and thereby have done better in the matter than God did. The theory of limited predestination denies the existence of God, and sets up a Being that its devotees call the devil, which from the beginning of time has proved himself to be more wise and more powerful than the thing that they call "God," by getting sin into the world which they say their "God" made, and which He was unwilling for sin to enter.

Not only did this devil, according to the Limited Predestinarian view, outwit their "God" and get sin into His world contrary to His will, but he kept it here ever since, while their "God" was unwilling for it to be here any part of the time. The devil has caused all men to sin, while their "God" was not willing for any man to sin, nor have any utility for its existence. He will drag millions down to hell while it was not in the original will, purpose or intention of their "God" for any hell. He never had any such thought as a heaven or a hell, salvation, or damnation until He looked into the future and saw sin coming, propelled by the devil. Then he got busy and held a council in which he consulted his Will as to what He should do about it. And either because He was unable to find a way to prevent it, or unwilling to do anything to prevent its coming into the world, He decided to let the devil have his way about it, and usher it into the world. And while He did not, at his first thought of making man, mean, purpose, or intend to hate and everlastingly damn anybody, yet when He saw that they would become sinners, hatred arose in Him toward the greater part of the human family, and

he decided that he would rather prepare a hell and punish them forever than to either take steps to prevent them from becoming sinners, or prepare a remedy for sin and save them.

Understand me; this is the limited predestinarians' "God" of whom I am speaking. They cannot afford to admit that their "God" arranged the whole program in his own eternal mind, unbiased and uninfluenced by Satan or anything outside of himself. They deny that he eternally willed that things should be as they are. They also deny that he eternally willed or purposed the damnation of anyone. But they say he prepared a hell and determined to damn millions, because he foresaw sin would come. If he foresaw sin would come he certainly saw that Satan would be the cause of its coming; hence, from the time he foresaw this He has never been free for a single moment from the influence of what He foresaw. All of His purposes, from thenceforth, were influenced and shaped by what He foresaw. Everything that He has ever done or said since He foresaw this "unpurposed" [sic] and unpleasant event coming contrary to His will, has been determined and shaped by what He foresaw. Not a single prophet would ever have been sent out to tell us of the things that should and have come to pass. Jesus Christ would never have come into the world to save sinners if not for this foreseen contingency. No apostles would have been sent out, no Bible would have been written, and there would not have been a single church house nor a single minister of the gospel contemplated nor provided for in that "God's" arrangements, had he not foreseen something coming that he did not will nor purpose should come. Surely, surely, surely, if there is no God greater than that held forth by limited predestination, then the man who said in his heart, "There is no God, " (Psalm 14:1) was no fool. What I would like to impress upon the mind of the reader is that the theory of limited predestination is the truth, then God has never done anything as a matter of purely SOVEREIGN, free and independent choice, of a free and independent Will. But to the contrary, all that He has ever done or will ever do, was, is, and will be a matter of second choice, or expediency, with Him. All that He has done or will do, He does it as a matter of necessity, and not as a matter of original, free and independent purpose. For if sin, with its consequence, together with all that He does in His dealing with sinners, both in saving some and damning others, were not embraced in His original, free and independent Will and purpose, then it follows that all that He has done or will do in these matters, He determined to do them as a result of what He foresaw. He was moved to do it, not because it was the good pleasure of His own will to have it that way, but because He saw something coming contrary to His will and was moved thereby to devise a plan for dealing with the unpleasant situation

that He saw was going to be thrust upon Him contrary to His will.

How any one who believes in an all-wise and all-powerful God can believe such folly is a mystery to me. None can fail to see that both salvation and damnation were made possible by sin entering into the world; for surely no one thinks that either the salvation of sinners or the damnation of sinners would be possible if there were no sinners to be saved or damned. Hence, if God ever had any thought, purpose, or plan for the future, independent of, and not induced by sin, He abandoned them when He telescopically saw sin coming and arranged all of His plans for time and eternity in connection with sin, sinners, and those that were once sinners. None can fail to see this. Eternally, He will punish one set of sinners, and dwell with others that were once sinners. Is all of this a matter of second choice with Him? Perish the thought! Would He rather this state of affairs have never been? Certainly He would, if He rather there had been no sin; for his final state of things could not have been as it will be, if there had been no sin. So we are forced to choose between the real God who "doeth His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand" and a so-called "God" that has never had anything, nor will ever have anything in time or eternity, as He would have preferred to have it. Well did the apostle say: "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things and we by Him. Howbeit, there is not in every man this knowledge "(I Corinthians 8:5-7).

Paul says of this God, that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). It is His Will to make a man subject to vanity. It was His Will to make a tempter and to allow him to tempt this man to violate the law, knowing that no one but Himself could withstand his seductive influence. No, not even His Son; for He gave His angels charge over Him to keep Him in all His ways, so that He would not fall when lead up into the wilderness to be tempted of this same one that tempted Adam. He gave this tempter power to incline Adam's mind to eat the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so that –

"When Adam to eat of the fruit was inclined,  
It answered the end that Jehovah designed,  
No purpose of grace was altered thereby,  
It was all for the lifting of Jesus on high.  
From thence we behold He made nothing in vain,

For Adam thus formed was a link in the chain.  
In Him 'twas decreed that His members should die,  
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.  
The devil was non-pulsed in what he had done;

The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run dry And all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

The Scriptures abound with the proof of the predestination of all things. The very name and nature of the Tree and its fruit, that Adam ate of in the Garden, signifies the purpose for which it was made, just as surely as the name and nature of the Tree of Life signifies the purpose for which it was made. The name of one signified that it would give the knowledge of good and evil to those who eat of it; and the same of the other signified that it would give life to those who eat of it. The fruit of one contained a nature or property that would impart the knowledge of good and evil to the eater, while the other contained a nature or quality that would give everlasting life to the eater thereof. God made each of these trees and gave to each its nature. Did He give them that nature on purpose? Or did He do it accidentally? Common sense would say that He did it on purpose. An all-wise God could not do any thing by accident, and no intelligent being would knowingly do anything without having some purpose in so doing, and some end in view which he intends to accomplish by means of, or through what he does as a means to that end.

**OBJECTIONS TO GOD'S  
DECREE AND THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS A Letter  
From Elder Thomas J. Blanchard  
To  
Elder Jonas C. Sikes**

My precious brother, I have had a mind to write you for some time, and after having read quite a number of your papers through the kindness of brother Richardson of Texas, I now make the attempt.

Now, dear brother, I think you know me too well to think that I am prompted by an spirit of evil, but, precious brother, as there are some things taught by you that I can not reconcile with my limited knowledge of the Bible, and I think if there is a man living that can do it, it is Jonas Sikes. First, I cannot see how God could predestinate all the wicked acts of man, and then forbid a

whole lot of them. I have always understood predestination to be the cause of all that it embraced. Now, dear brother, will you show me how this is?

"Thou shalt not eat of it," yet I have predestinated that you shall; "thou shalt not kill," yet I have predestinated that you shall; "thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not covet," etc. Again, "out of the same mouth proceedeth not blessings and cursings, my brethren these things ought not to be."

Second, I cannot read the predestination in the Bible and get any evil consequences there from, and where it stops I must stop. Let us look at it just as it reads: "For whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." Now, precious brother, will not this predestination cause every one of them to be conformed? And if it causes one thing it embraces, why not all? Again, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children," etc. Now will not this predestination bring about this adoption? I think we will agree it will. Then I repeat if it brings about one thing it embraces, why not all? Now, dear brother, the true logic forces us to this conclusion: now you notice that it reads, "For whom He did foreknow." This cannot embrace the wicked, for He says to them, "I never knew you," hence did not predestinate them, for if this reaches them, will they not as surely be conformed to the image of His Son as the elect will? And will they not as surely be adopted as children? Mark you logic forces us to accept all that a proposition embraces. Now my dear good and precious brother, I believe from the foregoing Scripture, that every one of God's children of the Adamic race will in time be conformed to the image of His Son, and hence adopted into the heavenly family. I had as soon think that God would cease to be, as to think that this purpose of predestination would fail, and all I can see that God had to do with the wicked acts of man is to forbid them and overthrow them when arrayed against His purposes.

Third, if He predestinated my sinful acts, why did He convict me and make me mourn for that He predestinated I should do? Now, my dear brother, no man esteems you more highly than I, and therefore I have been very candid in this little epistle of love and earnest inquiry, thinking that you would think more of me for so doing than you would if I went about bush-whacking you as though I considered you an enemy to the cross of our blessed Redeemer, and I trust that you will receive and answer this in the same spirit of meekness in which it is written. If you see proper, publish this with your answer, and send me the paper in which it is published. Give my love to Sister Sikes, brother Money, and all the dear saints with whom you meet, and

rest assured that I am your true friend, Oh! That sweet peace and true fellowship may be restored among all in Texas, is the prayer of your little brother yet in hope. Thomas J. Blanchard

Browns Creek, Miss.  
July 18th, 1902

### **ELDER SIKES' REPLY TO OBJECTIONS**

My dear precious Brother in Christ:

Your very kind and brotherly letter came to hand yesterday. I am sure, dear brother from the very spirit of it, that you had no evil motive in writing it, and I am also sure that no evil can result from an investigation of this subject when carried on in the noble spirit which is so clearly manifested in your letter to me; and I am also sure that if all that has been said and written on the subject of predestination had been done in this same fine spirit of kindness, the Baptists would have been in perfect peace on that subject today. But instead of a spirit of brotherly kindness, it seems that a spirit of self importance, of egotism, of strife for the mastery and a desire to publicly score some and get a name and to say, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou," has so captivated our people that a brotherly investigation of a subject is almost impossible. I want to say, dear brother, before taking up the points to which you call my attention, that I fully realize my imperfections, and my weakness and insufficiency for these things; and I am always willing to acknowledge that after all, I may be mistaken in the whole thing. I am also free to admit that I find some difficulties in the doctrine of the predestination of all things; yet I find the foreknowledge of all things surrounded and embraced by the same difficulties.

But when I turn to the other side and try to deny the predestination of all things, I find the difficulties increased tenfold, and if I try to hold to the foreknowledge of all things and deny the predestination of the same, I become perfectly bewildered and lost in the fog of Arminianism. I cannot see how the certain foreknowledge of a thing can possibly exist when as yet it has not been determined that the thing foreknown shall ever exist. Neither can I see how the time that a thing will take place can be foreknown unless the time for its occurrence be fixed, settled, established or determined by some one. And the Scriptures are full of places where the time of events is set forth as certain. If things cannot be certainly foreknown and yet be uncertain, then the certainty of all things must be fixed or established by some one and in some way, or else they cannot be certainly foreknown. This fixed or established certainty of all events is what I call "predestination;" and

is to my mind the only certain basis of foreknowledge. But that you may more fully see and appreciate the difficulties that arise before me when I undertake to hold to the foreknowledge of a thing and not hold to the predestination of it, I will ask, how did God foreknow that there would be a world? How did He foreknow the shape and size of it? How did He foreknow what would inhabit the earth? How did He foreknow that the sun, moon and stars would exist? How did He foreknow the course that each would pursue? How did He foreknow the exact effect that they would have upon each other? How did He foreknow that there would be a man? How did He foreknow how many people should descend from Adam? How did He foreknow just who should be the father and mother of each child that is born into the world? How did He foreknow just when and where each one should be born and the place or "bounds of their habitation"? (Acts 17:26) How did He foreknow the number of the hairs of each of our heads? (Luke 12:7).

These and ten thousand other things arise before me when I try to find a basis for foreknowledge outside of God's determinate counsel.

If these things must be determined in order to establish their certainty, and in order to establish the certain foreknowledge of them, then it follows logically and inevitably that all things foreknown must be determined by some one in order for them to be certainly foreknown. Then if a thing must be fixed or previously determined by someone in order for it to be certainly foreknown, we are driven inevitably to conclude that God has fixed, or predestinated, or predetermined all things; for if God was before all things, which the Scriptures declare, then there was none else to fix, settle, establish or determine the future with its various events with certainty.

These, my dear brother, are some of my reasons for believing in the predestination of all things.

If the certainty of these together with all things else and the certain foreknowledge of them does not depend upon the determinate counsel of God, then please tell me upon what it does depend?

Before taking up your letter I wish to say a few words about the meaning of the word "predestinate." I think much of the trouble now among us on this point of doctrine has grown out of a misunderstanding of its real meaning. Convince me that it means "to cause", to influence or force, and I will at once give up the doctrine. True, many things that God predestinated God causes to come to pass, but predestination does not cause them. If predestination is the

cause that brings about events, then there was no necessity for the death of Christ. His people were predestinated to the adoption of children and to be conformed to the image of Christ. It is obvious that predestination adopts no one, nor does predestination conform God's people to the image of Christ.

If predestination is the cause that produces the end predestinated, then the death of Christ to redeem and the operation of God's Spirit to change us to the image of Christ were not necessary at all; predestination would have done the work. But I have searched every available source for the meaning of the word and if it means to cause, I have failed to find it. The word from which the word predestinate (in our Bible) was translated is Pro-o-rizo. It means to predetermine, foreordain, fore-limit, fore-bound, etc., but it does not mean to cause. We read in Acts 4, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4: 27,28).

These two words, determined and before is from the Greek word "pro-o-rizo," the exact same word from which "predestinate" was translated in every place where it occurs in the Bible. Now if you will find what those wicked men were gathered together to do, then you will know what God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done –predestinated. If predestination did not cause those wicked men to do what they did, then we have no reason to believe that it would be the cause of any other crime or sin; for if there is any meaning to language, God had predetermined or predestinated what these men did. That is a fact. And we cannot deny that they did it wickedly; and that they did it! From this we are forced to acknowledge that God can, and has, predestinated a thing and He not be the author of sin nor His predestination the cause or admit that He was the author and His predestination the cause of the blackest crime ever perpetrated by mortals upon the earth. This we cannot admit, so we are forced to accept the first position; and now we come to the points that you ask me to harmonize or tell you how they can be. As they will be seen in your letter which will be published with this, I will not quote them here, but will say whatever explanation will make clear the cases above mentioned will explain each case mentioned in your letter.

God said, "Thou shalt not kill," yet these men were gathered together to kill the blessed Son of God, and were gathered to "do whatsoever" His "hand and

counsel determined before to be done." God had said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." These men bore false witness, and yet it is emphatically stated by the apostles who lifted up their voices with one accord, that those wicked men were gathered together to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done. I cannot explain how it was that God moved David to say, "Go number Israel," and yet David committed a great sin in doing what God moved him to do, but such is the testimony in holy Writ. [Editor's note: David did not pay a ransom for every soul numbered, as required by the Law] I cannot see why God bid Shemei to curse David and then held Shimeï to account and punished him for it, yet I find it thus recorded and I bow to it. (II Samuel 16: 5-13; and II Samuel 19: 21).

I cannot tell how it was that God sent a lying spirit into the mouth of Ahab's prophets and caused them to prophesy lies, and He Himself, not be responsible for their lies, yet it is true. (I Kings 22:22-23).

I cannot explain just how God turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants and He not be responsible for their subtle dealings: yet David said He did it, and I must accept it. I cannot explain the matter as to just why He should send Moses to Pharaoh and command him saying, "Thus saith the God of the Hebrews, let My people go," and tell Moses, "Yet I will harden his heart that he shall not let them go," but thus it is written and thus I accept it.

I cannot fully understand and explain the justice of God in decreeing the death of His innocent, holy, harmless and sinless Son that vile, sin-polluted, hell-deserving rebels as you and I might go free; yet we find it so recorded in God's holy book, and we accept it with praise and thanksgiving to His holy Name, and we bow before Him and cry out, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." But when we turn our eyes to that awful day in which that thing was done and hear that wicked rabble cry out "Cruces Him! Cruces Him! Release unto us Barabas" we cry out in our hearts against them and say they are unjust and have committed a very unjust deed in killing the innocent and releasing the guilty, forgetting that Barabas is a type of ourselves and at the very moment that that wicked mob delivered Jesus to death and released Barabas, the Lord of Glory delivered His sinless Son to die and set us poor wretches free. I cannot understand it, I cannot explain it, and yet it is the joy of my heart and the theme of my song. The whole affair was to this intent: that the "Scriptures might be fulfilled."

These things, my precious brother, and the things that you ask me to explain, together with many other things like unto them, I cannot explain, yet I can and do believe them. If I could reject all of God's book which I cannot explain, I would have but little, if any left to believe. If I could explain all of His ways, then He must not be finite, or I infinite. I felt sure that any or all of these things would be as easy to explain as it would to tell why He let sin enter into the world when I know He could have just as easily prevented it as to have allowed its occurrence. We are forced right here to take one of two positions, i.e., He either allowed it on purpose, or He allowed it without a purpose; if on purpose, then the predestination of it is established; if He allowed it without purpose, then He was either ignorant of its coming or powerless to prevent it. This would evolve a worse difficulty than the predestination of it! So you see, if we shun the difficulties of predestination on the one hand we run off the road into the gulf of Arminianism on the other. If we use the text, "Whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate," to prove that God's predestination is limited, then we should also use it to prove that His foreknowledge is limited, for if it limits one, it just as certainly limits the other.

True, all men were not foreknown as His covenant people; nor predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, but they were foreknown as His creatures, and He must have had some purpose in creating them, and He must have determined before He made them what disposition He would make of them when time should end; and if He did not determine what disposition He would make of them when time shall end, He may yet determine to save all of them.

It seems from your letter that your objection to the predestination of all things is because you think that predestination means to cause. As I said in the first part of this letter, I do not so understand it. Predestination means a previous purpose, while the cause that produces the fulfillment of that purpose is entirely a different thing. God surely predestinated (pro-o-rizo) the death of Christ, yet it was "by wicked hands" that put Him to death. It is once appointed unto men to die, yet it is sin that "bringeth forth death." As to God's attitude to sin, it is very different to His attitude to righteousness. God (not His predestination) is the cause of all righteousness and holiness, while Satan (not God's predestination) is the cause, source and fountain of all sin and wickedness; yet enthroned as high above him as the heavens are above the earth, with all power to restrict, restrain, check or prevent him at his will is the Lord God "who reigneth in Heaven, in earth, in seas and all deep places" and "doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among

the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him What doest Thou." To me there seems to be far more honor to God and comfort to His people to believe that the Lord God omnipotent reigns and that He established the certainty of all things in His determinate counsel, than to believe that some other power existed in eternity by which the greater part of the events of time were made certain and thereby God, the Lord Jehovah was induced to arrange an emergency plan to meet and offset the events that were made certain by some other power. There is no way to escape the conclusion that if all things were certainly foreknown, the things themselves were as certain to come to pass as the foreknowledge of them was certain. How could any future event be certainly foreknown when as yet the coming to pass of that event was not an established certainty?

It does seem to me that there is far more comfort to the child of God in the thought his gracious and loving Father established the certainty of, and controlled, governed, directed and disposed of all things to His glory and our good, than to believe that blind chance, or heartless and soulless Fate had established the certainty of the greater part of the events of time and made necessary the remainder. To my poor mind we are bound to accept one of these positions. I cannot find any standing room between them.

My dear brother, if the entrance of sin into the world was not purposed in God's original plan, then I am forced to the conclusion that the covenant of redemption was a matter of second choice with Him, arising from a necessity that was entirely outside that plan. Hence His will to make a covenant was originated by a very displeasing necessity instead of being according to His own good pleasure. With these thoughts continually before me and many other reasons equally as strong as these I believe, my dear brother, that you in your charity and Christian liberality will at least justify me in my belief and continue to hold me in your love and fellowship, even if you cannot fully endorse my position. My heart is sorely pained within me over the distressed condition of our beloved Zion. This trouble has been forced upon us by those who are ever ready to cry "heresy" and set up bars of fellowship, but who will not take up the arguments of those whom they oppose and in a spirit of brotherly kindness, try to show wherein our arguments are not good. I do not know of any in this country whom I could not live in fellowship with so far as our doctrinal differences are concerned, but there are some who by their unbrotherly course and repeated misrepresentations have impaired my fellowship for them. I could love to meet you again and hear you proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. I will publish your letter with this reply, though we do not make it a vile to do so.

With love to yourself and family and all the household of faith, I remain,  
Your unworthy brother.

Jonas C. Sikes.

[ The following letter from Elder Jonas Sikes to Elder Hutchens, editor of The Lone Pilgrim in the 1930's has reference to a published letter from Claude H. Cayce published in The Primitive Baptist. This publication should not be confused with the original magazine with this name, published in Virginia. Elder Cayce adopted the title after the former went out of publication.

The reader may need to know of the Fulton Convention of 1900, held at Fulton, Kentucky. This convention was called together by the Progressive element of Neo-Primitive Baptists to revise the London Confession of Faith, and find an ecumenical union of different factions of Anti-mission Baptists. This they did via Annotations affixed to it, explaining their take on what the Baptists in England meant in 1689 when the Baptist Confession was submitted to Parliament to gain freedom of religious worship under the Act of Toleration.

Elder Cayce was one of the most able debaters among Primitive Baptists, had a very keen wit, and was an obstinate opponent to the sovereign dominion of God over all things. From him, and other young elders associated with him, they rooted Calvinism, and most elements of it from their ecumenical union, and were ardent opponents to it. At this publication, Calvinism has made new inroads among them, and their opposition to it is rising sharply. The reader may find this Letter of historical, as well as doctrinal, interest. ED.]

I have before me, three clippings from a paper wrongfully called "The Primitive Baptist." They were written, by its editor, C. H. Cayce. One of these clippings is an answer to a sister Terrell, one to a brother Owen, and one to a sister Carson. The date of their publication, were September 1, 1925; February 15, 1926; and March 1, 1926. These parties had asked him to discontinue their papers and he proceeded to give each of them a lambasting. His answers do not sound like they came from one who is commanded to be "gentle unto all men and meekly instruct those who oppose themselves." Rather, they are rantings of some parrot mouthed blatherskite, who is sorely afflicted with a diarrhea of words and a constipation of thought. I have had the clippings several days, with a request for me to answer them, but I have been hesitating and halting between two Proverbs, hardly knowing which

one to obey. In Proverbs 26:4, Solomon says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly lest thou also be like unto him." And in the next verse, he says, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." As his answers to those parties strongly indicate that he is badly affected with that trouble, I feel I will be justified in answering him according to his folly as requested.

I will now quote some of his sayings in those extracts, and then see if I can't find where he has talked entirely differently on another occasion.

In his answer to sister Carson, he says, "The heathenish, blasphemous, devil invented doctrine that God did from all eternity absolutely and unconditionally predestinate, unalterably fix and decree everything that come to pass; molded and fixed every link in the chain of events, so that everything must come to pass just as it does, which some folks among the Old Baptists advocate, is not Old Baptist doctrine and never has been and never will be. The man who advocates such a blasphemous heresy, gives evidence that he needs something, - either regeneration or reformation." Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). I will now proceed to try "C. H. C." by his own words.

In November 1900, there was a council held at Fulton, Kentucky, in which were fifty-one ministers, who claimed to represent fourteen thousand five hundred Old Baptists, and be in direct correspondence with more than one hundred thousand Old Baptists. In that meeting they said, "The London Confession of Faith, adopted over two hundred years ago, by thirty-seven of the ablest ministers of England and Wales, representing over one hundred churches, has served one of the most needful services among our people of any document of faith since the days of the Apostles, and has stood unquestioned as an expression of the Primitive Baptist interpretation of the Bible from then until now."

Among those who said this, I find the name of C. H. Cayce, of Martin, Tennessee. Now let us Quote from that Confession, what he said that he believed. "In Chapter 3, Section 1, it says, "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass." Unquote. How much does it say that God "hath decreed"? All things whatsoever comes to pass. How did He decree it? Freely and unchangeably. From when hath He decreed it? From all eternity. Elder Cayce may pile up all the prefixes that he can think of, to this, and he cannot make it express it any stronger than is

expressed in the words, "Freely and unchangeably." He may add "absolute," "unalterably," and "unconditionally," and it is no stronger than "unchangeably." And he may add "good," "bad," and "indifferent," and he has no more than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." He may go back as far as he can with every expression that he can think of, and he cannot get farther back than "all eternity." If God has unchangeably decreed all things whatsoever come to pass, and good, bad and indifferent things come to pass, then all the angels, men and devils in heaven, earth and hell has never, will never, and can never change one single thing from the way it was decreed, for it is unchangeably decreed from all eternity.

Elder Cayce said so himself in 1900, and he said that had stood for more than two hundred years as an expression of the Primitive Baptists' interpretation of the Bible. In this he was correct.

Listen again at what he said. He and fifty other ministers said, "We would be glad to see this document which has stood the test as an expression of our faith for more than two hundred years, become uniformly used in our churches as their expression of their faith and practice." Elder Cayce recommended this and then bucks all over creation because some of his subscribers believe it! All the prefixes and affixes that he has put to it in his letter to those parties, does not make it any stronger than unchangeably decreed That which is unchangeable cannot be changed, then how can you make it any stronger? And if it includes all things whatsoever comes to pass, then how can you crowd any more into it? It cannot be done. When Elder Cayce has piled up all of the prefixes and affixes that he can think of, and has beat the air on all sides in an effort to make the doctrine of truth look hideous, he has not got any more in to it than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." Nor made it any stronger than being "freely and unchangeably decreed of God."

The difference after all his ranting is only the difference between sheep meat and mutton. When he has ransacked all the different languages and exhausted his vocabulary, he can not make it any stronger than being "freely and unchangeably decreed of God," nor has he got more into it than "all things whatsoever comes to pass," neither has he got any further back with it, than "from all eternity." Let him tell us how he can go farther back than all eternity, and let him tell us how anything can be more firmly fixed than to be "unchangeably decreed of God." And let him tell us how he can crowd more into that decree than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." If he cannot tell us these simple things, then judging him by his own words, it is evident that

"he needs something — either regeneration or reformation." Perhaps both. Is this all the proof we have? Let us see.

In Chapter five and Section four of that Confession which he has recommended so highly, it reads as follows: "The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His Providence, that His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the .cyst \_fig and all other sinful actions both of angels and men, (and that not by a bare permission,) which also He most wisely and powerfully boundeth and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold dispensation to His most holy ends; YET SO AS THE SINFULNESS OF THEIR ACTIONS, PROCEEDETH ONLY FROM THE CREATURES, AND NOT FROM GOD, WHO, BEING MOST HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS, NEITHER IS NOR CAN BE THE AUTHOR OF SIN" This statement has the highest approval that Elder Cayce can give it, and as if he would add force to it, he helped to put a footnote to it which reads as follows: "We understand this section to teach that while God does not cause men to sin, nor is His predestination in its attitude to sin causative, yet He exercises such a control over all His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe." This was written in 1900, and expressed what Primitive Baptists believe then. (But this is two decades later.)

Now let me deal with him for a while according to his folly. What is he kicking about anyway? According to this statement, which he himself help to put as a footnote there, there was no chance for those parties to do different from what they did, because God was exercising such a control over them that there was no chance for them to do otherwise. According to this statement that Elder Cayce helped to draft and put in that Confession, there is no chance in the universe for anything to be different from the way it comes to pass. Not merely because of what he calls the "heathenish, blasphemous, devil invented doctrine that God did from all eternity absolutely, and unconditionally predestinate, unalterably fix and decree everything that comes to pass; molded and fixed every link in the chain of events, so that everything must come to pass just as it does," but "because God exercises, now, continuously, such a control over all His creatures, as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe."

Truly did Solomon say, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Proverbs 26:16). If God is exercising such a control over all of His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe and Elder Cayce says He is, then it is up to Elder Cayce to

tell us how, where and when there is any chance for anything to come to pass in the universe different to the way it does come to pass. And if he cannot do it, then judging him by his own words, he needs something - either regeneration or reformation.

Elder Cayce asks sister Carson, "Do you object to God's will and pleasure being done? If it is not according to His will and pleasure and yet He fixed it that way, why did He do so? Could He not just as easily fixed it so it would be according to His will and pleasure as to fix it the way it was and is?" Let us turn his logic back to him and see what kind of an answer he will make. If it was contrary to God's will and pleasure for sin to enter the world, why did He make it so that it would enter? Could He not just as easily have made it so that sin would not enter? And if it was contrary to the will and pleasure of God for sin to enter the world, and yet He used His wisdom and His power to make a world into which sin would enter, then is it not a fact that He used His wisdom and His power to defeat His own will and pleasure? And if sin entered into this world contrary to the will and purpose of God, what assurance have we that it will not enter heaven in the same way? It being contrary to God's will and pleasure for it to enter heaven and immortal glory is no assurance, whatever, that it will not enter, if it be a fact that it entered the world contrary to His will and pleasure. Does Elder Cayce now believe what he said he believed in 1900 at the Fulton Convention? If not, and that was the truth then, is not sister Carson's charge that he has departed from the truth correct? If he still believes what he said then that he believed, then he now believes that "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity -- freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever comes to pass." And if he believes this, then he does not believe that any, nor all of the angels of heaven, the creatures of earth and the demons of hell can bring one thing to pass in this world, different from the way they do come to pass, unless they can defeat, thwart and change the unchangeable decree of God. And if he believes that there is any chance in the universe for one thing to be changed from the determinate counsel of God, then he does not believe now as he stated in that council, that "all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe."

But the strangest argument that I have ever heard from anyone claiming to be an Old School or Primitive Baptist, is presented to Sister Carson by Elder Cayce. His entire argument is an effort to prove that when God says a thing shall be, His word may prove to be untrue, and the thing never be as He says it shall be. Listen to what he says. "Sister Carson asks if we do not believe that every will and shall between the lids of the holy book shall be fulfilled? Sister Carson, suppose we ask you to read your own question, and allow us

to ask you if you believe that every shall in the Bible shall be fulfilled. Do you? Let us read: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Genesis 2:16-17). The words, "thou shalt not" mean the same as "you shall not" in our present day English. Now sister Carson, the Lord said, "You shall not." Do you believe that the man did not, or do you believe that he did? If you say you believe that the man did not, then you admit that you do not believe the Bible. If you say you believe that he did, then you admit that at least one shall is not fulfilled. Which horn of the dilemma will you take?"

A man who is a minister, trying to convince the people of God that He does not tell the truth is almost inconceivable! To insinuate that when God says that a thing shall be, there is no certainty as to whether it will come true or not is contrary to a minister's calling. Yet this same man has said that God "exercises such a control over all of His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe." The gist of his argument is, that Adam did that which there was no chance in the universe for him to do, and proved God to be a liar! But Paul said, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

I am going to accept God's word and let Elder Cayce be the other fellow. In many places in the Scriptures, the seal of certainty is announced by the prophet saying, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." But this fellow in his blind and unholy zeal, to overthrow the truth of God's sovereignty, does his uttermost to prove that God Himself may either lie or be mistaken. And to prove it quotes a part of what God said to Adam, to prove God's word is not necessarily true.

Well did Jesus say, "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). The first account we have of the devil, he was trying to convince the woman that what God had said should be would not come to pass. And as late as March 1, this year, one of his ministers, was trying to convince a woman that another one of God's shalls in the same conversation, did not come to pass. Now let us read God's command to Adam and see if God's word did not absolutely come true. He said, "Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that shalt not eat of it FOR IN THE DAY THOU EATEST THEREOF. THOU SHALT SURELY DIE." Elder Cayce was deceitful in his selection of the contents of this verse. The Devil tried to prove that the last "shall" in the verse was not the truth,

and his minister tried to prove that the first "shall" was not the truth and the two of them deny any part of it being true. Paul tells us of some who turn the truth of God into a lie, and I am sure that this was done in the argument that we are now answering. When you take this command as a whole, anyone can see at a glance that it means, "Thou shalt not FREELY eat of it. You shalt not eat of it and not die." He said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest FREELY eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil" — the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the only tree that they should not eat of and remain free. But they shall not eat of it and be FREE, "for in the day," (not if you do) "FOR in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This command, as a whole, within its context, came to pass precisely as God said it should! For anyone to dissect it and disassociate the middle part of the command (Thou shalt not eat of it) from the preceding and succeeding part of it, and thus make it appear that God has either lied or was mistaken, has "handled the word of God deceitfully" and thus "turned the truth of God into a lie." But his crowning effort to discredit God, and prove that He has no stability about Him, and that He is mutable, and that His oath is mutable, and that He is unreliable and does not respect His oath comes in his next argument.

He starts it by saying, "Sister Carson, let us read Numbers 14:23 and 34, "Surely they shall not see the land which / swear unto their fathers neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it" and, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise." Can you harmonize with your doctrine that God absolutely and unconditionally predestinated every thing that comes to pass and that every thing has to be just as it is? Let us kindly ask some questions, Did not the Lord swear unto their fathers that He would give them the land of Canaan? Did He not promise them the land? Did the Lord intend when He made the promise and swore to it that these people should have the land of Canaan? Did He swear a lie? If He did not, then He meant what He promised, did He not? Did He not determine that they should not do what He swore they would do? Did He not say they shall see the land? Did He not promise it to them — the promise being made to their fathers? Did He not say, Ye shall know My breach of promise? The marginal reference to breach of promise, says, altering of My purpose. "I have quoted at length, for the reader to get the trend of what he is driving at, and to include his marginal reference, so that all may see that he does not believe that either God's promises or His oath are immutable, and that God is mutable and changes and forsakes His original purposes, promises, and oaths, and determines a new thing exactly to the

reverse of His original purposes.

If this be true, then where is the foundation for "strong consolation for those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of a hope set before them" by a mutable God whose promises and oaths are like Himself, mutable? Where is there any foundation for any hope at all, if God, His promises and His oaths are mutable? Not in His statement, "For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed " For if the light in which Elder Cayce presents Him in the above extract be true, He did change and destroyed a lot of the sons of Jacob, contrary to His promises and the oath of His covenant made with Abraham, confirmed in Isaac and Jacob, etc. Not in His promise to save, for His promises are mutable; not in His oath, for that also is mutable. Not in the promise of eternal life made before the world began, for Paul based this hope on God's inability to lie, which was made impossible by the nature of His promise and His oath, which nature Elder Cayce sets aside as something which does not exist. Paul said, "For when God made promise unto Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end to all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things (God's promise and His oath) in the which it was impossible for Him to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6: 13-20).

Paul evidently means in the above, that the immutability of God's promises and His oath is the only foundation for a hope that those who have fled for refuge could lay hold of with any degree of consolation whatever. And if Elder Cayce can find a consoling hope in a mutable God whose purposes, promises and oaths are mutable, then it is evidence that he has not fled for refuge to the same God that the saints of Paul's day fled to. Whatever the Scripture cited by Elder Cayce in Numbers 14 may mean, it cannot mean that God, His purposes, His promises and His oaths are mutable. Whatever the phrase "breach of promise" in the text referred to may mean, it cannot mean that God perjured Himself, which He must do IF He violates His oath. It cannot mean either, that if any of the offspring of Jacob failed to get to Canaan, that God has changed His purpose, broken His promise and perjured

Himself by the violation of His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for then Joseph and all others who died in Egypt, even the male children that Pharaoh had put to death, were only victims of God's mutability and unfaithfulness to His promise and His oath.

But Paul comes to our assistance just here and takes up the subject and discusses it at length in the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost sayeth, today I hear My voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My works forty years, wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.) (Hebrews 3: 7-11). In verses 18 and 19 Paul asks, "And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not." And adds, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." In the next chapter, in the third verse, he says, "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Paul talks very different about this affair from the way Elder Cayce talks. After narrating the whole thing, how the Holy Ghost said these people acted and how God was grieved with them and swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, then he adds, "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" He means the works that he has been discussing. Everything in connection with this whole affair was finished, completely arranged in God's determinate counsel, with no detail lacking, from the foundation of the world. This is exactly as Solomon teaches in Ecclesiastes 3:15, "That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." His statement: "That which hath been is now," means there is nothing now, which has not been in God's determinate counsel. "And that which is to be hath already been," is, that nothing shall ever be in this world that has not already been in God's counsel from eternity, for the works were finished in His counsel from the foundation of the world. It was all appointed by Him.

Since Elder Cayce refers to the margin of his Bible to try to prove his position, he cannot object if I quote from an old Bible printed away back when the characters "f" and "s" were almost alike. [Elder Sikes quotes from the Geneva Bible of 1615] "And who is like Me, that shall call and shall declare it, and shall set it in order before Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And what is at hand and what things are to come? Let them spew unto them" (Isaiah 44:7). This is exactly what Solomon means in Ecclesiastes

3:15 "That which hath been (appointed of God) is now. And that which is to be hath already been, (appointed of God) and God requireth that which is past. " That is, that which has ever stood in His appointments. Even in our revised Bibles, where the revisers have tried to revise the truth out of them, it still shows that God "has appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming shall come."

Elder Cayce has done exactly what God charges that Israel did in the day of provocation. He says in Psalm 78, "How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert. Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and LIMITED THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL." Elder Cayce once declared in council with fifty others, that God had, from all eternity, freely and unchangeably decreed all things whatsoever comes to pass. {But, alas, since then he has turned back and tempted God and limited the holy One of Israel. I feel sure in my heart that what is taught in his paper "has never been, is not now, and will never be true

Primitive Baptist doctrine." What he once put his name to, and turned back from, is the expressed faith of our people yet today. Sulphur Bluff, Texas

J. C. Sikes

**GOD'S DECREE**  
**Jonas C. Sikes, 1929**

If Jehovah is Infinite in all His ways,  
Giving life to man and numbering his days,  
Who dares to impeach Him if in His wise plan,  
He gave shape and direction to the ways of man?  
If He in His wisdom did all things create,  
Should He turn loose the helm, leave things to Fate?  
Did He not have a right in His sinless decree  
To mark the way for both you and me?  
If He did decree just what we should do,  
I cannot arraign Him, say brother, can you?  
Before whom will you try Him as judge of your court?  
Who will act as your clerk and make your report?  
If all things are in the decree of His will  
And all things are working the same to fulfill,  
Who but a vile sinner too wicked to bow,  
Would call Him in question or say, What doest Thou?  
If He decree the death of His only Son,  
The sinless, the righteous, the most holy One,

And this did not make Him the author of sin,  
To make Him the author, where will you begin?  
Will you begin with Judas whose act was foretold,

And as was determined His Master he sold?  
Did not the dear Savior say "Woe to that man,"  
I go as determined in God's holy plan.  
If Pharoah be one you think would no doubt,  
Prove that God's purpose was not carried out,  
Did not God command him by Moses you know?  
Saying, thus saith Jehovah, "Let My people go."  
Yet I will harden, yes, harden his heart,  
That he shall refuse and not let them depart,  
Till I bring My just plagues on all of your foes,  
And thus get Me honor on him and his host.  
Yet sinners most wicked will oft Him arraign  
Against His just counsel, they often complain,  
And say, if He decreed all things to the end,  
Then He is unjust and the author of sin.  
The heathen may rage and imagine vain things,  
The lowest, the highest, yea, even their kings,  
And shout till the world hear the sound of their din,  
"The author, the author, the author of sin!"  
His saints will still praise Him and shout as they go,  
Jehovah most holy all things doth foreknow;  
His counsel did settle just how they should be,  
So shout on you heathen, you don't disturb me.  
We learn from an Angel that time shall soon end,  
And saints shall be welcomed by Jesus, their Friend,  
This all is established by holy decree,  
For it is written, and thus it shall be.

If all things are certain, then how came them so?  
If things were not certain, how could God foreknow?  
Were all things to which foreknowledge relate  
Made certain by the old heathen goddess of Fate?  
We surely know at a thought or a glance,  
That things are not left to haphazard or chance,  
Will some please tell me that I may once see,  
How things can be certain, yet uncertain be?  
Now, while you are thinking, I'll come to a halt,

If you don't see the point, it isn't my fault;  
But, brother, please tell me how this thing can be?  
All things were made certain without a decree?

## **ELDER SIKE'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM AN ENQUIRER**

**Taken from The Advocate Of Truth, 1901**

In a recent issue of one of our exchanges, I found a list of questions for some brother to answer. The writer that asked them requested that they be answered in private, but as they were asked publicly, and there are (no doubt) many others beside himself who would like to see them answered, I will answer them through the columns of The Advocate Of Truth. These questions are on the subject of predestination. The dear brother that proposed these questions says, "The solution of this subject is to be found in the transgressions;" so I will answer them along that line. I desire to answer them in a spirit of kindness and gentleness. If that course would exist and be pursued in all our writings, I am sure that a better state of affairs would exist among us than what we have at present. The first question asked by this dear brother is:

1st QUESTION- "What kind of a man did God desire and make?

ANSWER- He desired exactly the kind of man He made, or He failed to make the kind of man He desired. Which did He do, dear brother? If He made the kind of man that He desired, then it follows that He desires a man that was "subject to vanity" (Romans 8:20), that was corruptible, and that would not remain in his upright state, but would become a transgressor; for this is the kind of man that He made. Is this not a fact, dear brother? If God desired a man that would not sin, then ask you in your own language, "Where was His wisdom and power that He did not use it in making a man satisfactory to Himself"? Can you answer your own logic, dear brother?

2nd QUESTION- "Was God satisfied with this man – His workmanship? If not, where was His wisdom and power that He did not use it in making a man satisfactory to Himself?"

ANSWER- Yes. Indeed, dear brother, where was it? If (as you seem to imply) He really wanted a man that would not sin, then your question demands that you answer it: "Where was His wisdom and power that He did

not use in making" that kind of a man? If you say that He did not desire a man that would not sin, then all of your questions are meaningless or are all answered by this one admission. If you admit that He made a man that He knew would sin, then you must either admit that He wanted that kind of man, or that He failed to make the kind of man that He desired. Which will you say, dear brother?

3rd QUESTION- "If God wanted a man to be something else besides upright, good and perfect, is that not an admission that God failed to make the kind of man that He desired to make?"

ANSWER- Not at all. For He knew that when He was making him that he would certainly become something else besides upright, good and perfect. But if He desired a man that would never be anything but upright, good and perfect, is not this indeed an admission that He failed to make the man He desired to make? Dear brother, can you answer your own logic?

4th QUESTION- "If God was dissatisfied with this man, was it not after He made him? It could not have been before He made him, for if that had been true He would have made him differently. If after He made him, then there is an admission that God was disappointed, ignorant and powerless to make the man He desired."

ANSWER- Well said, dear brother, but will you now take the absurd position that God desired a man that would remain upright, and then be forced to the ridiculous admission to which you infer, i.e., "That God was ignorant and powerless in making the man He desired?" What say you, dear brother?

5th QUESTION- "If God was satisfied with the man He made, and yet His purpose was that he would be the very opposite (a sinner), then could God be pleased or satisfied with His own purpose?"

ANSWER- Most certainly He could, for He knew that His purpose would be accomplished, and man would be the opposite. Are you not satisfied with your purposes when you know they will be accomplished? But if God purposed for a man to remain upright, then could God be satisfied with His own purpose, seeing that it was a failure? Here you must meet your own logic again. Can you do it? Did God purpose that Adam should remain as long on earth as he did? If so, did He purpose for him to remain upright? If so, did not His purpose fail? If He purposed for him to remain as long as he did, and yet did not purpose for him to remain upright, then did He not

purpose for him to become a sinner? (For "the wages of sin is death.") If He did not purpose for him to remain upright, nor become a sinner, then how did He purpose for him to remain? Can you tell me? If not, who can?

6th QUESTION- "Is God divided?"

ANSWER- No,

7th QUESTION- "Does God oppose His present mind with future purposes?"

ANSWER- No. His mind and purpose are both like Himself, immutable and always present. Do you mean to say by this question that if God created a thing in a certain way, and purposed that it should not always remain as He first created it, that He opposes His present mind by future purposes? If so what about man? Did He not make him natural? Did He mean for him to remain so eternally? If not, do you think that He opposed His present mind with a future purpose? In fact, can you tell me of anything that God created that He meant for it to remain eternally as it was first created? If this is not what you mean than I must confess that I do not know what you mean by this question?

8th Question- "Is God in one mind?"

ANSWER- Yes. But if it was His mind for Adam to remain upright, don't you think that He made some mistake in His calculations? Did God think that man would fall when he did? If so, would He not have been deceived if man had not fallen? If not, why not? Would not God be deceived if things were not to turn out as He thought they would? If so, was Adam actually able to stand longer than he did? Seeing that God thought he would fall when he did, would have been deceived had he not fallen? And if so, was he able to deceive God? Was Adam able to stand longer and liable to fall sooner than God thought he would? If so, was he not both able and liable to deceive God? If not, why not? Seeing that Adam was both able and liable to deceive God? If Adam was not able and liable to do differently from what God thought he would do, then what does all your questions amount to anyway! In fact, are not all of your questions based on the thought that man could have acted differently from what God had thought he would act? If so, are they not based on the thought that man was able to deceive God?

9th QUESTION- "Does God oppose Himself?"

ANSWER- No.

10th QUESTION- "Could God have purposed one thing and done another?"

ANSWER- God makes no mistakes, but what say you? Do you think that He purposed to make a man that would stand, but did the opposite? i.e., Made one that would not stand? You need not try to answer these questions by saying that God made man upright, there is no one denying this, but did He not make a man that would no remain upright? Did He do this on purpose, or by accident? If on purpose, did He not desire that kind of a man? If not, why did He make that kind? Could He not have made one that would not sin, [as the elect angels] if it had been His purpose to do so? If not, where was His wisdom and power?

11th QUESTION- "Some one says God purposed in eternity that man should be a sinner. Then did God make the man that He purposed should be? If not, does God do whatever He purposeth?"

ANSWER- God made the man He purposed to make, but did not purpose that he should remain as He first made him. If so, was not that purpose a failure? As to God doing whatever He purposed, I will say that God purposed many things that He does not do. He purposed that Jesus should be betrayed, but He did not betray Him. He purposed that Jesus should be crucified, but He did not crucify Him. Do you think that God does everything that He purposed should be done?

God purposed that the Egyptians should hate His people, but He did not hate them. He purposed that they should deal subtly with His servants, but He did not deal subtly with them Himself. Rather, "He turned their hearts to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants. (Psalm 105: 25).

12th QUESTION- "Was Adam truly man complete before he became what God purposed he should be?"

ANSWER- Yes. He was truly man complete before he became what God purposed that he should be afterwards. Will you deny this? If so, will you affirm that it was God's purpose, intention or desire for him to remain eternally just as he was when created? If this is not what you mean, then your questions are meaningless, are they not? "It is appointed unto man once to

dies" (Hebrews 9:27). Could Adam so have acted as to have annulled and made void this appointment of God? If not, could he have remained upright, since "the wages of sin is death"?

13th QUESTION- "Is not God's work to accomplish His purpose? If not whose work is it? If it is, and He purposed that man should sin, was it not His work that caused man to sin?"

ANSWER- It is not God's work to accomplish all His purposes, for many of His purposes are accomplished by man as is clearly shown in my answer to Question 11. He purposed that sheep should eat grass, but He does not eat grass nor force the sheep to eat it. Do you think that God must either eat grass or force the sheep to eat it in order that His purpose be accomplished? If you do not, then what do you mean by your 13th question?

14th QUESTION- "Is He the author of His own achievements?"

ANSWER- He is the author of all that He does Himself, and all that He authorizes others to do; but He is not the author of all that is according to His purpose. He purposed that Pharaoh should do the very thing that he did, and says Himself that He raised him up for that purpose, but He was not the author of Pharaoh's actions. Do you think that He was?

15th QUESTION- "Could God be just and punish man for doing what He purposed man should do?"

ANSWER- God was just for punishing Pharaoh for doing just what He purposed and raise him up to do (Romans 9: 17-18), but Paul spoke of some who, like yourself, would question God's justice in punishing man for doing what He purposed that he should do, and asked them, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" (Romans 9: 20). Dear brother, don't you reckon that this question was meant for you? The parties for whom it was intended could not see how God could be just and hate Esau when he had done no evil, and punish Pharaoh for doing what He purposed that he should do; so they asked, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?" Does not your question indicate that you are of the same mind as those objectors of whom Paul spoke? Your 15th, 16th, and 17th questions are fully answered in my answer to your 14th and 18th questions.

16<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "If God purposed that man should sin, did man disobey

when he transgressed?"

ANSWER- Yes. Man disobeyed God's commandment when he transgressed, but he did not violate any purpose of God. If so, will you please tell me what the purpose was that man violated? Did not God command Pharaoh by Moses, saying, "thus sayeth the God of the Hebrews, let My people go" (Exodus 9:1) And did He not tell Moses, "Yet I will harden his heart and he will not let them go, and I will get Me honor upon him and his host" (Exodus 10:1; 20, 27; 14:17,18). Did not Pharaoh disobey God when he refused to let them go? And did he not at the same time fulfill God's expressed purpose when he refused to let them go? Did not God punish him for his disobedience and was He not just in so doing?

17<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "Was it not by disobedience of man that sin entered the world?"

ANSWER- Yes.

18<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- This is answered in my answer to your 19th question.

19<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "Did God command Adam not to eat the forbidden fruit and yet purpose that he would?"

ANSWER- Did God command Pharaoh to let His people go and yet purpose that He would harden his heart that he would not let them go? If so, your question is fully answered. If not, then is not His language meaningless?

20<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "Can a man be accountable when his acts are regulated by the achievements of God's decrees?"

ANSWER- I don't know that I understand what you mean by "regulated by the achievements of God's decrees." If you mean that God's decrees exercise an influence over man and causes him to sin, I know of no one who is arguing that; but if you mean to ask if man could be accountable for doing what God purposed that he should do, I answer yes. The case of Pharaoh and the men who crucified Christ are directly to the point and you are found in company with Paul's objectors again who asked, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?" Will you allow me to ask as Paul did, "Nay, but 0 man, who are thou that repliest against God?"

21<sup>st</sup> QUESTION- "In fact would we not always be doing the will of God

if His purpose is effected in all we do?"

ANSWER- We would be doing His purposes all the time, but not keeping His commandments all the time. His commandments are sometimes called His will and are often violated, but His will of purpose is never violated. But while His commandments are often violated, the purpose for which He gave the commandment is always accomplished, unless some of His purposes fail. Will you deny this? If you will not, then you give up all the ground covered by your entire list of questions. If you deny it, then will you have the kindness to inform me how God could give a commandment for a certain purpose and the purpose for which He gave it never be accomplished, and yet that purpose not be a failure?

22<sup>nd</sup> QUESTION- "If we do God's will and purpose will we ever do wrong?"

ANSWER- Here you are in company with Paul's objectors again. They could not see how God could find fault with Pharaoh for doing His will. Their questions and Paul's answers show that Pharaoh had done God's will, and Paul's arguments which called forth question proves that he was doing God's purpose, and the faded find fault with him proves that he did wrong. So your question is fully answered by the Scriptures itself. But why do you blend the will and the purpose of God together so often, as if they were the same and always meant the same? Is it because you think by so doing that you can prove that God's purpose sometimes fails to be accomplished? If this is not what you mean, what is it?

23<sup>rd</sup> QUESTION- "If we never do wrong will we ever be condemned?"

ANSWER- No.

24<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "Did God purpose all we do?"

ANSWER- I think He did. What think you? Our brethren in 1689 said that He decreed all things whatsoever come to pass. Do you agree with them? If not, who has departed, you or I? Were they heretics? If so, have you not descended from a heretical body?

25<sup>th</sup> QUESTION- "If so, do we not all do our duty?"

ANSWER- No. Pharaoh, nor the wicked men who crucified Christ, were not doing their duty, and yet the Scripture clearly proves that God purposed what

they did. Can you do your full duty? If so, can you not live without sinning unless it is your duty to sin? If you can live without sinning, then is not the modern sanctificationist right? If not, why not?

26th QUESTION- "In fact, could we do anything only that which is well pleasing in the sight of God?"

ANSWER- Yes Sir. God has said, "The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). The prefix "shall" before the verb "do" is an auxiliary verb and strongly expresses determination; yet, notwithstanding the fact that God has expressed His determination that they shall do wickedly yet He had an end in view that He will accomplish through His dealings with them as sinners, and with this end in view, He is well pleased. As to their wickedness, I will say as did our ancient brethren, "He was pleased to permit it, having purposed to order it to His own glory." Will you deny this?

27th, 28th, 29th and 30th QUESTIONS- "Did God purpose the transgressions? If so, was the transgressions offensive to God? If not, was man the offender? If not, could he (man) be an object of mercy?"

ANSWER- All of these questions are answered many times over in this article except the one which refers to man as an object of mercy. To this one, I will say no, man could not have been an object of mercy if he was not an offender. Did God purpose to bestow mercy upon man? If so, did He not purpose that man should be an object of mercy? If so, and man could not be an object of mercy unless he is an offender, as your question indicates, then was it God's purpose that man should be an offender? Are you not caught again in your own trap?

31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, and 35th QUESTIONS- "Was the devil in deceiving our Mother Eve doing God's purpose? If so, was it God's purpose to deceive? If so, was He not a deceiver? Do you not preach a deceiver as your God?"

ANSWER- How dare you to question the rights of the eternal Jehovah with such impunity? If He purposed that the lying spirits should deceive Ahab's prophets (1 Kings 22:22,23 and 2 Chronicles 18:21, 22), shall man that is mortal, and whose breath is in his nostrils, rise up and reply against Him, saying, "Thou art a deceiver"? If He purposed that these prophets should be deceived, and should also deceive Ahab, have you the right to reply against Him and call Him a deceiver? If He is not just in so doing, will you set as a

judge and pronounce Him guilty? Do your questions mean to question His right to do as He pleases? If not, what do they mean? If God purposed that Ahab's prophets should be deceived, and yet the lying spirits did the deceiving, does that make God a deceiver? If not, would the other case to which you refer make Him a deceiver? If so, why, seeing that it does not in this case?

36th QUESTION- "Again did God purpose that the devil do the work that he did?"

ANSWER- God either purposed that the devil should do the work that he did, or that he should do something else besides what he did, or that he should not do anything at all – which horn will you hang on, dear brother? If He purposed that the devil should do as he has done, then His purpose is accomplished. But if He purposed that the devil should do differently, or not anything at all, then His purpose is a failure and God is defeated. Take either proposition that you may and you as Haman (Esther 6:6-13 and 7:1-8), are hung on your own gallows.

37th QUESTION- "Did God send His Son to destroy the work of the devil?"

ANSWER- Yes.

38th and last QUESTION- "If so, would God not be destroying His own purpose?"

ANSWER- No. Do you think that God purposed that the earth should exist, and also that He purposeth to destroy it later that He will destroy His own purpose in so doing? Would this not be the fulfillment of His purpose rather than the destruction of it?

Now in conclusion, let me ask you some questions. Is the devil an eternal being? If so, was God "before all things"? (Colossians 1:17). If he is not an eternal being, then is he not a created being? If so, did God create him? If God created him, did He not create him for a purpose? If so, is he not filling the purpose for which God made him? If not, is not God's purpose for which He made him a failure? In fact, was it God's original idea that anything in the world should be as it is, seeing that all things are affected by sin? Is not the redemption of sinners a matter of second choice with God if His original desire was that sin should not enter the world? Did God originally desire "to show His wrath and make His power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to

destruction"?

(Romans 9: 21,22). Now, dear brother, I am done. May God bless you with an understanding heart, and may you see the folly of replying against Him. Fare ye well in the Lord, Jonas C. Sikes

## **THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

**By**

**Elder Jonas C. Sikes, 1929**

**(LM, or 8.8.8.8. meters)**

Come all ye men of every age —  
Yea, all the noble and the sage,  
Let's view the things that God hath done  
The counsel t'wixt the Three-in-One.  
Before the earth, before the skies,  
Before the noble and the wise,  
Yea long before there was a man,  
All things were settled in His plan.  
Before the sun, the moon, the stars,  
Before the seas with doors and bars,  
Before He ever made a hill,  
All things were settled in His will.  
Before He gave to man his form,  
Before the Serpent did him harm,  
All things that ever were to be,  
Were firmly settled by God's decree.  
According to this wondrous plan,  
God made the earth then made the man,  
Unto this man He gave a law,

In which no one could find a flaw.  
There was a Serpent also made,  
Who dwells in darkness or in shade,  
Who thought he found a flaw in man,  
And thought to thwart God's holy plan.  
He pointed man unto a tree,  
And said, "It's fruits are good to see,  
That fruit so dazzling to your eyes,  
If you will eat, 'twill make you wise."  
"I know God said ye shall not eat,

The rest of which I'll not repeat,  
But I am sure it was a lie,  
For if you eat you shall not die."  
"Behold its beauty and it's form,  
Just eat, I'm sure 'twill do no harm,  
'Twill open up your blinded eyes,  
And you, like God, will be all-wise."  
So man did eat and lost his race,  
Then he sought to shun his Maker's face,  
He hid himself among the trees,  
But could not find a place of ease.  
So when He found he had no rest,  
He tried to make himself a dress,  
To hide his nakedness from God,  
And thus escape the chastening rod.  
This dress was made of green fig leaves,  
'Twas just an apron without sleeves,

It would at most just hide a part,  
It left exposed his sinful heart.  
God came that evening in the cool,  
To talk with man as was His rule,  
But man with shame instead of pride,  
Was much afraid and tried to hide.  
God called out, "Adam, where are thou?"  
Old Adam heard and made his bow,  
And said, "I heard and was afraid —  
O God, Thy law I've disobeyed."  
"I am naked, wretched and undone,  
There's none to pity, no not one;  
Without Thy grace, I know full well  
In justice I must sink to hell."  
God's Mercy then began to show,  
Which was of old, as all should know,  
It was a promise in His plan,  
Held in reserve for fallen man.  
So for him God did slay a beast,  
Or made them coats of skin at least,  
Which represents Jehovah's plan,  
To slay His Son for fallen man.  
Glorious plan which was of old,

The half of which has never been told,  
Or grace in Jesus Christ bestowed,  
For they to whom He nothing owed.  
This turns our minds back up to heaven,

To where these blessings first were given,  
And makes us think upon that plan,  
From which all blessings flow to man.  
In God's decree which was of old,  
A bleeding Lamb we do behold,  
Brought forth as slain for fallen man;  
All this was in God's wise laid plan.  
Methinks I hear some men object,  
For some you know, can't retrospect,  
They cannot see God's way of grace,  
For this is only seen by faith.  
Faith views God's plan before the world,  
Before this rolling sphere ere whirled,  
And sees that sin was just as sure,  
As grace, which is sin's double cure.  
If sin don't come then grace must fail,  
To speak of debt, implies a sale,  
So with this view we read of old,  
That we for naught ourselves have sold.  
If man don't fall then grace never can,  
Cancel the debt of fallen man,  
For how could grace ever be bestowed,  
To pay a debt that no one owed?  
So in God's Counsel we must know,  
If grace was certain sin was also,  
For all must see just at a glance,  
Grace can't be sure, if sin's by chance.

Methinks I hear some cry, "Unjust!"  
Of course `tis those who want a fuss,  
We nothing else could well expect,  
Of men who cannot retrospect.  
Now let us step back down to earth,  
The place where all men have their birth,  
The place where sin must first take place,  
For God to show His saving grace.

We must admit God did intend,  
To execute some glorious end;  
His glory was the end designed,  
To which all things were predestined.  
He made of clay of the same lump,  
The human race from top to stump;  
From one blood came the human race,  
Which leaves our two-seed friends no place.  
[They claim that some God did not make,  
Then they of sin did not partake;  
For none could ever be made to sin  
By Adam, but the sons of men.  
They think they find a seed of God, Who were not made of earth or sod,  
Who dwell in God ere time began,  
But since have come to dwell in man!  
But this of course, must be a lie,  
And here is certainly the reason why,  
Jesus died for sinners of Adam's breed,  
And not for some eternal seed "

But over them we will not boast,  
Although they're few and not a host,  
For truth is only seen by faith,  
Which none can have except by grace.  
And still there is another class,  
Which we must see before we pass;  
They boldly say that grace must depend,  
On things performed by sinful men.  
Now of this class there are two kinds,  
Which shows the trend of natural minds;  
Their difference is in slight degree,  
As any one can plainly see.  
One says that God, "if He is just,  
Must give the man He made of dust,  
A chance of heaven and of bliss,  
Which he can either hit or miss."  
He has a natural disposition,  
To hinge 'free" grace upon condition,  
And thus destroy Jehovah's plan,  
And give His glory unto man.  
Now when we come to see the other,

We must admit his is his brother;  
For "Sure," says he, "much depends  
Upon conditions performed by men."  
"Stop!" says he, "I mean for time,  
And not for heaven all sublime;"  
But if on man it must depend,

`Twould give God's glory unto men.  
If grace and works we try to mix,  
We get the grace in such a fix,  
The works will soon the grace alloy,  
And thus God's sovereignty destroy.  
Then with disdain, but all pretense,  
He says his brother "has no sense;"  
Now if salvation be by grace,  
Then conditions have no place.  
But let him meet with those who claim,  
Salvation all, in Jesus name,  
Then he begins to twist and quirk,  
And hinge grace' blessings on man's work.  
He says "Of course `tis all of grace,  
And yet conditions have a place;  
Man can accomplish or can thwart,  
The ends Jehovah has at heart."  
He says, "God wants man to obey,  
That He may bless him every day;  
But then it all on man depends,  
Who often thwarts Jehovah's ends."  
But when we come to view the two,  
`Tis hard to tell just who is who;  
The arguments they both employ,  
God's grace and sovereignty destroy.

But here at least I must confess, To some extent I have digressed;

So now with joy will turn my face,  
To God's great plan of Sovereign Grace.]  
`Tis here we see man brought to view,  
With nothing good that he can do;  
He cannot satisfy the law,  
Hence can no blessings from it draw.  
`Tis here that God's free grace steps in,

This grace doth reign much more than sin;  
It reigns to free from death's great power,  
It reigns to keep us every hour.  
It reigns to conquer sinful lusts,  
And bow us down unto the dust;  
It reigns to raise us up again,  
This glorious grace doth sweetly reign.  
It reigns to bring us unto God,  
And make us know and love His Word;  
It reigns to make His saints obey,  
His laws and precepts every day.  
It reigns where'er His saints are found,  
It reigns more than sin doth abound;  
It reigns that we may show His praise,  
In time and unto endless days.  
Arise my soul and ne'er forget,  
This grace that cancelled all my debt,  
And reigns to guide us in the way,  
And bring us blessings every day.  
O glorious hope: O wondrous plan

In which is seen God's love to man-  
O give me grace to tell the story,  
And magnify Jehovah's glory.  
Come then dear saints who love His name;  
All whom these thoughts your souls aflame,  
Come, let us join to shout His praise,  
Through sin's dark maze to endless days.  
And when we all shall meet in heaven,  
Where all these blessings first were given;  
O then we all shall see His face,  
And know the fullness of His grace.

**Finis**

**A DISCOURSE UPON THE DECREES OF GOD By**  
**Hercules Collins, 1696**  
**(Contributed by Elder Leroy Rhodes, Cicero, ILL.)**

Ephesians 1:11 — "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own  
will"

Ephesus was a great and rich city, but given much to idolatry: Paul, Appolos and Aquila, preaching the gospel among them, many were brought off from their idolatrous temples and worship, for the Word of God grew mightily, and many believed and were baptized. The idol-worshippers seeing their idolatry like to fall before the Gospel, as Dagon before the Ark, and their craft in danger: the great goddess Diana despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipped; a great uproar was among them: which when ceased, Paul called the disciples together, embraced them, so went to Macedonia; but left Timothy there, to charge some, they preach no other doctrine than Christ crucified, and not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying (I Tim. 1:3,4).

The Apostle in the context treating of election, predestination, redemption, justification, adoption, sanctification, and an eternal inheritance; he comes in our text to resolve whence all these flowed; which is from no other fountain that the counsel of God's own will: that those who were by nature children of wrath, walked according to the course of this world, and dictates of the prince of the power of the air, fulfilling the delights of the flesh and of the mind, were without hope, and without God in the world, as to any saving knowledge of Him; that those that were afar off, are made nigh; of strangers, fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith; that those who were once idol-worshippers, are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, are gracious works in time, flowing from His purposes in eternity, as the Apostle in our text above affirms.

In the words we consider these parts: First, The Agent. Who "God, the Father: "(verse 3). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath chosen us in Him: " that is, as He is the Head, and the Church the body; as He the King, the Church the Kingdom; for Christ, as man is God's Elect (Isa. 42:1), yea, the Head of Election and Predestination: He was fore-ordained to be the Head of a holy, glorious, mystical body; the King of a glorious kingdom, perfect Captain of a glorious company; the Bridegroom of a glorious bride: Yet if He will have this honor, He must purchase it; if He will make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed (Isa. 53:10). He shall be Head of this body, King of this kingdom, Captain of this company, Bridegroom of this bride. Is it likely that this purchase can be capable of losing? Then He may be a King without a kingdom, a Bridegroom without a bride, a Head without a body: but how is this possible?

If He be a Head, He must have a body, if a King, He must have a kingdom, if a Captain, He must have a company; if a Bridegroom, He must have a bride, because relatives: He that is a Father, must have a child; He who is a Husband, must have a wife; or if Christ be a Bridegroom, He must have a bride: If so, where is any room for a total and final fall from true grace? A child cannot cease to be one's child; and if once children, then heirs (Romans 8:17), no fear then of losing the inheritance.

Mark, when it is said, "We are chosen in Christ, " we are not to understand, as if the death and merits of Christ were the foundation of election: No, that's from the grace and love of the Father. This is the Fountain from whence election flows; hence the elect are called the Father's (John 17:16), "Thine they were, and Thou gayest them Me. " Yet the death of Christ is the foundation of all grace in the Church-militant, and glory in the Church-triumphant (I Thess. 5: 9, 10). The Father from free Sovereign Grace, choose a number out of the world in their fallen state when in misery, and makes them vessels of mercy (Romans 9:23) [a sublapsarian viewpoint – Ed.] But, if Christ will have the honor to be their Lord, He must pay a certain sum for them, no less than His blood; because Justice had said, the man (if he transgressed) should die, either in his person or in a Surety. So here is "Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other," (Psalm 85:10). Here, the Mercy of the Father meets the Righteousness of the Son; the Mercy of the Father, in providing a Surety to pay and satisfy Himself; the Justice of Christ, in laying down His life. These sweetly agree in order to the everlasting peace of a lost sinner; so that when it's said, "We are chosen in Christ," it intends as He was to be the Head, of the Church the body; as He the King, the Church the kingdom: but not chosen in Christ, as if His death were to merit our election, that was from the Father's love; yet His death is the fountain of all grace in time, and all glory in eternity.

Secondly; The Act, "worketh:" It's not said, He hath wrought, or will, but worketh; signifying, that all the acts of Divine Providence, past, present, and to come, are nothing but the execution of His eternal counsel, purpose and will.

Thirdly; The Universality of it, "all things:" This word, "all things," is not limited to the context; but as if the Apostle should say, "All that I have spoken of before concerning redemption, justification, salvation, and all other acts of Divine Providence, which I have not mentioned, are all according to His eternal purpose, and counsel of His own will.

Fourthly; The manner of the Agent's Act, is "according to the counsel of His own will;" not work according to the counsel of another's will, but of His own. As God took no counsel of man's will in the work of Creation (Isa. 40:13,14), neither does He in the work of salvation: As God wrought according to His own will, and not of man's in the first Creation; so He works according to His own will and counsel, and not man's in the New Creation (Romans 11:34). Of His own will the Child of Grace is begotten, and the Seed of Grace sown, as the Apostle James asserts (James 1:18). If then it be of His own will, 'tis not of man's.

## **OBSERVATION**

All the acts of Divine Providence in time; whether in the Church or the world, are all the effects, products and executions of God's eternal pleasure, purpose, counsel and will. I shall speak to three general heads:

I. The Demonstration

II. Speak to some Properties of the Divine Will

III. Draw some Natural Inferences from the Doctrine, with some other uses in the close.

That this doctrine is true appears from the Creation: If God had not first willed and decreed it, it had not been. David's members were written in the book of God's decrees (Psalm 139:16), when as yet there were none of them in being, but in time had a being, by virtue of their having been there written. Yea, our very habitation where we dwell, were beforetime determined and appointed: which doctrine Paul preached to the Athenians on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:26), to bring them off from their idolatry to worship the true God who made Heaven and Earth, and all things therein; and made all nations of one blood, to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations that they might seek the Lord; so that the time of our being, and the place of our being, is according to God's determination aforetime. Moreover, Pontius Pilate, the Jews, and Gentiles act of crucifying Christ, was the fulfilling of God's counsel, which "He determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27,28). God may be said to be the cause of an action, when no cause of the sin of that action, that ariseth out of the heart, saith our Lord (Matthew 15:19) — "Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc." Everyone will grant, no man can do any sinful acts, as swear and lie with the tongue, steal and murder with the hand, without the power of God concur to uphold and strengthen those organs and members, "For in Him we live and move, and have our being," (Acts 17:28), yet they are not

upheld and strengthened for that end, but His glory: but man abuses his physical and natural strength.

God's determination that Christ should die to save man, laid none under a necessity of sinning: but God foreknew in His counsel what the malice of the devil, Jews and Gentiles would be against this Person to put Him to death: And God did determine not to prevent it, but suffer it, because He knew how to bring Glory to Himself out of it. It was necessary Christ should suffer, that God might not be mistaken in His foreknowledge, or come short of His determinate decree. But this neither took away the liberty of Christ's suffering, neither did it take away the liberty of the Jews, and their voluntariness in putting Christ to death. God's decree that Christ should suffer, did infallibly secure the event; but did not annihilate and destroy the liberty of the act, neither in Christ as aforesaid, who freely suffered Himself, nor the Jews, who as freely and voluntarily put Him to death, as if there had been no decree of God at all about His death. The gardener's foreknowledge that such seeds and roots will in the Spring produce such leaves and flowers, is not the cause of their rise and appearance in the Spring; but knowing the virtue of such roots, so concludes: So God's foreknowledge what wicked works would proceed from the root of a wicked heart concerning Christ's death, is no more cause of those evil acts, than the gardener is the cause of the rise of such flowers in Spring from such roots, because he foreknew the nature of them. God's foreknowledge that Adam would fall, put 'him under no necessity of it, but 'twas done voluntarily and freely; yet God foresaw infallibly he would fall, and God determined not to prevent it, knowing how to glorify Himself by it. So God's foreknowledge of the Jews putting Christ to death, did not necessitate them to it, but 'twas done as freely as if it had not been foreknown, nor any determination of God about it. Thus we have proved those acts of Divine Providence in time in the world, are the product of God's eternal purpose.

**[Editor's comments:** He seemed to have proved otherwise. Collins is using the sublapsarian views in these arguments. Gill was an infralapsarian in his views, while Sike's and the editor of this book are supralapsarian. So in these three articles, you have all three positions presented. You may note, too, that John Gill defended the supralapsarian view when it was attacked by the vicious John Wesley. Infralapsarian lies somewhere between the sublapsarian (after the fall, or lapse) and the supralapsarian (before the fall, or lapse), and apparently agrees with both according to how one is looking at the decree of Adam's fall. A theologian will laugh at this simplicity!]

Now we come to show and demonstrate, that all the gracious acts and providences in the Church are the products and executions of His eternal will. As for the act of effectual vocation (II Timothy 1:9), it is not according to our works (Acts 13:42), but according to His own purpose and grace, which He purposed in Christ before the world began (Ephesians 1:3). That the Gentiles believed in Christ, was because they were "ordained to eternal life:" that the Ephesians were holy, was, because chosen to it, not for it, "before the foundation of the world." The reason why a people are drawn in time to God is because "loved with an everlasting love," (Jeremiah 31:3). The new creation and good works found in the Ephesian Church (Ephesians 2:10), was the pure effect of what God had "before ordained." The hope of eternal life in the saints, is the product of that promise which was made of God, that cannot lie, "before the world began" (Titus 1:2). The sanctification of the Church at Thessalonica, and their belief of the truth (II Thess. 2:13), was in order to that salvation they were chosen and appointed unto "from the beginning" (I Thessalonians 5:0). In a word, our calling, justification, and glorification, are all the effects of God's eternal purpose. This was the doctrine Paul taught the Church of the Romans (Romans 8:28-33), Ephesians, Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus, etc. Christ being manifested in time to the Church, was from His foreordination to it, "before the foundation of the world" (I Peter 1:20). His being slain in time actually, was from the decree in eternity, hence called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" not so actually, but in God's decree.

## **I. To speak to some of the properties of the Divine Will.**

1. It's an eternal will; His will is as Himself and habitation, eternal. God's will is not suspended unto time, to see the creatures' will before He wills concerning them; as if man's will were to determine His; as if God could not determine His own will until He saw man's. His counsels are called "counsels of old," (Isa. 25:1), to signify the eternity of them. We poor creatures will in time; but there is no time with Him, all is eternity with Him. His mercy is said, not only to be everlasting, but "from everlasting," (Psalm 103:17). His love is said to be the same; His covenant is an "everlasting covenant," (II Samuel 23:5), as it has no end, so no beginning. The acts of God's will are all one with His will, His will is all one with His essence, His essence is one pure simple act; God is love essentially, Wise essentially. We may have a being, yet be neither good or wise; but God can as soon cease to be, as cease to be either. If there be no Divine will (saith Polbill upon the Divine Decrees), the glass of the Divine Prescience must be broken; because as God knows all essences in His own Essence, all possibles in His own

Omnipotency, all congruities and tendencies to His own glory, in His own unsearchable Wisdom; so He knows all futures in His own eternal will: for all things future were in their own nature but possibles, and could never become future, but by the Divine will; this future of the saints' holiness is from the Divine will, "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4).

2. The second property of the Divine will, is righteousness: hence His counsels called by the prophet Isaiah, "faithfulness and truth," (Isa. 25:1) called counsels in respect of the wisdom of them, old in respects of the eternity of them, true in respect of the performance of them. Men often will what's unjust, as Ahab Naboth's vineyard, the Jews the death of Christ, though innocent; Pharaoh and Haman, the destruction of the Church: but it is incompatible with the Divine Being, to will anything unrighteous; as Elihu said. (Job 34:10), "Far be it from the Almighty that He should commit wickedness", "The judge of all the earth will do right; " He who takes no pleasure in wickedness, cannot will it. The sanctification of the Thessalonians was the will of God, and that they "should abstain from fornication," (I Thess. 4:3-5). Things may be better said to be just and righteous because God wills them, than will them because they are just and righteous: For God's will is the Rule of Righteousness: "His work is perfect," saith Moses (Deut. 32:4), "for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." When the viols of God's wrath are poured out upon His implacable enemies, it's said, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." Though the foundation of justification be from the free grace of God the Father; yet in consideration of Christ's paying the sinner's debt, God is said to be just in justifying him which believeth in Jesus. God's willing honor and eternal life to those who by patient continuance in well-doing, and God's willing the wicked to the day of evil, are all according to the holy and righteous will of His nature; and when you cannot comprehend some mysterious providence, still retain Jeremiah's principle, conclude, "God is righteous," (Jeremiah 12:1).

3. A third property of the Divine will, is graciousness. The Ephesians being predestinated unto the adoption of children (Ephesians 6:7) as it was according to the good pleasure of His own will, so also to the "praise of the glory of His grace; " so our redemption and justification is according to the riches of His grace. That a Savior is proclaimed by the angels, in order to man's eternal peace, was from the good will of God. What had become of the burning bush in Egypt, had not the good will of God dwelt in it? This name God has commanded to be proclaimed (Exodus 34:7), "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth,

pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him," etc. There is a great deal of unmercifulness in sinners' will, as the Devil has a will to destroy all; but blessed be God, who has the great Red Dragon in a chain, his power is not absolute; for though he go up and down the earth seeking souls' destruction (I Peter 5:8), yet it is not whom he will, but whom he may devour. God's will is a gracious will: when He gives His Church Himself in covenant, and all His attributes; His Son and all His offices, and purchased blessings; His Spirit, and all His saving operations: whence can this flow but from the Fountain of Free-grace? Hence 'tis said (Ephesians 2:8), "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

4. A fourth property of the Divine will is immutability. Hence His decrees are compared to "mountains of brass," (Zech. 6:1,2), which are immoveable; with Him is not the least shadow of turning; it is not compatible with Him, whose name is Jehovah, to change; if so, the Church had been destroyed e're now. It's not for want of sin in Jacob they are not destroyed, but because He is Jehovah, and changeth not (Mal. 3:6), neither is it possible He should change, because He perfectly foreknows whatever will come to pass. Indeed men who have not that power, do often will and purpose this and that, and change their mind after, not foreseeing the cause of the change; which if they had, would not have will that which they must undo again, because it's some dishonor to men to be changeable, but "God is not a man that He should repent, (Numbers 23:19). "For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance," (Romans 11:29). When the Scripture speaks about God's repenting He made man (Genesis 6:6), it is not to be understood properly, as if God were capable of repentance, as man is: but it is spoken to our capacity, God is said to repent, when He doth such things as men do when they repent: when God withheld those judgments and effects of His anger He threatened against Ninevah, He is said to repent; so when God lets out His judgment, the effect of His anger upon the old world, God is said to repent: According to our capacity, and man's practice, who when he doth repent of a thing, doth shew it by some visible act. It's because God's compassions fail not, but are ever the same, that the Church is not consumed (Lam. 3:22). Though David's house nor heart was as it should be, yet this was his comfort, God had made with him an everlasting covenant (II Sam. 13:5). God foreknew Israel would be a transgressor from the womb (Isaiah 48:9). Yet for His namesake would defer His anger, and for the praise of His grace would not cut them off. God foreknew Peter's sin, Paul's sin; yet that hindered them not from being "chosen vessels," elect according to the foreknowledge of God (I Peter 1:1,2). So that whom He once loves, He must love to the end, because there

can be nothing hid from Him that might make Him change His mind, as it is often with men. So that we may conclude this with the Apostle, "He who hath begun a good work in you will finish it," (Phil. 1:6).

5. A fifth property of the Divine will is, that it is a Sovereign and Supreme will He hath an absolute freedom of will (Isa. 41:13). If He will work none can let (hinder) Him (Daniel 4:35). "He doeth according to His will in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what dost Thou?" (Lam. 3:37) "Who saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" (Psalm 103:19) "God's kingdom ruleth over all." He has absolute power over men and devils. Hence, "He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious, and He will shew mercy to whom He will shew mercy, and whom He will (after the abuse of much patience) He hardeneth," (Romans 9:18). What reason can be given why Christ must take the human nature to save man, and not the angelic nature to save angels? We must answer as Christ in another case, "Even so Father, for so it pleased Thee, it was Thy will and pleasure." So if God will choose Abel, and pass by Cain; choose Isaac, and pass by Ishmael, choose David and Solomon, and pass by Saul; choose Peter and Paul, and pass by Judas: that some of the natural seed of Abraham are elected, and the rest left in their blindness and hardness: what shall we say in this case, but as Moses and the Apostle, "He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious," (Romans 11:7,8)? If God will convert a profligate sinner, as the thief upon the cross, and take his soul into Paradise the same day, who never gave God a day's service, but a subject of the Black Prince all his days: I say, if God will give him the same happiness He gives another, who has served and suffered for Him forty years, who shall fault God? May He not do with His own grace and glory what He will? When the Apostle said (Acts 10), "God is no respecter of persons," the meaning of that is, God doth not respect the person of a Jew, because a Jew, more than a Gentile, a Roman; as Peter did suppose, before God showed him otherwise in a vision: then he saw Cornelius, though a Roman or Italian, and no Jew, yet believing in Christ, and working righteousness, was accepted as much as the believing Jew. Yet effectual vocation (calling), and saving faith must always be concluded to be, not according to our works, but God's purpose in election, as the Apostle asserts in Romans 9:16, whether it be a Jew or Gentile, that is called effectually. God's will is a Sovereign Supreme will, yet a righteous will; God's power is suitable to His will: Many will great things against the Church, as the Devil and his kingdom wills the destruction of Christ's Kingdom; but their power is not suitable and adequate as God's is to His will; if He has a mind to open and change such a heart, rescue such a one out of the Devil's power, He can

do it. He can carry His will through: God's will is a Sovereign and Supreme will, "For there is none above Him, that He should give an account unto any of His matters," as Elihu said unto Job, when under some discontent about Divine Providence (Job 33:13).

6. A sixth property of the Divine Will, is, That it's a will of perfect Wisdom: Hence counsel is joined with it in the text; it's not a mere will, but a will with a depth of Wisdom. He doth everything, which may render any wise, if it be wisdom to act to a right end; so doth God act all for Himself and His own glory. "As He made, so He ordered all things for Himself" (Proverb 16:4). Moreover He knows and observes all circumstances of actions, all second causes are before God, how they will act, and when, and carries all on in an exact harmony with His Divine will and pleasure. This will is not mere will, but a will guided by the Reason and Counsel of His own Infinite Understanding. We never count a willful man a wise man, but all God's acts are said to be in judgment, and working all things according to counsel. The wisest of men often miscarry in their ideas and contrivances; but God never did miscarry for want of Wisdom in anything; all the wisdom of men and angels is from Him. The Prophet Isaiah, speaking of man's wisdom in plowing, sowing, threshing, "This wisdom cometh from the Lord of Hosts," saith the Prophet, "who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," (Isa. 28: 24,29). As He made the world in Wisdom, so He governs it: for "He works all after the counsel of His own will."

Use 1. By way of instruction. If God works "all things after the counsel of His own will;" then know that God's purposes are some way or other concerned in Satan's tempting of the best of saints. If Satan could not enter into a herd of swine without Christ's leave, surely he cannot without it disturb one saint; the Devil must have leave from God before he could touch a hair of Job's head; and this is very observable, that Satan generally sets most upon the most holy, and those who bring most glory to God, because he envieth their glorifying of Him: this is the chief design of Satan in all your temptations, and the destruction of the soul is his subordinate end. The Devil's assaults are not so much against the weakest as strongest saint; and therefore it is no good inference to conclude, you cannot be a child of God because so much harried, for it's rather an argument you are one of God's choice jewels. David is called "a man after God's own heart," yet he was often set upon by the Evil one. With Job, God gives him the character of "a perfect and an upright man," yet none more plagued by the Serpent than he. And Satan desires to have Peter in His own power, to sift him as wheat, though one of whom Christ said, "I will build My church" upon that faith of

his, wherein he believed Christ to be the Son of God. And Paul, though Christ asserts "he is a chosen vessel," yet he must have a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. In a word, our dear sinless Savior passed not through the world without Satanical temptations, and some of the worst sort, for he tempted his Maker to worship him. From hence we may not wonder that we sometimes hear the best and strongest saints mourn under temptations, because Satan sets most violently upon them, knowing they are the greatest enemies unto his kingdom of darkness, and most capable to glorify God, and enlarge Christ's Kingdom. Moreover, he knows God will have more dishonor in the fall of one eminent saint, than of many weak ones; hence he sets most upon them by his temptations. And if the saints would be conquerors in times of temptation, they must not deal with Satan by presenting their duties, what they have done, or their own holiness and righteousness; because Satan will find a flaw in the best of yours; but you must always fight him and overcome him with the blood of the Lamb, and His Righteousness, and rather confess thyself a sinner, leaning upon Christ's imputed righteousness, than stand upon anything of thine own, for then Satan will be too hard for thee. O labor to be one of those who come out of great tribulation and temptation, with thy robes washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Use 2. By way of information. Doth God work "all things after the counsel of His own will"? Then we infer this Agent is an independent Being and Worker; If He works "all things after the counsel of His own will," then He doth not depend upon the will of another. Regeneration is not according to "the will of man," but of God (John 1:13), that is, of God's free grace and Divine power; for a child cannot beget itself; he who is dependent upon another's will, cannot do his own, because he depends on another: God depends upon none for Being, Wisdom, Power, Authority to act anything, for "He works all after the counsel of His own will" The work of sanctification spoken of in the context, was the product and effect of God's eternal counsel and will, and not the effect of man's; God's will depends not upon the creature's will: for when He speaks of a new heart, He doth not say, "If the creature will be willing he shall have it," but He speaks like a Monarch (Ezek. 36:26,27), "I WILL take away the heart of stone, I will give a heart of flesh; I will put My Spirit within them, and will cause them to walk in My statutes." I wait not the creature's motion till he be willing; but I will make him willing, in My working all things after the counsel of My own will. If we consider what regeneration is, it will clearly demonstrate God's will doth not depend upon the creature's will in that work at all, because it is a Divine Seed and principle of grace put where there was never any before; so that in regeneration man is wholly passive, and can contribute no more to his being

a new creature, than his being a creature; wherever it is wrought, it is the pure product of God's eternal will, and not the creature's: "Of His own will begat He us," (James 1:17). The creature's will doth not determine God's, God's will doth not wait the motion of the creature's will before He determine about him; but "He works all things according to the counsel of His own will: " God works in time according to His own purposes, and not men's purposes, in a way of salvation: "For it is not of him that runneth, nor of him that willeth, but of God that sheweth mercy," (Romans 9:16). It's from the merciful purpose of God, and not the creature's will, that any are vessels of glory, and that all are not vessels of wrath; so then man's will cannot prevent nor determine God's because "He works all things after the counsel of His own will: " Both the "will and to do" is wrought in the Philippians, according to God's good pleasure, and not according to man's good pleasure (Phil. 2:12,13).

Use 3. Of inferences. If God "works all things after the counsel of His own will;" then we infer, (1) He is irresistible in His will, because He actually works what He wills. In this sense we say with the Apostle (Romans 9:19), "Who bath resisted His will?" that is, His effective and determinative will: indeed God's ordinative revealed commanding will may be rejected; so the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, in not being baptized with the baptism of John (Luke 7:30).

So the Jews resisted the Spirit in the doctrine of the prophets (Acts 7:45). So the false prophets in Jeremiah's time are said, "not to stand in the counsel of the Lord," (Jeremiah 23:22). So we are to understand the prophet Isaiah to the Church, when he saith, "What could God have done more, which He had not done?" (Isa. 5), that is, in respect to His revealed will and external means, but not in respect of internal grace; for all must confess in that respect He could have done more; but in respect of His revealed will and external means, what could have been done more? "He gave His law to Jacob, and His statutes to Israel, He hath not done so by any other nation," (Psa. 147: 19,20). To them was committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:1,2). No nation so great in this respect (Deut. 4:7). But though the ordinative will of God may be resisted, yet His will whereby He hath determined to effect this or that, cannot: for in this sense "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" (Job 23:13), This counsel of the Lord shall stand, "whatever devices may be in a man 's heart, " (Prow. 19:21, "this counsel of God shall stand," saith the prophet Isaiah, "and He will do all His pleasure," (Isa. 46:10). We can as soon stop the ebbing and flowing of the ocean, and the sun from going its course, as supercede and put a stop to God in His determinative will. How

soon did God change the will of the thief on the cross, when this will of God came to act? Though many strong bars be upon the heart against God, by nature and actions, yet if this be the counsel of His will, "He will work, and none can let Him;" "for He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will." (2). If "God work all things after the counsel of His own will;" then we refer He must be an Omnipotent and Almighty Operator and Worker; for He works what He has a will to do: He willed the creation of the world, but had He not been Omnipotent, He could never have made all things out of nothing, with only, "Let it be so," (Genesis 1:3). He must be Omnipotent, because He wills that which none but an Omnipotent arm can perform: He willed Christ's and the saints' resurrection, which none but Omnipotency can effect; but God can raise the dead, though none else can. He willed the working of saving faith, the faith of Christ, in the souls of the Ephesians, and the knowledge of the riches of the glory of the saints' inheritance:

But the Apostle saith (Ephesians 1:18-20), "No less power can effect it, than that which raised Christ from the dead;" which is set forth by several graduations, he called it "power, great power, mighty power, exceeding greatness of His power, in them who believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." And as by a mighty power, saints are put into a state of grace so they are kept in that state by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation (I Peter 1:5). This was the doctrine and the experience of the Apostle Peter; He is able to keep you from falling, in respect of His Omnipotency; and willing, in respect of His purpose: "For He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." It's His purpose and will to overthrow mystical Babylon (Rev. 20:6), but it could not be done, if God were not Omnipotent, and reigned over her. Omnipotency, as 'twas required in the first creation, so also in the second. Omnipotency brought light into a dark world, and the same brings Divine Light into a dark heart. Can less than Omnipotency raise and quicken a dead body from the grave? No less power is required to quicken one dead in trespasses and sins; thus the Ephesians were quickened according to the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:1,2). (3). If God work "all things after the counsel of His own will:" From hence we infer God's Prescience and Foreknowledge; if whatever comes to pass, cometh to pass because it is the "counsel of His own will," then He must needs foreknow all things: "For known unto God are all His work from the beginning of the world," (Acts 15:18). If there can be nothing come to pass but what He hath determined, then He must of necessity foreknow whatever comes to pass. This is an incommunicable property of the Divine Being. When Jehovah

would debase all false gods, He interrogates their worshippers, if they could declare things to come to pass as He could? (Isa. 41:26), "Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? And before time, that we may say, He is righteous?" The true God "declares the end from the beginning," (Isa. 46:10), therefore He must foreknow whatever comes to pass. And albeit God did not decree sin, as sin, to be in the world, because contrary to His Nature; yet He decreed to permit it, knowing how to bring glory to Himself out of it, else would never have permitted it.

Now if God foreknow all things, then He cannot be disappointed in anything, as man is, who knoweth not what shall be on the morrow (Prov. 27:1). Hence when the Scripture saith, "God looked for grapes, and behold wild grapes," (Isa. 5:2), it is not to be understood, as if God were disappointed as man is, who sometimes looks for one thing, but behold another occurs which he looked not for, nor foreknew anything of. But it's written thus, to shew what God might justly expect from that people, considering the means and mercies were bestowed on them: But 'tis not compatible with Jehovah to be frustrated in His expectations as man is, "He declares the end from the beginning," He foreknew infallibly who would be saved, and who would miscarry, before He made man; notwithstanding all the means afforded, God foresaw many thousands would perish. Yet let none say, If so, why did God make man? O have a care of thy thoughts! (Romans 9:19-23). "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that form it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God willing to shew His wrath, and make His power known, endured with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction? And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." God foreknow the defects of the elect, who are, saith Peter: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God," (I Peter 1:1,2), yet that did not hinder them from being vessels prepared afore to glory. If all things in time come to pass according to His eternal will, then He must needs foreknow all things, seeing He could not be ignorant of His own will; So He worketh in time "all things after the counsel of His own will" in eternity. (4). If God works in the world, and in the Church, "all things after the counsel of His own will; then we may infer God's Immensity and Infinite Presence. He must be in all places, if He works in all places, nothing is more clear than that! He fills Heaven and Earth with His Presence (Jeremiah 23: 23-24). He is in the world in the way of providence, in Heaven most glorious, in Hell in His power and Justice; God is in every place, and totally in every place, not a part of God in one place, and a part in another. Neither is God like earthly

kings, who can be but in one place at one time, in person, and act in other nations by their representatives; but God is personally present in every place (Psa. 139:7-9), how else could He work all things for the best to them who love God, and "work all things after the counsel of His own will"? He who is of an Infinite Being, must be of an Infinite Presence; this must be, because He hath promised His Presence to the Church to the end of the world: therefore He must be with them in all places of the world, or else cannot make good His Word. God's power is everywhere, therefore Himself: For Himself and attributes are all one: It is not enough to say, God knows all things in the world, as one upon a high mountain may see what is under him; But God is everywhere personally present; as David saith, "Whither can we go from Thy presence?" God is everywhere inclusively, nowhere exclusively: hence David would cry unto God from the ends of the earth (Psa. 61:2), believing God would work all things after the counsel of His own will, for the answering the saints' prayers is according to His purpose. (5). Doth God work all things after the counsel of His own will? Then we infer, that all those things we call casual, fortuitous, accidental, chance, are all the products of the counsel of His will: if that we call chance, be things, it must be some of those "all things" in the text which God worketh; that which we call casual, accidental, in the way of second causes, are all ordered by the first Cause.

"A man cuts down a tree, the head slips off the helve (axe) and gives his neighbor a mortal wound," though done not designedly, but "accidentally" by the man; yet the text saith, "God delivered him into his hand," (Deut. 19:5 compared with Exo. 21:12,13). As for the periods of preservation, they are all fixed on the Divine decrees; there the days of men are determined, their months numbered, and their impassable bounds appointed, as Job saith (Job 14:5). Hezekiah had 15 years added to his days; but there was no addition to the Divine decree. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days, yet they live out all the days set down by the Divine decree. The Jews, though they had great malice against Christ, could not kill Him until His time was come; rain nor drought, fruitfulness, barrenness, riches, nor poverty, health nor sickness, prosperity nor adversity, life nor death, come not upon us by "chance", but according to the counsel of His own will. Divine Providence extends itself to all persons, things, places and times: This Job knew, he saw God in the loss of his estate and children (Job 1:20,21). Though God made use of the Sabeans and Chaldeans as instruments, yet he looked beyond the second causes to the first Cause. David was dumb under very severe providences, from this principle (Psa. 39:9). God's Divine Providence extends itself to the lion, unicorn, whale, raven, hail, snow; as

God tells Job (Job 38, 39, 40, 41). Yea, the fall of a sparrow, nor a hair, is without it: If our hairs are all numbered, much more our years, if a sparrow cannot fall without it, much less a child, a man! That which is "casual" to us, is all ordered by God in infinite Wisdom: Many things fall upon us we never dreamed of, but nothing comes to pass but what God did foreknow; and whatever second causes God may make use of, it is all to bring about the will of the first Cause. Joseph's selling unto Egypt, Shimei's cursing of David, Ahab's going up to Ramoth Gilead, the arrow entering between the harness, though shot at "a venture," was disposed of by God, and had its commission to give him his death wound. The change of government we are under is God's working, according to the counsel of His own will: (Psa. 75:6,7), "For promotion cometh not from the East nor West, North nor South; but God putteth down one and setteth up another. " The great reason there are so many discontented under general and particular providences, is, because they overlook the Finger of God in it; always quarreling with second causes, not considering "God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

**Some Considerations To Quiet Any Under Trials,  
In Order To Their Patient Submitting to,  
And Cheerful Doing of The Divine Will.**

First, consider, who can govern the world better than He who made it? Who can dispose of His creatures better than He who gave them a being? Who can tell how to keep a house or watch in order, better than He who made them? Shall magistrates acquire the name of wise governors, and shall not the Governor of the world, who is essentially Wise, be so accounted in His "working all things after the counsel of His own will"? Who is fitter to govern the world than He who made it? This was the very argument God stilled Job withal, (Job 38-42). "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Hadst thou no hand in making the world, and wouldest thou a hand in governing it? Am I not able to govern and dispose of My creatures by the same wisdom I made them? Did I take no counsel of man in framing it, and shall I come to man for wisdom to govern it? Had I no counsel of man when I made My decrees, and shall I now come to man for wisdom to execute them, when it's My own glory to "work according to the counsel of My own will"?

Secondly, consider, God takes pleasure in all His purposes and decrees; as God's counsels will stand, because immutable, so His counsels are called "His pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). God's electing, redeeming, adopting, sanctifying, saving the Ephesians, is called "the good pleasure of His will: " that wherein

He took delight, or was well-pleasing to Him (Ephesians 1:5). Shall God take pleasure in His decrees, and the execution of them, and shall we not be pleased with what God is pleased withal? Shall we cheerfully submit to the just decrees, will and pleasure of earthly governors, and not to Him whose "Kingdom rules over all" (Psa. 103:19)? All good men do delight in their own just decrees and purposes, and shall not God in His, who cannot go out of Himself or His own purposes to a greater Good, because He is the chief Good? If it do please God to make you His people (I Samuel 12:22), and for your profit is pleased to correct you (Hebrews 12:10), shall we not say, "Blessed be God" for the one, as for the other (Job 1:21)? Although it is too low for a Christian to say, I must submit; it's the glory of the Christian to choose the Divine will. Reprobates and devils must submit. If God will dispossess a poor sinner of the Devil, he must come out, will he, nil he! Pharaoh indeed obeyed God's will in letting Israel go; but it was sore against his will! A believer should submit to the Divine will out of choice, not force, that's no more than devils and reprobates do: Herein Christ is our Pattern, though the human flesh did sometimes recoil and draw back under the sense of approaching trouble, as good men sometimes do; yet His judgment and will was for complying with the Divine will, though it was to die, (Luke 22:42), not only from the eternal transaction between the Father and Himself, about man's salvation, but knowing it was best to choose the will of such a One who is not only righteous, holy and good, but can "work all things after the counsel of His own will"

Thirdly, consider, Divine content ariseth alone from this principle: Am I content with this revolution, {reference to the reformation during the reign of the Protestant prince, William of Orange, 1688-1702} this alteration in the nation, in my family, my person, in my estate, because it is my Lord's will? So Paul could never be content in every condition, but from this principle, knowing not only that the condition he should be in was best for him, but that it was also according to the purpose of God's own will (Philippians 4:11). Some heathens, called Stoics, labored after contentment in every condition, from the improvement of natural principles: but that was far from Divine contentment, God's content and satisfaction ariseth out of Himself and His decrees, knowing Himself perfect: Now when our content is Divine, it flows from this principle purely, and abstract from all other considerations, this is the Divine will, therefore I submit, and therefore am content, and can do no other but choose it, because it is the will of One who is perfect in Wisdom. Lord, if Thou shouldst refer any case to me, to make my own choice, I would refer it to Thee again, and say as the brethren of Berea and Thessalonica, concerning Paul whom they loved dearly, and shed so many tears for at

parting, "The will of the Lord be done."

**Fourthly, consider, all in God, and all about God, serves to bring about His decrees and eternal counsel.**

First, all in God, if I may so express it, all the attributes of God are concerned in the accomplishment of His will; His will decrees all, His Wisdom orders all, His Truth and Power accomplisheth all. Mark, God's Power acts not beyond His Purpose: though in point of power, God could do many things more than He doth, and prevent many things that come to pass; yet in point of His decree, cannot: In point of power God could prevent those garments rolled in blood in the nations of the world, and many family, relative, personal afflictions upon us, and upon His Churches; yet in point of His decree cannot: The Power of God is active, one while to accomplish His will (Acts 17:24), and at another time ceaseth to act, to bring about the Divine purpose: If God withdrew His Power from a creature, he quickly ceaseth to move; and if God do send forth His Spirit, we are created (Psa. 104:29,30). Some may say, I committeth my near relation, husband, wife, or child, into God's hand, with a firm belief God could raise them up; and yet they died: Soul, thou didst well to believe in God's Power. But would you have God act His Power contrary to, or in the preventing His decrees? Remember God's Power acts not beyond His decrees, but all in God, either in a way of action or cessation from act, serves to bring about His own eternal, unchangeable will.

**Secondly, all about God serves to complete His Divine purposes and decrees.**

I mean the holy saints and angels in glory (Psa. 103:20). "They do His commands hearkening unto the voice of His Word " The spirit of the living creatures, and the wheels, went in Ezekiel's vision, wherever the Spirit of God went for to accomplish His will: So the four spirits or chariots in Zechariah's vision (Zech. 6:104), which came out from between the mountains of brass, the immutable decrees of God, these are all employed in the four quarters of the world, to accomplish those eternal decrees; so that whatever providences they were employed about, whether frowning providences, toward the enemies of God and His Church, signified by the red and black horses, or mixed providences signified by the grizzled and bay horses, some mercy and some affliction; or whether smiling providences upon the Church, signified by the white horses in the third chariot, these all serve to accomplish the immutable decrees of God: And seeing none shall

enter the Holy Place "but he which doth the will of the Father," (Matthew 7:21), let it be our daily cry, "Lord help me to do Thy will on earth, as it is done in Heaven," (Matthew 6:10). To suffer patiently, and do cheerfully the will of God upon the earth, is a very great resemblance of the Heavenly life; there is nothing in Heaven, but the Divine will done and delighted in. The angels which are in chains of darkness, their hearts did no sooner rise against the Divine will, but were cast out of the airy Heaven into Hell; and all such as obey not the gospel of Christ, can expect no less than flaming fire (II Thess. 1:8). Is it fit a King should entertain a company of rebels, which continually oppose his will?

Let such remember, as God hath Power and Goodness enough to fix the godly and obedient in everlasting bliss, so He hath Power and Justice enough to fix the disobedient in complete misery. Remember, O disobedient soul! "He can work all things according to the counsel of His own will. Will you not tremble at His presence, who appointed the sand for the bound of the sea?" (Jeremiah 5:22). "Who knows the power of His anger?" (Psa. 90:11). Whoever hardeneth himself against God, and prosper? Who but one lunatic would oppose the joint commands of a general, whose army is an hundred thousand strong, that can crush him as a moth? Oh! What armies in Heaven and earth can God raise against an impenitent sinner, an army of angels, stars, lice, frogs, caterpillars, locusts; yea, God can arm thy own conscience against thee, which is more than all. Provoke not this Lord to jealousy: Are you greater than He, who can destroy soul and body in Hell? Rather labor to "make peace with Him, and you shall make peace with Him," (Isa. 27:5).

Finally, Doth "God work all things after the counsel of His own will"? Then "blessed is the nation, whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance, because the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of His heart to all generations," (Psalm 33:11,12).

## **FINIS**

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

**By**

**Stanley C. Phillips**

#### **FOREWORD:**

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). But, have many ever asked, "What about "before God created the heaven and the earth"? That is an interesting question and the search for its' answer is a

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

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

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

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

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

"- being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

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

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

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

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

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

There have been many individuals, and many ways these individuals have used, to destroy the doctrine of God's foreknowledge of all things, and/or His determination of all things. The above texts can stand alone to refute any such attempts of an unregenerate mind. The plain, or self-evident truth, is, that God's determinate counsel, foreknowledge, and predestination are inseparable entities of the divine Mind, and are inclusive of all things that have, are, or ever will exist. This we hope to establish. While some charge the above as being "Calvinism," (which they disdain) it is just as much the position of "Hypercalvinists," "Augustinians", and "Thomists" alike. Basically, it is the truth of the Christian faith, even if denied or disputed by most called "Christians". It is the foundation principle of Chapter Three of the major "Christian" confessions of faith in America. (London Baptist Confession, Westminster Confession, and Savoy Confession.) This is the topic, then, of this short treatise.

Before entering further into this discussion, let us preface it with this brief notation: If one relegates all things evil, wicked, and contrary to God's moral law to men or devils, he leaves very little else under the dominion of his Maker. One need not then speak of God as being a "sovereign," for certainly He would not be. Those who have advocated God's sovereignty over all things have been so evilly treated for their belief they have become hesitant to mention His sovereignty in this area. On the one hand, they do not wish to encourage men to sin, which is commendable, because men are judged for such acts and stand accountable to God for them; and on the other hand, to leave this subject in complete silence is to fail to "declare the whole counsel of God." The Scriptures give a balance to these otherwise extreme positions (in man's mind), and so must we. The doctrine of the predestination of all things, when correctly understood, does not make or imply that God is the author of sin. On the contrary, it fully establishes the accountability of men to their Creator, for they are subjected to His law. To suggest otherwise is to reveal one's own ignorance on the subject of predestination. First: Sin is not a created thing or being. The Bible clearly identifies sin to be the "transgression of the law of God" (1 John 3:4). Paul declares, "Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). Had the Lord God not prohibited that one single thing, thus making a "law," sin would have never entered into the world or death by sin. This fact is self-evident and indisputable. The Lord God declared that everything He made was "good." The man was "upright," the ground was good, the trees of the garden were all good, the fruit of the trees were good, and we surmise that originally, the serpent was "good" – at least for whatever purpose God had made him. The law, or command, was 'just, holy, and good" as well. How then did sin enter the garden under such perfect conditions? It entered by the transgression of that one law. Who did it: God or man? You know the answer. Second, in that first transgression, and every transgression since then, God did not infuse sin, nor force sin upon any man. Man acted freely according to his nature before the fall, and men act according to their fallen nature since the fall. God cannot be the "author of sin," simply because IF He commands anyone to commit an act forbidden by His published law, that act is not now forbidden to him, and hence cannot be a "sin." The second command negates the antecedent command, and thus is to be obeyed. God can do this because He is the only Lawgiver. An illustration is at hand: According to the law, a priest or Levite is commanded to "take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife" (Leviticus 21:13,14). Yet, God commanded Hosea, saying, "Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom,

departing the Lord So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son" (Hosea 1:2,3). No matter how one wishes to approach that text, yet, was it a sin for Hosea to take a wife of whoredoms (plural) as commanded by God?

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

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

God's foreknowledge must be based upon something. That something must be knowable by Him. If it is argued, as it is by some, that God merely saw things coming "down the pike," and then reacted to it, (or did nothing at all) rather than determine it, then His foreknowledge is only telescopic. Such a view leaves God, as if with arms folded, a bystander observing inevitably undetermined events transpiring. In relation to "evil" events, it makes Him a complacent accessory to the crime. Those that think they are honoring God by denying His sovereignty over sin are not helping themselves when they know that He could have prevented it, but that He did not! In principle, such a position differs none at all from the Arminian who claims that God will not interfere in man's "freedom of choice" by divine election and effectual calling. He certainly has power to prevent any, or all, evil deeds, and has done so many times. Where is there a true believer that has not had his evil tendencies interrupted and restrained by God's grace? Those who will limit God's activity believe these forces that are combined in their intricate patterns of events to bring them to pass is left believing they come strictly by chance, or the old heathen goddess of Fate. Hence, limited predestinarians are Fatalists, if not worse, atheists.

If God allows things to come to pass in the absence of His determinate counsel, He is not the "one only true and living God" — He is not the one in charge! There has to be another one out there somewhere bringing these events to pass that God merely foresees. When we consider that there is far more sin and wickedness in the earth than righteousness, that someone, or

thing, would surely be the dominant influence over the universe. He, She, or It, must either be the Goddess of Fate, Satan, astrology or someone of greater power than God. Again, the above texts allow no such views. There is but one only true and living God. In the modern shallow views of far too many "Christians", denial of God's sovereign reign over all things is due in great part to the limited understanding they have of God's eternal counsel. It seems as though they never give it any thought, and if they do, it is but fleeting.

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

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

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

There are very few, if any, free grace believers that do not believe in a covenant of grace between the Father and the Son, which covenant was established before the creation of the world. It is perfectly consistent for God to determine to do something before He does it! It is quite foolish to say that He determined to do something after He did it! The fact of an establishment of a covenant implies a coming together for the purpose of making the agreements of such a covenant. This writer has difficulty agreeing with the way in which John Gill states this covenant, but has no disagreement with the fact of such a covenant. God speaks to man in terms that man can understand (anthropomorphism- speaking in the form of man's speech) but Dr. Gill seems to be even more anthropomorphic than the Scriptures, when he says, "—it "was necessary that the will of the Son should be "expressed, and His

approbation and consent had; for "which this council was called and held." This appears to present God in the tri-personality trinity, as separate Gods being called together, sitting down around a table and planning and scheming as men would do in forming a council to make a plan, a contract, or an agreement. God "is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" (Job 23:13). It is the writer's opinion that God being eternal and unchangeable, then so is His mind and thought. If He presents "thoughts" to us, it is for our understanding Him as finite creatures, but in reality, He possesses one eternal Mind. This seems to be the meaning of this passage: "The Lord of Host hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14: 24), where His thought is synonymous with His eternal purpose. Be that as it may, the fact that there is a covenant of grace within the Godhead, whereby the "counsel of peace shall be between them both" gives substance to there having been, at least in the form of speaking, a council where roles were assigned to the different parties in the Godhead. This council, of course, preceded the formation of His eternal counsel (plan), and the creative decree to put into force the consequent counsel of His will. As the psalmist wrote, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

This council seems to be alluded to in the text, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send Me" (Isaiah 6:8). I say, seems to be alluded to, because the New Testament says, "Then said I, Lo I come, ( in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrew 10:7 & Psalm 40:7). Again, it is implied in the very beginning, when the Lord God said, "Let us make man after our own image," and seems to be an agreement between parties to do so. Again, this was during the deliberation of the Godhead in council together, whereby His counsel was determined, and prior to His creative decree — "before the foundation of the world." This is confirmed in the bringing of the First Begotten into the world, for it was by an agreement, "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifices and offerings Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me" (Hebrews 10: 5). (He did not say, "Thou prepared for me a body"; but "a body Thou hast prepared Me." There seems to be a difference in these two thoughts.)

Without going specifically into the New Covenant and its agreements, we point out only that such appears a product of an Eternal Council, and in that council, there was an agreement, not only to the parts each party would perform, but also the creation and establishment of all things necessary to

bring this counsel to fulfillment. It is here that the comprehensiveness of predestination is necessary. This, of course, was inclusive of all things, because the recipients of that covenant agreement are all sprinkled throughout all ages and in all countries, and the "bounds of their habitation" are determined. Paul preached this in Athens, saying, in part, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26). When did He determine the appointed times? When did He set the bounds of men's habitation? Surely it must have been in the Eternal Council before He set out to create the world and all things in it. See how minute this determinate counsel is! How inclusive it is? No wonder Paul expresses it as inclusive of "all things," for certainly it must if it is to be settled and all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

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

**Next to be discussed is:**

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

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

became the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). All of these, and many more, are revealed to us, but His eternal counsel included the whole of all creation from eternity past to eternity future (if it is legitimate to use such an expression) much of which is not revealed to us.

To illustrate: It is revealed that in God's determinate counsel that in all the land of Egypt not a dog would wag its tongue as the horde of Israelites and strangers left that nation following the first Passover (Exodus 11:7). It was fulfilled accordingly, in time, and not a dog sounded the alarm for the Egyptians. But, tell me, dear friend, was the active purpose of choking down the dog's nature the end itself? Was it not for a greater purpose than this? It was one small tiny bit in the total events of God's determinate counsel. It played its specific role — that is true. It surely was one of those "all things that work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose". It was "an interstitial relationship of secondary causes". I doubt God was merely playing with dogs that night! Again, that "little bitty" worm that cut down Jonah's gourd was in God's determinate counsel, but was it the main event that day? Or that specially prepared whale that swallowed him? Of course it was not. In your own life, the day your father proposed to your mother, and she consented — was that the end of the whole purpose? If so, what are you doing here? Was it necessary for your father and mother to meet? It surely must have been. Was it an accident? I speak foolishly, for there is no such thing! But they are interstitial working together of secondary causes and they are provided for in the eternal counsel of God as means to bring to pass His own will. Again, keep in mind that God designed these interstitial and minute events of secondary causes before He actually created the world, and they are all part and partial of His creative decree when He put the same into force "in the beginning."

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

Again, we must eat, for we are created that way. The small nitrogen fixation microbes are necessary for other plants to feed upon the soil's nutrients, or else they would die. Without them, so would we! Can any sensible person think that each microbe is not covered by the determinate counsel of God, in all ages past, present, and to come, as surely as the sparrows, whom our Lord said not one would fall without the heavenly Father? If God prevented a

single fly to be found in all the land of Goshen (Exodus 8:22), surely He has a purpose for all things else. It is difficult to separate unbelieving "children of God" (if such can exist) from outright Atheists, when those identified with "Christian churches" deny the full extent of God's sovereign dominion over all things. It is certain that such give aid and comfort to the enemies of God by denying the comprehensive predestination of God over all His works. It is certain that the ungodly, wicked, and unbelievers all deny the comprehensive predestination of all things! Why would a child of God agree with such infidels? It is obvious they have no light or understanding, yet even infidels talk seriously about the environmental balance in nature. Should Christians be less predestinarian than infidels, Marxists, environmental extremists, and unbelievers? What is to separate them from the ungodly world if they all agree to limit God's sovereignty?

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

Once the determinate counsel of God was formed ("I speak as a man") He set it in motion by His creative decree: "And let there be light, etc." The Book of Genesis is the historical narrative of the genesis of this counsel in operation as it pertains to man. Our forefathers expressed their belief of this event, writing, "God hath decreed all things whatsoever comes to pass", etc. (London Confession, Chapter 3). The expression "God hath decreed" utilizes a word often misused. For instance, many say, "God has predestinated all things whatsoever comes to pass," believing that this is what the Confession meant. It has also led to the belief that predestination is causative. But, this is not the case. A decree is "an authoritative order having the force of law." "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). A decree is an ordinance of God or man in some position of authority. Look at some of these: "But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king made a decree to build this house of God" (Ezra 5:13). Again, "Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter. Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon" (Ezra 5:17 & 6:1). In God's creative decree, the entire and full determinate counsel of God relating to the creation and historical events of this creation was commanded and set in motion and order, from the formation of the elliptical orbits of the planets, their suns, moons, stars, atoms, molecules, their locations on all minute moments in time, relations between and among each and every part, etc. "God hath

decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass" says it all. When our forefathers referred to God's creation being in continual process throughout time, they were applying this concept. God is still creating the world, insofar as He is now continuing the process determined in His eternal council and established in His determinate counsel, and this through His daily providence, grace, and interstitial working together of secondary causes yet bringing them to fulfillment. HOW this decree is carried out involves every created thing, being, and event, from the genetic code in man or beasts, (determining that a child's right arm and hand grows the exact length and at the exact same time as the left, etc., et. al.), and the environmental influences of family, culture, personal experiences and knowledge, etc., is embraced in the terms predestination, providence, grace and secondary causes as they influence each other and each event in the whole of God's eternal counsel. All these actions are interstitially knit together as to be necessary in the order determined. One cannot drive his car to the market to buy a loaf of bread unless someone discovered oil, many others drilled and pumped it, and still many others refined and marketed it and he put it in his automobile. He need not expect to buy his loaf of bread unless someone planted and harvested the grain and someone else refined and marketed it, and someone baked and marketed the bread. All things necessary in the process is absolutely necessary to one driving to market and buying the loaf, of bread. If this is so in natural things so insignificant, how much more necessary is it in the creating of such a magnificently ordered universe. For one to deny God's comprehensive predestination of all things is to portray oneself as a simpleton. Keep in mind that the determinate counsel of God and His eternal purpose are the same, and were formed before the world began in His eternal council, and the Bible teaches that it embraced "all things". Some refer to this as God's "plan," but we do not like to use this unbiblical expression. Men plan, God purposes.

How extensive does the Bible present the determinate counsel of God? Well, for starters, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23). If I even mention the clause, "and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," immediately there will be a host of unbelievers who would howl at the moon, and exclaim: "He makes God the author of sin!" It is said by some that we "believe that God predestinated all things, both good and evil" and they place the emphasis on "the evil." Strangely, they never attempt to explain this clause themselves! If they did, they too, would be charged with "making God the author of sin," and this terrorizes them into a denial of the plain statement of the apostle Peter! Denying this

clause, denies both the determinate counsel of God and His foreknowledge! You cannot have the one without the other. Prejudice against the truth of God is so great that one dares not even discuss any element of it, lest he is charged with making God the author of sin! From thence is the silence on the subject in modern pulpits. This fear has shut the mouth of many a preacher! No wonder that so many are as ignorant of God's Almighty power, wisdom and understanding as they are today.

Consider this: That all the activities of men, their minds and motives compiled together daily amounts to the overwhelming presence of sin as compared with righteousness, that to relegate God and His counsel from them is to place God in charge of "the few acres of sandpit on the back forty" and allow men and/or Satan to control the rest! How does this render praise to God? Were all these activities and motives carefully considered by God before He issued His creative decree? Were any needful event overlooked, scratched, or left out of His determinate counsel? Did new conditions develop that necessitated God making changes in His determinate counsel as these conditions appeared? If so, then God and His counsel are not immutable, as Paul declared. (Hebrews 6 : 1 8)

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

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

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

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

In the genealogy of our Lord Jesus, it is written: "Abraham begat Isaac" (Matthew 1:2). Can any deny, then, that the determinate counsel of God played a significant part in that unusual event centuries earlier when Abraham was one-hundred years old, and "at the set time" Sarah gave birth to Isaac? (Genesis 21:2) Or, in the same genealogy when Isaac begat Jacob, is there any doubt that this event was not by the determinate counsel of God, when Abraham's servant bowed before his master's God and prayed, "Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that Thou HAST APPOINTED for Thy servant Isaac" (Genesis 24:14)? Do I hear someone saying, "That was not predestinated"? Read what immediately occurred, "And it came to pass, BEFORE HE HAD DONE SPEAKING, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham 's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder." "And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, DRINK, MY LORD: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I WILL DRAW WATER FOR THY CAMEL ALSO, until they have done drinking" (Genesis 24: 18-19). Can you imagine how much water a camel can drink? Or how much many camels can drink? What a test this was! Deny it if you can, but this link is essential

to that event when He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" thousands of years later at the cross of our Lord. We would sound foolish to an unbeliever, yet it is true, that every step of these camels, and the direction they traveled, and the precise timing of their arrival with that of Rebekah's were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God also! Without this link in the events of history so long before, the crucifixion of Christ would not have been possible. But then, a Conditional preacher once wrote: "God is working together for His people the all things of His foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification." (Elder Ronald Lawrence in "The Reformed Movement," page 99) It would surprise him to know he agreed with those he despises as "Absoluters." They too, believe that all things that God foreknew and predestinated "works together for good to them that love God."

Of that predestinated union, Jacob was born, and he had twelve sons. One, through whom our Lord was to be born, was Judah (Matthew 1:2). Judah had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er died without offspring. Onan died without issue too. Judah promised Shelah to Er's wife, Tamar, but forgot his promise and married him to another. The prophecy was that the Lord Jesus, Shiloh, would come from Judah (Genesis 49:10), and now all three of his sons are without issue. What now becomes of God's determinate counsel? What happened to His foreknowledge? If these were defeated, then it could truthfully be said that the predestination of God did not cover all things. But if not, it must be acknowledged that it does. Did these things go awry? Not so! "Oh, no, no, no! Not this way! Don't go there! Oh, my, oh my! Lord have mercy, he's "gon'na" go there!" Here it is, my friend, believe it or not. "Let God be true and every man a liar. " The widowed Tamar, knowing that her father-in-law, Judah, was going to Timnath to shear sheep, removed her widow's garments, and seeing Judah coming down the road, covered her face with a veil and played the harlot. Judah went in to his daughter-in-law, and she took his signet, bracelets, and staff as a pledge until he could send her the price of harlotry. She returned home, and later was found expecting a child. When Judah would have her killed, she presented the pledge: "By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave not to Shelah my son" (Genesis 38:11-26). Tamar gave birth to twins, Pharez and Zerah (verses 29,30). Now, let us return to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as recorded in Matthew 1: 3, "And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom." It would have totally destroyed the lineage of our Lord, and the determinate counsel of God, as well

as put the lie to His possessing a foreknowledge of future events, had Judah not produced an issue as foretold in the sacred text. None, absolutely none, can intelligently deny that even in this link, it was as much "by wicked hands," that Judah fulfilled the prophecy and Tamar had a child by incest as it was that Christ was crucified by "wicked hands." And none can successfully deny that Judah, Tamar, and Pharez, and these incidences in their private lives were all included in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Jesus would not have existed had it not been fulfilled as God had determined in His counsel, and by His foreknowledge it was foretold of the generation of Jesus Christ through Judah. Now, if you have a problem with this text, or the writer's use of these texts, why not make an effort to reconcile them to the view of limited predestination and/or conditional time salvation? Isn't that a fair challenge? But I forewarn you. If you attempt it, you will also be charged with making God the author of sin, and you'll never get one of your opponents to give you a fair hearing no matter what you come up with – not one. You will find, as we have, that they are virtually brain dead! They seem not to have the mental capacity to think clearly on the subject, or else, are so afraid of man, that they dare not!

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

"Ah, Ha!" One may say. "This writer believes God is the author of sin." Did he really say any such a how-do-you-do? The decree of God does not in the least create the wicked motives that drive depraved men to evil! We have noted that Satan tempted Eve and she enticed Adam and thus brought sin into the world. Sin is not a created thing – NOTE: I wrote: "SIN IS NOT A CREATED THING" –it is the "transgression of the law of God" (I John 3:4). It finds them where they are, totally depraved, (as all are) and uses them as instruments to fulfill His own counsel. Look at some of these. In the case of Judas, Satan entered into him, and guided him in such a fashion that he unwittingly fulfilled Psalm 109. That is not why he did it. He had other base motives – money! Read all of Psalm 109 if you wish to see the minute details of Judas' offense and punishment. He was cursed, his grandfathers (on both sides) were cursed, his children were cursed, and his mother was cursed; and his children made vagabonds and beggars (verse 9-12). There was no forgiveness for the sins of his fathers or his mother (verse 14) and his name was cut off from the earth in the next generation (verse 13). It is obvious that the prophecies were based upon God's foreknowledge, which in turn, was founded upon His eternal counsel. This counsel was formed before He created anything.

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

problem. They wish to limit God so they can boast in their supposed abilities, obedience, and conditional blessings. My, my, my!

In the counsel of God "between them both," God did determine a counsel in which He also decreed its fulfillment. "Predestination" is the term for the interstitial relationship of all the parts that bring God's counsel into fulfillment. If it is His counsel, it becomes quite obvious that this counsel is His eternal purpose. That is why the text says, "Remember the former things of old: for I AM GOD, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me," and He next tells us how we can know that He is God: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: . . . I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have PURPOSED IT, I will also DO IT" (Isaiah 46: 9-11). No one but God can do this. And it is God that does it, too. If one reads the whole context in Isaiah 46, he discovers that the reason for God giving this description of Himself was for the comfort and edification of His people. There can be no comfort for those who deny his eternal counsel, foreknowledge of that counsel, and the predestination necessary for bringing it to pass compassing all things. Predestination can be said to be "a rendezvous of all the direct and secondary causes coming together to fulfill a divine purpose." The end of each singular event is brought to pass by the interstitial workings of all the necessary secondary causes, and in the aggregate, all these singular events themselves are secondary causes for other events in the larger picture of things. That His counsel embraces "all things," cannot be Biblically denied. And if He were ignorant of His own counsel, then there could be no foreknowledge, nor certainty, to any thing, and His purpose is really nonexistent. It is predestination that brings all the necessary events together to fulfill any single purpose of His eternal counsel, and therefore must be as inclusive as His eternal purpose. This purpose, according to Paul embraces "all things." "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who WORKETH ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). Isn't it strange that anyone reading this can limited God's predestination to four or five minor things, leaving the overwhelming number of necessary events totally uncertain, or left to haphazard or chance! Where is there any praise to God for the greater number of daily events, if we give Him praise for almost nothing comparatively speaking? Even our own salvation is not anthropomorphic, or man-centered: It is "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:5). Why are we instructed to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15), unless His Will governs all things? In fact, how can

anyone say "Thank you, Lord" for anything other than the three or four things he believes is predestinated? For what shall a man pray, if God has nothing to do with the event that answers his request? See how limited (or no) predestination leads to atheism or infidelity? Maybe that is what is wrong with this ungrateful modern self-willed society!

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

One of the most well known events is that recorded in Genesis 15. God said to Abraham, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall afflict them four hundred years," etc. (verse 13). How did God know this? How did He know how long? He knew it because it was sure, or certain, to come to pass. Why was it sure, or certain? It was predestinated to come to pass according to His determinate counsel. It was contained in His creative decree at the beginning of the world. "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again"(verse 16). And they did just that! Was that a good guess, or was it infinite foreknowledge? Again, in the life of Abraham, "And God said, Sarah thy wife will bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac" (Genesis 17:10). Did she bare a son in her old age? Did Abraham name Sarah's son Isaac? And of Ishmael, the bondwoman's son, it is written, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply

him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (verse 20). Did he? "And these are the sons of Ishmael:" Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah" (Genesis 25:13-17). Did I count correctly — twelve? How in the world could God know the exact number of sons yet unborn that this child would eventually have, unless it was predestinated according to His determinate counsel and known in His foreknowledge? Is God a mere inactive and unconcerned bystander in the history of man? Surely one must admit that He is not. God gave to Joseph a series of dreams that he related to Jacob and his brothers. These dreams caused great enmity against him by his brothers, who eventually sold him to Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. Can you believe they could have sold him to someone in Yemen? The inspired narrative of Joseph's captivity, and many of the obscure details of God's providence and grace are recorded, showing the predestination of God fulfilling His determinate counsel in bringing those dreams to fulfillment, and preserving and developing the nation of Israel; even as Ishmael's Arabian nation was being developed during the same period.

## **SEVENTH: PROPHECY AND PREDESTINATION**

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

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

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

God's eternal and determinate counsel is expressed by God's eternal purpose. By it being so inclusive of all things, then it is often expressed in somewhat segmented sub-purposes. All through the Bible, God speaks of this and that

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

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

What was the purpose of the coming of Christ and His sacrificial death? We know that He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Was He

not slain for the sins of His people? Then must they be sinners! John tells us, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). Isn't sin the work of the devil? So, even this proves that God's determinate counsel included the ungodly works of that howling mob in Jerusalem when our Lord was crucified, and God's gracious design in our salvation by the sufferings of Jesus. It is certain from both of these texts that comprehensive predestination includes the "sins of His people" and "the works of the devil," otherwise the texts are superfluous. It is also certain that a Bible believer cannot Scripturally deny this to be true. For if Christ came to save sinners, and this determined before God created the world, then there had to be sinners in His view in His determinate counsel to be saved. If Christ came to "destroy the works of the devil," and John said so, and if this determination was before He created the world, then His eternal counsel had to have included both the devil and his works. There is no consistent way to deny this hypothesis. ( Doesn't it hurt to think!)

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

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

It is difficult to see how there can be any comfort for the struggling child of God in any scheme of salvation based upon the works of the creature, or in anything that gives some honor to the devil. If the devil was able, contrary to the determinate counsel of God, to enter paradise and bring such a disastrous consequence to God's best and perfect intentions in His creation, then who is to say that he cannot enter the heavenly paradise with the same awesome results? Either it was God's will, when He created the "crooked serpent," to

use him to bring about the salvation of God's elect from sin and misery and get glory thereby, or it was not. There is no alternative to this proposition. If the devil in some wise interrupted God's gracious work, or caused God to rush in with an emergency contingent work, surely the old serpent is wiser than God, and the otherwise safe condition of God's people is left in doubt. To this writer, such a condition poses a very difficult condition from which to draw comfort. But when he considers that 'from the beginning" God created the crooked serpent to get honor for Himself in the manifestation of all His gracious and glorious attributes; His love, mercy, longsuffering, gentleness, power to save and to keep His promise, His vigilance, and daily providence to His people, such is an enormous comforting thought. Just to know that God is truly GOD, and as a God, He provides all that a God is expected to provide to His people is truly comforting. Any shortcomings or imperfections in God or His counsel have ramification too great to provide any security, and therefore, comfort to a believer. There can be no greater sense of security to a believer than to be able to rest in His absolute and comprehensive sovereignty.

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

an understanding of God's determinate counsel, fore-knowledge, and the comprehensive predestination of all things by an unchangeable and perfect God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One thought might be needful here: Good works are not an enumerated list of "do's" with a list of "don'ts," for people to uniformly perform. They do not include such things as Sunday Schools, paying one's "tithes," driving soul-winners buses, supervising gyms for "the Lord", etc., as noted before. If the eternal God has ordained one of His children at some point in time as an

instrument to fulfill a divine purpose, or whatever that work might entail, it is a "good" work. Some of these works, particularly of wicked men, when measured against the standard of God's Law, may be rightly considered by us as "bad," but when it "works together for good" to God's end, "God meant it for good to bring to pass" His own will. This is seen in the case of Joseph's brethren's wicked acts against him, as well as the whole horrific acts in the crucifixion of Christ. Surely it was "by wicked hands" the purpose of God was fulfilled, but every child of God is compelled to admit that the end of that wicked act was very "good," for by it they have salvation. In man's limited vision, which takes in moment-by-moment events, he is too prone and too quick to condemn things that are often approved of God. How many, many "Christians" will harshly judge one for drinking wine? Yet, not only did the Lord make it at the wedding at Cana, but also drank it, and as today, the Jews of old called Him "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber." Such men could not consider the Lord turning water into wine as a "good work"! But it was.

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

In the performance of external good works, one should consider that even the most precious and God-honoring work done by a fallen creature is performed in great imperfection. "There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). The vehicle through which God does the work is unclean, and to that extent, so is the best work of a just man. Hence, we conclude that these works by which God carries out His determinate counsel cannot be accepted for any form of justification, righteousness, or blessings. Until one, or unless one, first fulfills the law of God to perfection as required of him, he cannot boast that he has "performed his duty." Since none has ever perfectly obeyed the law, there is no possible foundation for merited blessings "in time" or eternal salvation by "doing your

duty." This, surely, is the lesson the Savior was teaching in Luke 17:10, when He said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, `We are unprofitable servants: We have done which was our duty to do. " Upon the basis of this text alone, one ought to conclude that other than the Lord Jesus Christ, no one has ever done any duty, for none have done "all those things commanded" them to do. All the saints stand alike together, none having fulfilled all those things that are commanded them, and none have any grounds whatsoever to expect blessings as meritorious for what little they have done.

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

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

In considering this subject, one should not overlook the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, for in that aspect of one being God's workmanship, he certainly performs good works. All that he does, in some fashion or other, fulfills God's eternal purpose. Consider the child of God who is in Christ Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). The Lord Jesus taught His disciples, saying, "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall

speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36), and the apostle tells us, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Few there is today that believe either what Jesus or Paul said here, and shamefully, their lives demonstrate their neglect! Nevertheless, again, the apostle said, "For we (he includes himself) must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God" (II Corinthians 5:10-11). What are these "good things done in the body"? Whatever they are they are "done in the body." Of them, God's people will give an account, and that "with joy." Are they "earned blessings"? Surely no living child would say so! Are they not those things the Holy Spirit has wrought in them? We believe they are.

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

When the apostle described his own experience, he wrote: "For I know that in me [ dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but to perform that which Ls good I find not" (Romans 7:18). Notice the parenthetical express omitted above [ ]. It contains these words: "that is, in my flesh." The apostle was making a clarification: "In my carnal flesh there dwells no good thing, yet I cannot deny those "good things" that are of the Spirit that are in me." These good things that are in the child of God are there only by the work of God within him. And these works are all good, and for these "good things" the child of God will give an account in the day of judgment. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth

confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10: 10). All of God's children will have these good works for which to give account, because he has "received the things in his body, according to that he hath done" in the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose for him. We may consider the following, among many, as illustrations: divine life is a good work done in the body when one is called by grace; sanctification of the Spirit is a good work done in the body in that gracious work of conforming one to the image of Christ; the fruit of the Spirit (such as faith, hope, charity, patience, longsuffering, gentleness, humility, etc.) are all good works done in the body. All these "good things" are within the child of God, in his "body," and for which he can give account with joy. All these are "good works," and have their outward fruit unto God's free grace. From them flow many of the things God works, as an instrument, to fulfill His will. Those who believe in the comprehensive predestination of all things are as diligent in good works as any work-mongering freewiller! And that from a much more God-honoring motive.

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

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

A good architectural engineer will plan a building as precisely as his skills will allow. All measurements, stress factors, materials, places for lightening and plumbing fixtures, receptacles, gauges of wiring, windows, doors, etc., are blue-printed. Even a Conditionalist or Arminian preacher will allow this to be fair. One will hear no complaint that there is something wrong designing a building in such precise detail. It surely transcends the old fashion method of trial and error methods! But, alas, how these perfectionists will scream if anyone dare suggest that infinite wisdom Himself does the same, but with absolute perfection! Can one imagine such? Yet it is so throughout the country! The comprehensive predestinarian, however, insist upon it. God as easily designed the universe for all time and more precisely as any good architectural engineer designs a masterpiece building – except with perfection! Every small detail is predestinated exactly right to fulfill His

eternal will. Unregenerate men who suppose they are God's ministers are implacable enemies to such a glorious concept. They will not have it under any circumstance, and being unable to refute the concept without exposing their simple-mindedness, they will heap all kinds of euphemisms on both the doctrine and those who have been taught it.

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

We have expressed elsewhere in this article that predestination, per se, is not causative. It is, as one writer in this book pointed out, a word. It is a word expressive of a combination of factors, or causes, utilized by God, either directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a portion of, or an event of, His determinate counsel, or His "eternal purpose." We do not in this discussion wage war with those who believe it is causative, for the accumulated end collectively is causative. Insofar as one uses the word to express the finality of all factors collectively used by God to fulfill His purpose, we are content to defer to them. But in this treatise, our intent is to divide the concept into its component parts, and attribute causation to those immediate factors that directly bring God's eternal purpose to fruition. Therefore we are unwilling to dispute with anyone on this point, but rather express our view of the subject in the following summary: For this end, we say predestination is not causative, because in any event foretold and fulfilled in the Bible, it was not "predestination" that brought it to pass, but all the other forces and factors God used in fulfilling His will. We follow this line of thought primarily because the "limited" Primitives' objection to it arises from their misunderstanding of the term. They believe predestination is causative, and in their belief that they should exonerate God (Who needs no defense!) from the charge of causing men to sin, they "throw out the baby with the wash." That is, they deny the truth of God's absolute sovereignty and government of His own universe, and commit most of its governance to either: man, the devil, or "chance." Whereas, if they understood that predestination is not

causative; there would be no perceived problem to deal with to begin with. To better illustrate our point: The child of God is "predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ" (Romans 8:29). However, for this conformity to take place, it must be brought about by God's everlasting love, divine and unconditional election to grace and glory, effectual working of the Holy Spirit to life and salvation, sanctification by the Spirit and belief of the truth, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and glorification, which will be manifested upon the regeneration and resurrection of the saints from the grave. "Predestination" is the word used to embrace the whole combination of these and other factors necessary to fulfill the purpose of God that His saints be conformed to the image of His Son. The one word can be substituted for the combined number of necessary factors in their conformity to His image. But "predestination" per se did not do the work. God did.

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

Notice the following passages of Scripture relating to predestination: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1: 5,6). Here we have the word "predestinated " You will find that whatever is necessary to the end purposed is predestinated, and that end is stated: one's adoption in a manner that it should be to His praise and our acceptance in Him. This end is dependent upon many things, one of which is all that is

necessary in making us "accepted in the Beloved" This, of course, embraces the imputation of our sins to Christ and His bearing the due penalty for them, the new birth and our conversion, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, His donation of His faith to us as a gift of God, etc. Taken all these together, these works of grace are necessary for our being "made acceptable in the Beloved " Collectively, the word to express all these is "predestination" and these are necessary to our adoption as children. As you may see, predestination, per se, in this text, is not causative, but it embraces the multiple facets that do cause our acceptance in Christ. God directs and controls all of these causes to His determined purpose.

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

In Romans 8:29, we find the word predestinate again, and that without a definition, and it too, is not causative. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." Here, the end is stated: "that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. " Is it predestination that conforms one to the image of Christ, or is it the Spirit's work within the child of God? If He is to be the firstborn, then it is obvious that there must be many others born as His brethren. Predestination assures us that this is certain, and that all necessary events, persons, and causes will attend to this great end. In this case, the entire household of elect is included (as His brethren), and all things

necessary for their natural birth, existence and the place and time and conduct and salvation are all embraced in that predestination. In the same text, "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called" [Many who insist that only these four or five things are "predestinated" deny that all the elect will be effectually called. But this text takes in all that were predestinated in that effectual call.] This phrase expresses the certainty of their effectual call to salvation. If we were to expound upon all that is contained in this short text, it would be a massive book of historical, genealogical and experimental data on all of God's dealings in bringing to pass His eternal purpose and good pleasure in the salvation of His Bride, the Church. The word "predestinate," is sufficient to cover the whole field of human existence and experiences, not only for "His brethren," but of all those who played any part as instruments in God's providence in their experiences in nature and in grace. It includes all the necessary events used by God in "bringing many sons unto glory." His eternal purpose, that is here predestinated, issues forth from His determinate counsel and foreknowledge agreed upon before the world was created.

There are two places in the Bible where the identically same Greek word is used that the Tyndale and King James translators rendered "predestinate" in the four places covered above. First, in Acts 4:28, the word is translated "determined " The text reads: "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined (predestinated) before to be done." The freewill argument that predestination never has anything to do with evil is hereby solidly refuted. In this passage, it is rather obvious that it is not causative, yet it embraces all of the most wicked, horrific, and cruel events ever committed by men or devils. It refers directly to the culmination of all the events in the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. In this case, the word covers the combination of all these hellish events, and says that God's hand and counsel had predestinated, or determined them "before to be done." Predestination did not crucify Christ; but "wicked men by wicked hands put Him to death, and the sins of the elect were the cause of His sufferings and death. Yet, the string of events, persons, and circumstances of those terrible days, and all previous ones leading up to those events from the foundation of the world to that day, were "before determined." Or "predestinated" in God's determinate counsel.

Secondly, in I Corinthians 2:7, the word translated "ordained" is the same Greek word elsewhere rendered "predestinate" or "predestinated". It reads: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained (predestinated) before the world unto our glory." Notice again, that the definition of the word is not given. One who does not

understand the comprehensive scope of the concept of predestination cannot possibly understand the text. The end, however, is given: "the wisdom of God in a mystery," and even the timing of when this predestination was determined — "before the world began." That, not incidentally, is the same time (so to speak) when God's eternal council formed His determinate counsel relative to His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus "before the world began." It coincided with when God's people were chosen in Christ — before the foundation of the world. Here, in this text, we have both predestination and God's determinate counsel joined together at the same fountain of causes simultaneously. None can successfully dispute that predestination, when coupled with God's determinate counsel, must imperatively embrace "all things" in the most comprehensive manner possible. So, too, the apostle taught this merely uses that as a rationale for their wicked unbelief, and they will still hate His sovereignty. It may not really matter if God was the author of sin, since the Bible nowhere discusses it pro and con — some man or men threw that "boogerboo" into theological mix anyway. But the object is to set forth the concept of the comprehensive predestination of all things in its collective use of varying means utilized by God to fulfill His eternal and determinate counsel. — the good pleasure of His will. In this regard, predestination can be viewed as a rendezvous of all things necessary to fulfill God's decreed design at any and every event in time. It is an interstitial netting together of a great multitude of converging causes and events; the culmination of all previous causes and effects that bring to pass a given purpose of God in time; which time in itself is, in God's controlling and directing hand, a vehicle for other events yet to come. Never does one single event stop with that effect. Invariably an event always leads to other events. These causes with their effects are effectively and sovereignly directed and controlled by God in a manner to bring about their determined end — to the praise of the glory of His grace and the overriding good of His body, the Church.

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

Predestinarians seem to favor the history of Joseph, while Arminians and Conditionalists pass rapidly away from the Genesis narrative. None can Biblically or logically deny the comprehensive predestination of the many events recorded in Joseph's life that fulfilled God's previously revealed prophecy foretold to Abraham four generations earlier. For this reason, Conditionalists and other Arminians try to stay clear of that narrative. Here, we will but briefly select portions of that history to point out the varying

means God used to fulfill His reveal purpose, and then pass on to another such inspired document. This, primarily, because all our likely readers are more familiar with these ancient events, since most of them are Bible readers. While many historical events were interstitially united leading up to God's revelation to Abram, we will forbear to center our attention to many of them: as Noah's salvation, the genealogy of his family down to Nahor, Abram and Sarai; Abram and Sarai's election of God to procreate a favored nation; and all the recorded incidences of Divine providence in their lives, etc. We here commence with God's precise and revealed counsel and foreknowledge of His directing their offspring in the four centuries to follow. In fact, seems to be the very purpose for this narrative in the Holy record, to demonstrate God's absolute sovereign governance of events producing the lineage of Christ.

In the first revelation to Abram, God said to him, "This" (Eliezer, Abram's servant) "shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (Genesis 15:4). Note that nothing is said at this time about Sarai conceiving a child. Only that Abram would father a seed. In the unfolding of events, Sarai gave Abram her maid-servant, Hagar, to Abram to father a child for herself. Thus, Ishmael will be a firstborn son, and according to the ancient law of primogeniture will, according to custom, inherit Abraham's property. (This contested right continues among Abraham's offspring to this very day, yet God intended a much different outcome: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called.") So my first point is this: In the predestination of God, He will use the generation proceeding from Abram seminally to establish the basis of that future nation, and the resultant conflict over the inheritance rights between Ishmael and Isaac, and Esau and Jacob. Just as providence had heretofore directed Abram and Sarai, now their genetic offspring will also be utilized sovereignly by God to His own purpose. "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell (or count) the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness. And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it"(Genesis 15:5-7). Here we see an integral part of predestination is the providence of God and His faithfulness in keeping His promise. It was God who, unwittingly to Abram, had brought him out of Ur and directed his way hitherto.

The prophetic promise most central to the narrative of Joseph follows: "And He said to Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land

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

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

In time, Joseph's dreams revealed seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, and he was elevated to the right hand of Pharaoh. It was the famine God sent to drive the family into Egypt. It was no "accident" that Jacob heard

there was corn to be bought in Egypt! That is predestination. In time, Egypt is conquered by the Assyrians Empire [Kurds of today] and an Assyrian pharaoh who did not know Joseph, seeing the Hebrews were multiplying faster than the Assyrians, and fearful they would unite with the Egyptians to drive them out, began the attempted genocide, or holocaust, of the Jews. It is here the narrative of God fixed decrees raises up Moses as the Lawgiver to Israel.

But it is note-worthy that when Joseph's brothers learned that the viceroy in Egypt was Joseph, they were afraid, while Joseph was forgiving. When Jacob died, they thought, surely, now Joseph will avenge himself on us and they bowed before him. In Joseph's dream that they hated so badly, it was revealed: "Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words" (Genesis 37:7-8). His next dream was: "I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." (verse 9). Thus the foreknowledge of God was revealed, and thus it came to pass! That is predestination. There should be no doubt that Joseph was an absolute predestinarian. Hear him: "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but

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

We must pause here and take a second look. His brothers meant it "for evil." Their own conscience condemned them for it. God was not the author of their sin. They were. Their sin arose from their carnal and depraved nature. They only could go but so far, and each effort to go further was prevented. Reuban wanted to set him free, but could not. They at first wanted to kill him, and could not. They put him in a pit to leave him to die, and could not.

He had to go down into Egypt ahead of them. The caravan passed at the precise time and place for the transaction, and the Ishmeelites were willing to pay money for their cousin, take him into Egypt, and sell him as a slave. It could not have been otherwise! "The wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain." In the narrative, Joseph fully ascribed accountability to his brothers. Please read it again, maybe again, at least until you know that Predestinarians do not preach that God is the author of sin, and that man is fully accountable for his sinful actions! From now on, the reader may recognize a slanderer when he hears one suggest that Predestinarians "make God the author of sin." He then can "mark that man," and take anything else he says "with a grain of salt." What Joseph's brothers did was by the natural so-called "liberty" of their perverse, wicked, and fallen nature. They felt no coercion in doing it, but did it willingly; but only so far as God would allow. God did not put any different principle in their hearts than was already there. They, in fact, were born that way. But, pay close attention to the next statement, which is equally true: "God meant it for good!" God had a purpose to be fulfilled, and the text declares plainly what it was: "To bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." The revelation to Abraham four hundred years earlier was as much present in the mind of the eternal and unchangeable God as the day He spoke it. He would be the father of "a great nation." They would be "strangers in a land not their own." The father and brothers would bow down before Joseph. It would be foolish to say these events could have been otherwise. It is equally foolish to say all the yesterdays could have been different "if"- That history, so poorly elaborated upon by this writer, is nevertheless why this narrative is so much loved by all comprehensive predestinarians and so neglected by opponents of the truth. God did precisely what He said He would do. And God used evil to perform that which is declaratively good! Who can find fault with his Maker?

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

Predestination stood guard over the coffin. And then, suddenly, at the exact

time to the day, we read: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" (Exodus 13:19). Please forgive this diversion, I just hardly can help

doing it: Where are they that deny the resurrection of the body? They certainly do not believe as Joseph did! "Take me to my Canaan!" Do you know where your great, great, great grandfather of four hundred year ago is buried today? What a marvelous thing is this! Four hundred years watching over the bones of Joseph, the children of Israel left Egypt "in haste," but took time to go by the cemetery and pick up Joseph's bones and "carried him hence!" They did not forget! Listen, honestly: all those intricate and precise details, foretold because they were fore-ordained, and God would have us believe in His absolute and comprehensive government of His great universe. These things were written for us upon whom the end of the world has come. They prove the verity of our God and His faithfulness in fulfilling His own good pleasure. What kind of base creature would rebel against such a great Creator and Sustaining God as this, or "say unto Him, why hast thou made me thus"?

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

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

God reveals His will and He sometimes uses the instruments of the wicked (as Joseph's brothers) to fulfill His gracious designs. Our London Baptist forefathers pointed out that God did this, but did "no violence to the will" of corrupt men. In short, that God is not the author of sin, nor does the comprehensive predestination of all things imply such a thing. God does not

put, by His Holy Spirit, evil thoughts or actions in the minds and hearts of men; but He does use these means to His own glory and His peoples' good, as it seems pleasing in His sight. Such is seen in the following inspired narrative.

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

The narrative begins to unfold, with the Syrians under king Benhadad making war with Israel. Eventually, Judah will be drawn into the conflict as well. King Benhadad's troops were roundly defeated in the mountain ravines of Israel. Being both a superstitious pagan and a scientific minded man, he laid his defeat to Israel's God being the "God of the mountains," and his god was the "god of the plains." Therefore, to test his freewill hypothesis, he planned the next battle in the plains. He appeared rather scientific. He "numbered" this new army according to the number in the defeated army, "horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they" (I Kings 20:25). So much for his empirical research! God was very displeased with this blasphemous experiment. "There came a man of God. And spake to the king of Israel (Ahab), and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (verse 28). There can be no better evidence than this! Does God have to do with more than "five things"? Does He bother with "things"? Let us see.

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

God's law to Israel said in one article, "Thou shalt not covet." Covetousness seized upon Ahab in a most inordinate passion and he desired a vineyard next door to his property for an herb garden. The vineyard belonged to Naboth, who refused to sell it to him. This lust was so great that the king of

Israel laid down in deep depression and refused to eat bread! He wanted that vineyard! The queen, Jezebel, as wicked a female as found in the sacred pages, a worshipper of Belial, conspired with the freewill preachers of her faith to falsely accuse Naboth and had him stoned to death. Then she gave the vineyard to Ahab. Happily he went down to possess his ill-gotten plot, and the Lord's prophet met him there. "Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (I Kings 21:19).

So here is a portion of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge made known ahead of time to the evil king. Lets read one more such prophecy. "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall ( Jezreel" (I Kings 21:23). Now if the dogs don't eat her, or if they eat her some place else, then the prophecy is uncertain as some people think. All these prophecies are expressions of the determinate counsel of God. By His foreknowledge, He reveals them in advance to sustain the verity of His word. "He spake, and it was done." Those who deny the comprehensive predestination of God sometimes say, "God has nothing to do with these "timely things in our daily lives." Is it so? As one minister from Ohio once said at Kingsport, Tennessee, "If a man is run over by a car, God had nothing to do with it. It was not predestinated." But is this absurdity true? Not if said about our God. God has spoken of events that are yet to transpire in time. Does He have anything to do with the fulfillment of these prophecies? We shall see.

The war with Syria is renewed. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah paid a state visit to Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab talked Jehoshaphat into joining him in taking Ramah-Gilead from Syria. But Jehoshaphat desired to know God's will in the matter. "The king of Israel (Ahab) gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? (I Kings 22:6). Before finishing this quotation, lets look at the record in II Chronicles 18:18. "And the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up andall at Ramoth-Gilead ? And one spake after this manner, and another saying after that manner. Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will entice him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go out and be a lvin2 spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: Go out, and do even so"

(II Chronicles 18:18-21). May no reader overlook this discussion between this spirit and the Lord, nor ignore what the Lord told him to do. Let Arminians and Conditionalists display their ignorance of the Bible and the

truth, but God is fulfilling His own foretold decree precisely as He will.

The king of Judah was not satisfied. These prophets were the prophets of Beliel. He wanted a prophet of the Lord to enquire of the Lord in this matter. "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so." So they called Micaiah and enquired of him. The messenger that went after him even suggested "Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good. And Mocaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that I will speak" (II Chronicle 18:12,13). Let us notice something here before proceeding. The spirit was to be a "lying spirit in all the prophets." So watch this: "The king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forebear? And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand" (verse 14). We must let our opponents comment on that one! He lied! This message did not ring quite well in Ahab's ears. This just was not like Micaiah! He never prophesied good to Ahab, because there was nothing good about him for which to prophesy. Ahab's stunning reply: "And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord?" And to king Jehoshaphat, he said, "Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? " He had just prophesied "good" to the king, insofar as he prophesied what all the false prophets had also prophesied, but Ahab seems not to have believed him at all! Upon this, Micaiah prophesied: "And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his own house in peace" (I King 22:17). Ahab, being a freewiller of some sort, theologically, thought he could deceive the Lord. He said, "I will disguise myself; and enter into battle," but insisted Jehoshaphat dress himself in his royal robes! The Syrians were told not to fight against anyone except the king of Israel, but he was disguised as a common soldier. But the word of the Lord must be fulfilled, and predestination stood ready at hand to do just that! "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded" (I Kings 23:34). That, dear reader, is comprehensive predestination, as absolute as one can ever describe it! Here is a bowman, without aiming at a target, shoots an arrow "at a venture." As the arrow rises in its flight, a team of horses off in the distance saddening dash rapidly in the direction whereby the

arrow will intercept the king of Israel at the exact place, time, and angle so the arrow will penetrate the armory harness and bring the charioteer down. The doomed king dashes rapidly in the correct direction and speed necessary. Every step of the cooperating team of horses, and the number of steps necessary have been determined, and is fulfilled. Any slower, or faster, or in the wrong direction by a small degree, and the random arrow would have missed the predestinated target. And it can to pass, "one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according to the word of the Lord which He spake" (verse 38). And we have read, "God has nothing to do with things in our daily life!" Can you believe a God-called minister can be this ignorant? But this is not the end of this narrative.

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

Are these narratives true, or Jewish fables? Let the reader decide. In the case of the lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets of Beliel, they were false prophets to begin with. They were professional liars. How can one fault God if it pleased Him to merely have these professional and skilled liars all tell the same lie at the same time? He did them no wrong. God merely used these liars as instruments to bring to pass His righteous judgment against the house of Ahab. The horses were instruments in His providential hand as secondary means to fulfill his will. Does He not have a right to do what he will with his horses? Ahab did. Why not God? The flight of the predestinated arrow was totally out of the control of the archer the moment it clear the bow, and its

course was set by God. Did He not have a right to direct it to His target? The bowmen by trade always did the same. Why not God? The arranging of that narrow place in the harness of Ahab's armor at just the right angle and time and place to effectually penetrate the harness and end his life was of God. The horses were not that smart; the bowman shot at "a venture," so no one was left to fulfill the prophecy except the Lord. Was that wrong? How can one think so? Was not God extremely merciful? All the soldiers of Israel went home in peace without a single loss of life but that of Ahab! What could possibly be wrong with God conducting such a battle! Dogs licked up the blood of innocent Naboth and his sons, so what is so terrible about God making dog feed out of Jezebel? She was the one that perjured Naboth and his sons to acquire his property. Was it not a balanced and fair judgment? Yet our humanistic and sentimental age has produced a brand of ministers who find such justice revolting, and will deny God's sovereign right over His own creation!

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

he should answer the people roughly, "For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (II Chronicles 10:11). Now read this next passage with care, considering the Scripture that says, "the preparations of the heart, and answer of the tongue is of the Lord " We read why he took the evil, and rather stupid counsel: So the king hearkened not unto the people: for it was of the Lord, that the Lord might perform His word, which He spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. And all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? And we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents" (II Chronicles 10:15-16). Israel left the kingdom of David, and Rehoboam ruled over the single tribe of Judah as the Lord promised Solomon, while Israel elect his servant, Jeroboam as its king. Look at this narrative. The Lord put in Rehoboam's mind to take the evil counsel of the young men, in order to fulfill His purpose in the division of the kingdom of David. The king had no "free" will in this matter. The whole preparation of the hearts of the king and his young counselors was of the Lord, and the answer of all their tongues "was of God, that the Lord might perform His Word" What then shall one say of those who think God has nothing to do with our daily affairs! While God did not make these men wicked, He surely used their wickedness to His own end. In separating Judah from Israel, a Judah's freedom lasted one hundred and twenty years after Israel's conquest and extinction and became, as historians call them, "the ten lost tribes." The Jews, however, still exist! This is what we mean when we speak of comprehensive predestination of God over the evil acts of men. This view is fully supported in His Word: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself: even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4). Our Lord says, basically the same thing in Matthew 10:19, "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" Even your words, Conditionalists and Arminians, are not your own, although you surely think they are!

Predestinarians are unable to deny what the Lord has so clearly revealed about evil. He said, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah 45:6). We cannot help to wonder how many modern "Christians" believe Isaiah. This writer recalls the first time that verse was presented to him. Elder John R. Gilpin of Ashland Kentucky quoted it in 1954, and explained that the "evil" in this text did not mean "sin." According

to him, the Hebrew word use here, "Ra," was never translated "sin." I later found that he might have had a Scofield Reference Bible, for its footnotes on the text say the same thing. However, neither of them was honest in their translation. To say it "never" was translated sin suggests they looked up each reference, and if they had done this, they would also have known how it was used. The word "Ra" is often translated "wicked," "wickedness," in the following texts: The first place it is used is in, of all places, Genesis 2:9: "The tree of knowledge of good and evil (Ra)." To say that God did not create "evil," or "wickedness," is to flatly dispute the Bible itself. In Genesis 6:5, we find it translated this way: "And God saw that the wickedness (Ra) of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil (Ra) continually." Mr. Scofield was somewhat deceitful here, for he certainly should have known this when first used, it was translated in these verses as both "wickedness" and "evil." True, he was correct that it is "never translated sin," but should have given how it was used. Obviously it should not be translated "sin," because "sin is the transgression of the law of God," and therefore it should not have been so used. God "created Ra or evil, or wickedness." (See Genesis 2:17; 3:5; and 22; 8:21; 44:4; 48: 16; 50:15,17,20. That is ten times in Genesis alone! As one can see, God does make choices for us; puts thoughts into our minds; controls the wicked motives of our corrupt hearts; and directs our decisions in such a way as to fulfill His will and leave us with our supposed "free" volition!

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

The infinite unlimited and eternal mind of the Great Jehovah embraced all His creation from the commencement to the consummation, and those portions thereof that He is pleased to reveal to man has been foretold by His

prophets and apostles, who were "moved by the Holy Ghost to write" what they did, and they desired to look into the things of which they spoke. As the purpose of God is fulfilled, those men, things, and events necessary to be brought together as cause or causes to produce the desired effects are embraced in the term "predestination."

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

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**ARTICLES OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION**  
**(Episcopal Church)**  
**Article Seventeen**

[Note: Isaac Backus' and John Gill's reference to the Episcopalian minister's unfaithfulness to the 17th Article of the Church of England in the above two articles are based on the following Article: " Of Predestination and Election".ED]

"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 honor. Wherefore, they which be 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 be 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 wretchedness 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.

**finis**

## **PREDESTINATION LONDON CONFESSION OF FAITH OF 1689**

### **Chapter III, Of God's Decrees**

1. God hath (Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15,18) decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin (James 1:15, 17; 1 John 1:5) nor hath fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature not yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather (Acts 4:27,28; John 19:11) established; in which appears His wisdom in

disposing all things, and power, and faithfulness (Num.23:19; Eph. 1: 1, 3, 4, 5,) in accomplishing His decree.

2. Although God knoweth whatsoever may, or can come to pass upon all (Acts 15:18) supposed conditions: yet hath He not decreed anything, (Rom. 9:11, 13, 16, 18) because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, (I Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:41) some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the (Eph. 1:5,6) praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their (Rom. 9:22, 23; Jude 4) just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice.

4. These angels and men thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their (2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18) number so certain, and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9) that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love; (Rom. 19:13, 16; Eph. 1: 6,12) without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so He bath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, fore-ordained (1 Pet. 1, 2; 2 Thess. 2:13) all the means thereunto, [see footnote], wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam (1 Thess. 5: 9,10), are redeemed by Christ, are effectually (Rom. 8: 30; 2 Thess. 2:13) called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith, (1 Pet. 1:5) unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. (John 10:26; 17:9; 6:64.)

7. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care: that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their (1 Thess. 1:4,5; 2 Peter 1:10,) eternal election; so shall this doctrine afford matter (Eph. 1:6; Rom. 11:33) of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and (Rom. 11: 5,6) of humility, diligence, and abundant (Luke 10:20) consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

[Footnote: The means the Old London fathers had reference to are following the statement. . . not the modern gimmicks of present-day "evangelicals". That is: the means of election, redemption by Christ, effectually calling by the

Spirit, justification, sanctification, and perseverance.]

**finis**

## **THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION**

**by**

**Christopher Ness, 1700**

Predestination is the decree of God, whereby (according to the counsel of His own will), He foreordained some of mankind to eternal life, and refused or passed by others, for the praise of His glorious mercy and justice. Some are "vessels of mercy"; others are "vessels of wrath." "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory?" (Rom. 9:21-23).

In a great house are various vessels both for use and ornament, vessels of honor, and vessels of dishonor. (2 Tim. 2:20); and the master of the house has a right to, and can wisely use, all his vessels, even as he shall think proper. God has His use even of Pharaoh and of the Church's greatest enemies, if it is but scullion work, to brighten vessels of mercy by them. God has appointed the Elect unto glory; and He has by the eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means thereunto; such as redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, effectual calling and conversion, justification in the court of conscience by faith in Jesus' merits, sanctification in the heart by the Spirit, producing holy living and holy walking with God and man. And these blessed participators are "kept by the power of God through faith (not by faith) unto salvation"(1 Pet. 1:5). "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we say then to these things" (Rom. 8:30-31). We will say with the apostle, "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" (1 Thess. 5:9).

It is called "destination," as it comprehends a determined order of means to the end; and pre-destination, because God appointed this order in and with Himself before the actual existence of those things so ordered. The Greek word signifies a fore-separating, and setting the bounds, for God's special use; as Israel was separated from among all the nations of the world to be God's peculiar inheritance. "I am the Lord your God, which separated you from other people" (Lev. 20:24). "The Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a

special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). As to say: "I have separated you to become vessels of mercy, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit, before all time, even from all eternity." As Divine prescience is sometimes largely mistaken for predestination, "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (Rom. 11:2), that is, whom He did predestinate; so, in like manner, predestination is taken strictly and in part for election itself (Rom. 8:30; and Eph. 1:5). I shall handle it accordingly in this following treatise, using the words election and predestination promiscuously. Predestination is also called a Divine decree, for in it is the determinate counsel of God, and the counsel of His own sovereign will, in bringing to pass such ends by such and such means. "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus.. . Herod and the Gentiles were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27,28). "Having predestinated us . . . according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will" (verse 11). The election and predestination of the Lord is, in Scripture phrase, termed the "hand", the "determinate counsel," the "purpose," the "good pleasure" of God (Acts 2:23; Eph. 1:9). The Divine decree of predestination has various properties; it is eternal, unchangeable, absolute, free, discriminating, and extensive.

### **Predestination is Eternal**

#### **This is proved from the following reasons:**

(1) God's internal and immanent acts are the same with His essence: such an act is the Divine decree; and, therefore, as God's essence is eternal, so His decree must also be eternal. Now the decree is God's decreeing, because whatever is in God is GOD; it is God Himself by one eternal act, decreeing and determining whatsoever should come to pass unto the praise of His own glory.

(2). The second reason is deduced from the simplicity of God, which is, God considered as one mere and perfect act, without any composition or succession. There can be no more a new thought, a new intent, or a new purpose in God, than there can be a new God. Whatever God thinks He ever thought, and always does and will think. Whatever God purposes He always purposed, and ever does and will purpose. He said, "I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer. 29:11). As He cannot know anything new, neither can He intend anything new, for His name is, /Am. He takes not new

counsels, as man, neither draws up new determinations.

(3). The third reason is taken from Christ Himself. If Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" as He is called (Rev. 13:8), then predestination to life must needs be before time, because Christ is the Foundation of election. We are elected in Him. "According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); and predestinated by Him, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph. 1:5), Christ is the means. Knowing the end cannot be of a later date and determination than the means to that end; they have relation to each other. And if Christ be the eternal purpose of the Father, the act of electing in Christ must needs be His eternal purpose also.

(4). Scripture expressly proves the eternity of the decree, saying, it was "before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2); and "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); and it was an "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11).

(5). It is the royal prerogative of the great Jehovah to order as well as appoint things that are coming and that shall come: "I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming and shall come" (Isa. 44:7). None can appoint God the time. He saith, "Who is like Me? and who will appoint Me the time?" (Jer. 50:44). Hence time is said to travail with those eternal decrees of God, and bring forth the accomplishment of them in their proper season; and the decree will bring forth" (Zeph. 2:22). Every thing has its accomplishment in time, which was decreed to fall out from eternity.

(6). If human concerns have this encomium that "these are ancient things" (1 Chron. 4:22), how much more the Divine decree, which is not the work of yesterday! If the negative part of predestination of the ungodly were "before of old ordained" (Jude 4), then much more the positive, for God's purpose of loving Jacob and hating Esau, was before they had done "either good or evil" (Rom. 9:11).

**OBJECTIONS:** Some may object saying, "We grant God's prescience or foreknowledge to be eternal, but not His predestination; that choice or election mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:27-29 must be a temporal, not an eternal, election."

**ANSWER:** (1) With God, the knowledge of things that shall come to pass must follow the decree thereof; for things must first be decreed, and then

foreseen in that being which they have in the decree. In this sense prescience presupposes predestination, for "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. " (Acts 15:18). God has a perfect and thorough foreknowledge of all future things, both the end as all the means to that end; not only as they may be, but also as they shall be, by His Divine determination.

(2) Prescience - seeing beforehand, or foreknow-ledge, is taken for God's love from eternity, which is a knowledge of approbation. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate" (Rom. 8:29); that is, "Whom he fore-loved", as Zanchius reads it: Whom He foreknew, not only with the knowledge of observation, but with the knowledge of approbation also. He foreknew them to be His. So it is predestination itself. To grant an eternal prescience without an eternal predestination, is to break the link of the golden chain in Romans 8: 29-30. "God hath not," and God will not, "cast away His people which He foreknew" (Rom. 11:2).

(3). Some grant a predestination eternal to the elect only, but to the non-elect only a prescience or naked foresight (without any preordination), lest they should, as they think, make God the author of the creature's sin and ruin. But these men fear where no fear is; for the worst evil that ever was committed in this world, to wit, the crucifying of the Prince of glory, Jesus Christ, did not only fall under the foreknowledge of God, but also under His determinate counsel: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23; 4:28), The taking and apprehension of Christ was not barely foreknown, but was actually unchangeably determined by God.

(4). Even suppose it to be granted that the apostle speaks of a temporal election, or choice, in 1 Cor. 1:27, etc., yet that signifies no more than our vocation or calling; and temporal reprobation intimates no more than man's obduration, or rejection. The accomplishment of both of these is granted to be in time, so may not be confounded with this eternal decree of God. These are but fruits and effects of that eternal decree.

### **INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE FORE-GOING:**

1. Is God's love eternal? Then Satan cannot get beyond or between this love and us; for it was before the world was, and so before Satan was.
2. Augustine told of a curious fool that asked what God did before the world was made, - "that He made hell for such as him;" now this teaches us that

God was choosing us to Himself before the world began. O wonderful!

3. If so, believer, then thy saintship and sufferings have eternal glory wrapped up in all of them. [All this comfort is lost with a limited predestination. [Ed. Sic.]

### **PREDESTINATION IS UNCHANGEABLE**

Hence it is compared to "mountains of brass" (Zech. 6:1), and it is called, the "immutability of His counsel." (Heb. 6:17). This is made evident by sundry reasons, as:

The Divine decree has an unchangeable fountain, to wit, the unchangeableness of God, "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" (Job 23:13). He desires and He does it: no created being can interpose between the desire and the doing, to hinder their meeting together. "God is not man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent" (Num. 23:19). "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6); with Him is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psa. 33:11). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Prov. 19:21). Man is a poor changeable creature and changes his mind oftener than his garments, both from the darkness of his understanding and the perverseness of his will. He frequently sees something that he did not see before. But there is no such imperfection in God. All things "are naked" before Him, dissected, or with their faces upward. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). He knows all His works - their nature and circumstances - as perfectly in the beginning of the world as He will do at the end thereof. And He abides still in one eternal mind when His dispensations are changed, for He decreed the change of them from all eternity.

The decree of Election stands upon an unchangeable foundation, to wit, that Rock of Ages, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). As the first Adam was the foundation stone in the decree of creation, so the last Adam, even Jesus, is the foundation stone in the decree of election. God has blessed us in Him, yea, and we shall be blessed; He has chosen us in Him; pardoned us in Him; sealed us in Him; built us up and completed us in Him, all "According to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). All those

acts of grace are said to be in Christ, who has blessed us in Christ (Eph. 1:3), chosen us in Him (vs. 4); pardoned us "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (vs. 7); "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed" (vs. 13); "rooted and built up in Him" (Col. 2:7); and you are "complete in Him" (vs. 10). Indeed, Christ Himself was under Divine ordination; He "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter. 1:20), and is called the elect stone (1 Pet. 2:6). Christ is the first person elected. "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect" (Isa. 42:1; Matt.12:18). Christ was chosen as the Head and we as His members; therefore we are said to be "given to Christ." "Thine they were, and Thou gayest them Me" (John 17:6). Now, so long as this foundation stands sure, so long does the superstructure remain unchangeable. The temple stood firmly upon those two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, i.e., stability and strength (as these words mean); so the decree of election stands sure upon Christ the Foundation; and none can pluck an elect soul from off this Foundation. None can pluck any of Christ's out of His hands. Christ alone will lose none that are given to Him; He will fulfill His Father's will by taking care of them all. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). "They shall never perish" (John 10:28).

(We omitted the 3rd. reason for brevity, since it covered much already set forth.) Predestination is unchangeable, for the decree concerning the end includes the means to that end, and binds them together with an irrefragable chain, which cannot be broken. The predestinated, called, justified, and glorified ones are the same (Rom. 8:30). Therefore the purpose of God according to election must stand (Rom. 9:11). God does not decree the end without the means, nor the means without the end, but both together. As a purpose for building includes the hewing of stone, and squaring of timber, and all other materials for construction; and as a decree for war implies all arms, horses, ammunition, and warlike provisions; so here, too, all that are elected to salvation, are elected to sanctification also. God ordains to the means as well as to the end. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). God has ordained that we should walk in good works (Eph. 2:10), hence we are elected unto obedience, through the "sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:2); therefore God has promised to sanctify those whom He purposed to save. Election is an ordaining to grace and glory. In predestination, therefore, the means of salvation are no less absolutely decreed than salvation itself. We may not conceive that God's decree runs after this form, "I will predestinate Peter to salvation, if it should so happen that he does believe and persevere"; but rather thus: "I do predestinate Peter

to salvation, which, that he may infallibly obtain, I will give him both faith and perseverance." Were it otherwise, the foundation would not stand sure; yea, and God's gifts would not be without repentance, if God did not absolutely decree to give and bestow faith and perseverance to His elected ones. The covenant of grace runs in this tenure: "I will be a God to you, and ye shall be a people unto Me," that is, I will make you so.  
Christopher Ness, 1621-1705

**Finis**

**THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION  
STATED, AND SET IN THE  
SCRIPTURE LIGHT**

**By**

**JOHN GILL, 1752**

**IN OPPOSITION TO JOHN WESLEY'S "PREDESTINATION  
CALMLY CONSIDERED," with a Reply to the Exceptions of the said  
Writer to "THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE  
SAINTS".**

Mr. Wesley having declared himself the author of the Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints, to which I lately returned an answer; has been pleased to shift the controversy from perseverance to predestination: contenting himself with some low, mean and impertinent exceptions to a part of what I have written on the subject of perseverance; not attempting to answer any one argument advanced by me in vindication of it; and yet he has the assurance in the public papers, to call this miserable piece of his, chiefly written on another subject, A full answer to Dr. Gill's pamphlet on perseverance; any other man but Mr. Wesley would, upon reflection, be covered with shame and confusion; though to give him his due, in his great modesty, he has left out the word full in some after-papers; as being conscious to himself, or it may be, some of his friends pointed it to him, that it was an imposition on the public, and intended greatly to expose himself and his cause; since he has left me in full possession of all my arguments; which I will not say are "unanswerable," though I think they are; and it looks as if Mr. Wesley thought so too, seeing he has not attempted to answer one of them; yet this I may say, that as yet they are not answered at all, and much less in a full answer given unto them.

[Reference is made to Gill's 1752 booklet on "Final Perseverance" that was written to refute John Wesley's first effort on "Serious Thoughts on Perseverance of the Saints," that denied eternal security of the elect. – Ed.]

And now, though I might be very well excused following him in this wild pursuit against the subject of Predestination; since he has not meddled with my argument from it for the saints' perseverance; since he has not pursued that subject, as his title promises; and since throughout the whole he does not argue, only harangue upon it; and that only a part of it, Reprobation, which he thought would best serve his purpose; yet for the sake of weak and honest minds, lest through his subtlety, they should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; I shall endeavor to state the doctrine of predestination, and set it in a true light according to the Scriptures, with the proofs of it from thence; and take notice of the principal objections raised by Mr. Wesley in his harangue on that part of it which respects reprobation; and then close this treatise with a reply to his trifling exceptions to what I have written on the subject of the saints' perseverance.

As to the doctrine of Predestination, it may be considered either, In general as respecting ALL THINGS that have been, are, or shall be, or done in the world; every thing comes under the determination and appointment of God; "He did," as the assembly of divines say in their confession, "from all eternity, unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass;" or, as they express it in their catechism, "God's decrees are the wise, free and holy acts of the counsel of His will; whereby, from all eternity, He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time:" and this predestination and fore-appointment of all things, may be concluded from the foreknowledge of God. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (Greek: "from eternity" ) Acts 15:18. They are known by Him as future, as what would be, which became so by His determination of them. The reason why He knew they would be, is, because He determined they should be: also from the Providence of God, and His government of the world, which is all "according to the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). He does every thing according to that, or as He has determined in His own mind. Eternal predestination in this sense is no other than eternal providence, of which actual providence in time is the execution.

To deny this, is to deny the providence of God, and, His government of the world, which none but Deists and Atheists will do; at least it is to think and speak unworthily of God, as not being the all-knowing and all-wise and sovereign ruler of the world, He is. Once more, the very wonderful thing, prophecy, or foretelling things to come, could not be without a predestination of them; of which there are so many instances in Scripture; such as the stay

of the Israelites in Egypt exactly 430 years as prophesied, and their departure from thence; the seventy years captivity of the Jews in Babylon as foretold, and their return at the end of that time; the exact coming of the Messiah at such a certain time which was prophesied; with many others, and some seemingly the most casual and contingent; as the birth of persons by name a hundred or hundreds of years before they were born, as were Josiah and Cyrus; and of a man's carrying a pitcher of water, at such a time, to such a place (1 Kings 13:2): how could these things be foretold with certainty, unless it was determined and appointed they should be? There is nothing comes by chance to God, nothing done without His knowledge, nor without His will, and nothing without His determination. Every thing, even the most minute thing, respecting His creatures, and what is done in this world in all periods and ages of time, is by His appointment. For the proof of which see the following passages.

Eccl. 3:1, 2. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born and a time to die," &c. a time fixed by the purpose of God for each of these.

Job 14:5. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."

Job 23:14. "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. "

Daniel 4:35. "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? "

Ephesians 1:11. Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will. " Acts 15:18. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world "

Acts 17:26. "and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Matthew 10: 29 ,30. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "

II. Predestination may be considered as special and as relating to particular persons, and to things spiritual and eternal; whereas predestination in general respects all creatures and things, even things temporal and civil.

First, Christ Himself is the object of predestination; He was foreordained to be the Mediator between God and man; to be the propitiation for sin; to be the Redeemer and Savior of His people; to be the Head of the church; King of saints, and Judge of the world: hence He is called, God's elect, and His chosen one; and whatsoever befell Him, or was done to Him, was by the

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; even all things relating to His sufferings and death: in proof of which read the following Scriptures.

Romans 3:25. "Whom God hath set forth (Greek: fore-ordained) to be a propitiation. "

1 Peter 1:20. "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," that is, to be the Lamb slain. (See chapter 2:4)

Luke 22:29. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me. "

Acts 27:31. Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath appointed (See also chapter 10:42).

Isaiah 43:1. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth. (See also Matthew 12:18)

Luke 22:22. "And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed" (See also Psalm 109) Acts 2:23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hand, " &c. Chapter 4:28. "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.

Secondly, Angels also are the objects of predestination, both good and bad; the blessed angels are chosen unto life, and to continue in their happy state to all eternity: and their perseverance therein, and eternal felicity, are owing to the eternal choice of them in Christ their Head; "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things," (1 Timothy 5:21). The evil angels are rejected of God, and left in that miserable estate their apostasy brought them into, without any provision of grace and mercy for them: they are "delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved to the judgment of the great day; and everlasting fire is prepared .(or. them, according to the determinate counsel and will of God (2 Peter 2:4, Matthew 25: 41).

Thirdly, Predestination which the Scriptures chiefly treat of, is what respects men, and consist of two parts, election and reprobation; the one is a predestination unto life, the other unto death.

First. Election, which is a predestination unto life, is an act of the free grace of God, of His sovereign and immutable will, by which from all eternity He has chosen in Christ, out of the common mass of mankind, some men, or a certain number of them, to partake of spiritual blessings here, and happiness hereafter, for the glory of His grace.

Second. The objects of election are some men, not all which a choice supposes; to take all would be no choice; called therefore, a "remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). These are a certain number, which though unknown to us, how many, and who they are, are known to God. "the Lord knows them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19). And though they are in themselves a "great multitude, which no man can number" (Revelation 7:9), yet when compared with those from whom they are chosen, they are but few; "many are called, but few chosen," (Matthew 20:16). These are chosen out of the same common mass of mankind, be it considered as corrupt or pure; all were on an equal level when the choice was made: "hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Romans 9:21). These are not whole nations, churches, and communities, but particular persons, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life; "Jacob have I loved," & c. "salute Rufus chosen in the Lord," and "according as He has chosen us in Him," etc c. (Romans 9:13 and Ephesians 1:4). Election is not a set of propositions, but persons; not characters, but men; or not men under such and such characters, as believers, holy, &c., but men as having done "neither good or evil; " before they had done either, (Romans 8:11).

1. This act of election, is an act of God's free grace, to which He is not moved by any motive or condition in the object chosen, nor by His foresight of them: wherefore it is called "the election of grace; " concerning which the Apostle's reasoning is strong and invincible; and "if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," (Romans 11:5,6). It is according to the sovereign and unchangeable will of God, and not according to the will or works of men; "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:5 and again, verse 11), "being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; " hence it stands immutably firm and sure, even "the purpose of God according to election, not of works but of Him that calleth" (Romans 9:11).

2. This act of election is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, as causes or conditions of it; faith flows from it; is a fruit and effect of it, is secured by it, and is had in consequence of it: "as many as ordained unto eternal life believed," (Acts 13:48) hence it is called "the faith of God's elect," (Titus\_ 1:1) and though holiness is a means proved in the act of election, it is not the cause of it; men are chosen, not because they are holy,

but "that they should be holy," (Ephesians 1:4); good works do not go before, but follow after election; it is denied to be of them, as before observed, and it passed before any were done, (Romans 9:11 and 11:5,6) they are the effects of God's decree, and not the cause of it; "God hath fore-ordained" them "that we should walk in them," (Ephesians 2:10).

3. The act of election was made IN Christ, (not in Adam) as the Head, in whom all the elect were chosen, and into whose hands, by this act of grace, were put their persons, grace, and glory; and this is an eternal act of God in Him; "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world," (Ephesians 1:4) and so the Apostle tells the Thessalonians, that "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation; " (2 Thessalonians 2:13) not from the first preaching of the gospel to them, or from the time of their conversion by it, but from the beginning of time, even from all eternity, as the phrase is used in Proverbs 7:23. Hence nothing done in time could be the cause or condition of it. What men are chosen unto by this act are, grace here, and glory hereafter; all spiritual blessings, adoption, justification, sanctification, belief of the truth, and salvation by Jesus Christ. Salvation is the end proposed with respect to men; sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth are the means appointed and prepared for that end. "He hath chosen us in Him, - that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, &c." (Ephesians 1: 4,5). "We are bound to give thanks to God always 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" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

3. Both means and end are sure to the chosen ones \_since this is an act of God's immutable will; these are redeemed by the blood of Christ: He died for their sins, and made satisfaction for them: they are justified by His righteousness and no charge can be laid against them; they are effectually called by the grace of God; they are sanctified by His Spirit; they persevere to the end, and cannot totally and finally be deceived and fall away, but shall be everlastingly glorified. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth! " that is the elect (Roman's 8:33). "It is Christ that died," that died for them. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also

justified: and whom He justified, them He glorified"(Romans 8:30). "For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect "(Matthew 24:24); but that is not possible.

4. The ultimate end of all this, with respect to God, is His own glory; the glory of all His divine perfections; the glory of His wisdom in forming such a scheme, in fixing on an end, and preparing means suitable unto it; the glory of His justice and holiness, in the redemption and salvation of the chosen ones, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of His Son; and the glory of His rich grace and mercy exhibited in His kindness to them through Him; and the whole of it is, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

This now is the Scripture doctrine of predestination, or that part of it that is called election; from whence it appears to be ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL, irrespective of any thing in man as the cause and condition of it in time or eternity. Mr. Wesley believes, that, "election is a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness;" so that he owns a particular and personal election, and calls it an eternal decree; but believes that it is conditional: but if it is conditional, the condition is to be named; let him name the condition of it: let him point it out to us, and in what passage of Scripture it is; this lies upon him to do so, and I insist upon it, or else he ought to give up his unscriptural notion of conditional election. Mark 16:16 is no expression of this decree, but a declaration of the revealed will of God: and points out to us what will be the everlasting state of believers and unbelievers: but believers, as such, that they who are real believers, are the elect of God; but then the reason why they are the elect of God is not because they are believers, but they become believers, because they are the elect of God; their faith is not the cause or condition of their election, but their election the cause of their faith; they were chosen when they had done neither good nor evil, and so before they believed: and they believe in time, in consequence of their being ordained unto eternal life, from eternity: faith is in time, election before the world was; nothing temporal can be the cause or condition of what is eternal. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures. If Mr. Wesley will not attend to these, let him hear the Articles of his own church [The Church of England, or Episcopal Church]; the seventh of which runs thus:

"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 of honor. Wherefore they which be 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 be 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." This is an Article agreeable to the Scripture; an Article which he as a true son of the church, has treacherously departed from; an Article which Mr. Wesley must have subscribed and sworn to; an Article which will stare him in the face as long as subscriptions and oaths of office stand for any thing with him.

The doctrine of election, as above stated, standing in so glaring a light in the sacred Scriptures, and appearing with such evidence, as is impossible for all the art and sophistry of men to set aside; the other branch of predestination necessarily follows, which we deny not, but maintain. Mr. Wesley would have an election found out which does not imply reprobation; but what election that can be, the wit of man cannot devise; for if some are chosen, others must be rejected; and Mr. Wesley's notion of election itself implies it; for if, as he says, "election means a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness;" then others must of necessity be left out of that choice, and rejected. I proceed therefore,

I. To the other branch of predestination commonly called Reprobation; which is an immutable decree of God, according to His sovereign will, by which He has determined to leave some men in the common mass of mankind, out of which He has chosen others, and to justly punish them for sin with everlasting destruction, for the glory of His power and justice. This decree consists of two parts, a negative and a positive; the former is by some called preterition, or a passing by, a leaving some when others are chosen; which is no other than non-election; the latter is called pre-damnation, being God's decree to condemn or damn men for sin.

First, Preterition is God's act of passing by, or leaving some men when He chose others, according to His sovereign will and pleasure; of which act of God there is clear evidence in the Sacred Scripture; as well as it is necessarily implied in God's act of election which has such clear and incontestable proof. These are "the rest", those that remain unelected while others are chosen; "the election hath obtained it, and the rest are blinded" (Romans 9:7), or elect persons obtain righteousness, life and salvation, in

consequence of their being chosen and the rest being left, they remain in their native darkness and ignorance, and for their sins are given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. These are they that are left out of the book of life, while others have their names written there from the foundation of the world; of whom it is said, "whose names are not written in the book of life (of the Lamb) from the foundation of the world" (Revelations 13:8 and chapter 17:8).

Secondly, Pre-damnation, is God's decree to condemn men for sin, or to punish them with everlasting damnation for it: and this is the sense of the Scriptures; and this is the view that they give us of this doctrine. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverb 16:4). Not that God made man to damn him; the Scripture says no such thing, nor do we; nor is it the sense of the doctrine we plead for; nor is it inferred from it. God made man neither to damn him, or to save him, but for His own glory, that is His ultimate end in making him, which is answered whether he is saved or lost: but the meaning is, that God has appointed the wicked man to the day of ruin and destruction for his wickedness. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation": But who are they? They are after described, "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Hence the objects of this decree are called "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," that is, by sin, (Romans 9:22). And now what is there shocking in this doctrine, or disagreeable to the perfections of God? God damns no man but for sin, and He decreed to damn none but for sin.

Thirdly, This decree, we say, is according to the sovereign will of God, for nothing can be the cause of His decree but His own will: let the object of that part of the decree, which is called Preterition, be considered either in the corrupt or pure mass of mankind, as fallen or unfallen creatures, they are to be considered in the same view, and as on an equal foot and level with those that are chosen; and therefore no other reason can be given, but the will of God, that He should take one, and leave another. And though in that branch of it, which is an appointment of men to condemnation, sin is the cause of the thing decreed, damnation; yet it is the will of God that is the cause of the decree itself, for this invincible reason; or otherwise He must have appointed all men to damnation, since all men are sinners; let any other reason be assigned if it can be, why He has appointed to condemn some men for their sin, and not others,

Fourthly, God's end in all this is the glorifyin Himself, His power and His justice; all His appointments are "for Himself, " for His own glory, and this among the rest; "What if God willing to shew His wrath," His vindictive justice, "and to make His power known," in the punishment of sinners for their sin, "endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction!" (Romans 9:22).

The doctrine of reprobation, considered in this light, has nothing in it contrary to the nature and perfections of God. Harsh expressions, and unguarded phrases, that some may have used in speaking or writing about this doctrine, I will not take upon me to defend: but as it is thus stated, I think it is a defensible one, equally as the doctrine of election, and is demonstrable by it. The Scriptures are indeed more sparing of the one than of the other, and have left us to conclude the one from the other, in a great measure, though not without giving us clear and full evidence: for though reprobation is not so plentifully spoke of, yet it is clearly spoken of in sacred writings; wherefore, upon this consideration we judge it most proper and prudent, not so much to insist on this subject in our discourses and writings; not from any consciousness of want of evidence, but because of the awfulness of the subject. This our opponents are aware of; and therefore press us upon this head, in order to bring the doctrine of election into contempt with weak and carnal men; and make their first attacks upon this branch of predestination, which is beginning wrong; since reprobation is no other than non-election, or what is opposed to election; let the doctrine of election be demolished, and the other will fall of course; but that will cost too much pains; and they find a better account with weak minds in taking the other method; a method which the Dutch Remonstrants (Arminius' followers) formerly were desirous of, at the synod of Dort, could it have been allowed, a method which Dr. Whitby has taken in his discourse of the Five points of Calvinism; and this is the method which Mr. Wesley has thought fit to take, and indeed he confines himself wholly to this subject: for though he calls his pamphlet, "Predestination Calmly Considered;" yet it only considers one part of it, Reprobation, and that not in a way of argument, but harangue; not taking notice of our arguments from Scripture or reason, only making some caviling exceptions to it: such as have the face of an objection, I shall gather up, as well as I can, from this wild and immethodical performance, and make answer to. And,

First, Mr. Wesley desires it may be impartially considered, how it is possible to reconcile reprobation with the following Scriptures: Genesis 3:17 and chapter 4:7; Deuteronomy 7:9, 12 and chapter 12: 26-28, and chapter 30: 15,

II Chronicles 15: 1, Ezra 9:12,14, Job 36: 5, Psalm 145:9, Proverb 1:23; Isaiah 65:2, Ezekiel 18:26, Matthew 7:26 and chapter 11:20, and chapter 12:41, and chapter 13: 11, 12, and chapter 22:8, and chapter 25. John 3:18 and chapter 5:44, Acts 8:20, Romans 1:20, II Thessalonians 2:10. In all which there is not one word that militates against the doctrine of reprobation; nor is any thing pointed at worthy of consideration. We know very well, nor is it contrary to this doctrine, that the curse came upon all men for sin; and that it is that which renders them unacceptable to God, and is the reason why at last they shall find none with Him, or Him favorable to them. There is a repentance that may be found in non-elect persons; instances of that kind do not at all weaken the doctrine. Matthew 8:11,12 proves it. The word any is not in the original text in Job 36:5. It is certain there are some whom God despises (Psalm 53:5 and 63:20). It is pity but he had transcribed two or three hundred more passages when his hand was in; even the whole books of Chronicles, and the book of Esther, that would have been as much to his purpose as those he has produced.

Secondly, Mr. Wesley proposes the following Scriptures which declare God's willingness that all should be saved, to be reconciled to the doctrine of reprobation: (Matthew 21:9, Mark 16:15; John 5:34; Acts 17:24, Romans 5:18 and chapter 10: 12, I Timothy 2:3,4, James 1:5, II Peter 3:9, and I John 4:14.) Some of which do not respect eternal salvation at all, but the temporal salvation of the Jews; and others have nothing to do with salvation in either sense; some speak only of God's will to save His elect, to whom He is long-suffering; and others of His will, that Gentiles as well as Jews, should be saved; and that it is His pleasure that some of all sorts should be saved by Christ; neither of which militate against the doctrine of reprobation.

Thirdly, He thinks this doctrine is irreconcilable with the following Scriptures, which declare that Christ came to save all men; that He died for all; that He atoned for all, even for those that finally perish! (Matthews 17:11, John 1:29, and chapter 3:17, and chapter 12:47, Romans 14:15, I Corinthians 8:11, II Corinthians 5:14, I Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 2:9, II Peter 2:1, and I John 2:1,2.) But these Scriptures say not that Christ came to save all that are lost; or that He came to save all men, or died for all men, for all the individuals of human nature; there is not one text of Scripture in the whole Bible that says this: that which seems most like it, is Hebrews 2:9, "That He might taste death for every man; " but the word "man" is not in the original text; it is only (Greek for) "for every one;" for every one of the sons of God, of the children, of the brethren of Christ, and seed of Abraham in a spiritual sense, as the context determines it. As for the above-cited passages,

they regard either the world of God's elect; or the Gentiles, as distinguished from the Jews; or all sorts of men ["all" is an indefinite pronoun]; but not all the individuals of mankind: and those who are represented as such that should perish, or in danger of it, are either such who only professed to be bought by Christ; or real Christians whose peace and comfort were in danger of being destroyed, but not their persons; and none of the passages militate against the doctrine of reprobation.

Fourthly, This doctrine is represented as contrary to, and irreconcilable with the justice of God, and with those Scriptures that declare it, particularly Ezekiel 18. This chapter in Ezekiel concerns the people of the Jews only, and not all mankind; and regards only the providential dealing of God with them, with respect to civil and temporal things, a vindication of them from inequality and injustice; and not spiritual and eternal things: or the salvation and damnation of men; and therefore is impertinently produced by Mr. Wesley. If any one does but seriously and impartially consider the doctrine as above stated, they will see no reason to charge God with injustice, or find any difficulty in reconciling it to His justice.

In the first branch of this decree, called preterition, let the objects be creatures fallen or unfallen, it puts nothing into them; it leaves them as it finds them; and therefore does them no injustice: in the other branch of the decree, appointment to condemnation, this is only but for sin; "is there unrighteousness with God" on that account? No surely not; if it is not injustice in Him to condemn men for sin, it certainly can be no injustice in Him to decree to condemn them for sin: and if it would have been no unrighteousness in Him to have condemned all men for sin, and to have determined to have done it, as He doubtless might; it can be no ways contrary to His justice to condemn some men for, and to determine so to do; wherefore all that is said under this head is all harangue, mere noise, and stands for nothing. Let the above argument be disproved if it can.

Fifthly, This doctrine of reprobation is represented as contrary to the general judgment; and that upon this scheme there can be no judgment to come, nor any future state of reward and punishment: but why so? How does this appear? Why, according to our views, "God of old ordained them to this condemnation: " (Jude 4) but then it was for sin; and if for sin, how does this preclude, a future judgment? It rather makes one necessary; and certain it is, that a future judgment is agreeable to it, and quite inevitable by it; God decrees to condemn men for sin; men sin, are brought to the judgment-seat of God, and are justly condemned for it. The judgment of God takes place, and

the just reward of punishment pursuant to the righteous purpose of God, and according to the rules of justice. But Mr. Wesley has the assurance to affirm, that we say, that "God sold men to work "wickedness, even from their mother's womb; and "gave them up to a reprobate mind, or ever they "hung upon their mother's breasts." This is entirely false. We say no such thing. We say, with the Scripture, that men "sell themselves to work wickedness" as they grow up; and that God gives men up to a reprobate mind after a long train and course of sinning; and it must be a righteous thing with God to bring such persons to judgment, and condemn them for their wickedness. [Note: This viewpoint is referred to as infralapsarianism. The viewpoint held to by Jonas Sikes is called supralapsarianism — for you that discern the difference — editor.] But then it is said they are condemned "for not having that grace which God hath decreed they never should have." This is false again; we say no such thing; nor does the doctrine we hold oblige us to it; we say, indeed, that the grace of God is His own; and whether it is the sense of the text in Matthew or no, it matters not, it is a certain truth He "may do what he will with His own" grace: we own that He has determined to give it to some and not to others, as we find in fact He does. It is self evident all around us. But then we say, He will condemn no man for want of this grace He does not think fit to give them; or for their not believing that Christ died for them; but for their sins and transgressions of His righteous law. And is not here enough to open the righteous judgment and proceed upon? Besides, the sovereign decrees of God respecting the final state of men, are so far from rendering the future judgment unnecessary, that that will proceed according to them, along with other things: for with other books that will be opened then, the book of life will be one, in which some men's names are written, and others are not; "and the dead" will be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. — And whosoever is not found written in the book of life," shall "be cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12,15). "I never knew you, depart from Me" (Matthew 7:23).

Sixth, The doctrine is said to agree very ill with the truth and sincerity of God, in a thousand declarations, such as these: Ezekiel 18:23, chapter 32: 32, Deuteronomy 5: 29, Psalm 81: 12, Acts 17: 30, Mark 16: 15. To which I reply, that some of those declarations, concern the Jews only, and not all mankind; and are only compassionate enquiries and vehement desires after their civil and temporal welfare: and at most only shew what is grateful to God, and approved of by Him, and what was wanting in them; with which they are upbraided, notwithstanding their vain boasts to the contrary. Others only shew what is God's will of command, or what He has made the duty of man; not what are His purposes man shall do, or what He will bestow upon

him; and neither of them suggests any insincerity in God, supposing the doctrine of reprobation. The gospel is indeed ordered to be preached to "every creature" to whom it is sent and comes; but as yet, it has never been brought to all the individuals of human nature; there have been multitudes in all ages that have not heard it. And that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men I utterly deny; nay, I deny they are made to any; no, not to God's elect; grace and salvation are provided for them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them in Christ, published and revealed in the gospel, and applied by the Spirit; much less are they made to others; wherefore this doctrine is not chargeable with insincerity on that account. Let the patrons of universal offers defend themselves from this objection; I have nothing to do with it; till it is proved there are such universal offers in the Bible, then Dr. Watts's reasoning on that head, will require some attention; but not till then.

Seventhly, Mr. Wesley said that the doctrine of election and reprobation least of all agree with the Scriptural account of the love and goodness of God, Predestination, page 35. The doctrine of election surely can never disagree with the love and goodness of God; since His choosing men to salvation is the fruit and effect of His everlasting love and free grace; the reason why any are chosen is, because they are loved of God; election pre-supposes love: this the Apostle points out clearly to us, when he says, "we are bound to give thanks always to God, for you brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God bath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," (II Thessalonians 2:13). And the goodness of God greatly appears in consequence of this decree in the redemption of the chosen ones by Christ, in the regeneration and sanctification of them by the Spirit, and in bringing them at last to eternal glory and happiness according to His original design. But it may be, it is the doctrine of reprobation only, although both are joined together by Mr. Wesley, that so ill agrees with the love and goodness of God. It is not inconsistent with His providential goodness; in which sense "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works; " and notwithstanding this decree, all men have a large share of this goodness of God; and though they may abuse this goodness, which will be an aggravation of their condemnation; this is their own sin and fault, and not to be charged on the decree of God, as this writer falsely does; who says, that God, according to us, gives men this world's goods on purpose to enhance their damnation; and every one of their comforts is, by an eternal decree of God, to cost them a thousand pangs in hell; whereas the abuse of mercies given, which will enhance their damnation, flows not from the decree, but from their own wickedness. The special mercy and goodness of God is

denied to such indeed, which is at His sovereign will to give to whom He pleases; who "will have mercy on whom" He "will have mercy" (Romans 9:18, and Exodus 34: 6-7), the act of election is an act of God's love, and flows from it; reprobation indeed flows from His hatred, which is an appointment to wrath; but then it is from His hatred of sin, which is no ways contrary to His being a God of love and goodness: besides there is a much greater display of the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God in choosing some men to salvation and infallibly securing it unto them, and bringing them safely to the enjoyment of it, than in the contrary scheme: according to which not one man is absolutely chosen to salvation; salvation is not insured to any one single person; it is left to the precarious and fickle will of man: and it is possible, according to that scheme, that not one man may be certainly saved; nay, it is impossible that any one man should be saved by the power of his own supposed free-will. Let it be judged then, which scheme is most merciful and kind to men, and most worthy of the God of love and goodness. Upon the whole, the doctrine of reprobation, though set in so ill a light, and represented in such an odious manner, is a defensible doctrine when stated and cleared; nor are we afraid to own and maintain it.

This cloven foot does not affright us; so Mr. Wesley calls, as he thinks, beautifully, but most blasphemously, an act of the divine will; nor is this a "millstone that hangs about the neck of" our "hypothesis," as he no doubt very elegantly expresses it; but let me tell him, it will be His distinguishing mercy, if it is not a millstone about his own neck. From hence he wanders to free-will and resistible grace: sometimes he is for free-will, sometimes for free-grace; sometimes for resistible, and sometimes for irresistible grace. When he can agree with himself, he will appear in a better light, and may be more worthy of notice. What he says of free-will on the one side and reprobation on the other, as agreeing or disagreeing with the perfections of God, may be reduced to one or another of the above objections, where they have had their answer.

It is scarcely worth my while to observe what he says of the covenant of grace; which he owns he has no understanding of; and I believe him, for he says, "God the Father made a covenant with His Son before the world began, wherein the Son agreed to suffer such and such things; and the Father to give Him such and such souls for a recompense, in consequence of which these must be saved " And then Mr. Wesley asks where it is written? And in what part of Scripture this covenant is to be found?

Now not to inform or instruct Mr. Wesley, but for the sake of such who are

willing to be informed and instructed, read Psalm 40:6-8; Isaiah 49:1-6 and chapter 53:10-12; Psalm 89:3, 4, 28, 36; in which will appear plain traces and footsteps of a covenant, or agreement, of a stipulation and re-stipulation, between the Father and the Son; in which the Father proposes a work to His Son, and calls Him to it, even the full redemption of His people; to which the Son agrees, and says, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O my God! " and for a recompense of His being an offering for sin, and pouring out His soul unto death; it is promised He should "see His seed and prolong His days," and have a portion divided Him with the great, and a spoil with the strong. That there was such a covenant subsisting before the world began is clear; for could there be a Mediator set up from everlasting, as there was, and a promise of life before the world began made to Christ and put into His hand, and all spiritual blessings provided, and all grace given to His people in Him, before the foundation of the world; and yet no covenant in being? See Proverb 8:23; Titus 1:2; II Timothy 1:9; and Ephesians 1:3.

The covenant of circumcision made with Abraham, and that made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai, are no instances of the covenant of grace; but are covenants that are "waxen old, and vanished away; " and do not concern us today who are not under the law, but under grace; but however these covenants were conditional to the Jews that were under them; the covenant of grace is absolute and unconditional to us, being made with Christ our Head, who has fulfilled all the conditions of it.

**Finis**

**PARTICULAR ELECTION AND FINAL PERSEVERANCE by  
Isaac Backus, 1789**

[John Wesley wrote a stunning attack against Augustus Toplady and the doctrine of election and predestination, and the doctrine held by the supralapsarian Calvinists. Toplady, John Gill, and Issac Backus answered his heretical blasphemy. This is Backus' reply,]

Controversy is generally complained of and peace is earnestly sought, but often in a way that denies to all others the liberties we claim for ourselves. The revealed will of God is the only perfect law of liberty, but how little is it believed and obeyed by mankind. Both the Hebrew and Christian churches were to be wholly governed by it, and when the first king of Israel presumed

to violate a plain command of God, and then thought to atone for it by acts of worship, he was guilty of rebellion, which is as the sin of witchcraft, (1 Sam. 15:23.) And in like way Mystery Babylon by her sorceries has deceived all nations, and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (Rev. 18: 23-24.) Yet these extensive terms are so limited by carnal reasoners that none of them, in any nation, will admit themselves to be of that bloody city. And at the same time they are for extending general words of grace beyond any limits and are ready to accuse us with making God deceitful if we hold that He did not design the merits of His Son equally for all mankind.

If we inquire then, why all are not saved, the general answer is that they would not receive that salvation, or if they did for awhile, and then turned away from it, God rejects and destroys them for it. We readily grant that God always rewards the righteous and never destroys any for anything but sin and iniquity, but this cannot content many without we will allow that grace has put power into the wilts of all mankind to become righteous and to obtain salvation when they shall be pleased to set about it in earnest. The fruit of which is that men neglect the great salvation because they love darkness rather than light. "Yea, everyone that doeth evil hateth the light." (Heb. 2:3; John 3:19,20.) And when any are brought to obey the truth and so come to the light, every art is made use of to get them into darkness again if possible!

This has been remarkably the case in the southern parts of America. Many of their teachers were so dark as to swear profanely, drink to excess, and follow gaming and at the same time to preach up do and live, work and be blessed, to their people. But the light of the pure Gospel produced reformation among some of them about forty years ago (The Great Awakening period-ed.), and it has greatly increased since 1768, as I was well informed when I was called to travel and preach in Virginia and North Carolina last winter. But after this reformation had spread extensively, the followers of Mr. John Wesley introduced his writings against particular election and final perseverance and thereby greatly obstructed the work of truth. I was therefore requested to publish a brief answer thereto. His first piece on that subject was published above fifty years ago under the title of free grace, and it was closed with a hymn called "Universal Redemption," and therein Mr. Wesley says:

"Thine eye surveyed the fallen race,  
When sunk in sin they lay,  
Their misery called for all thy grace,  
But justice stopped the way.

Mercy the fatal bar removed,  
Thy only son it gave,  
To save a world so dearly loved,  
A sinful world to save.  
For every man he tasted death,  
He suffered once for all,  
He calls as many souls as breathe,  
And all may hear the call.  
A power to choose, a will t' obey,  
Freely his grace restores;  
We all may find the living way,  
And call the savior ours."

He denied that man had any natural liberty of will left after the fall until it was restored by grace [A few now held by most Conditional Primitive Baptists - Ed.]. This he more explicitly did in a pamphlet on Predestination, Election., and Reprobation published in 1776; and said upon it, "We believe, that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left; but that God, when of His own free grace He gave the promise of a Savior to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation." (page 16.) But if the fall took all natural liberty of choice from man until grace restored it, then the fall released him from the authority of the law of God as it was first given to him, and he never has been under it since, but by grace. The beasts are not under that law because they never had the powers of thinking and choice as rational creatures have, and if men are not under the law, what are they better than beasts? Yea, do they not corrupt themselves more than brute beasts that know and obey their owners? (Jude 10, Isa. 1:2-4.) And if all freedom of the will is from grace, then it is only by grace that any have the will or power to sin against God, as none can sin against Him who have no natural liberty of will! This opinion of Mr. Wesley's is most plainly confuted by the case of the fallen angels who never had any grace revealed to them. Yet the Devil sinneth from the beginning, and all willful sinners are "children of the devil" in opposition to all those who are "born of God" (John 3:8, 10.) In the same book Mr Wesley says : "1. God's love was the cause of his sending His son to die for sinners. 2. Christ's dying for sinners is the cause of the gospel's being preached. 3. The preaching of the gospel is the cause, or means, of our believing. 4. Our believing is the cause or condition of our justification. 5. The knowing ourselves justified through his blood is the cause of our love of Christ. 6. Our love to Christ is the cause of our obedience to Him. 7. Our obedience to Christ is the cause of His becoming the author of eternal salvation to us. Page

8.

And is not this going about to establish our own righteousness? For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, saying, "That the man who doth those things, shall live by them." This is a "zeal of God but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2-5). Mr. Wesley goes on to say: "I shall now briefly show the dreadful absurdities that follow from saying "Christ died only for the elect." He said, "If Christ died not for all, then unbelief is no sin in them that finally perish, seeing there is not anything for those men to believe unto salvation for whom Christ died not. 2. If Christ died not for all men, then it would be a sin in the greatest part of mankind to believe He died for them, seeing it would be to believe a lie. 3. If Christ died not for those that are damned, then they are not damned for unbelief, otherwise you say, that they are damned for not believing a lie.

[Publisher's comment: We agree with his argument in numbers 1, 2, and 3, for we ourselves do not believe it is required of the reprobate children of the Devil to believe Christ died for them, or to believe unto salvation, which they can't. We believe they are required only to believe what God has commanded them to believe, even in His eternal power and Godhead. Reprobates were not chosen in Him, are not now in Him, have never been in Him from the beginning of the foundation of the world, as the elect have been, and they shall never be in Him. Natural suasion or nominal belief will not put them in Him.]

4. If Christ died not for all, then those who obey Christ by going and preaching the gospel to every creature as glad tidings of grace and peace, of great joy to all people, do sin thereby; in that they go to most people with a lie in their mouth. [ Note: This is true of all Arminians and Pelagians, for they preach that He died for all, when in fact He died for His sheep only,]

5. If Christ died not for all men, then God is not in earnest in calling all men everywhere to repent, for what good could repentance do those for whom Christ died not? 6. If Christ died not for all, then why does He say, He is not willing that any should perish? Surely He is willing, yea, resolved that most men should perish, else He would have died for them also. 7. How shall God judge the world by the man Christ Jesus, if Christ did not die for the world or how shall He judge them according to the gospel when there was never any gospel or mercy for them? ( Page 4.) –John Wesley's Quote closed.

ANSWER by Backus: If Christ died with a design to save all men, why are

not all saved? Can the Devil cheat Him of a great part of His purchase? Or, can men defeat His merciful designs? No, say many, He died for all, and He will finally save all (Universalists, or Socinians.)

Others go farther and conclude that a God of infinite goodness could not give existence to any creature that shall be miserable without end, but that He will finally deliver every child of Adam from hell (Hell Redemptionists), though many of them will be tormented therein for ages of ages. But how is their deceit here discovered? Fallen angels were as really the creatures of God as fallen men, yet no salvation was ever revealed for them, but they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness" unto the judgment of the great day. And this is a clear evidence against ungodly men who "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." (Jude 4, 6.) God was so far from ever proclaiming atonement to all men without exception, that He said, "The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord and that soul shall be cut off from among His people." And for such presumption, Korah and his company perished most terribly (Num. 15:30; 16: 1-3; 3134.) For if the inability of men, as the scripture testify, or if as debtors and criminals could release them from the authority of the laws, until rulers would give them power to bring the government to their own terms, how would all dominion be despised! These "filthy dreamers" have now filled the world with Babylonian confusion. (Jude 8.) The Jews called it heresy in Paul to believe in and obey Jesus as a lawgiver above Moses. (Acts 24:14.) And this is the first place where the word heresy is used in the Bible, and if we observe what is said in the last chapter in it of every man who shall add to or take from its words, we must conclude that all men who do so and violently impose their inventions upon others are guilty of heresy?

The head of the church of Rome assumed God's place in that assembly, and exalted himself above God, who never could violate His promise or His oath or entice any into sin, and how justly are all those given up to strong delusion who practice either of these evils? (2 Thess. 2: 3-12; Heb. 6:18; James 1: 13-15.) And how happy should we soon be if these iniquities were excluded from our land.

True believers are so far from presuming upon the secret designs of God that when the same are revealed, they dare not make His designs, but His laws, the rule of their conduct. Though His design of removing Saul and making David king over Israel was clearly revealed, yet David refused to kill Saul when greatly provoked thereto because he had no direction to do it. Neither did David assume regal power over Israel until each tribe freely received him

as their king by a solemn covenant. But the envious Jews no sooner had it declared to them that Jesus was to die for that nation than from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death. (John 11:53.) Hereby we may see the plain difference between true believers and reprobate believers. "For unto the pure all things are pure, but unto the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. " (Titus 1: 15,16.) In this way, teachers who turn grace into lasciviousness deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4.) But many are deceived by them because in words they profess to know Him. Since Christ was exalted to the right hand of the Father, His only priests upon earth are the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. These are the chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praise of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Pet. 1:2, 23; and 2:5,9.)

But Mr. Wesley, in his piece on predestination, election, and reprobation, says:

"They were chosen through belief of the truth and called to believe it by the Gospel; therefore they were not chosen before they believed, much less before they had a being." (Page 5.) And in his sermon from Romans 8:29, 30, he says: "God looking on all ages from the creation to the consummation as a moment and seeing at once whatever is in the hearts of all the children of men knows every one that does or does not believe in every age or nation. Yet what He knows, whether faith or unbelief, is no wise caused by His foreknowledge. Men are as free in believing or not in believing, as if He did not know it at all." (Page 6.)

I readily grant that His knowledge does not cause any sin, which is altogether in and of the creature. The angels who fell kept not the first estate but left their own habitation. (Jude 6.) And those who stood were elect angels. (1 Tim. 5:21.) And sin came into human nature by violating a known command. And Adam was a figure of Jesus Christ, and therefore death reigned over all his posterity, many of whom never committed any actual transgressions as he did. And the word "as" so often used in this affair, cannot be true in any sense if both Adam and Christ were not heads and representatives of all the seed of each. It is certain that Adam was not a figure of Christ, as he

conveyed death and ruin to his posterity by a just sentence of law; for Christ conveys life and salvation to souls by a free gift of grace. Neither could Adam be a figure of Christ in the great things that he did by one offence, "for Christ atoned for many offences; therefore where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:12-21.) I say the word "as" cannot be true in all these places unless those two men acted for all their seed. Many would have it, that this word cannot be true unless Christ atoned for as many as fell in Adam, but certain death came upon all Adam's race while multitudes hold that salvation by Christ is uncertain and depends upon the natural wills of individuals. In this view they would make Christ vastly inferior to Adam whose doings were efficacious, and the doings of Christ exceeding precarious, upon their plan. And they who hold that Christ will finally save all the race of Adam from hell, yet imagine that the creature's sufferings must save them and not the efficacy of the death and grace of Christ; or if they hold that He will save all from future sufferings, they hold also that He has now saved them from the authority of the law of God, which Adam never did. By the sentence of it every child of Adam returns to the dust, the righteous as well as the wicked, so that if the doings of Christ are not efficacious for the final salvation of His seed, it cannot truly be said that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

## **THE SOVEREIGN DECREES OF GOD**

**By**

**Isaac Backus, 1773**

**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 own selves and makes the Scripture-wish, that all men might be saved, no less than a rebellion against God." -End quotation.

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 beasts 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 teacher 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" (John 3:21); 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 savages) he tries to keep himself and his own principles hid. Though it fares with him as it did with the old enemies of the sure foundation that 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 (Isaiah 28). For though by the title of his piece he would have people esteem him as a bold champion against tradition and a friend of 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 portion of 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 either 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 (Deuteronomy 16:19); 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" (Isaiah 28:15). And in the controversy before us we may take notice of the following refuge of lies that the enemies sovereign grace try to hide themselves in.

First, 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 imaginary 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

legal rules, and for judges to assume a discretionary power to dispense with old laws or to make NEW ONES as occasion serve 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 that 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 "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will" (Hebrews 2:4) and woe to that man who presumes either to add to, or take from, those holy oracles.

Second: The advocates for their own "free will" in opposition to sovereign grace have determined that the doctrine of eternal fixed decrees in the Divine Mind concerning the future state of men, is consistent with the "liberty" of their own wills, and with 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 even touched the point in debate! We know, and as firmly 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" (Matthew 16:27). 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 throughout the universe has not been known and Am' in His counsel from the beginning, so that "nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it" (Ecclesiastes 3:14), Or, whether many events are not held in suspense and uncertainty in His infinite Mind, till they are decided by "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 that are

appointed to pull down the strongholds that are raised against the knowledge of God, and to cast down the imaginations which keep men's thoughts too high to yield their all to a meek and lowly Jesus (II Corinthians 10: 4,5). Many in latter ages have carried their imaginations so high on this subject as to:

Third. To assume a dignity to themselves that they will not allow in the Eternal God, for they claim for themselves a self-determining power in their supposed free wills while they deny it to the Most High God, 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 plainly 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 and sound reasoning than these are? "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matthew 11:25-27); "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8: 29,30); "According as He bath 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" (Ephesians 1: 4,5); "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (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 of their own will, 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 beasts 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 cloth 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 doest Thou? " (Daniel 4:35). Thus it happens that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turned it whithersoever He will" (Proverb 21:1), and if so of kings, or absolute monarchs, how much more of lesser men than kings? That is, while the king acts voluntarily as he designs yet only as God designed to have them to do. From hence it appears evident that there is no inconsistency in holding God's decrees to be immutable, 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 that "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, which proves the will of man is not "free." Do not men often do the same to other men as well? Though Balaam was so madly set after the "wages of unrighteousness" that he would not be turned ever by the reproof of a dumb ass, yet when the Lord opened his eyes to see the angel with a drawn sword before him, he at once choose to fall to the earth or to turn back rather than run upon it! (Numbers 22:31). In order therefore to keep up their conceit and delusion that eternally fixed decrees interfere with men's liberty, some of their greatest "doctors" have:

Fourth. 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 their 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 became fools," for as Mr. John 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 imaginations and thoughts always move men to act wickedly, "But unto Cain and his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" and "Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew

him" (Genesis 4: 5,8). But when any are brought to know the truth it makes them free, free from sin's dominion, so as to become "servants of righteousness" (John 8:31, & Romans 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 notion of "being as gods" still conceits that he has a "power of will 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, whenever 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 worshiping a deity that can possibly be mistaken or disappointed in any one event, than I have of worshiping Baal, who could not defend either his altar or grove when his votaries were asleep (Judges 6:31).

Those who are determined to believe nothing but what they can comprehend, are determined to be idolaters, for 'Us certain that anything that 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 a thinks; to whom be glory forever, amen" (Romans 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 or 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 fire, to teach us the importance of receiving His grace as "free gifts", of acting towards Him uprightly, and serving of Him with "reference and Godly fear" (Psalm 84:11; & Hebrews 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 [Signer of the Declaration of Independence- Ed], 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 (see Genesis 49:10 with 38: 15-29, with Matthew 1:3). It was their lusts that caused the defect or

want of its being lawfully (before men) begotten. Yet the child is God's creature, and if He pleases He makes it a subject of His grace, as with any other child. 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 reasoners try to persuade people that to hold to absolute predestination, that every event to be certain in the Divine counsel 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 actions 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, (Psalm 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 motives; when they first saw Joseph coming to them, they felt so that they thought they would slay the dreamer. 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 — so they sold him instead, fulfilling the very dreams that were told to them and for which cause they hated him. 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 in 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" (Psalm 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 more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25), 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" (Isaiah 30: 8-11; Zechariah 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;

that God will never command a man to do what he cannot do. To them, this is contrary to their natural reason. 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 (Matthew 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).

It is a most wicked device in the writer of the paper now in hand, to use the word inevitable concerning reprobates and irresistible, concerning the elect in such a manner as to exclude the idea of their own wicked choice; whereas the vessels of wrath say, "We will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart" (Jeremiah 18:12) and of such the Lord said, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:20). The vessels of mercy pursue the same ways till God works in them "to will and to do of His good pleasure," "working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 13:21). Therefore though the final event is as certain to the one as the other, yet in 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 longsuffering 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" (Romans 2:5 and 9:22-24). And renewed souls are so far from assuming to themselves a free will power to be God's counselors or venturing to act upon those "secret things which belong to God" (Deuteronomy 29:29), 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 great difference between subjects and rebels is discovered by this. As, for instance, God let David know that He designed to remove Saul and make David 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 Samuel 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). That is quite a difference between the two! And God's accomplishing His infallible decrees in that great event, while the Jews were inexcusably guilty – "ye by wicked hands has seized and slain" – in their actions about it, are strongly asserted by the inspired apostle. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, YE have taken, and by WICKED HANDS have

crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

They acted most wickedly in conspiring against the Savior who was perfectly holy and harmless and constantly went about doing good. Yet God's purpose 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: 37,38), "and that on the selfsame day" God told Abraham of above four-hundred years before (Exodus 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 (Isaiah 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 (Acts 27:24), 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 an event, and yet it is expressed conditionally, while both were true! It was true that all should be saved, and they were; and it was also 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 Scriptural 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.

## **EXPOSITION OF THE CONFESSION**

### **Chapter 3, "Of God's Decree"**

**By Abel Morgan 1775**

The Association of elders and brethren of the several Baptist churches in Pennsylvania, and the colonies adjacent, held at Philadelphia, October 10th, 11th, and 12th, 1775,

To the several churches we are in connection with, send our Christian salutation.

Beloved Brethren – In the primitive times, when people were converted by the ministry of the gospel, and united together in church relation and fellowship, it was the practice of the Apostles to establish them in the truths which they had believed and professed (Acts 15:41) for their edification and comfort (Acts 9:31). We now, according to our measure, would endeavor to follow this worthy pattern, for the like excellent design.

The subject, which next in order comes to be considered, is the doctrine of God's Decree (Confession of Faith, Chapter 3.) Where on we observe:

First, That God, the Supreme, who is self-existent, and in every way an independent Sovereign, the Creator of all things, hath an absolute right to dispose of all His creatures as seems good to Him; and before His works of old, to appoint and determine ALL THINGS to a certain end. This article of our belief, both Scripture and reason do jointly and sufficiently confirm (Isaiah 46:10; Psalm 33:11; and Proverbs 19:21).

Second. The rule of His fore-appointment of all things, of what shall come to pass in time, is the wise counsel of His most holy will and good pleasure (Ephesians 1:11).

Third. In accomplishing His eternal purpose, no violence is offered to the will of the creature, either good (Psalm 110:3), or bad (James 1:13-14); nor the use of means taken away (Ezekiel 36:37); neither is God, in anywise, the author of sin, though He decreed to permit it to be in His determinate counsel (Acts 14:16; Genesis 14:5; Acts 2:23).

Fourth. The special objects of God's Decree are angels and men.

Fifth. When all the human race, by the sin of the first man, were involved in guilt (Romans 5:12), and fallen under condemnation, and all become the

children of wrath; it would manifestly be doing them no injustice, if they were, to every individual, left in that state, and eventually punished for their many sins. This would have been their proper desert, their just reward. But God, out of His mere free grace and love, without any moving cause in the parties chosen, hath predestinated some unto life, through a Mediator (Ephesians 1:4; Romans 11:5-6), (without any wrong done to others) together with all the means subservient to this end, that is, their redemption by the blood of Christ, and the renovation by the Spirit of holiness, to the "praise of His glorious grace; " the others left to act in sin, to their final destruction, to the glory of divine justice (Romans 9:22-23).

The bounds of a letter will not permit us to enter on the discussion of the several objections carnal men raise against the determinate counsel of God over all things, and to remove out of the way the many cavils that are raised by men of different principles, in opposition to this Scripture doctrine; that has been repeatedly well done heretofore by others; but only add a word, with a view to relieve and support those distressed souls, whoever and wherever they are, while they acknowledge this awesome truth, but at the same time are greatly exercised about their interest therein; frequently raising objections against themselves, fearing they are not of the elect of God: and, should this be the case, they infer, that all their endeavors must be in vain, their acts of worship unacceptable. The consolations and promises of the gospel are proposed to them to little purpose. Their souls refuse to be comforted. Their hope flags, their expectations fails; they are greatly disheartened; yea, the very duties of religion become to them difficult, and oftentimes burthensome; briefly, they are ready to halt, and to sink down in the gulf of despair, believing the Decree of God to be immutable, which it is, but against themselves, which it is not, if they be sensible sinners.

So this solemn and grand truth, instead of administering joy to their souls, and exciting in them adoration and praise to God, becomes to them an occasion of tenor, discouragement, and great depression of spirit. The topics, whence they generally derive these gloomy apprehensions are such as follows, viz., the gross darkness of mind under which they are shut up; no signs of election; extreme ignorance of God and of Christ; finds no returns of prayer; so full of sin; manifold afflictions; cannot act faith; backslidings, unprofitableness, heart rising against God, and such like.

To remove these difficulties in ascertaining their election of God and place in God's good determinate counsel:

First, Let the parties consider that there may be very great and just reasons for the ground of these complaints, which without calling into question their election of God. They may be designs for them to "examine themselves to see if they are in the election of grace," and to "make their calling and election sure. " (II Peter 1:10).

Second, Let them seriously observe the frame and temper of their soul under all or any of these defects, whether a sense of their case excites in them more humiliation and sorrow for sin (Psalm 38:17-18), and more vehement cries and ardent wishes for seasonable help (Psalm 38: 4,5,21,22), a desire to be more spiritual minded, and have "the mind of Christ." If so, the evidence is in their favor, for such is not afforded the wicked that know not God.

Third, Let such know and learn, that the way for their relief is not by laboring to pry into the secret purpose of God, or in their thoughts to dwell upon it to their own discouragement, but abide by, and cleave to, His revealed will, which directs all indigent ones to Christ the Mediator for supply, and to the use of those means prescribed for the satisfaction and peace of laboring souls. The whole counsel of God includes one making his "calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10) that his praise might be to God, and his confidence in himself destroyed. In so doing shall the fearful be able to look back, and know their election before time in God's determinate counsel, and forward, and view their salvation to come as a certainty, when time shall be no more. This glorious truth is not, therefore, designed to deter troubled souls from coming to Jesus Christ. It shows the absolute sovereignty of God's eternal will in the salvation of sinners, and soul-trouble is a good evidence of one's need for salvation.

Fourth. It directly tends to administer support to the laboring soul, when we find those very springs of complaint, doubts, and fears, from which they argue to their disadvantage, are no other than what the Scripture declares to have been the case with every elect of God; for instance, these complain of darkness, so did they, "Why hidest Thou Thyself?" (Psalm 10:1. Job emphatically, in 23:8,9, also Isaiah 1:10). Do these sorrowful ones lack tokens of their election? Certainly they do. But hath not God in special mercy hedged up their way, to keep them from sin, and made it bitter to their souls? (Hosea 2:6,7 and Lain. 3:19,20). Do they not find themselves thirsting after Christ? (Psalm 42:1-3). Do they not groan earnestly, and are burdened, because of their depravity, &c.? (II Corinthians 5:2). These are given as encouraging tokens, and are the very characters of the elect; who also in their day bewailed their ignorance of God. (Proverbs 30:2,3). So why so

discouraged with God's determinate counsel over all things, if such includes the tokens of your own hope in Christ and His salvation? The exhortation "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ," intimates their deficiency therein, and what the remedy is for longing souls. How pathetically did they expostulate with God about His deferring to answer their prayers: "Will the Lord cast off forever? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" (Psalm 78:3-7). "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear?" (Habakkuk 1:2). How feelingly did they acknowledge themselves full of sin; "Mine iniquities are gone over my head," said David (Psalm 38:38). Or as Paul, "Wretched man that I am" (Romans 7:18,24). Do these saints fear because they cannot put forth acts of faith? Consider the case of the godly; "I am shut up, and I cannot come forth" (Psalm 88:8). In God's determinate counsel over all things, it is evident that Christ would have men to know their own insufficiency, (John 15:5 and 6:44); who Himself is the author and finisher of faith. Hence, "Draw me." (Song 1:4). Sore afflictions are ordained the very portion of the dear chosen ones in the world, to "bring many sons unto glory" (Psalm 78:10,14; 34:19; I Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:6-8). Let these languishing souls hear the gracious word of promise to backsliders (Hosea 14:4). Christ teaches all the elect to esteem themselves unprofitable (Luke 17:10). Do these perplexed ones lack faith because they find in themselves heart-risings against God? "Lord, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). This indeed is very alarming and dreadful in its consequences; but there is on sacred record an instance of this sad case, in one that was undoubtedly a chosen vessel, an elect of God (Jonah 4:3, 4, 9), whose heart not only rose up against God, but also in his reply vindicated himself therein, "I do well to be angry," said he. This is probably by far a higher degree than any of these dejected ones are got to. Hence we observe, that not one distressed soul hath ground to argue against himself from any of the above-mentioned cases, or the like, that he is passed by, and, without hope, left to perish in his sins. None can conclude his preterition but from final impenitence, and the sin against the Holy Ghost, which none of God's dear children will ever be allowed. From the former he cannot, because he is yet in this life; nor from the latter, because final impenitence is an inseparable ingredient of that sin.

Fifth. Guard against every device of Satan, who aims to prevent people profiting by the gospel of Jesus Christ, and would have them exclaim against God's eternal purpose in Him. (I Peter 5:8).

Sixth. Inasmuch as we are authorized to encourage the weak, the feeble, and fearful to be strong, (Isaiah 35:3,4) we therefore exhort and charge all those

into whose hands this may come by the good providence of God, who are, and have been sorely afflicted on the aforesaid account, that they would press forward in the ways of godliness, seek the Lord Jesus unfeignedly, pray without ceasing, and faint not, (Luke 18:1,7), endeavor for satisfactory experience of grace in their own souls; that hereafter they may rejoice in this, and every other truth of God, that God reigns sovereignly over sin, so that "all things work together for the good" of His people (Romans 8:28).

Lastly, We would earnestly caution all persons, on the other hand, who confidently conclude themselves to be the elect of God, to beware at all times of living a dissolute, vain, irreligious life, or giving themselves liberty to continue in sin, because election is unalterable; pleading or thinking they shall be saved, let them live and act as they will (This truth hath been thus horribly abused.) Such corrupt principles, wicked practices, and black characters, are inconsistent with the pure doctrines of the gospel. Remember that holiness becometh the house and people of the Lord forever, and is indispensably enjoined on every one that nameth the name of Christ (II Timothy 2:19; II Thess. 2:13; I Peter 1: 14,16). Let none of God's children speak or act in such a way as to deny the determinate counsel of God over all things, on the one hand, or imply that in some fashion He is the author of their hideous sins.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceedling joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Elder John Gano, Moderator  
Elder William Rogers, Clerk  
Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1775

**Finis**  
**The Absolute Predestination Of All Things**  
**By Gilbert Beebe**  
**1800-1881**

[Note: The following is a combination of four separate articles by Gilbert Beebe, editor of the SIGNS Of The Times paper from 1832-1880. The publisher has edited these in the following manner: They are joined together because they do not replicate thoughts contained in each separately, and by omitting the salutation or query at the beginning. He has separated the articles by placing the publication date at the end of each. It is appropriate to

note two things about Elder Beebe: He expressly and repeatedly denied that his views "made God the author of sin," which a fair reading by an enlightened mind can easily ascertain, and he did not use the word "permissive" relative to God's will. —Publisher]

On this important part of the doctrine of Christ, we wish to be well understood, as we consider it a fundamental part of the faith of the Gospel. In the absence of this doctrine we can have no confidence in the predictions of the Word of God. If the prophets spake and wrote of undetermined events, events concerning which the Holy One Himself had not made up His mind, they must have spoken and written with the utmost uncertainty. If it were possible to banish the doctrine of Predestination from the Holy Scriptures, we should not only lose thereby our interest in the ancient predictions of the Old Testament, but we should find it impossible to believe the testimony of the New. What consolation would the exceedingly great and precious promises of the Gospel afford us, if we had reason to believe that God had not yet determined whether they should ever be verified? Again, what confidence could we have in the veracity of God if it were certain that His promises were made without any determination on His part to perform them? Indeed there could be no certainty of a future state without the predestination of such a state. No heaven, no hell, no resurrection of the body, or final judgment. Thus we see to what an awful dilemma we should be driven without this doctrine.

Predestination is the pre-determination of all events that can possibly come to pass. It involves the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, and exhibits the wisdom and the power of God; the one presents the purpose, the other carries into execution the thing decreed.

Predestination is the result of the counsel of God's own will, originating with Himself alone. "With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him &c"(Isaiah 40:14). In the doctrine of Predestination all the Attributes of God shine forth, with dreadful majesty. The entire history of mankind is by Predestination established in the view of God, and the final destiny of all things are held in His Almighty hand.

"There's not a sparrow nor a worm,  
But's found in His decree;  
He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be."

We may consider this doctrine first in the economy of salvation, and then in

its more general bearings. First, God has chosen, or predestined, His people unto salvation, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thessalonians 2:13). Agreeable to His own sovereign pleasure as expressed in the above text, He has predestinated them "to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:5). He has predestinated them unto eternal life. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17:2). "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). He has predestined their calling, conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, their justification and glorification. "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:29-30). In short, every thing in relation to His people here and hereafter is so firmly established in the decree of God that no power can prevail against them. "He rideth upon the heavens in their help and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26, 27). "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?" (Numbers 23:23) "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30 & Luke 12:7).

Second, Predestination is not confined to the adorable purpose of Salvation by Grace; but it has a direct bearing on all things. Not a sparrow can be brought to the ground, nor can the troubled ocean dash her foaming waves one inch beyond the limits of God's decrees. "And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11).

If any thing was left upon uncertainties, every thing must have been equally uncertain. If the smallest atom in creation were suffered to fly at random in the full sense of the word, God Himself not knowing where, or when it would alight, it would prove what cannot be proved, viz: that God is deficient in knowledge. The omniscience, and the predestination of God, must stand or fall together; they cannot be separated. We are confident that both exist in glorious harmony in the mind of Him who has "declared the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10).

The doctrine of Absolute Predestination, when rightly understood, does NOT

involve the idea of man's acting involuntarily in sin; nor does it exonerate him from accountability; this may be discovered by noticing the following examples: The crucifixion of Christ, the abduction of Joseph, together with many other circumstances recorded in Holy Writ. "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27). "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, YE have taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain" (Acts, 2:23).

The brethren of Joseph had no knowledge of the purpose of God when they sold him to go down into Egypt, they meant it for evil, but God ordained it for good. When the Jews persecuted the disciples of our Lord Jesus into strange cities they knew not that God had ordained this very method of sending his "missionaries" [sic] everywhere preaching the Word. And amidst the abounding abominations of the present day, it is our consolation to know that God has ordained: "The wrath of man shall praise Him, the remainder of wrath Thou will restrain" (Psalm 75:10). We need only to understand this precious doctrine, and we shall most assuredly love it. The Christian exults in the thought that death and hell can do no more than what our Father pleases.

We might notice the objections commonly brought against this doctrine, but we shall wait until such objections are presented; and in the mean time earnestly request our brethren to examine the Word of God on this important subject. And that the God of all grace may give us light and wisdom from above, that in His light we may see light, is our prayer in Jesus' name, to whom be glory, power and dominion, now and forever, Amen.

### **February 6, 1833**

Our Standard Lexicon defines absolute to mean, in its literal, or general sense, free, independent of anything extraneous. 2. Complete in itself; positive, as an absolute declaration. 3. Unconditional, as an absolute promise. 4. Existing independent of another cause, as God is absolute. 5. Unlimited by extraneous power or control; as an absolute government or prince. 6. Not relative, as absolute space. (See Webster's definition). As this word is nowhere used in the Scriptures to qualify the word predestination, we will not contend for it, especially as the word predestination when rightly understood needs no such qualification, as it cannot be otherwise than absolute. We merely use the word absolute to distinguish our views of

predestination from those who, while they admit that the term is frequently used in the Scriptures; deny its plain and obvious meaning as though it were only vaguely used by the inspired writers without any positive or unequivocal meaning.

On the signification of the word predestination, it means foreordination by an unchangeable purpose. But the grand question on which we are principally at issue, is, whether the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men or devils. We have rejoiced greatly in the firm belief that God's government is universal, that there is not a sparrow or a worm, but is found in His decree. That sin, and death, and hell are under His control, so that "the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." If the Scriptures do not authorize us so to believe, we know not at what hour we may fall a prey to the unbridled rage of the enemies of God and of His people.

If the divine government of Jehovah only extends to the "good" conduct of His creatures, His government is much more limited in regard to this world, than we had supposed, for He has informed us that there is "none that doeth good; no not one." But that He has set limits to wicked men, we should infer from His declaration, "I have formed the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and bringeth forth an instrument for his work; I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 54:16,17). If God has created the blacksmith, and the waster, to destroy, and so limited their operations that they cannot go beyond His decree, and if this is a part of the heritage of His servants, they cannot yield it up without marring our inheritance. We confess that to us this part of the saints' inheritance is too valuable to be sold for a mess of pottage, as Esau's birthright. Paul has said, that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will;" and God has told us, by the mouth of Isaiah, that He has declared the end from the beginning, &c., "saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass, I have purposed it, I will also do it." How unmeaning would all this language be to us in the absence of predestination!

The end declared from the beginning, and yet not determined in the mind and purpose of God, how preposterous! We cannot believe that our God would declare a thing beforehand that He was undecided upon, and which might be

quite different from what He had declared; and if He has only declared what He had determined on, that is the most "absolute" predestination that we have any knowledge of. This predetermination of events extends throughout all the intervening space, from "the beginning to the end," and consequently embraces "all things." When wicked men conspired against the life and liberty of Joseph, and against the predestination of his and their own destiny, as signified by Joseph's dreams, they intended evil, "but God meant it for good." If God had not previously intended to harden Pharaoh's heart, He would not have told Moses that He would do so. If He had not predestinated that the children of Israel sojourn in a strange land, and be afflicted cruelly by the Egyptians four hundred years, He certainly would not have told Abraham so (Genesis 15: 12-16). Let it be remembered that God told Abram this long before either the children of Israel or the Egyptians, who were to be concerned in it, were born, and the things which the Egyptians were to do to the children of Israel were such, as God told Abram He would judge and punish them for.

The Son of God was delivered into the hands of wicked men, that they should, with wicked hands, do to Him what God's "hand and counsel had before determined to be done." He was, in fact, "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

Paul writes to the Thessalonians concerning the manifestation of that wicked people, whom the Lord would destroy, and says, "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, &c (II Thessalonians 2:11). God said by the mouth of Isaiah, that He would "choose their delusions" (Isaiah 66:4). This is solid Bible testimony, and it is what we intend to express by the words absolute predestination. And pray brother, what objections have you to it? Would you wish the right, the power, or the government of God to be circumscribed? Would you wish to restrict His government, and confine His dominion to "good people" and their "good works" and leave the powers of darkness to rage at random, without the restraint of God's predestinating decrees? Are you fearful that this view reflects upon the purity and holiness of God? But why these fears? Are not the inspired Scriptures sufficiently guarded to secure the honor of their supreme Author? If not, all our attempts to supply the supposed deficiency will be as vain, if not as presumptive, as Uzzah's attempt to protect the Ark of God. Because God controls, restrains, overrules and disposes of all beings, and all events, precisely as He eternally designed to do, it does not BY ANY MEANS FOLLOW THAT HE IS THE FOUNTAIN FROM WHENCE IMPURITY PROCEEDS. He is perfectly holy, just and good; but He has all power to set bounds and limits to that which is unholy, unjust, and wicked. If

it be admitted that God now has power to restrain the wickedness of men and devils, according to His sovereign pleasure, and that He is immutable, then it follows, that He always had that power. If it is denied that He has that power, where is the safety of His church? Or, if He has now a perfect knowledge of all beings and of all events, then He must always have had that knowledge. It certainly does not become us to say that either His wisdom, holiness, prescience or power, are at fault, that He has allowed His creatures to rebel against His government, when He had power and wisdom enough to have prevented it, if it had been His pleasure so to have done. We do not charge or brethren with attempting to limit Jehovah, or set bounds for Him to be governed by, but we would give and take the admonition, "Be still and know that He is God." If we cannot comprehend Him, it still is our privilege to confide in Him, for He is too wise to err, and too good to do that which is wrong.

We have no disposition to press our views on those who do not understand the Scriptures as we do on every subject. But we wish all our readers to understand that we do as firmly believe, and as greatly rejoice in the doctrine of Predestination, and its extension to everything in heaven, earth and hell, as we do in any other part of divine revelation.

**July 1, 1855.**

Predestination, as a highly esteemed writer in the Signs once remarked, does not require to be qualified by prefixing to it the word absolute, as the predestination of God must of necessity be absolute in every particular. Jehovah is an absolute God, and all that He purposes or performs must be absolute. There can be no fiction or anything merely nominal with Him. Predestination is destination beforehand, and as nothing can be beforehand, or subsequent with Him, the term as it is used in the Scriptures is used in reference to our finite state, as creatures of time; or rather as creatures of God, but for the present, in the time state of existence. God inhabits eternity, and all things are ever present with Him. The progression of time and development of events can add nothing to His stock of knowledge. We His creatures may and certainly do both live and learn. He has Himself called our attention to the fact that He "has declared the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." This declaration of the end from the beginning proves His prescience so conclusively, that but few are so hardened in Infidelity as to openly and in so many words, deny His foreknowledge of all events; for if He were deficient in knowledge He could not with unerring certainty declare the end from the beginning and

from ancient times, the things which are yet to transpire. But there are those who, while they admit what is called the foreknowledge of God, deny that His knowledge is based upon His own purpose and determinate counsel. They urge the following objections to predestination.

It, they say, is fatalism, it destroys man's free-agency, and his accountability, and makes God the author of sin; and some there are who go still farther and say if the doctrine of predestination be true, God in predestinating the events in time, etc., has transcended His right and therefore is unjust. Our friends, we think, will agree with us, that it very illy becomes poor sinful dying mortals thus irreverently, not to say blasphemously, to question the eternal right of God to do what seems to Him good, "in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," or to set up their own standards of justice and denounce their Creator if He does not abide by their decisions. Let all such first meet the searching interrogative of the inspired Apostle, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, to form one a vessel of honor" etc.? The holy prophet of Jehovah, by inspiration, has informed us that God is the potter, and we are the clay. Hence we must acknowledge His eternal right to dispose of all things, all events, and of all worlds according to His own pleasure. Let this be admitted and all murmuring against His predestination will cease.

It is not our purpose to meet the objections urged by men to the doctrine of divine revelation, and by logical argument to put them to silence; nor do we design to attempt to make the doctrine palatable to the natural mind of man which "is enmity against God," for all such attempts are without the least prospects of success. The enmity of the carnal mind is fully demonstrated in the objections which they bring, but we design rather to search out and call attention of our friends to what God has revealed in the Scriptures on the subject, and this we will do, if God permit, whether men will hear, or whether they forbear.

The term predestination, as we have intimated, has reference to the order and succession of events in time, by which the eternal designs of God are brought to pass. And, so far as God's providence is concerned in bringing His designs to pass, predestination simply signifies that God had purposed, decreed, ordained, or destined the accomplishment of those things before they were, in order of time brought to pass. Hence to us, it is pre-destination, with God it is destination, because His infinity connects and comprehends the end with the beginning, for He is Himself the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending.

## **Predestination is a Bible Doctrine**

Having, as clearly as we are able, defined predestination, we pass to enquire whether it is a Bible doctrine. If it is a Bible doctrine, we must admit it, or reject the Bible as a record of infallible and eternal truth, and take the open ground of Infidelity. And who can trace the sacred pages of the Holy Book and say that it contains no testimony in support of the doctrine? In the absence of predestination how was it that the prophets of Jehovah foretold the events of ages, thousands of years before those events were actually fulfilled? Who, or what directed the prophetic vision of holy men of old, to look down the vista of intervening centuries, and in the name of the Lord Jehovah predict the things that should come to pass down to the end of time, and even the resurrection of the slumbering dead, and the judgment of the last day. If these things were not before determined of God, how were they known by His prophets? and if they were unknown to God and man how were they foretold so precisely? And if they were foreknown of God, and He inspired holy men to foretell them, then that knowledge and purpose of God was what the Bible calls, predestination. But we have no need of ifs in this investigation.

The Scriptures do most clearly and emphatically declare that "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," that God "spake to the fathers by the prophets," and also that the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, "did testify beforehand of His sufferings and of the glory that should follow" (Hebrews 1:1 & I Peter 1:11). This was and is predestination. God spake by the prophets, saying, "It shall come to pass." Do not these words imply a decree when uttered by Him who speaks the Word, and it stands fast, who commands, and it is done? How harmoniously do both Testaments agree in this fundamental doctrine. Throughout the Old Testament, God, by His prophets, declared the things that "should come pass." Apostles and inspired evangelists in the New Testament respond, saying, "And it came to pass." This is predestination. But perhaps some may demand, "What came to pass?" We reply all that God by the prophets said should come to pass.

First, in reference to the advent of the blessed Savior, for He Himself declared that all that was written of Him in the law, and in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled, and when dying on the cross of Calvary He exclaimed, "It is finished!" and in awful confirmation the retiring sun, prevailing darkness, the quaking earth, rending rocks, opening graves, rising dead, and rending veil of the temple gave ample demonstration. Daniel, in

harmony with all the other prophets of the Lord, had predicted that at a specific time the God of heaven should set up a kingdom that should never be destroyed, that the Messiah should come, should be cut off, should make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. The New Testament is a record of the faithful and precise fulfillment of these predictions. Long had the prophet slumbered with his fathers, before the accomplishment of his "seventy weeks," but the Word of our God could not die, it liveth and abideth forever. That is predestination.

The Predestination of our God also embraces all the heirs of immortality. "For whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He did justify them He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30). This predestinated people is blessed with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as He (God) hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of His will. In whom we have received an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:4-6,111).

There are those who admit the doctrine of predestination, so far as it applies to the coming of the Savior, the work which He was to perform, the sufferings which He was to endure, and the glory which was to follow; and also in relation to the good works which God before ordained that His people should walk in; but reject the idea that His purpose and foreknowledge extends to the wicked acts of men and devils. This they claim would make God the author of sin. But for ourselves, it is our firm conviction that if a single event could possibly transpire from the creation of the world to the end of time, from the rise and fall of empires, to the falling of a sparrow, or a hair of our head to the ground, that such unforeseen and consequently unprovided for events would unavoidably endanger and render uncertain the execution of what is admitted to be ordained and decreed of God. How could it be otherwise? Can we consistently believe that it was predestinated that Christ should suffer on Calvary to redeem sinners, and yet that He did not foreknow that there would be any sinners to save? Did He decree that His dear Son should be delivered into the hands of wicked men; and yet not contemplate in that decree, either the existence of wicked men, or what they should do in condemning and crucifying Him? But aside from all human

reasoning, or vain speculation on the subject, God has informed us, by His inspired Apostles, that Jesus was in fact delivered by His determinate counsel, and foreknowledge, and was actually put to death by wicked hands. And again, the inspired Apostles break forth in praise to God, in devout acknowledgement both of the decree and of its accomplishment, that, "And when they had heard that, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth, against Thy holy child Jesus whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:24-28). Here let it be observed the holy Apostles of the Lamb did not start back with horror, and exclaim, fatalism! This makes God the author of sin! Or this destroys the accountability of man! They saw nothing in all this reflecting unfavorably on the character or purity of the supreme God; but they saw such harmony in the purpose, decrees, and actual accomplishment of the designs of God, as led them simultaneously and with one accord to lift up their voices in devout adoration and praise to the Most High God, whose providential government was so clearly manifested in controlling all events. The things which they now saw brought to pass were distinctly spoken of by David in his day, and pointed out by the slaughtered lamb which Abel, by faith, offered to God some four thousand years before any of the actors in the crucifixion of Christ, were born. God had not only decreed what they should do, but He had also decreed what they should not do. "The enemy should not exact upon Him, nor the son of wickedness afflict Him." "A bone of Him should not be broken." "He should not be holden of the pains of death." His soul should not be left in hell, nor should His flesh see corruption. Neither death nor hell could go beyond the purpose and decree of God. None but Judas could betray Him, without involving a contradiction of the purpose and decree which was recorded in Psalm 109; the pieces of silver for which He was betrayed were all numbered and recorded in the decree of God and His revelation as published by the prophet hundreds of years before Judas was born. The parting of His raiment, and casting lots for His garment, was all a matter of ancient record, together with all the minute circumstances which occurred; all of which we are informed were done "that the Scripture should be fulfilled."

The murder of the infants by Herod, brought to pass the decree published by

the prophet Jeremiah six hundred years before. "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children because they were not" (Jeremiah 31 and Matthew 2:18).

The case also of Joseph and His brethren is a very clear and striking illustration of the overruling government of God, as embracing all events. And who shall dare charge God with unrighteousness, because He retains in His own hand a supreme control of all things and of all events, because He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"? Who has a right to infer that God is the fountain of sin or unholiness; when we are informed that men "with wicked hands," do "whatsoever His hand and His counsel before determined to be done"? Paul when declaring what God had said of Pharaoh, that for this very purpose He had raised him up to make His power known in him, etc., anticipated the blasphemous out breakings of the human mind in opposition to the predestination of God. "Thou wilt surely say unto me, Why doth He yet find fault," or hold man as an accountable being, "for who has resisted His will?" But the Apostle did not forbear to declare this doctrine because men resisted and blasphemed it; but says the Apostle, "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replieth against God?" etc.

When the enmity of the human heart is subdued by the quickening power and grace of God in regeneration, then the heaven-born child is reconciled to God, and loves to contemplate the power and glory of Jehovah. Then is he prepared, with the inspired psalmist, to rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that all power in heaven and in earth is vested in the blessed Savior. But if left to doubt His all-pervading power and providence for a moment, now sinks his spirit at the fearful thought that some wheel in the vast, and apparently complicated machinery of nature might be suffered to revolve unbound by the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. If one of the wheels could work without the power and providence of God, its effects might be to ungear the whole system of divine government, and worlds on worlds be dashed in irretrievable ruin. When the enlightened mind of God's dear children contemplates the glory of this subject, they fall down before God in admiration, and with the four beast, and four and twenty elders, cry "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God, Almighty." They are filled with the most profound reverence for, and confidence in the God of their salvation.

One reason we have thought why some of the children of God have seemed to be unreconciled to this doctrine is that they have failed to discriminate between the overruling power and providence of God and the effusions of

His Spirit. "Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted, neither tempted He any man." When men are tempted to sin they are tempted of their own lusts, and by the devil. But how hopeless and desperate would be the condition of all who are tempted, if God had not the power and providence to control the temptation, and overrule its effect according to His eternal purpose and pleasure for the good of His tried and tempted children, and for the glory of His own great name. Our every temptation, though they flow not from God, are directed, and restricted and made serviceable to His saints, by Him, is absolutely certain. Hence Peter assured the saints that God would control this matter, "He will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that which ye are able; but will also with the temptation make a way for your escape." That glorious High Priest which becomes us, was Himself tempted in all points as His children are, and knows how to succor them that are tempted. Soon after He was baptized, He was led up by the Spirit, unto the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was not led there by the devil; but by the Holy Spirit of the Lord God which was upon Him. Neither was He tempted of the Spirit of God which led Him into the wilderness; but He was tempted of the devil. The devil could neither afflict poor old Job, nor even drown the herd of swine, until he received permission of the Lord, and it is hard for us to think that any of the saints, however shy they may seem to be of the doctrine of predestination, really would wish or be willing that God should have less, or that sin or Satan should have more power. It is a blessed reflection to us that

"Death and hell can do no more  
Than what our Father pleases."

Volumes have been written upon this subject, and volumes may still be written. It is too rich and boundless ever to be exhausted, but after all that we can say, it is the Spirit of the Lord alone who can present it in its beauty to the sons of men. He, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, can slay the enmity of our carnal mind, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. May that Spirit in all its quickening power and grace be with our friends and all others who earnestly desire a knowledge of the true God and eternal life.

**Feb.1, 1854.**

Although it is common for all wise men to lay out their plans and

predetermine, or predestinate what they intend to do, it is exceedingly hard for men to comprehend the doctrine in its application to Him who has "Declared the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." Although our Savior has called that man a fool who without predestinating, pre-concerting his arrangements, or predetermining in regard to his undertakings, would attempt to build a house; yet it is thought by many incompatible with the divine perfections of our Lord that He should predetermine, pre-arrange or predestinate, in the building of a world. If God has declared the end from the beginning, He has so declared on the ground of positive knowledge of the end, and if He absolutely foreknew all things, all things must have been before determined, either by Himself or by some other power. If not predetermined by Himself it might well be demanded, "With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, or taught Him, when He measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" (Isaiah 40:12-14). We must admit that God possessed all this knowledge of Himself independently, or deny His Omniscience; and we must acknowledge that His perfect knowledge rested on the counsel of His own sovereign will and pleasure, or, conclude that He was instructed by some other, which conclusion we think none who know the Lord will be likely to make. But we need not speculate, nor attempt to establish this matter by inferences, however clearly drawn, for in His holy Word we are informed that it is the theme of reverence and worship of the four beasts in Revelations, and the four and twenty elders, who, falling down before Him, and casting their crowns before His throne, continually cry, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and FOR THY PLEASURE they are and were created." (Revelation 4:10,11). And in His Word Jehovah claims that He has "created all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil;" and He says, in vindication of His supreme Godhead, "I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace and I create evil; I the Lord do all these things." We cannot read these declarations from the mouth of God Himself, and resist the conviction that our God "worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

We will speak more particularly on the words, "all things." There are those who profess to believe that God has predestinated some few things, but they cannot comprehend the idea that He has predestinated all things. Among the things which these allow that He has predestinated, are the redemption of His people from sin, and their eternal justification and immortal glory, the

unspeakable gift of His dear Son, His advent to our world, His sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension to glory; but they cannot admit that God absolutely ordained that sin should enter into the world, that there should be any sinners to redeem, or that wicked men should, with wicked hands, crucify and slay the Lord of life and glory.

Did the Lord predestinate that Joseph should lay up corn in Egypt, but had nothing to do with his dreams, the envy of his brethren, or any of the circumstances of their projecting his murder, had no hand in sending the Ishmaelitic merchants to intercept their wicked designs, or with his being sold to Potiphar, nor the strange course of Potiphar's wife, or the dreams of the butler and baker, who were fellow prisoners with Joseph? But we confess we cannot conceive how anything can be predestinated unless all things are. In regard to both the cases referred to, we are informed that God did control all the events. Peter, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, charged upon the Jews the murder of our Redeemer, in these words, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23). Again, "For of a truth, against Thy holy child, Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27,28). In regard to the case of Joseph, God had made known to his great-grandfather Abraham, His control over this matter, and that the children of Israel should sojourn in Egypt, and be entreated evil for the space of four hundred years (Genesis 15:13,14). So also we are informed in the Word that, "The wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain" (Psalm 75:10). From this last quotation we learn that God, in His providential government, according to His inscrutable wisdom and the eternal counsel of His own will, allows wicked men and devils to go just so far in wickedness as He designs to overrule for His own glory, and no farther; they would if they could, do more, but God restrains them.

His providential government, which is based upon the pleasure of His own will, according to which He works all things, extends to the falling of a sparrow, and the numbering of the hairs of our heads, and it is and should be a consoling thought to all of God's dear children.

But it is argued by the opponents of Predestination, that if God has predestinated all things, man is not accountable; and some go so far as to blasphemously say that God would be the author of sin. The Apostle Paul anticipates the blasphemous cavilings of the enemies of divine sovereignty.

"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault?" or why doth He hold men accountable for their wicked actions? "For who hath resisted His will?" It is true that God's eternal and immutable will cannot be successfully resisted or thwarted, for He "doeth His pleasure in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand" (Daniel 4:35). This the Apostle does not deny or modify to avoid their blasphemous cavils; but he says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, Why has Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted 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" (Romans 9:20-23).

As it is a mercy to us when God restrains us from sinning, and "leads us not into temptation, but delivers us from evil;" so is a manifestation of His wrath, upon the vessels of wrath, when He endured with long-suffering, or allows them to fill up the cup or allotted measure of their iniquities, and when He "sends them strong delusion that they may believe a lie, that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:11,12). That the purpose and predestination of all things do not exculpate men from blame, nor involve the supreme Jehovah as the author of sin, in the manner urged by the opponents of the truth, is very apparent from what is recorded in connection with the events to which we have made allusion. Although Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; those who were charged with His crucifixion were guilty of doing it with "wicked hands." They acted as voluntarily and maliciously as though no such determinate counsel had determined beforehand what they should do. Joseph told his brethren that God had, for their sake, brought him to Egypt, and although they "meant it for evil, God designed it for good; to save much people alive." Pharaoh was punished for his wickedness, although God had for that purpose raised him up, that He might make His power known in him, and from time to time hardened his heart that he should not let the children of Israel go until God's wonders were displayed in Egypt.

Every intelligent being knows that in committing sin, he acts voluntarily, and follows the impulse of his own depraved nature, and every one who is born of God and taught by His Spirit, knows that sin is the opposite of holiness; that God is holy, and that sin is of the devil and man's lust, and not of God.

Still a consciousness of God's supreme power and wisdom, to fix its bounds, and say to it as He has said to the waters of the deep, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," affords a strong consolation to all who look alone to God for succor, protection and support, while destined to remain as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Middletown, N. Y., May 1, 1858.

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## THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

By

Samuel Trott, 1833

[ Samuel Trott is given the credit for the drafting of the Black Rock Address of 1832, which document called upon Particular or Predestinarian Baptists of the "Old School" of divinity to come together in opposition to the "New School", or "New Divinity," introduced among Baptists by Andrew Fuller in 1782 in England. The New Divinity swept American churches between 1813-1820, and had set up a conditional scheme of universal appeals and an incomplete salvation based upon the view of a "General" atonement by Christ. It rejected the view of a complete and finished salvation of a "particular" people, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. The greatest doctrinal difference between the New Divinity School and the Old School basically was this: The New School made the "Gospel" a set of propositions to all mankind to "close with Christ"; while the Old School recognized that Christ having already atoned for the sins of God's elect, the "Gospel" was "glad tidings" of this finished salvation; which glad tidings would be received by all born of the Spirit, for whom Christ died. The former preached "invitations" to sinners, while the latter preached the "Gospel" to sinners. The former depended upon preachers to help God save all He could, while the latter depended upon the Holy Spirit to call God's elect, whom He had saved, from death to life, and to conversion by the "foolishness of preaching". From 1818 to 1832, those opposed to the New Divinity, and mission movement, were referred to as "Old School Baptists." The New School became known as "Missionary, or Means Baptists." The division was practically completed between 1820 and 1845. By 1845, the New School was deeply embedded with Arminians, sprinkled with some Calvinists. The Old School has always gone beyond Calvin, hence were "Hyper-calvinistic."

In each succeeding generation since that time, there has always been among the Old School, some men to arise, saying, “Doctrine, doctrine, doctrine! Why not instead, preach love, love, love” and thereby led the feeble minded and fearful astray. Such are unaware of the warning by the Apostle John, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (I John 1:9). Solemn warning is this! –ED]

### **Samuel Trott on Predestination**

This sentiment, “The absolute predestination of all things” as expressed in the Prospectus of The Signs Of The Times, has called forth so much invective from some, and so much ridicule from others of the popular Baptists of this region that one would conclude some strange and absurd idea had been advocated; some whim daringly promulgated as a part of the secret things of God (Deuteronomy 29:29).

It therefore, may not be amiss, to re-examine the subject, and inquire whether it be a revealed truth of God, or a visionary notion of man, which is calling forth such malicious sneers from those who profess to be the servants of God.

Predestination is the same in meaning, with fore-ordination or fore-appointment; and is with God, one with pre-determination; for as God declares, so He determines, “the end from the beginning; saying My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Isaiah 46:10). Thus the pre-determination of God, to admit sin into the world embraced in it the decreeing of the time, manner, results &c. of that event. And His pre-determination to bruise His Son in the place of sinners included in it the instruments, time, place and manner of His death. (Compare Acts 2:23 and 4:25-28, and John 17:1, and Hebrews 13:11,12). The doctrine of predestination, then, is this, that God has so predetermined every event, as to fix with such precision its limits and bounds, its causes and effects, that with Him it is divested of all contingency. This, Brother Beebe, is the monstrous doctrine, that you engage to maintain, in your paper, and which we Old Fashioned Baptists, some of us, profess to believe, and which is drawing down upon you and us the reproaches and contempt of all the learned gentry among Baptists.

The term “absolute” has been prefixed to the word “predestination” by yourself and others, to distinguish the doctrine you hold from the idea of a

conditional predestination. Strictly speaking, however, this is an unnecessary appendage. A conditional predestination, is no predestination at all; for the predestination of an event conditionally, is but a pre-determination to leave the event undetermined, and therefore excludes predestination altogether.

Having thus briefly explained what we mean by predestination, I will proceed to show that it is a doctrine taught in the Scriptures. In relation to the salvation of the elect we have the doctrine of predestination expressed in direct terms, as in Romans 8: 29,30 – “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, &c. – Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called &c., and Ephesians 1:5 – “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ &c.” and verse 11 – “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will.” In these passages, we have not the word “predestination” used in the translation, but in the original the Greek word employed is of a corresponding signification; being *proorizo*, formed of *pro* – before, and *Orizo* – to bound, or limit, to determine, to define &c., and is derived from the theme: *oros* – a bound or limit, or the end of a thing. Hence the literal signification of the word, used is: a fixing before, the bounds or limit, of a thing or event.

If we look at the connection, we find the idea conveyed by the word, fully sustained by its use in these cases. In Romans 8:29 & 30, the whole of the apostle’s argument in these and the following verses of this chapter are in support of the declaration he makes. Verse 28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” To this the inquiry might be made: How, Paul, can we know this? “For,” or because, is the answer, “whom He did foreknow” that is, as the objects of His purpose and call, “He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” This did decree that they should be like Christ, should partake of His image; should as His brethren participate in that life that is in Him, in a justification from the demands of the law, in the Father’s peculiar love and care, in the resurrection, and in the glory that the Father gave Him, &c. And this was no inefficient purpose, “Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified; them He also glorified” (Romans 8:28). Paul now retorts some inquiries to those who might doubt the assertion made in verse 28, He asked in verse 31, “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Or more emphatically, “Who against us,”

that is, who is it that is against us? He goes on to confirm his position by a series of inquiries in which he shows that the predestination of God is firm against all the assaults of tribulation or distress, &c., and against death and life, and angels and principalities, and powers, and things present, and things to come, and heights and depth, &c. Thus we see that predestination of God in this case not only secures the leading purpose that the elect shall be conformed to the glorious image of His Son, but also fixes the limits and determines the end of all things that transpire in relation to them.

Again, if we refer to the use of the word in Ephesians we shall find that the predestination and the determination or purpose of God goes together. Thus Chapter 1, verses 4-6, "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 to 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." Predestination is here represented to be according to the good pleasure of His will, and is a decreeing of the objects of His choice unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world; but determines at that period their being "accepted in the Beloved;" and of course decides with certainty their repenting, believing, and being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; things necessarily embraced in their experimental acceptance in Christ. Again, in verse 11, the apostle speaks of having obtained an inheritance as the result of that predestination of God which is according to the purpose of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Here then we have in these and the connecting verses every part of salvation brought to view as the predestination of God. For He "worketh all things," not according to the caprice of fallen men, or according to any fortuitous circumstances which may transpire, but "according to the counsel of His own will." If then it is a fact, as the apostle declares, that God works all things after the counsel of His own will; then does the counsel of God's own will not only determine with certainty all the parts of salvation and fix the whole chosen race, "blameless before Him in love" in possession of their inheritance, as "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," but also decrees the result of all events according to His good pleasure?

If all persons with whom we have to do were disposed, cheerfully, to submit to the decision of Divine revelation, there would be but one question more to decide in order to determine whether all things, absolutely, or things in a limited sense, are predestinated, or worked according to the decision of the counsel of God's own will, and that question is: How far does the

government of God extend? If His government extends universally over matter and mind, then there is no movement either of matter or mind but what God “works after the counsel of His own will,” or determines the result thereof according to the “good pleasure of His will.” King Nebuchadnezzar evidently thought that God’s dominion was universal over both heaven and earth for he said of Him, “He doeth 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 doest Thou?” (Daniel 4:35). And the king was certainly correct in this, for Christ assured His disciples in Matthew 28:18, that “all power is given unto Me in heaven and earth;” that is, as Mediator. If so, God had it in His own hands to give. Again, Christ said in John 17:2, “As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou has given Him.” Hence, His power is over the wicked as well as over those to whom He “gives eternal life;” and it being all power, it must extend to both matter and mind, as there can be no disposing influence, or power, besides, and therefore, the devices both of men and devils, as well as their actions, must be under His control.

Still, however, many persons are unwilling to believe that the predestination of God has anything to do with the wicked actions of men or devils. They, in order to be consistent with themselves, ought to believe that wickedness is under the control of an opposite power, and that God exercises no control over wicked actions or thoughts, to limit their extent, or to overrule their results in accordance with His purposes; lest thereby He should be charged with being the author of sin.

I think, however, I shall be able to bring from the Scriptures of truth several facts which go to prove that the predestination of God determines the results, fixes the limits and so controls the actions and devices of both good and wicked men and devils, so as to cause them to terminate in the furtherance of His own glorious purposes.

The first proof I shall bring in support of this position is the declaration of the apostle, relative to the crucifixion of Christ as recorded in Acts 2:23, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, YE have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” I know there are those who say that the event accomplished by the death of Christ was so glorious and of so great magnitude as to justify the making use of wicked men or predestinating their acts relative to it. But this is measuring the Mind of God by our little contracted views. We are apt to be so dazzled by splendid events as to overlook the necessary means by which the event may

have been accomplished; whereas if the event had been less splendid, we should have condemned those means. But let us beware of attaching such imperfections to God. As great as was the benefit accomplished by the death of Christ, it did not lead God to overlook the perpetrators of the act. Judas received his marked punishment, and “went to his own place” (Acts 1:25), and the Jews are to this day receiving the punishment of their crime, as denounced upon them by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:49-68; and by David, of Judas, in Psalm 109: 6-20. As great as was this event, there were many circumstances connected with it that were done by “wicked hand” and yet were revealed beforehand by God, and of course, had been determined. He “was delivered up,” that is, to be slain, “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” Jesus says of His life, “No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself” (John 10:18). Yet, in this laying down of His life was involved the wicked acts of Judas in betraying Him to the Jews (Zechariah 11:12; Psalm 109), of the Jews in delivering Him to Pilate, of Pilate sending Him to Herod, of His being sent back, and of Pilate’s delivering Him up to be crucified though “he found no fault in Him” (See Psalm 69:19,21; Deuteronomy 21:7; Psalm 22:18). Judas’ act was evidently predestinated; for Christ said to His disciples, “One of you shall betray Me,” and when asked of John who it was, He designated Judas by this sign: “And after the sop Satan entered into him” (Psalm 109:6; John 13: 21-27). And even farther back than this, it was designated (Compare Acts 1:15-20 with Psalm 41:9, and 109:8). All of these are wicked acts of wicked men. Thus also Herod and Pilate’s combining to deliver up Christ as also the Jews and Gentiles being united in that act was predestinated (See Acts 4: 25-28 compared with Psalm 2: 1,2). The circumstance of the Jews wagging their heads at Him and mocking Him, etc., their parting His garments among them were prophesied (See Psalm 22:7, and 8:16); and that these circumstances were not foretold upon the mere ground God’s foreknowing that they would do these things. See the circumstance of their giving Christ gall mingled with vinegar as prophesied of in Psalm 69:21, and the fulfillment as recorded in John 19: 28-30; from which it is manifest that the prediction governed the event, hence that the prediction might be fulfilled, Jesus says, “I thirst.” Indeed it is altogether idle to attempt to separate the foreknowledge of God from His predestination; for how could God foreknow that certain persons would give to Christ vinegar and gall unless He had predestinated to bring those very persons into existence to preserve them alive to that time, to give them health and strength sufficient to attend on the crucifixion, to leave them to the enmity of their hearts, and to give them the occasion to act out this enmity by Christ’s saying, “I thirst,” and then suffer them to offer that insult? So of every event fore-known of God. If

God then foreknows all things, all the circumstances necessary to bring those “all things” to pass must have been predestinated of God. It is said by the apostle relative to what Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, did to Christ, that they did “whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27,28).

Another proof in support of the doctrine that the wicked actions of wicked men are predestinated of God is found in Isaiah 10: 5,6 – “O Assyrian; the rod of Mine anger, and staff in their hand is Mine indignation, I will send him against an hypocritical nation and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the street.” Here God in the clearest manner possible declares what use He will make of the Assyrian. Can any say that He did not predestinate the Assyrians taking the prey, &c.? Yet, these were acts of violence and cruelty in the Assyrians as is manifest from the connection, verse 7, “Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.” And in verse 12, “Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of Assyria and the glory of his high looks.” In perfect accordance with what God says of the Assyrians relative to their ambitions, murderous course, that they were the “rod of His anger.” The Psalmist in praying to be delivered from the wicked that opposed him, and from his deadly enemies, says, “Deliver my soul from the wicked which is Thy sword, from men which are Thy hand, O Lord, &c.” (Psalm 17:9-13, 14). Can the wicked thus be God’s rod, sword, and hand, and He not determine and govern their acts? And if their acts were foreknown to God, did He not predetermine or predestinate those acts? Hence it is said in Proverbs 16:4, “The Lord made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” Some may suppose that by “the day of evil,” for which the wicked are made, we are to understand their own destruction. But such is not the faith of the Old School Baptists. They do not believe that God in bringing the wicked into existence had no higher object in view than their destruction. By the “day of evil,” we understand, the day in which God brings evil upon His people or upon others. It has pleased God to bring His Church and people “through great tribulation” (Acts 14:22); from whence are their tribulations to arise but from the persecutions of the wicked? God will give those blood to drink that have shed the blood of saints and prophets; by whom will He do it? Not by the righteous. He has made the “wicked for the day of evil;” and so has He prepared instruments for every evil day. Thus says the Psalmist, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; and the remainder of wrath Thou shalt

restrain” (Psalm 76:10). What is this but a predestination, that limits and bounds even the wrath of man, letting it go just so far as to accomplish the purpose of God, and no further?

If the above is not sufficient to establish the fact that God predestinates and controls the evil acts of men, we have additional proof from the history of Joseph and his brethren. Joseph says to his brethren, “Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserved life;” and again, “God sent me before you to preserve a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So it was not you that sent me hither, but God” (Genesis 45: 5-7,8). And in Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Thus we see that while Joseph’s brethren thought evil against him and wickedly devised means to put him out of the way, in order to disappoint his prophetic dreams, God had determined that this very wickedness of theirs should be the means of bringing about the fulfillment of those dreams, and to terminate in His and their good. So also He employed the wickedness of Potipher’s wife, to bring about the ultimate exaltation of Joseph, and consequently to fulfill the purpose for which God sent him into Egypt. So full was Joseph in the belief of the predestination of God in that thing from the manifestation he had received that he said plainly to his brethren: “It was not you that sent me hither, but GOD.” And as full proof that this affair was determined on beforehand, or predestinated of God, we have not only the thing revealed to Joseph in dreams, but the dwelling of Israel in Egypt and the actual length of time they should be there was foretold to Abraham, “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;” and “But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 50:13,16).

These several proofs that I have brought forward are not to be considered as so many peculiar instances in which God’s government is exerted over the wicked actions of men; but rather as special illustrations of the universal government of God. They show how “surely He will cause the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain” (Psalm 76:10). The soldiers must not break the legs of Jesus though so commanded, but they pierced His side “that the Scripture might be fulfilled;” that is, that the foretold purpose of God should stand (See John 19:31-37). So Joseph’s brethren could neither kill him, (as they first considered) nor leave him to perish in the pit, (where they had put him next) nor could Reuben deliver him

(though he desired to do so); but the company of Ishmeelites must needs come along at that exact juncture of time and place and they sell Joseph to be carried down into Egypt, and not somewhere else! These several instances that are thus particularly recorded of God's making the wickedness of men and devils serve His purpose, are sure pledges that in spite of the combined malice and rage of both, He will roll on His gracious purposes, accomplish all His promises, and fulfill every prophecy. He that could make the enmity of Joseph's brethren, and desire of gain in the Ishmeelites, the wickedness of Potipher's wife and the ingratitude of Pharaoh's steward all combine to accomplish the exaltation of Joseph and the purpose of God had in view, will while He causes judgment to begin at the house of God, surely accomplish at the appointed time, the complete destruction of the man of sin, in all his branches.

And dear child of grace, however much men may revile you and hate you, or Satan may "desire to have you," you have a sure pledge both from the declaration of God, and from what you have seen of His overruling Providence that "all things work together for your good," as they did for the good of Joseph when taken from his father, and for the good of David when "hunted as a partridge upon the mountain" (I Samuel 26:20b). For as it is said in Proverbs 16:9, "Man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

### **OBJECTIONS TO THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS:**

The objection most frequently made to this doctrine is that it represents God as the author of sin. Most of those who make this objection will allow that God governs the world and that no event takes place but by His permission. Where is the difference between them and us? It appears to be something like this: We believe that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," that He has a wise design in every event which He either permits or causes to take place, that each event and all the transactions of men, even the vilest, are as so many links in the great chain of that Providence by which the eternal purpose of God are connected together, and drawn on to their ultimate and glorious consummation; that from eternity God drew the wondrous plan of His government, saw through the operations and bearing in the every event, and assigned to each its place and use in the dispensation of His Providence, His justice, or His grace.

They, if I can comprehend their views, believe that God has not beforehand determined the wicked actions of men, that merely as a spectator He suffers

the wicked to go on according to their own “free wills.” Of course, if God has had no previous determination relative to their acts, He can have no design in permitting them unless it be simply the general design of leaving those persons to aggravate their condemnation. Now it would seem to me that if either of these systems makes God the author of sin it is their view, for it makes God to be, in a most wanton manner, accessory to the vices of men. But why is such a system preferred? Surely, only, because it takes the government of God from Him and gives it to the will of man.

But says one in the case of an assassin’s way-laying a man and murdering him, it would be horrid to suppose that God had predestinated this barbarous act. Where is the preacher who talks thus, if called to preach on this funeral occasion, that would tell the afflicted relatives that God had nothing to do with the affair, and therefore instead of exhorting them to eye the hand of God in it, and to be submissive to His will, would direct them to regard only the hand of the assassin? And yet he ought thus to tell them to be consistent.

The Master said to His disciples, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29-31). Christ had been telling them not to fear them that kill the body, &c., in reference to persecutors, and then brings in the case of the sparrows. Would not the disciples naturally be led to think of the sparrows as exposed to the ravages of birds of prey? And when thus assured that the hawks could not seize their prey but by the will of God they would feel such confidence in the care of their heavenly Father, as to believe that their bloody persecutors could not take their lives until His gracious purpose was accomplished, and He for wise purposes saw fit to suffer them to be put to death.

If God thus takes care of sparrows, can it be supposed that any human being will be left to fall by the hand of an assassin without our heavenly Father? If any can find comfort in believing that men’s lives are thus left to the sport of chance, I envy them not that comfort.

Let us take another view of this subject. I think it more consistent with what God has revealed of His universal government to suppose that the days of this murdered man were numbered, that the designs of God in his existence on earth were accomplished, and the period had arrived for his being taken from it; and that God had determined to leave him who was the assassin thus

to manifest the enmity and depravity of his own heart, to be a warning to others, and to receive that open punishment that his depraved principles merited. Also that such afflictions are attended this affair God had seen fit to appoint unto relatives, if not to result in their good, yet for wise and good purposes. "It is appointed unto men once to die, etc."

I do not see that this view of the subject any more makes God the author of sin than any other system would short of that of the Magi which supposed the existence of two gods, the one good and the other evil [Zoroastrianism]. Not any more than the Lord's having appointed Peter the death by which he should glorify God made Him the author of the sin of his persecutors (See John 21:18-19).

But to give, if possible, a clearer illustration of this subject, I will offer a few remarks on the text, Luke 13:4-5, "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." I have said above that there is no movement either of matter or mind but what has been fixed by the counsel of God to work for His glory. In the text above I think there is an illustration of this fact. In the case of the eighteen being slain by the fall of the tower of Siloam, are the following circumstances to be noticed:

First, the passage gives no statement of the special case that produced the fall of the tower; neither is there any intimation that it was occasioned by anything miraculous. The whole account appears clearly to imply that it was what would be termed at this day a mere casual event. Second, the Jews having been taught by their lively oracles, to acknowledge the hand of God in every event, considered this a special visitation of God upon those who were slain and accounted for it by supposing that they were sinners above others. This latter idea the Master evidently designed to correct and to impress upon the minds of His audience that they were sinners equally with those eighteen, and like them, exposed to the judgments of God, unless they repented with that repentance which their law required of them as national Israelites.

While we are left ignorant of the direct cause of the tower's falling, whether it was carelessness in building, negligence in repairing, the wear of time, or some other circumstances, the fact is evident that the materials of which it was built, having been undermined or in some other way removed from their proper balance one upon the other, fell by the regular operation of the law of

gravitation, and in their fall killed eighteen persons. Can any be so hardened in opposition to the sovereignty of God as to contend that He by whom alone the sparrow falls, had no hand in the death of these persons? Yea, is it not manifest from the improvement which the Savior made of the event that it was designed as a warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem of the impending judgments that hung over their heads? These impending judgments of which the Jews were thus warned were brought upon them, as the events of history shows, by the instrumentality of the Roman arms. That these impending judgments were limited and bound by the predestination of God is evident from Matthew 24: 15-28, and Luke 21: 17,24. It is equally manifest that it was the ambition and pride of the Romans that impelled them forward to the destruction of this devoted people.

Now if in the one case God could accomplish His purpose of cutting off those eighteen persons by the instrumentality of the effect of the law of gravitation upon the materials of the tower of Siloam without diverting that law from its regular course of operation, why could He not in the other case bring His threatened and defined judgments upon the Jews by the instrumentality of the Romans' thirst for conquest and blood without being the author of their sin or without infringing upon their will in the act? Some may say that God was the author of the law of gravitation. True, God did establish it in the original creation of matter; and so did He originally permit sin to enter into the world and man to become so depraved as that it is as natural for him to sin as it is for a heavy body to fall to the earth. And there was no more necessity for God, in the one case, to produce a new principle of depravity in the hearts of the Romans than, in the other case, to produce a new principle of gravitation or give a new bias to that heart. In the one instance God had only to permit the interposition of certain occasions to bring the law of gravitation into effect upon the materials of the tower and to bring those eighteen persons together within its reaches to accomplish His purpose concerning them. So in the other case, He had only to permit the Jews, by their turbulence and rebellion, to provoke the resentment of the Romans to be the occasion of their acting out their bloody cruelty, so far as God had determined to permit them.

What I have said upon this subject is probably not sufficient to satisfy the minds of some who may think they are honest inquirers after the truth. But it is not dependent upon me to vindicate the revelation and ways of God from the charge of sin. Let those who charge that doctrine which God has revealed, with sinful tendency, answer to Him for it.

I will offer a few remarks for the consideration of those who think that God has too great affairs to manage to concern Himself with the smaller particles of matter, such as are seen floating in the air; for such professors there are. I would ask them whether they believe in the resurrection of the body? If so, whether they believe that God will raise the bodies of all or only such bodies He can find on the resurrection morn? We know that the bodies of many have been burned to ashes, and those ashes scattered towards the four winds of heaven; the bodies of others have been left to molder to dust on the surface of the earth; the graves of many have been opened and the dust that once composed the bodies mingled with other particles of earth, not to insist upon the continual process through which matter is passing of decomposition and new organization, by which that which was once the component part of an animal body becomes incorporated in a vegetable substance, etc. How can any person with these facts in view believe that God will or can raise the bodies of all persons unless they believe that He exercises infinite knowledge and that universal disposal of all things, that every particle of matter is present to His notice, passing through what process it may, filling by His direction the very place and accomplishing the very object He designed? Is this knowledge too wonderful for your comprehension? So it is for mine. But is it too extensive for our God whose understanding is infinite ?

Another objection urged against the doctrine of predestination is that it would involve the notion of the Fatalist and destroy the “free-agency” of man and consequently his accountability. These notions must arise from ignorance of the true character of God who, as an efficient Intelligence, governs the world in wisdom and righteousness, causing everything to result in the greatest good. But in answer to the objection, suffice it to say that the universal experience of man and the sure word of prophecy both unite in establishing the fact that man in all his sinful transactions acts freely, and is accountable there for. I will notice a few instances in which the consciousness of guilt was manifested in persons, relative to transactions manifestly predestinated of God.

We have an instance in the case of Joseph’s brethren. Although Joseph declared that it was God who sent him to Egypt, yet when their father was dead his brethren sent unto him saying, “We pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father” (Genesis 50:17). We have another instance in Judas who committed the very crime which had long been predicted, and which the Master pointed him out as the one destined to perform, yet when he had committed the base act, he in contrition said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood” (Matthew 27:4). An

instance of acknowledged free volition we have in the case of the Assyrian, who was “the rod of God’s anger against the Jews.” God says of him, “I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom, &c.” (Isaiah 10:12,13). Thus it is that men and devils, instead of frustrating or retarding the righteous government of God by the acting out of their enmity, are, in their very acts of sinning against Him, made by His wise government to bring about His holy and eternal purposes. This view of the holiness and majesty of God, manifested in His overruling the sins of men to the promotion of His purpose of grace while it fills His enemies with wrath, constrains the true believer to “exalt Him and to worship at His footstool” (Psalm 99:5) under a feeling sense that “He is holy.”

I now pass to the consideration of an objection made by the popular Baptists, more particularly against this doctrine as held by the Old School Baptists. Even those who profess to believe the doctrine of predestination make it, when professed by an Old School Baptist to be a very Pandora’s Box from whence springs Antinomianism and everything which they are accustomed to consider as evil in us. It is, according to their representation, our belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things that keeps us from engaging in the Benevolent Enterprises [Modern missionary and social gospel movement – Editor] of the day and prevents us from preaching repentance and faith as conditions of salvation, and from making any efforts to convert sinners, and in a word that it makes us very idle and wicked professors. This is the most unhallowed of all the objections made against this doctrine! It is the very course pursued by the Jews against our Master, that by raising a prejudice in the public mind against Him and His doctrine that they might more easily accomplish His death. As they thus succeeded against Him to do “with wicked hands,” what the “counsel of God had before determined to be done,” so will they succeed against the two witnesses.

But let us, Dear Brethren, rejoice with His early disciples in being accounted worthy to suffer persecution for our Lord’s name sake. This course pursued by the popular Baptists in reproaching this doctrine, and us for holding it, while they admit it even to be a Bible doctrine, is the most decisive testimony as to what manner of spirit they are of, that could be had. It is, I sometimes think, undeniably an instance of our being reviled and having evil said of us falsely for His sake. The Christian knows ordinarily, owing to the sense of the corruption of his own heart, the instances are not many when he can clearly draw the conclusion that it is for Christ’s sake that he is reviled. Hence, how thankful ought we to be for the privilege granted us of having

such an unequivocal testimony that the blessing recorded in Matthew 5:11 and 12 belongs to us.

It is not in one solitary instance, or two that we are reproached for holding this doctrine. There appears for a few months past to have been a general concert on the subject. Preachers while professing to preach the doctrine of predestination, have in the very same discourses, represented it to be Antinomianism and to have the most deadening influence when held by certain “Baptists,” meaning the Old School brethren. Others have given the same views on the subject in their publications in the religious papers: witness the letter of a certain celebrated preacher in Virginia published in the Religious Herald of December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1833. But it is perhaps proper to answer the objection, however unprincipled it is. The objection seems to imply that the whole sum of our faith is the doctrine of predestination; that all our religious course is determined by our belief in this one point of revelation.

It is true that believing in the predestination of God, we have no idea of procuring or of being instrumental in producing the salvation of one individual not chosen of God unto salvation; nor that one of the “travail” (Isaiah 53:11) of Christ’s soul will die without experiencing the renewing of the Holy Ghost and thus being prepared for the society of Heaven, whether that individual die in infancy or in old age, whether he was born in New York, in Rome, in Mecca or in Peking. But we as firmly believe that God “has chosen” His people “to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;” that: “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,” (II Thessalonians 2:13) and that while the “preaching of the cross is unto them that perish, foolishness; unto us who are saved it is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:18).

Let those who think and speak of tracts and Sunday Schools as the more efficient means of converting the world ponder this text and think seriously on the distinction drawn between those who perish and those who are saved. The one class esteem the “preaching of the cross,” or Christ crucified, as far surpassing any scheme of men as the power of God surpasses the weakness of man. But they do not consider the difference between the preaching of the cross, and Sunday School teaching or reading of tracts to consist so much in any natural superiority of the one over the others, but simply in the fact that the one is the appointment of God delivered to us through the volume of eternal truth and that the others are not. Attendance therefore on the one calls for and authorizes the exercise of faith in God, that He will bless His own appointments, whereas there can be no authorized faith in relation to the

others because God has made no revelation concerning them. And according to the apostle's views of the subject, the reason why God has instituted the simple preaching of the cross, unadorned with wisdom of words, is that by such preaching God might "make foolish the wisdom of the world," and that the faith of His people "should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18-29, and 2:4,5). The above may suffice to show that it is not our belief in the doctrine of predestination alone that prevents us from uniting in the "benevolent enterprises" of the day, as they are styled, but the fact that God has appointed the one institution and but one has its due weight with us, and ought to have with all who have confidence in the wisdom of God. But again our belief in the predestination of all things gives us confidence to believe that not an instrument shall be wanting, or a circumstance fail, that God ever designed to employ, or ever would own for bringing an individual of the election of God into the liberty of the gospel, or for establishing him in the hope and consolations thereof. It also leads us to believe that Christ's people will all "be willing in the day of His power" (Psalm 110:5), according as they are called to believe in Him, to confide in Him, to profess His name, to enter the ministry, and that with just such gifts as He has bestowed on them, and to go and occupy these gifts wherever God in His providence directs; and that their willingness to these things will be from a manifestation of the "day of His power" to their souls, and not from any offered worldly accommodations. Hence we have no confidence in the Divine call of any person to the ministry who enters it or goes forward in it only as some salary or mission fund is proffered for his accommodation. Neither when they go forth from these considerations can we believe that God will make their labors a blessing. Consequently we stand opposed to Missionary and Theological school systems. The preacher made willing in the day of Christ's power to enter the ministry does not need these proffered accommodations to stimulate him to action. Neither does he need for this end the notion of becoming popular by a display of "school polish" or by multiplying converts. He has to preach to answer his own conscience. Being an ear-bored servant, he will desire to be found faithful. And feeling that he is a servant, he will feel it to be his province to follow the directions of his Lord, to keep strictly to his written orders: to preach the Word, to be instant in season and out of season, and to leave it to his Master's will to accomplish His own purpose by the Word preached. Thus the predestination of God has secured that belief in the Absolute Predestination of all things will not make His servants idle, but on the contrary, it becomes an incentive to active obedience. The same is the case, as might be shown from the Word, with all His other children in their several relations.

It is true that the servant of the Lord may sometimes be left to seek his own accommodation, rather than do his Master's will, but when this is the case, the Lord will assuredly send leanness into his soul, or otherwise so chastise him as to bring him back to a cheerful discharge of duty.

As to Antinomianism, those who know the meaning of the word, when they use it certainly do know that it is a base calumny upon us. They know that what offends them in our preaching relative to the law is our contending so strongly for the spirituality and unchangeable nature of the law, and that nothing but that full and perfect righteousness, found in the obedience of Christ as the representative of His people, could release from condemnation. If instead of preaching the apostle's doctrine which establishes the law, we preach the abrogation of the eternal law and that man is, as they say, on pleasing terms with God, and by which many seem to mean that man is on grounds for proposing terms of acceptance, with God, we should then in the estimation of the popular be very lawful and holy men.

In reference to the charge that our belief in the doctrine of predestination occasions our not preaching that men should repent and believe, I would remark in the first place that according to our understanding of the Scriptures, "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" are essential parts of that salvation to which the elect of God are predestinated. These things therefore we preach. But the repentance to which God has predestinated His people is a heart repentance, a "godly sorrow for sin" (II Corinthians 7:10); a turning with heart-loathing from self and all self-doing, as being defiled with sin. We do not, therefore, and dare not, preach a mere Ahab or Ninevite repentance, as that which characterizes persons as entitled to the consolations of the gospel. There is the same corresponding difference between the one repentance and the other, that there is between the deliverance granted Ahab and Nineveh, and that salvation that comes by Christ. It is true that if we could satisfy our consciences by preaching the word "repent" instead of preaching that repentance that is the result of the regenerating operation of the Holy Ghost, we should much better please the unregenerate and popular professors as we should then preach a repentance of which they have some conception.

Again, Christ, by "nailing the handwriting of ordinances to His cross" (Colossians 2:14), so took the Sinai covenant, as such, out of the way that it never after should, by all the contrivances of men, be introduced into the plan of God as any part of salvation. Hence Christ, after His resurrection, made known to His disciples that "repentance and remission of sins should be

preached in His name” (Luke 24:47), among all nations beginning in Jerusalem. The law was given by Moses, “but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” If therefore there is any meaning in the expression, “In His name,” it must mean something very different from preaching repentance and remission of sin in a legal form. So we understand it as fixed by the predestination of God, and therefore we do not preach repentance as a condition upon which salvation is suspended. But while we preach the manifested obligation of all, both Jews and Gentiles, as the creatures of God to return unto Him by repentance, or as the apostle has it, “but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30), and while we preach the absolute necessity of heart repentance as a predestinated part of the salvation of God, we preach that Jesus Christ is “exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31); and that no repentance short of that which He gives in making His Word as a “fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces” (Jeremiah 23:29), either manifests the person as entitled to, capacitates him for receiving the consolations of the gospel. Hence, that no other is of any avail. Thus far our belief in the predestination of God affects our preaching repentance.

So faith we preach, not as a condition of salvation, but as the “gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). And the faith we preach is as distinct from any natural belief of the human mind as the internal revelation or testimony of the Spirit of God is distinct from the testimony of men: the one is external and natural, the other is internal and spiritual; the one is comprehended and received by the natural powers of the human mind, the other can be understood and relied on only by spiritual life imparted. In a word, we believe that the predestination of God has fixed eternally the point that none but that system of salvation that God has decreed, that truth which God has revealed, and that order which He has established, shall stand. We would, therefore, be wholly conformed in understanding, in feeling and walk to that system, be grounded in that truth, and bounded and defined by that order which God has revealed. Being thus established in the truth of God and sustained by His word, if persecution come, let it come, we shall feel the assurance that the “two beasts,” that the “Image”, and all their drilled and mustered forces, can go no farther in their rage than our God has determined to permit them, that they cannot afflict us, only as He has designed the affliction in mercy upon us, that they cannot take our lives one moment before our Father has accomplished His wise purposes with us in this vale of tears.

Such an established belief in the predestination of God serves to preserve us, amidst the various trials of life, and amidst the rage of persecution from that

fretful, sullen, and heart-sunken spirit manifested by Saul when he said, "Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, &c., that all of you conspired against me; and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, &c. (I Samuel 22:7,8). But on the contrary, it will enable us to manifest that patient, resigned spirit which David manifested when he said to Saul, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee" (I Samuel 24:12), and when he said of Shimei who cursed him, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? Let him alone and let him curse for the Lord hath bidden him, it may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day"(II Samuel 16:10-12). In the case of Saul we see manifested the genuine temper of that spirit which will not have the Lord to reign over him, and which therefore rejects the purpose of God; in the other that humility and meekness which is incident to a belief and acquiescence in the Sovereignty of God. But David did not believe that God's having bidden Shimei to curse, or in other words, His having predestinated this act, exonerated him from guilt. Hence David's directions to Solomon in I Kings 2:8,9).

I will here leave the subject, praying that while others reproach us for believing in the Absolute Sovereignty of God, the Lord would bless us with more unshaken confidence in His universal predestination and with a more entire submission to His Sovereign Will in all things, and that while others indirectly charge God with revealing a doctrine they think leads to licentiousness, God may manifest in us that the belief of the truth and the power of His grace can so overcome the corruptions of our nature as to enable us to lead quiet, peaceable and godly lives.

## **FURTHER REMARKS RELATIVE TO PREDESTINATION**

**By  
Samuel Trott, 1834**

[Editor's note: The Reader may find it informative, that after having read the above article by Samuel Trott on Predestination in 1833, in which he made it crystal clear that Predestinarians do not make God the Author of sin; yet there was even then a class of men that still insisted after having read the above, that he taught that God was the Author of sin! We note this because the same is still true today, in 2005, there is such a class of men that insists

that anyone who believes in the Absolute Sovereignty of God over all things “makes God the Author of sin” ! Regardless how often or how clearly a Predestinarian vindicates the righteousness and holiness of God, and strongly denies that God can be the author of anything contrary to His divine nature, they still insist upon it, and tell and teach others also. Why? Only God knows. We can only suspect that such have a devilish preconceived bias against God as GOD, and as some once said, “We will not have this Man reign over us” (Luke 19:14). Almost to a man, those who make this vicious false charge will insist upon man having a “free” will. It is possible, as Gordon Clarke once said, “Any man who claims to believe in the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, is either mad, or has the wrong definition of both terms!” If you have not read the above article, we strongly suggest you read it first to determine what Trott actually taught. – Editor]

### **REMARKS ON PREDESTINATION, S. Trott**

Brother Beebe,

Having understood that several of our Brethren in different places, as well as others, have so construed my piece on the Absolute Predestination of All things, as to infer that I represent God to be the Author of sin, I have been led to look over that article to see if I did make any slip on that point, and leave any sentence so worded as to give just ground for their construction. But I do not find a single sentence therein, that by any fair interpretation, represents God as being the Author of sin in general, or as compelling the creature to a sinful choice by any arbitrary force put upon his mind. I think, if any of our Brethren, who have taken up this wrong idea of the article on Predestination would take the trouble to examine it again impartially, they will find that so far from my representing God as being so the author of sin as to exempt man from guilt in his sinful transactions, I have endeavored particularly to show, while the predestination of God determines that sin, and the sinful acts of men and devils, shall result in the accomplishment of His own glorious purposes, that this predestination does not destroy the free volition of man, but leaves him free to act according to his nature, and consequently conscious of his guilt, and justly subject to punishment for his crimes, as in the case of Joseph’s brethren and of the Assyrian, and of Judas and the Jews.

Persons who make these objections to my views as published seem to overlook the fact that I speak of God’s government in this case as being a predestination, or pre-determination, to permit such and such acts of depravity to take place, and to cause them to produce certain results, and to

transpire under certain circumstances; and not a predestination to compel men to perform those acts.

I know that many persons have, in their minds, so attached to the term predestination the idea of arbitrary force exerted upon the minds of men, compelling them to act, as never to attend to any other explanation given to the subject. Whereas by attaching such an idea to the term predestination when spoken of God, they divest Him of that infinite wisdom and understanding that belongs to Him, and bring Him down to a level with us short-sighted mortals. Man when he absolutely predetermines an act or event, acts foolishly, for he knows not what an hour may bring forth. Not so with God. He can, and does “declare the end from the beginning” with all the attendant circumstances.

Persons who suffer their minds to be thus swayed by their prejudices against a term they did not understand, can scarcely fail of attaching to the combined terms, absolute predestination, every thing awful and tyrannical. The plain natural meaning of the term absolute is unconditional, in this sense, and in this sense only it is used in this connection. And while we contend for an absolute or unconditional predestination, we deny that there is any thing like an arbitrary purpose or act to be found in the government of God.

In order, if possible, to be more clearly understood upon this point, I will offer a few additional remarks:

1<sup>st</sup>. That such is the depravity of human nature, that so sure as he is given up to the sway of any one of his passions, and comes into contact with circumstances exciting him to the gratification of that passion, so assuredly he perpetrates the crime to which his inborn depraved passion urges him. David, in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, being left to the influence of his passion, needed but the exciting circumstance of seeing from “the roof of the king’s house the woman washing herself” to lead him on to that course which resulted in the consummation of his whole crime. David therefore instead of charging this act to God, was conscious that it was chargeable only to the depravity of his own heart, and therefore justly says to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And yet there is no room left to suppose that this whole affair was not embraced in the pre-determinate purpose of God, for it was a very important link in that chain by which Shiloh (The Lord Jesus) descended from Judah (Matthew 1:6).

2<sup>nd</sup>. That while the predestination of God extends to every event that takes place in the universe, it puts no other force upon the minds of sinful agents than that of restraint. God has predestinated that men shall not act out the depravity of their hearts any further than He for wise purposes has predestinated to let them go in sin. For producing this restraint, He employs various instruments, as education, public opinion, etc., and also frequently causes the various passions of man to counteract the undue influence one of the another. In a word, the predestination of God secures, that so far as He has determined to leave any one to act out the depravity of his heart, so far attending circumstances shall be favorable thereto; as in the case of Pharaoh: “Even for the same purpose have I raise thee up.” (that is, by divine providence, to the throne of Egypt, that full opportunity may be given thee to show the haughtiness and cruelty of thy heart), “that I might show My power in thee,” (in causing thy arrogance and rage to work thy own destruction and My people’s deliverance.) So of Judas, the thirty pieces of silver are secured to him for a bait. On the other hand, wherein God has determined to restrain the wrath of man, or to put restraints upon his depravity, He places him in circumstances calculated to exert the necessary force upon his passions.

But from whence comes depravity and sin? Sin exists in the world in the depravity of man, and yet in its origin it was non-existent: not a creature, nor an eternal existence. God is but the innocent cause, if I may use the expression of its having an existence. Had not God brought intelligent creatures into existence sin could never have had a being; and if God had not created and placed those creatures under a law, and left them to the free exercise of their own wills whether to obey or not, sin would never have become an existence in the world; and yet not God but angels and men, each in his sphere, brought it into existence.

The existence of sin in the world may be aptly illustrated by the existence of darkness. Darkness could never had had an existence had not God made creatures needing the medium of material light, in order to the exercise of their organs of vision. For in God “is no darkness at all.”

But when creatures were produced needing material light to enable them to see, the absence of that light is what we call darkness. In reference to the statement in Genesis 1:2, “And darkness was upon the face of the deep,” I understand it to be spoken in relation to the progress of creation, and to be an intimation that the material light suiting this material world was not then created, and that this darkness, or absence of light, was no more a direct production of God than was the formless state of matter in its original

production. The one was the absence of that order which was afterwards given to the matter created. The other, the absence of that light which creatures would need to the use of sight. It is true God has given to material darkness a permanent being in relation to creatures on earth by “dividing between the light and between the darkness,” instead of giving to the light an entire sway over the earth.

So of sin, to go back no farther than its relation to man, God made “man upright,” but made him a dependent and an accountable creature and therefore laid him under obligations to “be holy in heart and life” unto God, or in other words, to be entirely and voluntarily devoted to the will of the Creator. And being thus created, God gave him a command as a test by which to prove his voluntary subjection to his Creator or his voluntary holiness, I say to prove whether he would be holy to God. (I know the general idea is, even among those whom we esteem sound, that God created man a holy being, but this is an idea I have not been able, perhaps from inferiority of intellect to comprehend), that is, to say in relation to heart holiness or voluntary devotion to God. I know that the word holy is sometimes used to denote mere freedom from impurity, in this sense I cheerfully give in to an idea that man was created holy, that he came from the hands of the Creator pure. Man being thus put to the test, he soon showed destitution of that voluntary holiness, that self-devotedness to God, which, his being a creature, laid him under obligation to exercise. This want of holiness was sin; it was a violation of his obligation and a transgression of the command under which he was placed. And I do not know but that Adam’s thus preferring his own gratification to submission to the government of God was as much a natural or necessary consequence of his being left to choose for himself as is the succession of darkness to the withdrawal of light. I know that being thus left to his own choice, the very first occasion finds him choosing to set up for himself, for “Adam was not deceived;” and I know that God with certainly knew that this would be the course of the man; hence the setting up of Christ before the foundation of the world. The act was Adam’s own, it was not that Satan infused any evil principle into him. Satan was only an instrument in beguiling Eve, of exciting him to a choice upon the point. Man having made his choice to serve self rather than God; the penalty of the command took immediate effect, and depravity runs through the whole human family, and became from the choice of Adam, the reigning power over the human heart, reigning unto death; the penal requisition of the law giving it that power, “for the strength of sin is the law.” Hence man exits under “the law of sin and death,” from which he could be ransomed only by the blood of Christ; and delivered only by being

brought into a new existence as a new creature in Christ, and that only by the power of God.

Do any ask what has predestination to do with this? I answer that it has this much to do with it; that God predestinated man to be, or pre-determined to make him just such a creature as he was, and to leave him to encounter the temptation in his own creature weakness, that he might act freely without the restraints of communicated holiness; with the certainty of his falling and becoming “dead in trespasses and sins,” and thus an occasion should be offered for bringing in the “Sun of Righteousness.” And here is the counterpart of the figure of darkness. If creatures had not been so formed as to need material light, there would have been no occasion for the sun; if man had not so fallen, as to need a Divine Savior, the Word had not been made flesh. Hence, says Christ, “I come a light unto the world.” And in the coming of Christ there is “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards man.” If “glory to God in the highest” came through Christ, then predestination has assuredly secured a greater good by man’s being left to fall than could have come to the universe by his being supported and confirmed by the power of God in his original state of happiness. Thus the predestination of God, instead of making God the author of sin, secured that all the glory of redemption should result from the malice of Satan and the native weakness of man.

Fairfax County, Virginia, July 7, 1834     S. Trott.

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## **ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**Samuel Trott, January 20, 1860**

[ Editor’s note: Once again, late in life, Elder Trott answers the slanderous and false charges against the historical Baptist doctrine of God’s absolute sovereignty. He rightly answers those suggestions, (similar to the Episcopalians’ Thirty-Eight Articles of The Anglican Communion – see page 236), that the subject of Predestination ought not to be preached, because it will make men worse. The truth of the matter is that those congregations that followed that line of reason no longer exist as sound Christian churches. They have long since departed the purity of the Gospel as to no longer qualify as “Gospel Churches.” Here, Elder Trott defends the consistent

doctrine of the absoluteness of predestination over all things. This was his last article on this important subject.]

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I, a few weeks since, received by letter a request from a brother out West that I should give through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES my views on the Absolute Predestination of All things. I judge from this letter that this brother is sound on the subject; but I also judge from his letters, as also from a copy of the Minutes of the Association with which he is probably connected, that he is surrounded by Baptists not sound on all points, and not upon the subject upon which he wishes my views. I feel, therefore, disposed to yield to his request, if by any means I might say anything that would strengthen and confirm him in the truth, and instruct others who have hearts to understand. But I have in times past so fully discussed this subject through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and so frequently expressed my views on it, that I can hardly be expected to give anything new relating to it, yet it is a fruitful subject. One remark more: What I write on this subject I write for Old School Baptists. I do not expect others are prepared to receive what establishes the full sovereignty of God.

To come to the subject: Old School Baptists will admit concerning Him who is our GOD, that “all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3); that all things were created by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16); that “the Lord made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Proverbs 16:4). It is true the first two texts were written of Him who is the only begotten of the Father, and His Son, and of course the third applies to Him also; but the Son is the Savior, and the Savior of Israel is the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel (See Isaiah 43:3). Hence it is written, “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” (Romans 1:20). Is it not, then, evident that all things that are made were created FOR Himself, that He had a use for them all, even for the “small dust of the balance” (Isaiah 40:15), and for “the wicked” (Proverb 16:4), and for the “waster to destroy” ? (Isaiah 40:15). If He created “the wicked for the day of evil,” and the “waster to destroy,” had He not, when He created them for such, pre-determined the use He would make of them ? God had use for the waster, Satan, to introduce sin into the world, and He certainly had use for sin in the world for carrying out the purpose which He had “purposed in Christ Jesus,” that of saving sinners, and “bringing many sons unto glory” (Hebrews 2:10). He had use for Nebuchadnezzar to waste Judah. Tyre and Egypt, &c. And He had use for all

the wasters from Nebuchadnezzar down to the little insects that destroy one another, and can be discovered only by the microscope. If God “made all these things for Himself,” He certainly has a right to them, and to govern and dispose of them. Can it be supposed with any reason, that when God had made man for Himself, that He permitted him by sinning to take himself away from under His control and government, so that man can in anything thwart the purpose of God? Or, that Satan has obtained a control of man above the control of God? But whatever men may suppose concerning this, God has said, and that settles the question, “Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain” (Psalm 76:10). Again, David says, “Deliver my soul from the wicked which is Thy sword” (Psalm 17:13). If the wicked is His sword, then He of course has use for them, “in the day of evil” which He will bring upon men. Thus God says of Nebuchadnezzar: “O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation.” (Isaiah 10:5,6; also verse 15).

Once more: We are told by inspiration of God that, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,” (Romans 8:28). In the first of the above texts, we have it in substance affirmed that whatever wrath man shall be allowed to act out, shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath He shall restrain. This must embrace the sinful actions of men in general (“Thou shalt restrain”). In reference to the restraining of wrath, we have one instance in the crucifixion of Christ. God had said, through the type of the paschal lamb, “a bone of Him shall not be broken.” Whilst the soldiers break the legs of those crucified with Him, yet when they saw that Jesus was dead already, they did not break his legs; yet they would vent their wrath on Him in some way, and one of them pierced His side with a spear. There they were restrained from doing that which God said should not be done (Exodus 12:46 & John 19:36) yet in acting out their wrath they did exactly that which was foretold should be done (John 19:32-37 and Psalm 22:16). Yet these Roman soldiers did not design nor know that they were doing the will of God.

In the quotation from Isaiah 18:5,6, we have one illustration of how God uses the wicked as a sword or staff to visit evil upon men. In the quotation “that all things work together for good,” &c., there must be included in these all things all the trials from the reproaches and persecutions of men, from the temptations of Satan, and from the crosses and afflictions of life, that His people are subject to. In the quotations I have given it must, I think, be admitted that most of the wicked actions of men and devils are represented.

And it is shown that God controls them, for His people, for accomplishing His purpose, and for the good of His people.

Old School Baptists will admit that God's foreknowledge is infinite, and therefore must have embraced from eternity every event, however minute. If God then foreknew all of the wrath of men that should praise Him, and all that He would restrain, and all the use He would make of the wicked, it must have been He purposed that wrath which should be acted out, and that use which He would make of the wicked, and the events He would accomplish by them. Hence He say, "As I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24-27).

What is God's purpose but His predestination? Men in all ages charged the predestination of God with destroying the accountability of the creature. Paul knew of the natural prevalence of this objection, hence he said, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" The answer: "Nay, but O man, who are thou that repliest against God?" (Romans 9:19-24).

And here perhaps it would be wisdom to leave that point where Paul has left it. I will, however, just add that the Scriptures nowhere represents that God's purposing or predestinating the actions and events produced by it, in any case, destroys the sinfulness of the actor.

God had purposed that Joseph should be sold into Egypt, but his brethren sinned in the transaction, doing it from wicked design. Hence Joseph said unto them, "ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). So in the case of the Assyrian, while God foretold that He would use him as a rod and a staff in His hand against a hypocritical nation, &c.; yet He said, "Howbeit he meaneth not so," and "it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:5-19). Also, in Acts 2:23, concerning the Jews in crucifying Christ, we see the work of God in these cases. We see His purpose carried out by the wicked actions of wicked men and Satan, yet we cannot see Him work. We cannot comprehend His ways. Shall we deny His power? Deny that He does it, because we cannot comprehend how He does it, so as to have man a guilty transgressor and Himself pure and just? And shall we, therefore, ascribe the controlling power as well as the resulting acts to men and to devils? Every event prophesied of, both in the Old and New Testaments, concerning Israel, concerning the four great world empires of Nebuchadnezzar's image, of the division of the Greek Empire, of the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, and of the rise of the seven

headed Beast and of the two horned one – were and must have been predetermined of God, or it would not have been declared of God that they should take place. God said He would send Nebuchadnezzar or the Assyrian against Judah and Jerusalem, as has been seen from the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah. God named Cyrus as the man that should destroy Babylon and break the Assyrian Empire, and establish the second great empire, the Persian, and deliver the Jews – a hundred and thirty-eight years before Cyrus was born (see Isaiah 45:1-4). Yet He says of the Assyrian, that he meaneth not so, &c., and therefore that He will “punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria” (Isaiah 10:7-12). And He called Cyrus “a ravenous bird, that He calleth from the East to execute His counsel, &c., (Isaiah 46:11). It is evident, as is the case in the Assyrian above noticed, both from the Scripture account and from secular history, that Cyrus and all these kings and nations and people were acting by ambitious motives to exalt themselves: the one in the destruction of the other. Yet God says, in reference to these and preceding events, “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure; calling a ravenous bird” etc. – (Isaiah 46:9-12). What can be a more full and decided declaration of absolute predestination than this?

There are those in this section of the country who, though they consider themselves “Old School Baptists,” deny the absolute predestination of all things; yet they admit the predestination of those events immediately connected with the coming and death of Christ, and the predestination of the elect unto salvation and to the adoption of children. And I suppose, my brother, you have the same class of “Baptists” around you. It may therefore be well to say something on this point.

If the coming of Christ in the flesh was predestinated before the foundation of the world, then all events, all things connected with His coming, were predestinated. He “came into the world to save sinners;” then it must have been predestinated that His people should be “sinners,” and therefore that Adam, by transgression, should bring sin into the world. Rahab must become a harlot, and have a house in a retired place on the walls, that she might receive and hide the spies sent by Joshua, and thus secure her own deliverance from the destruction of Jericho, and become the mother of Boaz (David’s grandfather) by Salmon, and thus secure the succession from whence Christ was to come after the flesh (Joshua 2 and 6:25; Matthew 1:5). Tamar must assume the garb of a harlot, that she might entice her father-in-

law, Judah, that she might bear unto him an heir, that the succession from Judah to Christ might be preserved as prophesied (Genesis 38:12-30). So the birth of Solomon was preceded by adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. Those were all sinful acts and were intimate in securing the succession from Abraham down to Jesus. Satan had quite an important part to act in bringing this about; not only in entering into Judas and leading him to betray Jesus, but in exciting the Jews. Satan did not this with the design of furthering the purpose of God, but to frustrate it. He was acting out the enmity of his own heart against God. The act of Judas in betraying Jesus had been prophesied of by David, and therefore must have been predestinated, and of course, Satan's entering into him was also foretold (Psalm 109). Even Jesus said unto Judas, after Satan had entered him, "That thou doest do quickly." Yea, all this did not lessen his sinfulness in the act. If God can thus control and make use of Satan's enmity in accomplishing His own purpose, and yet leave him a devil, He can with equal ease control the wrath and wicked acts of men, and yet leave them still the sinners. We discover from this that Satan must be ignorant of the spirituality of the Scriptures, or he would have known that he was fulfilling them by tempting Judas. And he was equally ignorant of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, or he would not have thought to crush it by procuring His death.

In reference to the predestinated salvation of His people, Christ says of His Father, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17:2). What was the use of this power being given to Him over all flesh, if it was not necessary that He should have the control of all flesh, and their acts, in order to give eternal life to His people? It is as necessary that they should experience their first birth as their second; of course, He must have the control of every event that could effect their preservation in their ancestry to their being born, that there might be no frustration in that; and after their birth till called to the knowledge of the truth. This power over all flesh is declared by Christ to be, "All power in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18). If He has all power over all flesh, then there is none other that has any power over them to control their actions contrary to His purpose. I cannot think that any consistent Old School Baptist can think that God created or brought into existence any part of the human family merely to be damned; or in other words, that He had not use for in the world in carrying out the great purpose of creation, namely: the salvation and glorification of His people, either as channels through whom the elect are to descend from Adam, or through whom the wicked are to be brought into existence "against the day of evil," or to compose the votaries of the false systems of religion which God has in all ages permitted to exist in

the world, by which, through contrast with them, the glory and beauty of His truth may be made more manifest, and the riches of His grace more displayed in bringing His people to the knowledge of the truth, and in preserving them to glory. He must have the control of all these masses so as to secure their filling the places assigned them in the purpose of God. Indeed the term flesh in the expression “all flesh,” seems to be used to denote those who only are born of the flesh, in distinction from those who are born of the Spirit, as it reads, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”(John 3:3). It is true, this “power over all flesh was given” to Him as Son and Mediator – as God it could not be given Him, and that it is as Son that He reigns, and has reigned since His glorification or exaltation, and must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. (John 17:1-2, I Corinthians 15: 24,28). But it is not merely as the “begotten of the Father,” and having therefore only a derivative existence, and exercising only a given or delegated power, that He reigns. For although those around you may think that the character of the Redeemer is portrayed as truly sublime when He is represented as having no other Godhead than what was begotten and therefore derived, yet the Scriptures represent Him as absolutely Jehovah, the one self-existing God. Hence while as the Son He could say, “My Father is greater than I,” and “I and, My Father are one.” He is thus God, and the Son of God, in the same glorious personage as Mediator. Hence He said to Philip, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” If so He brings all the attributes of the Godhead into His work as Mediator, as He exercises His mediatorial powers. Being therefore, God, He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. Hence in the exercise of His power “over all flesh,” He is so controlling all that they are made to subserve the very purpose for which they were created, and therefore that which had been predestinated concerning them before they were created in Adam. Certainly it cannot be supposed that God created men for a purpose and yet had not determined what that purpose should be. It is equally absurd to suppose that He created them without a purpose! Hence we may rest assured that notwithstanding the wrath of men they can do nothing but what will be found among the “all things that work together for good to them that love God.”

Some Baptists are opposed to the predestination of all things being preached or agitated in our papers. They say that it tends to make men worse. Whether such are Old School Baptists in heart, or not, it is not my province to say. It certainly is the case that there is nothing which so directly draws out the enmity of the human heart against God and His Sovereignty, as the doctrine of predestination. But if the doctrine of predestination is true, it is certain that men will act out no more wrath than God will cause to praise Him, for

the remainder of wrath He will restrain. And it is true, or there is no dependence in the prophecies of the Scriptures. They would be all guess-work, if God had not determined just how far men should act out their wrath, and wherein He would restrain it. On the other hand it is truly consoling to the child of grace to feel assured that his God, his Savior, has the sovereign and all-powerful control of every event, and has determined all for good. Our Savior says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." Of course no shot can hit, no bird of prey can wound or kill a sparrow but as God pleases. Christ said to His disciples, "Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

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**PREDESTINATION,  
RELATIVE TO THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT IN THE BOOK  
OF LIFE; ALSO, RELATIVE TO THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE IN  
THE BOOK OF LIFE.**

**A**

**SERMON,**

**PREACHED AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE,  
BOROUGH ROAD.**

**By JAMES WELLS,  
MINISTER OF THE CHAPEL.**

**LONDON:**

**E. PALMER AND SON, 18, PATERNOSTER ROW.**

**1839.**

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**PREDESTINATION.**

**I Thess. v. 9.**

**" For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation  
by our Lord Jesus Christ."**

To know the will and understand the counsels of the Lord, are mercies truly great, mercies which none but the Lord can bestow, and which none but those whose names are in the book of life can possess. A true knowledge of God, is associated with every other grace of the Holy Spirit; those therefore who truly know the Lord, will believingly receive his truth, will fear his name, love his salvation, seek his face, and walk in his ways, and will stand out a clear contrast to those who know not the truth as it is in Jesus. Those who know the truth are led by the Spirit. of truth, knowing that the majority of men are led by the spirit of error; either indifferent concerning eternal things, or else, by a blind zeal, manifesting their enmity against the sovereignty of God in the eternal election of his people; but all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed, yea, even confounded, for he "

worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," saying, " my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." The deadening, intoxicating and capricious things of time and sense are passing away like the morning cloud and the early dew, and who in his senses, would look for shelter from that cloud which ensures no lasting mitigation from the killing heat, or who would look for permanent enjoyment from the effects of that dew which leaves the grass to wither afore it groweth up? Ps. cxxix. 6:" let us therefore (saith the apostle) who are of the day, be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation; for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us then, the Lord enabling us so to do, follow up the contents of this scripture under the three following particulars,

1. The State of Man by Nature.

11. The Decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the Book of Life.

111. The Decrees of God relative to those whose names are in the Book of Life.

I. The State of Man by Nature. This is indicated by some being appointed to wrath, as none will be punished but sinners, and all by nature are sinners; yet some escape the wrath to come, and it is because Jesus hath delivered them from the wrath to come, and they are appointed to obtain by him salvation; this is the way the Lord's everlasting arms are underneath them, and but for this, they would sink even as others.

There is one feature of man in his natural-state, which I here intend chiefly to notice, and that one feature is helplessness. Man by nature is helpless, both as it relates to the law of God and to the gospel of God; the law demands of him all that perfection he had in the first Adam, but he is altogether an unclean thing, " there is none that doeth good no not one," the law is immutable, the sinner is helpless. And as to the gospel, "except a man be born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;" and, " the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned; and, "without faith it is impossible to please God; "they

that are in the flesh cannot please God, and no man can keep alive his own soul. The Father quickeneth whom he will; the Son quickeneth whom he will, it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. How emphatically does the prophet describe in the following scripture our helplessness, "we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." Here we are compared to autumnal leaves, dead fallen from the tree, and made the sport of furious winds, raised by him, who is the prince of the power of the air. And, what is the use of these leaves ? scarcely fit for the dunghill, the fire is their more proper place: man does not deserve a place even in this world, that fire which is unquenchable is his desert. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." Ps. lxxii. 9. Who can revivify these dry leaves, unite them to their native tree, and thus save them from ultimate destruction!

Such is the helplessness of men in their fallen state-the soul as destitute of spiritual life as is the body of immortality: and as no human wisdom, power, or means, can prevent the body from returning to the dust., so no one can contribute one iota towards the salvation of his soul. We have destroyed ourselves, and in us is no help; vain is the help of man. And, even if it could be proved, that we did not by the fall lose all the holiness, righteousness and goodness we had by creation; even if this could be proved, these remnants of original rectitude, could not assist in preparing us for the upper world, for Adam, was not fitted for the celestial world, but for this world only. The saints, are to enter heaven by the blood and righteousness of Christ, in the Spirit of Christ and in the love of Christ; no one mere, creature doing, or creature quality, can ever be admitted to mingle with the glories of Christ, he is all and in all. Man by nature is dead in sin, and is helpless, as to the law and gospel of God. Man is Helpless also as to his body and his soul; he cannot prevent the death of the one, nor atone for the guilt of the other. Here it may be asked, does not this statement take away, or at least lessen human accountability? We answer, that this statement does not lessen human accountability, and for this reason, that human helplessness does not originate in our creation state, nor in the law of God, nor in the gospel of God, nor in the providence of God. God is not the author of our helplessness; our helplessness originates in sin; our helplessness is one of the immediate effects of sin; the body is dead because of sin; the soul is dead in sin we are by sin without strength, and as our helplessness is an immediate effect of sin, it becomes in its turn a cause of sin. For man being helpless, he continues in some shape or other a willing slave to the wicked one; and to bring forward our helplessness as an excuse for sin, would be bringing one sin to excuse

another: Adam having lost his robe of innocence, was no excuse for his hiding himself among the trees of the garden, but an evidence of his guilt. Therefore, the reason our helplessness does not lessen human accountability, nor form any excuse for man, is, because Helplessness originated in sin: we have destroyed ourselves.

This our helplessness, is a truth of the Bible, and realized in the experience of all who are taught of God; and a doctrine to be insisted upon, in order to shew up the ravages of sin, and that the haughtiness of men might be brought low, and that the Lord's people should be encouraged, and free grace glorified. In proportion as human helplessness is denied, are all the truths of the gospel denied. Hence the doctrine of free-will has let in a train of abominations, which (as far as words can do it) turns the gospel of God upside down ; putting down the sovereignty of the Creator, and setting up the (supposed) sovereignty of the creature ; making void the decrees of heaven and resting matters upon the designs of earth ; keeping back the perfection of the Saviour's work, to make room for the doings of the sinner : degrading the Holy Spirit to a phantom, that man may be supposed to have power to serve (just as he chooses) God or the devil.

Certainly free-willers have done wonderful things! Cain was a free-willer, and of course he hated Abel's free-grace religion, and very piously dismissed him from the earth. Those who persecuted and slew the prophets were of the free-will tribe; so also were those who crucified the Lord of life and glory: and the same tribe, as soon as they could, drove the apostles out of the world. Of this tribe too were the popes of Rome; Catholicism is free-willism in its slaughter-house dress. If the free-willers and duty-faith Calvinists of the present day, were left to the full influence of the doctrines of duty-faith and free-will, and had in their hands the power, they would be as great persecutors of the real children of God, as ever the Romish church was. Not that it is to be wondered at, that doctrines of devils should lead to devilish deeds; but by a kind and overruling providence, they are kept from the tendency of their own principles, and most of them ignorant of the tendency of the doctrines they advocate.

Let the doctrine of creature power be excluded, and the doctrine of human helplessness be brought in, or let the advocates of the one be contrasted with the advocates of the other, and then mark the difference of the position of each, together with the difference of the tendency of the principles of each. Those who contend for creature power, these persons deriving no absolute security from the ancient counsels and settlements of God the Father, cannot

bring to him the glory of absolute and eternal election in Christ. These of course are not bound to give thanks that God hath from the beginning chosen them to salvation; nor must they say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world;" nor that "he hath saved them and called them, not according to their own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given to them in Christ before the world began." As they do not derive these things from the ancient settlements of God the Father, they cannot bring the glory of them to him, they must bring something else instead; but the Lord will say, Who hath required this at your hands? And this their bond-service will be rejected, and they along with it. Again, as they do not derive absolute, unconditional, and eternal deliverance from the wrath to come by the mediatorial work of Christ, he cannot have from them the glory of being all in all, of being their fullness and eternal perfection; therefore when they say, "Salvation is of grace!" and Christ will be crowned Lord of all! they contradict their darling principles of free-will and creature-power. The doctrines of free-will and creature-power are the abominations they hold in their heart; and the Lord looketh on the heart, and it is no use to come with free grace on the lips while free-will is in the heart. They speak of peace, but war is in the heart.

Again, the doctrine of free will does not acknowledge the necessity of the sovereignty nor the invincibility of the Holy Spirit. Thus the nature and tendency of the doctrine of creature power, are to rob immortal souls of the highest good, and God of the highest praise. How awfully delusive then is the position of those who advocate the doctrines of free will, creature-power, and duty-faith. But, bring in the doctrine of creature-helplessness, and let men come to an experimental knowledge of their helplessness, they will then be brought low, and the Lord alone exalted: they will see and feel their need of the ancient settlements of mercy, the Saviour's finished work, and the sovereignty and invincibility of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's people know (at least many of them) what it is to try to do all that law and gospel command; and they go on trying and trying, until they find that their strength is perfect weakness: it is one thing to assent to the doctrine of human-helplessness, and another thing to feel it. Those who are taught of the Lord, learn that faith and repentance are gifts of God; and they learn also, that he that believeth not cannot (living and dying in that state) be saved, and that except they repent they must perish and that there is no peace, no pardon or assurance enjoyed, without faith and repentance. The Lord humbles them

by repentance, and keeps them through faith: that is to say, the Lord brings them down under a sight and sense of what they are as sinners, makes them nothing and less than nothing in their own eyes; and he who has convinced them of sin, keeps them in the belief of what they are and of what he is. Thus humbled, made willing, and kept believing, they know from experience that before honour goeth humility and that all their springs are in God. Nor can they rest satisfied concerning their destiny, until the Lord Jesus is made precious to their souls; and when they find him of whom Moses and the prophets did write and speak, they know it is because he has loved, sought, and found them. These deriving their salvation in the origin, mediation, manifestation, and continuation of it from God, very naturally from the sentiments and feelings of their hearts ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb, and know that song which none can know but those who are redeemed from among men. Those who advocate the doctrine of conditional salvation, may ascribe salvation to God in word, but it is only in word, for their sentiments run another way; and except the Lord should grant them repentance, they too will go another way " There is a way that seemeth right, but the end thereof is death."

All men being dead in sin, under sin, possessed by sin, helpless through sin, and condemned for sin, if any are saved the Lord alone can save them. And he who saves some, could if it were his will save all; and, as some of our old divines have said, if He who alone can save does not save, how vain is the help of man--his inventions are worse than nothing, his rebellion impious, and all his works as a spider's web. After these few observations concerning our state by nature, let us notice,

II. The decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the Book of Life. The decrees of God relative to these may be said to be threefold, permissive, restrictive, and retributive.

1. Permissive. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet: so that neither the fall of angels nor of men could derange his counsels, alter his thoughts, nor disannul his decrees; for his counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure. It was not his will to hinder the fall of man; and as it was not his will to hinder it, it was his will to permit it. The Lord permitted the fall because he would. Are we to suppose the Lord willed that the fall should not take place, and yet it did take place? That the Lord willed that none should harden their hearts to destruction, and

yet men do harden their hearts to their own destruction? What! The Lord will that Adam and Eve should continue in paradise, yet is obliged to pass upon them the sentence of death, and send them out of paradise? Yea, that the Lord willed that angels should not fall, yet they did fall? Willed that none among men should be lost, yet millions of men are lost? But, thou wilt say, if he hath willed all these things, why doth he yet find fault? But nay, O man, who art thou that repliest against God! Art thou wiser than God? Hast thou an arm like God? Is there an atom of dust thou canst call thine own? Is not thy soul, thy body, and thy breath, and all that pertaineth to thee in his hands? And wouldest thou, impious worm, overturn the throne of the Almighty? Thou rotten moth, wouldest thou undertake to hear up the pillars of the earth? Thou poor insect, canst thou hold the wind in thy fists, hide the waters in the hollow of thy hand, and roll planetary worlds through immeasurable space? Place thyself, O man, by the side of these things, and see thine own nothingness, and then approach thy Maker; and see thyself Nothing and less than nothing, and then ask if the ever-living and everlasting God, is not to work all things after the counsel of his own will, then who is to instruct him? who shall teach him knowledge, or say unto him, What doest thou? Forbear thee, then, meddling with God; put thy hand upon thy mouth, and acknowledge that thou art but as a beast before him.

Some have thought that decree and permission are one, but the truth is they are not one, the difference between the two is very great, so great that if we do not admit the doctrine of divine permission, we make God the author of sin. Let us try this matter. And in the first place, we have to ask by whose agency did sin enter the world? The answer is, that it came by the agency of the wicked one, of Eve and of Adam. The wicked one forged lies; Eve and Adam received those lies. The enemy did not get those lies from the Lord, for the enemy is not only a liar, but the father of lies, and by his feasible, but false doctrine, Eve and Adam were led into sin. Sin does not emanate from the Lord, nor was it produced and propagated by the Lord; for the production and propagation of sin, were works, which Christ came to destroy; and he came. not to destroy the works of God, but to destroy the works of the devil. Adam and Eve were commanded not to sin; this command they transgressed; but who and what, inclined them thus to transgress? The Lord did not; the law he had given did not; their consciences did not authorize them; nor was there a want of happiness, to authorize them to seek for something more than they then possessed. Now to say the Lord willed this, and at the same time to deny that he permitted it, would he saying, that the immediate cause of Adam and Eve sinning, was the influence of the will of God; and, whereas, it was the influence of the will of the devil. But, by maintaining that man fell by

creature agency, we can defy our adversaries to fasten upon us the stigma, of making God the author of sin.

These two things then are clear: First. That the fall took place by the conduct of the creature. Secondly. That the Lord permitted it. That is to say, he could have hindered it had it been his will so to do. There is but one reason that can be assigned why he permitted the fall, and that is, because he would: and let me tell you, that this is a reason quite sufficient for every honest enquirer. For in the first place, God is infinite in wisdom, so that he cannot err he is almighty in power, so that he cannot be repelled; he is independent of all, and under obligation to none; he is glorious in holiness, and underived in all the perfection of his nature. He either willed that sin should exist: or that it should not exist; if we say that he willed that sin should not exist, why then we must say also, that the creature has reigned over the Creator he decreed one thing and another came to pass, so that his counsel did not stand, nor could he do all his pleasure. Here is infinite wisdom baffled-omnipotence overcome the eternal God defeated. Thus by saying he willed that sin should not exist, we come at once into the chaos of Atheism. The systems of freewillism, duty-faithism, Roman Catholicism, Socinianism and profanity, all originate in Atheism; for while the profane live as though there was no God, the systems above mentioned deny his sovereignty; these systems, are the abominations sheltered under a denial of the absolute sovereignty of God. So then to say that the Lord willed the fall. should not take place, is to side with Atheism, Deism, duty-faithism, free-willism, Catholicism, Socinianism and every other damnable system of the day.

The only way, therefore, to maintain the entire dominion of God, and, that he is not the author of sin, is to say that he permitted the fall, because he would. The Lord is spoken of in these two respects in the scriptures of truth. We are there told, that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And that " he suffered (or permitted) all nations to walk in their own way." So, that on the one hand, in order to maintain his dominion, we must admit that he willed the fall should take place; on the other hand, in order to maintain the character of God, as a God of untarnishable holiness, we must contend that the fall took place by creature agency-that the Lord permitted but did not influence the creature to sin. This is the way in which he "has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet."

Those who choose to charge infinite wisdom with folly, and the sovereignty of the Most High with tyranny, because he willed and permitted sin to exist-those who choose thus to strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and to

rush in even upon the thick bosses of his buckler-those who choose to do this, must abide by the consequences of their conduct.

Although the Lord has willed that sin should exist, and has consequently permitted the creature to fall; yet sin to him is infinitely hateful, and to us, to the last degree awful. His willing the existence of it, brings no reflection upon him, for where there is no law, there is no transgression. The dominion of the potter over the clay, is not so entire as the dominion of the Lord over the creatures he has made. If the potter can without any injustice, appoint one vessel to honour and another unto dishonour, how much more can he who inhabiteth eternity, will what he pleaseth ! And to whom is he to be accountable? There is no God beside him! Who shall prescribe rules for him? Who shall enter into judgment with him? Who can say unto him what doest thou? For he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, and in all the deep places, and is the confidence of all his people, " even to the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:" for them he has willed good things, and if his will could fail in one respect, why not in another? The fall made way for the eternal covenant of salvation. All things were made for, as well as by Jesus Christ. I therefore conclude, that the Lord willed the existence of sin-that the fall took place, by creature agency-that the Lord permitted it because he would.

As the decrees of God relative to the fall were thus permissive, so in the next place they may be said to be restrictive. Now as the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, they do not go on in sin by any influence from the Lord. Heaven forbid that we should for a moment indulge such a thought. If men had more opportunity, and more muscular and mental ability, they would go ten thousand times further in sin than they now do; they have in them latent seeds of, capabilities for, and inclinations to sin, which creature-power can never develop, for " the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and who can know it" But the Lord hath fixed the bounds of their operations, which bounds they are ever aiming to pass, but they cannot perform their enterprise. I verily believe if the Lord were to leave the world one month entirely to the maddening operations of sin, that the world would be entirely depopulated: one month! aye, more likely in one hour. The Lord might well be called the PRESERVER of men. The very character of sin and Satan is to destroy, but the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The antediluvian world of ungodly men could not destroy Noah, nor hinder him from building the ark; the men of Sodom could not involve Lot in the destruction of the cities of the plain; nor could the nation among whom sojourned Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, destroy these apparently

defenceless patriarchs; nor could Joseph's brethren put him to death, nor the Egyptian prison detain him beyond the appointed time; Pharoah could destroy neither Moses nor the Israelites, nor could the nations around the wilderness destroy them ; Saul could not put David to death, nor could Jezebel slay Elijah ; Nebuchadnezzar's furnace could not injure the men of God; the lions shall do Daniel no hurt; the Jews shall not crucify the Lord of life and glory a moment before the appointed time; they could not (though they tried) go beyond nor frustrate the decrees and counsels of God. " He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and he that is proud he is able to abase." Persecution shall not hinder the divinely appointed course of the apostles, but rather accelerate their march; pagan superstition shall not extinguish the religion of the Son of God; popish domination shall not deprive the saints of their life in Christ; nor shall the blind charity of the present day hinder the elect of God from knowing the truth as it is in Jesus. The wrath of man shall praise him, and that which would go beyond its bounds will he restrain.

Man then as a fallen creature, is in a great variety of forms, religious and irreligious, led captive by sin and Satan; and as the Lord permitted the fall because he would, so he restrains the ungodly because he will: he hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. These truths are of course offensive to a blind and self-conceited world, but those whose hearts, eyes, and ears the Lord hath opened, believe, know, acknowledge, and bow to the solemn truth, that there is a people against whom the Lord hath indignation, and that for ever: that the Lord never loved them, never intended to save them, and has made no provision for them; they are appointed not unto salvation, but unto condemnation.

This leads me to the most awful part of the subject now before us, namely, that the decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the book of life, are not only permissive and restrictive, bat also retributive. Not one jot or tittle of his holy law can fail, so that those who are under the law must continue under the curse of the law, they will be punished according to the law. The law is holy, just, and good; they are unholy, unjust, and in every sense evil. In this state they must meet a God who is holy, just, and good; they cannot alter their state, and the Lord will continue holy, just, and good. Here is the creature standing altogether opposed to the law of God, and consequently to the God of the law; therefore as the Lord abideth by his holy law, they are condemned as being unholy, unjust, and evil; and as they have sinned personally they must suffer personally having sinned in soul and body, they must suffer in soul and body-having sinned against the Most

High, they will by him be punished, his wisdom shall confound all their inventions, and bring them to their destined end; his justice will hold them as its prisoners, the majesty of his holiness will be to them as a consuming fire, his native goodness shall bring all their evil to light, his omniscience shall find them out, his omnipresence shall encompass them, his power shall bring them to judgment, and force them down to bottomless perdition, there to dwell in adamant chains and penal fire; his eternity will continue their distress, and his immutability render their anguish always the same.

The certainty of their punishment is founded in the immortality of the soul, and in the infallibility of the law of God. As there will be a resurrection of the unjust as well as of the just, we say that with the exception of the time the body is mingled with the dust, the whole person is immortal. It matters not what men may say against our immortality, after all, the soul is still immortal; the opinions, sentiments, and speeches of men do not affect the truth, unbelief cannot make the promise, the precept, nor the penalty of none effect. God has not only constituted the soul immortal, but has also so constituted it (that notwithstanding men are by their fall in Adam dead in sin, yet) that the most hardened infidel in the world is not always free from fear upon the subject. The soul is the restless inhabitant of the body, nor is any one object on earth, nor all combined, able to raise or keep the mind in a state of repose and satisfaction. There are two reasons upon which many of the learned among the heathen rested their assurance of the immortality of the soul, one its restlessness, the other its capabilities. They compared the soul in consequence of its restlessness to a butterfly; hence the Greek word *pseuchē*, the soul, means originally a butterfly, going hastily from object to object, and so does the mind. It had in paradise before the fall a settled abode, it dwelt with God in knowledge, love, holiness and righteousness; but of all these it is now deprived. Having no true knowledge of God, no true love to him, no true holiness nor righteousness before him; having sinned it is driven out from his presence, and is become a wanderer in the regions of darkness, delusion, and death, aiming to work out imaginary worlds in which to reside : but, alas! whether it descend to mines of human wealth, send its anxious enquiries through the starry heavens, pursue the hidden "laws of the universe, walk on the fairy ground of earthly pleasure, or aspire to poetic, military, or senatorial fame, or wrap itself in all the royalty this world can bestow, and having like Solomon all the charms of nature at command; yet after all, what is the unavoidable conclusion to which it must come? Will it be that it has in some of these departments found a river able, to satiate its thirst-a climate suited, altogether suited to its feelings-a space large enough for the full use of all its powers-associations every way

desirable and united sources of supply able to keep happiness in full tide. Are these the tidings it will bring of those scenes in which it has endeavoured to rest? Let us ask of our fathers, and one will tell us that few and evil had been the clays of the years of his life; another longing for the wings of more than a mortal dove, that he might flee away and be at rest; another pathetically saying, "I am this clay fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my Lord the King," 2 Sam. xix. 3,5; another assuring us that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Sin is the fire whence the troubles naturally arise. In the realms of nature the mind cannot rest; for in consequence of sin all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Thus is the soul as a wandering bird cast out of the nest; called by different objects, systems, and circumstances, a thousand different ways; yet none but the Lord can lead it the right way. The mind as to its destiny is lost, not knowing where it is nor where it will be hereafter. Thus lost and deluded, wholly employing itself in things temporal, neglecting or wrongly directed in things eternal, how great is the misery of man; intoxicated with the wine of error, he is as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. But the period is fast coming, when the mind neither of the sinner nor the saint shall wander anymore for ever; all shall be stayed in God; one in his wrath, the other in his love. Let us here for a moment reflect upon the state of the soul reserved in chains of darkness, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Here it is fixed, all its sins and the wrath due thereto claiming and keeping all its attention; it cannot wander for one moment from what it then endures, almighty wrath holds it fast, and rends it as it were in a thousand pieces, yet it retains its oneness. God is against it forever, even forever and ever, and who can deliver out of his hand? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

All other matters to the lost will be as nothing, their punishment will be their all. And there appears to be two things, which those who are now in perdition dread. One is an increase of number-"Let one be sent (said the rich man) from the dead, to warn my five brethren, lest they come into this place of torment." I do not believe this request arose so much from a pity to others, as the fear of increased torment among themselves; as an increase of number must increase the horror of the shrieks, the groans and blasphemies of the lost: devils believe and tremble, but Satan cannot love. The next, is the day of judgment- "art thou come to torment us before our time?" the time when

their punishment shall commence in its highest degree, when there shall be no rocks nor mountains to fall on them from the wrath of the Lamb.

The capabilities of the soul surpass its present conception, as four of the external senses of the body, are included in the one out of which they arise, namely, feeling. The eye is sensible of objects, the ear of sounds, the nose of scent, and the mouth of taste; yet none of these could exist without the sense called feeling, although feeling may exist without any of these, as none of these four is essential to life. As then all the senses of the body, may be expressed in the one word feeling, so all the capabilities of the soul, may be expressed in the one word consciousness. What is knowledge? But a consciousness of beings, things and circumstances. How far then, the soul is capable of extending in knowledge, none on earth can tell. What is love? but the consciousness of an object of desire-fear, the consciousness of an object of terror-the will, is a consciousness of choice and refusal-hope, of something attainable reasoning, reflecting, and contriving, all come to the same thing; for without consciousness, there could be none of these. The manifold powers of consciousness will be unfolded in another world; the exercise of these powers may, and is, by many circumstances of this time state obstructed, as in sleep, for instance, the exercise of these powers seems totally suspended, but then the existence of these powers is still the same, they are as to their existence indestructible. This is clear, both from the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, and the eternity of the joy of the righteous; neither of which can be without the immortality of the soul. As the saints will not be interrupted in the exercise of their powers or capabilities, so the lost will not be able to cease from exercising their capabilities, in receiving, enduring, and being filled with all that condemnation due to them, and which shall be inflicted by Omnipotence.

Think then of our state by our fall in Adam; our guilt, augmented ten thousand-fold by our personal conduct, standing opposed to God the Judge of all. The soul, restless, immortal, possessing unknown capabilities, progressing through a transitory world, and hurried out of the world by the pestilence of sin and death, and then to sink to a world of endless remorse, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." This is the portion of those who live and die out of Christ; God is faithful to all his threatening as well as to his promises, none of his words can fall to the ground, "the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away." Thrice holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth, holiness is essential to the majesty and glory of God; hence, wherever there is sin, there are meanness and shame, so that those who are lost shall come forth, to everlasting shame and

contempt. God never will set light by his own holiness, and until he does, there will be for the lost no hope. Never, never will he cease to show infinite, just and holy hatred to sin. What must be the wrath of a sin avenging God? Ye believers in Jesus, ye followers of the Lamb, who can tell of one half of the gratitude, praise and admiration you owe to him, " who hath loved you and washed you from your sins in his own blood?" think of the sins for which he hath atoned. The pit from which he hath delivered the value of the soul he hath redeemed: to you who believe, to you, surely he is precious; he is the " unspeakable gift" of God your Father, he is the great theme of the Holy Ghost. God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is your God, and that for ever he being for you, who can be successfully against you?

The decrees of God then, objectively considered are relative to them that are lost, permissive, restrictive, and retributive. In these truths, we see maintained the holiness, justice, and dominion of him, " who is God over all blessed for evermore."

III. We now pass on to notice, the decrees of God relative to those whose names are in the Book of Life. The decrees of God relative to these may be considered as preservative, saving, and receptive; that is to say, they are preserved while dead in sin, salvation is theirs, and they will be at last received to glory. The two chief principles upon which these mercies run, appear to me to be, the love of God, and, the great act of absolute election. For, if we take away election, then they are not the Lord's, nor consequently, does he stand engaged to preserve, save, and receive them to himself. And, if we take away the love of God, then he would not have made them his, for "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" he made us his people because he loved us, and he does everything for us because we are his, and because he loves us. And, as the Lord's people are loved in Christ and chosen in Christ, so they are preserved, saved, and-received to glory in and by him. The Lord, in the beginning (if I may use the word beginning), exercised towards his people great things; he fixed upon them great love, love infinite and eternal, taking them up into the unspeakably high and noble relation of sons of God; bestowing upon them an infinite gift, even his dear Son ; and God-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, entering for them into an immutable covenant of salvation, and eternal glory. For ever is his word settled in heaven; the fixation of his love, the great act of choosing, the gift of Christ, and formation of the covenant, were all according to infinite knowledge,

consequently nothing unforeseen can arise; all the sins of the church, all the persons of the church, and all circumstances of all worlds, were clearly seen, fully provided for, and so arranged, as to be subservient to his own will; he purposes to preserve, to save, and to receive to glory all the objects of his love and choice; and in these things who can hinder him?

Our object then, now, is to trace these mercies, namely, preservation, salvation, and glorification. 1st. Preservation: and here, be it observed, that the love of God to his people is the same when they are dead in sin, as when they are in glory; his love to them is not augmented by anything he does for them, or by anything they can do for him, in truth they can do nothing, and all that the Lord does for them, is the consequence of his love to them; he gloried in them from everlasting, his delights were with the sons of men, even from everlasting, the Saviour's goings forth for them were from everlasting, his mediatorial throne was fixed of old from everlasting, he loved his people before the foundation of the world (.John xvii. 23 23) ; he loved them while dead in sin (Eph. ii. 4, 5) ; hence they were his while dead in sin; he died for the ungodly. Founded in this love of God and covenant relation to him, is their preservation while in a state of nature, and is not this preservation a mercy essential to our welfare, a mercy for which we are constrained to be thankful, a mercy glorifying to God? Were we not when we knew not the Lord exposed to ten thousand deaths, were not our sins innumerable, some of our worst enemies to us invisible, have we not seen many of our fellow creatures around us fall into the arms of death, to all human appearance having no true hope, and without God in the world, is there not then something more or less, wonderful in the history of each one who is brought to know the Lord? How many have from necessity taken those steps, which they worked hard to avoid, and yet the very circumstances have proved in the Lord's hands, to be the means of bringing them to know him? So that even when they were dead in sin, and were pursuing that by which they could not profit, the Lord was watching over them, preserving, and pursuing them for good, so that they can neither destroy themselves, nor can anything else destroy them; all their sins cannot provoke the Lord to withdraw his love from them, nor change his mind concerning them. When one creature sins against another, and persists in his ill treatment to his fellow creature, it is very difficult, if not impossible for the one who is ill treated, to keep up in his mind the same affection, good feeling and good will towards the person who does the wrong; and especially if the person who is wronged, can do as well without the person who wronged him as he could with him:

human love is a delicate flame, and if we throw much water thereon it will be very much weakened if not quenched, but the love of God, is love " which many waters cannot quench, nor can the floods drown it."

Scarcely will a man die for the dearest friend he has on earth, yet peradventure some would even dare to die for an earthly friend; but Christ died for us while we were enemies; he knew us when we knew not him; he loved us when we hated him; he preserved us when we would have destroyed him; he drank the cup of vindictive wrath for us, when we refused him a cup of cold water (John iv) ; he thought highly of us when we despised him; he carried us in his bosom, when our hearts were the habitations of devils; he longed after us, when we were saying, " Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." While he was fulfilling the law, we were fulfilling the desires of the flesh; while he was dying for our salvation, we were living in sin; while he was bringing in everlasting righteousness, we were glorying in our shame: yet none of these things could move him, he loved us still, nor all the sins of his people could abate his love, alter his thoughts, nor change his purpose. If he stood by us then will he forsake us now? If there had been any danger of abatement in his love, or alteration in his purpose, surely it must have been when he had before him all the sins of his people, the curse of the law of God, the insults of men and devils, together with ten thousand things which he in his life and death endured. " If then he died for us while we were yet enemies, and hath reconciled us to God; if he died for us then, much more being reconciled, we shall he saved from wrath through him, " for the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." He is the house not made with hands, and around this house the floods can no more rise. Upon this house the rains can no more descend, nor the mighty winds any more try to shake it; it is established for ever, mercy shall be built up for ever; the darkness is past, the true light now shineth, nor can the curse which is removed ever again return. Jesus hath died, and it is not needful that he should die again; death hath no more dominion over him. The love and the salvation of God were essential to our preservation while in a state of nature; and because the Lord loved us, made us his, and provided salvation for us, he therefore determined to take care of us: and as his love, salvation, and relation to us, remained through all circumstances and seasons the same, we were preserved, and so will all whose names are in the Book of Life. They are, while dead in sin, treasures hid in the sand, sheep lost on the dark mountains of error, children though in foreign climes, not knowing their high relationship, nor noble destiny, nor the incorruptible inheritance awaiting them.

Let then those who know the Lord acknowledge, that it was because they were appointed to salvation, that they were preserved in Christ Jesus; that he was their security even when they were dead in sin. Take away this eternal security in Christ, and then those who know the Lord may ascribe their preservation to anything but the Lord. In a word, if there were no security then, there is none now, for what the Lord Jesus Christ is for his people now, he was before the world began. He was made a Priest by an immutable oath, and this his priestly office includes every other office which he sustains, as also the dignity of his person as a priest he was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but this sacrifice could not have put away sin, unless he were God as well as man, and man as well as God: no man can redeem his brother, yet without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. Christ was and is an almighty and eternal Priest, for his priesthood is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." As a Prophet all the promises he uttered are rendered yea and amen by his blood. As a King he reigns over all the sins, circumstances, and persons of his people, by the infinite efficacy of his own blood. He pleads their cause with his own blood; they have by his blood, boldness to enter into the holy of holies by his blood they overcome all their enemies, in life, death and judgment. It is by the blood of Christ, that God in all the attributes and perfections of his nature is on their side God being thus for them, who can be against them? He is not on their side conditionally, but freely; not partially, but fully; not merely for a time, but from everlasting to everlasting. And if they cannot be lost while in a state of nature, how much the less when brought into a state of grace.

Those who deny or keep back the great acts of absolute election and divine predestination, have never yet experimentally known the truth as it is in Jesus; they have never yet known the good these great truths bring to men, nor the glory they bring to God. Do not these truths set forth the antiquity, freeness, and fulness of the love and salvation of God, in a way altogether suited to guilty and helpless man, and consequently glorifying to God? Every system that denies or keeps back the doctrines of election and predestination is an abomination in the sight of God. The advocates of such systems are false apostles, and their followers led by strong delusion, believing a lie, that they all may be damned that have pleasure in this their unrighteousness: but those who are the Lord's shall leave these wild tribes, come to Zion submit themselves to the righteousness and sovereignty of God, saying, " Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Take predestination to eternal life from the man who knows and daily feels what he is as a sinner; take predestination from such an one, and he feels that

he has no hope; for none of the doctrines of the gospel would be of any certain use without predestination. What for instance would be the love of God, if the Lord was not absolutely and unalterably determined that those whom he loves shall enjoy all the happy consequences of his love to them? What would election be, if the Lord were not determined that the objects of choice should have the Spirit of adoption? The atonement is infinitely efficacious in itself, yet what would it be to the people, if the Lord were not determined to bring them into the glory of it, and of all the doctrines of the gospel? Take away divine predestination, and all is uncertainty, confusion, and disappointment." But I (saith the apostle) so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth in the air." He here alludes to the Olympic games (that is, the public festivals) of the Greeks and Romans, There were three ways in which those who ran at those festivals were liable to lose the prize: first, from want of strength; at that festival the youths may faint, and the young men utterly fall, "but those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up on eagles' wings, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint"- "as their days are so shall their strength be" "they shall go from strength to strength"" God is their refuge and strength, and they shall do all things through Christ who strengtheneth them"- "they not fall short for want of strength."

Violating the rules of the race is another way in which they were liable to lose the prize. But in the heavenly race "if any man sin (and there is no man that sinneth not) we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, whose blood cleanseth from all sin." When an heir of glory is overtaken with a fault, let friends mourn and lament, and let not the enemies rejoice, for though he fall he shall again arise, and though he sit in darkness the Lord will be a light unto him. Grace shall reign by power and by pardon, through righteousness unto eternal life.

The dishonesty of the judge was another means by which they were in danger of losing the prize. The judges of Israel were to receive no gifts, as a gift blindeth the eyes. The Judge of all is a righteous Judge: "There is (saith the apostle) a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give to me; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." This crown of life and glory is bestowed as the reward of the Saviour's work: He rejoiced as a strong man to run a race; He traveled in the greatness of his own strength; he beat down all his foes, outran all opposers, and laid hold of eternal glory for himself and his people. Many run, but they run the wrong way: they run to Sinai instead of Zion, they run in the broad roads of free-will and universal charity (falsely so called). These run

not in the highway of eternal election in. Christ, predestination to glory by him, eternal redemption and justification by him. These paths of righteousness they have not known, on these high mountains of Israel they never walked. Many run, but one only, even the only begotten Son of God obtains the prize. His people and he are one, and he has full possession of the prize; and because he arrived safe to the end, so uncertainly, Jesus their fore-runner for ever liveth to make intercession for them.

There is one circumstance by which the candidate for the Olympic race became for a time a castaway; and it is to this the apostle alludes, when he says. " I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The candidates for the Olympic race underwent several weeks' preparation, which consisted in abstinence and exercise; and if any one violated these rules, he was called a castaway, and continued to be a castaway until the next festival, when he again came forward, and was allowed to run in the race. You see the import of this.

In the first epistle of the Corinthians, we have one cast away for a time for the destruction of the flesh, and in the next epistle we find him again received, for God never finally cast away his people which he did foreknow. Some of the most eminent saints of God have become for a time castaways, and knew what it was to have broken bones. It is indeed a bitter thing to sin against God; no punishment on earth can equal to a child of God that punishment which is the natural consequence of inconsistency of conduct. Yet how great is the mercy of being chastised, " for as many as the Lord loveth he chastens-" and rebukes, gives them repentance, and makes them zealous for their honour as heirs of eternal life; "for the Lord will be glorified even from the border (as well as from the centre) of Israel, and so all Israel shall be saved."

Take away predestination, and you dethrone the Almighty, render null and void the eternal covenant, bring the Saviour's claims to nothing, and throw infinity itself into confusion: there would be no resting-place for either God or man. No other spirit than the spirit of the world will oppose the doctrine of predestination; it is a part of the song of the saved, that " the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The Lord is for or on the side of his people in all his attributes, and therefore in his immutability; and as he was and is abundantly willing to skew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, he confirmed it by an oath, making his own faithfulness the bond of this oath; which oath stands recorded thus, « I will bless." Here is no if, no

peradventure, no conditions to be performed by the creature, for he (the Lord) swore by himself. " I will bless" is the language with which he goes through the whole plan of salvation. The fixation of his love was with " I will bless;" in election and predestination it was " I will bless;" in redemption, justification, sanctification, regeneration and final glorification, the language all through is, "I will bless" and there shall be no more curse, nor death, nor barren land.

It is to the heirs of promise only that this immutability of his counsel is so made known, as to make them feel their need of it, embrace the reality of it, and glory in the blessedness of it; and therefore it is that there are but comparatively few who rejoice in that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. The Lord himself glories in his own immutability; that with him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, that he changeth not, that his counsel is for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations; that he rests in his love, that he is of one mind and none can turn him; that none can hinder him; that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that of his kingdom there\_ is no end. The Lord brings his people into such a state that they can have no hope without this divine immutability; knowing this, they are decided for it, and speak much of it: the eternal and immutable God is their refuge and strength, and very present help in trouble.

Under our present circumstances of mortality, change in many respects is essential to our progression and final happiness; but on the other hand, unchangeableness in God is essential to his glory and our good. The advocates of free-will would fain persuade us that they believe God to be immutable; whether they examine what they do believe I must leave to themselves, but to say that they believe God is immutable, and yet believe that he once loved some whom he now hates, that he has thus changed in his love, and yet he changeth not, is a contradiction too glaring to be received or long retained by those who are taught of God. "The angels that are now fallen, he created and favoured them until they sinned, but it is clear he never loved them, as he neither prevented their fall, nor made any provision for their deliverance. He favoured the Jewish nation, so that there were thousands among them whom he never loved, nevertheless shared in the external favours of the Lord, and these favours certainly are called a favour which the Lord bare unto them, and the cessation of this favour is expressed in these words, "I will love them no more," Hosea ix. 15. We cannot suppose this to be the same with the love he bears to his people in Christ Jesus; this was a cessation of favour without any change of mind. And if it should be here said that he loves all men conditionally, and that therefore when they

sinned he withdrew his love from them; well then, let us follow up this sentiment, and see if we can answer it, and put its ignorance to silence. Be it then remembered, that the Lord foreknew who would sin, and if their sin did not hinder the setting of his love upon them, nor yet hinder the manifestation of it to them; yet that sin which could not hinder its fixation and manifestation, could and did hinder its continuation. This is making with a witness the Lord of Hosts go to war, without first considering whether he be able with a few to go against many, for he returns and leaves the creature not conquered. Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell; yet mortal man cannot be subjected to the almighty love of God, through which love saints are more than conquerors. He who built all things intends to build a house for himself, yet is stopped in the work by the obstinacy of the materials. So then mercy is not to be built up for ever, but the gates of hell are after all to prevail. And instead of the top-stone being brought home with shoutings of " Grace, grace unto it," it may not be brought at all. In a word, if freewillism were true not one could be saved; "But the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

But here it may be said, that the Lord knew that the Jews would sin his favours away, yet he bestowed those favours upon them. Well, let us examine this matter also. We insist begin with observing, that the sceptre was not to depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from among his descendants, until Shiloh came. This truth was made good, for the princely rod abode with the tribe of Judah through all their captivities, nothing could break nor bury the regular succession of generations, until Christ came in the flesh. Well then the favours bestowed upon Judah answered the Lord's end so far. The ceremonial law was a shadow of good things to come, and the Jewish nation were the people chosen, among whom the ceremonial law should be until the good things should come; and those good things are grace and truth, which are by Jesus Christ. So that the ceremonial law, the Promised Land, and their national exaltation were temporary. What then is the conclusion? Why it is this that the ceremonial law, notwithstanding the sins of the Jews, answered the end for which it was designed.

The law was given to Adam, to make him and all men in him accountable to their Maker; and this end it answered, for man remains to this day an accountable creature. The ark was intended to save Noah and his family from the deluge, and it did save them. The mediatorial work of Christ is intended for the salvation of all whose names are in the book of life, and all Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. " The word of the Lord shall not

return void, but shall prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent." As then nothing could hinder the fixation and manifestation of the love of God, so nothing can hinder its continuation. The Lord does nothing in vain, men do many things, in vain; but not so with the Lord, for "his counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure." His people have a kingdom, which cannot be moved. They have obtained this inheritance, being predestinated thereto according to the good pleasure of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. And in proportion as we are sensible of what we are in our fallen nature, so shall we prize the counsel of God, reject the inventions of men, and cleave to him who hath shewed us what is good, and hath taught us to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him, who is "our God for ever, and will be our guide even unto death."

The Lord in preserving his people hath preserved all the honours of his holy name-law and justice, holiness and mercy, truth and goodness, oath and promise. The restitution of all things consists in establishing the claims of law and gospel; the law, and all the promises and precepts of the gospel, will shine out in their perfection in the final preservation of the saints. The Lord preserves his people according to the order of the everlasting covenant; and whatever calamities may overtake them in this world, they are safe in Christ. The Lord having determined to preserve his people, he abideth by his determination, so that they are preserved forever.

We now pass on to the decree of God in salvation. Salvation is by the Lord Jesus Christ, and is of grace. The reason why it is said to be of grace is, because everything the Lord does in the salvation of his people, he does graciously; that is to say, what he does, he does freely and fully; not conditionally and partially, but freely and fully. Grace is a word applied to each person in the Godhead; the Father is the God of all grace, grace came by Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace. Therefore it is by grace that the saints are what they are. All that was done in the ancient settlements of mercy, was done according to the riches of his grace; and ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that what he did was in the riches of his grace; and are not all the covenant relations of the Holy Spirit expressive of the riches of his grace? If he quicken the soul, it is because he will. Jesus is the life with which the Holy Spirit makes alive. This is the life the Father gave. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of light, liberty, peace and joy. Jesus is the true light, the lawful liberty, the heavenly peace, and endless joy, which the Father hath bestowed upon us.

There are, and will in this time state, be some little ones in the Lord's family, who, when the following question is put to them, are somewhat at a loss for an answer. Namely. That if there be an elect and they are sure to be saved, what necessity was there for Christ to die? Though it may seem easy to answer such a question, yet there are some of the little ones who are not always prepared with an answer. The answer then is, that there are two reasons why the elect of God could not go to heaven without the blood and righteousness of Christ, and the two reasons are, that God is just and holy, he consequently maintains an infinite hatred to sin, justice claims the rights of the law of God, here is holiness determined to show its hatred to sin, justice determined to uphold the authority of the law, and also here is mercy determined to have its objects, and the determination of each infallible; now then what is to be done ; God loves his holy law, and is determined that not one jot nor tittle of that law shall fail; he loves his people, and is determined not one of them shall be lost; yet, they are by creation under the law, by nature dead in sin and children of wrath deservedly, even as others: yet they cannot be lost because the Lord loves them, and because they are his. As therefore he is just and holy, he is determined that even his own people shall not come from under his holy law without an atonement for their sins, and a righteousness for their persons; if they could be saved without the atonement and righteousness of Christ, then the holiness and justice of God could not have shone forth in our salvation, the Lord would not have kept his holiness and justice good, and failing in these two perfections of his nature, it would follow that he might fail in other attributes of his nature also ; the truth is, God is as infallible in the law as in the gospel, there is no difference; here then are the two apparent opposites, namely, the Lord's people held prisoners under the law, and the law cannot fail, yet they must be saved, then said Jesus, " Lo I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight O God to do thy will, yea, thy law is within my heart," he therefore comes in, and takes upon him all the guilt of their sin and all the wrath due thereto, and by his own arm brings salvation ; so that the holiness and justice of God which stood against us in the law, in the gospel stand on our side, for truth and righteousness have joined with mercy and peace, and by our salvation the law of God is infinitely honoured, mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. The reasons therefore why we could not be saved without the great work of Christ, are, because God is just and holy, which attributes are essential to his character as God over all blessed for evermore; for if he were not just and holy he must be unjust and unholy, and then he would cease to be God, as he would then be under the dominion of injustice and corruption. Then as God is just and holy, his people could not be saved without Christ dying for them; and for the same

reasons, namely, that he is just and holy, not one of those whose names are not in the book of life can be saved, they are without hope, and without God in the world. Now as it is impossible for those to be saved for whom Christ did not die, so it is impossible for those to be lost for whom he did die; and as it is impossible to be saved without the atonement of Christ, so it is impossible to go to perdition with the atonement of Christ.

Because then the Lord is just and holy, his people could not be taken to heaven without the blood and righteousness of Christ; justice and holiness stood against them in their fallen state in the first Adam, but in Christ, not justice and holiness only, but mercy, grace, goodness, yea all the perfections of God are on their side, so that they have boldness to call God their Father, that is, when the holy Spirit is pleased to enable them so to do ; and as they are appointed to salvation by Jesus Christ, it may here be asked, what it was that made the life and death of such a person as the Lord Jesus Christ necessary to salvation ? The answer is, that the nature and order of things required it, for the Saviour in order to act for others must himself be free, for had he have been no more than man, the law of God would have demanded of him as his personal duty all that he could have done; Adam could not obey for Eve, nor Eve for Adam, as neither could do more than his or her duty; now as the Lord Jesus Christ was and is God as well as man, and as though he has two natures, yet he is but one person, therefore whatever he has by nature as God, he has by right as man, and as he as God can be under no obligation to any above him, for there is none above him, so as God-man he was free from all personal responsibility, no law was ever made which he was to be under. I speak of him here, as it were apart from his covenant relation to his people; in a word, my object here is to show that he owed nothing for Himself, he was therefore perfectly at liberty to act for his people, he had no fault of his own to atone for, he owed no obedience for himself, such an High Priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners did the nature and order of things require; for if he owed anything for himself he must have attended to that first, as did the priests under the law. But we do not read, that Christ obeyed or atoned first or last for himself, therefore it is that, he came under the law for us, that he obeyed the law for us, that he was made a curse for us, made sin for us, was slain for us, he died for us, he laid down his life for us, all he did was for us; if he were not God as well as man, he could not thus be above all law, and consequently not at liberty to act for others. And who but such a Saviour as this could deliver us, seeing that towards helping ourselves we can do nothing, so that his own arm brought salvation. He needed not his obedient life and atoning death for himself, therefore they are, imputed to us; we were

in bondage, he was free, and he determined that his people also should be free, he therefore took upon him their responsibility, and as will presently be shown, something more than their responsibility, he is the surety of the better covenant, he came into their law-relation to God, and eternally established by his life and death the law of God, and has brought in the law of love, of life, and of liberty; he has slain the enmity, destroyed death, removed the barriers of the grave, and proclaimed liberty to the captive ; so that they shall be brought to dwell not in wrath, but in love; not in death, but in life; not in bondage, but in liberty.

We are accountable to God for what we were by creation; we were by creation, holy, just, and good: the Saviour became surety not only to make his people holy, just, and good, but to make them holy, just, and good, in a much higher sense than they were by creation. The image of God in which Adam was created, fitted him only for an earthly paradise, and which likeness was destructible: but, the holiness, righteousness, and goodness, which the election of grace have in Christ, fit them for an heavenly paradise, and are indestructible. Therefore, what they lost in Adam, will hear in value no comparison with what they have in Christ; so that they are not restored to what they lost, but raised to the possession of something infinitely superior to what they lost. They by sin took away their conformity to the law Christ has restored to the law for them a conformity to the law, which speaks out the holiness and majesty of the law, unspeakably beyond what here creature obedience ever could have done.

The law permitted Adam to continue in paradise on the ground of his continuing in his creation conformity to the law; but as Adam could not do more than his duty, he never could have raised himself higher by anything he could do. If then the holiness, righteousness, and goodness, in which Adam was created, entitled him only to an earthly paradise! if such the inflexibility of the law, that it could not permit Adam on the ground of his creation qualities any higher bliss ! What must be the holiness, righteousness, and goodness, which entitle to the immediate presence of God? The law, is the law of God, and the nearer we come to the open presence of God, the higher must be the qualities entitling us to this honour. The Israelites durst not so much as touch the mount on which the Lord descended, nor come near thereto. When Adam lost his conformity to the law, he was driven from paradise; and nothing but the obedience and blood of Christ, can bring us unto him, in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore. And, his obedience and blood could not thus bring us to the height of Zion, if he were not God as well as man. Hence

saith the apostle " feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood." And again, Christ is called Jehovah our righteousness no man can redeem his brother, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Here then are two, out of the many reasons, why it required the life and death of such a person as is the Lord of life and glory! That it was necessary he should be free from all personal obligation, that he may be at liberty to obey for others; and he could not be thus at liberty, were he not as God, self-existent; nor could he if he were not God, bring us from the depths of death to the heights of heaven; and not only so, but he by whom we are to obtain salvation, must be able to subdue all our enemies. Our enemies as it regards power, are to us destructive, and as to numbers, they are innumerable, and may be divided into two classes, the visible and the invisible. Nothing can be invisible to God our Saviour, all things are naked and open unto him; and as to our enemies! He has broken their power, comprehended their numbers, defeated their stratagems, and overturned all their counsels. But who, and what are these enemies? These enemies are sins innumerable, fallen angels, a deceitful heart, false doctrines, men averse to the truth, temptations, and the last to be destroyed is death. The Saviour has made a footstool of all these " kings and lords, which have had dominion over us;" and through him we shall do valiantly, for he it is that treadeth down our enemies. All his enemies must perish, but those who love him shall be as the "sun when he goeth forth in his might:'

The number of God's elect, rendered the life and death of such a person as Christ, necessary to salvation. These, according to the law of God, are individually accountable to God: yet the Saviour's one offering perfects the whole, and that forever. If the Saviour had not brought infinitely more honour to the law, than the whole of them (if they had not fallen) could have done they could not in his righteousness be exalted; but " the Lord doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted."

Salvation is by price and power: the Saviour's atoning death, paid the price of redemption, brought in everlasting righteousness, finished transgression, made an end of sin; he went to the end of the law, terminated for his people all its demands, in a word, he has gone to the end of everything that could in any way obstruct the progress of his mercy in the salvation of his people. Many may be their perplexities, persecutions, afflictions, and infirmities; yet, none of these things can separate them from the love of Christ, nor withhold from them the mercies the Lord has intended for them. Every mercy they can possibly need, is included in the one word salvation; and this salvation is in

Christ, and comes by him. All the promises of the gospel are yea and amen in him; the promises, which are made to him, include the salvation of his people. The Father hath promised him, that his people should be willing in the day of his power;" that "he should have the Gentiles for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession ;" that " his name should be remembered throughout all generations;" that he should be exalted, extolled and be very high; that his enemies should be his footstool;" that " the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands;" that "he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied :" in these promises we have salvation. For it is according to these promises made to the great Head of the church, that we are made willing to be saved in the Lord's own way; the Lord himself becomes our portion, the Holy Spirit causing us to remember him, " whose name is as ointment poured forth," and to exalt and extol him as Lord of all, and in his strength to tread down our enemies, and through him to prosper, and by him to be abundantly satisfied with the abundance of his glory.

Those who are taught of God, feel that they are but dust and ashes-that they are vile-carnal -sold under sin-helpless-shut up-and have no might of their own; where this experience is, the great truths of the gospel become interwoven in their souls, mingled with their minds, and so entwined about their hearts, that they are carried away in. their affections from earth to heaven, from sin to salvation, from this world to that which is to come; their hope is in heaven, they have no confidence in the flesh, but in the Lord they have righteousness and strength, life and light, joy and gladness, glory and honour: unto these things they look, for these things they seek, upon these things they live, of these things they boast, and by these things they defy death, hell and the grave. They thus put on Christ, walk in him, commune with him, and rest all their expectation upon his holy life, atoning death, and suretyship responsibility. His life is our justification his death is our redemption, our pardon, our health, our sanctification, our victory, and our peace with God our justification is complete, so that we are in this as well as in every other respect in him complete. Our redemption is complete, for he hath redeemed from all evil, from all iniquity, and from all adversity. Our pardon is complete, for the Lord hath forgiven all trespasses, he healeth all our diseases, he cleanseth us from all sin; the warfare is accomplished, peace is established, so that the Lord will work and who shall hinder him. God our Father goes on in the full tide of his love, the Saviour goes on prospering in all the purposes of his heart, the Holy Spirit goes on in all his relations, opening up the scriptures to the heirs of glory: not one promise fallen to the ground yet, not one child of promise lost yet, not one disappointment in the march of mercy, the Saviour's work is designed for no end which it does not

answer; whatever it comes against it is sure to subdue, overcome and bring into subjection, for whithersoever it turneth it prospereth. It met the law of God, honoured its precepts, endured and went to the end of its penalty; it put away sin, destroyed death, overcame the wicked one, brought all circumstances into such a position, that all things to the heirs of glory must work together for their good.

Not that these things are either in whole or in part accomplished, by the work of Christ being brought forth by men; indeed, there are very few who bring forth this great work in its own order, for its own order is after the power of an endless life, independent altogether of the creature: therefore it is when and wherever the Lord himself brings forth the work of Christ, that it shews its real power. When the Holy Spirit brought this great subject into our own hearts and minds, it made us feel that we were sinners, it gave us to see and feel that according to the law and threatenings of God, we were in a state truly awful; that we had been all our days deluded, that we had been resting in the inventions of men, guided by the reasoning's of the flesh, and were as ignorant of real vital religion as Hottentots. We were brought to know that all religion short of the Holy Spirit's quickening power would leave us were it found us. This power brought us into an abiding concern about salvation, and though at times we seemed to grow careless, yet still there was the uneasiness at the bottom; the world could not content us, our doings could not content us, nor could anything within our reach satisfy us yet nothing could destroy our anxiety, the root of the matter was in us, and this root is incorruptible, it is the root of David, the root of life eternal. When a roan is brought into this state, he is severed from the world and that in the right way; for lie is not severed from the world by external circumstance, worldly interest, or merely the unclean spirit going out! no, his separation is by the life of God in the soul! nor shall such an one (though lie may try) ever rest, until he receives in the love and power of it, eternal election. He will find, that the Saviour's great work cannot be a resting place without election and predestination; that he can have no hope, unless the Holy Spirit carries on his work according to the laws of that covenant which is "ordered in all things and sure;" that there can be no assurance, but in divine immutability; nor can he be content to receive these things merely in the letter of them! If he does not participate in their power and preciousness, he is discouraged, cast down, and driven to his wits' end. And when we who know these things do enjoy them, we seem to be in another world, all the vileness of nature is subdued, the wicked one under our feet, our troubles forgotten, our sins forgiven, mercy rolling in like the waves of the sea, peace flowing like a river, our hearts leaping for joy, and as for him "who loved us and gave himself for us,"

he is so precious, that we seem as though we could suffer a thousand deaths for his dear name -his precious blood and righteousness: we sing of the one- we shine in the other. This dear Mediator is the gift of God our Father; Paul may well call this gift an " unspeakable gift." This is the experience that constitutes the real anointing of the Holy Spirit, " he who thus believed), both the witness in himself, and both set to his seal that God is true."

Jesus has thus gone on from age to age conquering and to conquer. Who can count the millions now in glory who were conquered by him, and also obtained victory through him? He turns enemies into friends, and makes them love him more than ever they hated him. How suitable and how sweet will be the song, to

*"Ascribe our conquests to the Lamb,*

*Our victory to his death".*

The Saviour when on earth, did not make a second attempt to accomplish anything? Everything at which he aimed he accomplished; whether it were to cleanse the leper, heal the withered hand, subdue furious fiends, silence the elements, raise the dead, gather disciples, magnify the law, or atone for sin. Not one of all the things that were commanded by his heavenly Father failed, he did always those things which pleased the Father; this the Saviour himself said, of this the Father bare testimony, saying, " this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus; he is the person by whom we were appointed not unto wrath but to obtain salvation. I have said the Saviour accomplished everything at which he aimed; to this assertion there is a seeming (and it is only a seeming exception, and that is in his weeping over Jerusalem. But this matter I have shewn up in my sermon on ' Re probation and Election.' You will there see, that this circumstance is no exception to the assertion, that he accomplished all that for which he came into the world. And is he less almighty now! Is he less interested in his people! Is he less pleasing and glorifying to God the Father! Is he not still to be made known by the Holy Spirit! And are we not driven out of every other refuge! Then he is our refuge, a refuge from which the Lord will not, and creatures cannot drive us. He himself undertook to be our security, God the Father intended he should become our security, and the Holy Spirit hath testified (and we know that his testimony is true) that " when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." Now then what is to hinder us from getting home, can anything hinder the Lord from bringing us there-Jesus hath wrought salvation; " with him is mercy and

plenteous redemption," he gathers us with his arm and carries us in his bosom, and his gentleness will make us great, his power, his providence, and grace extend to all our circumstances, none can deliver out of his hand.

All the purposes, promises, precepts, and persons that rest upon him are safe. God the Father first trusted in him for all the honours of his holy law and purposes of the gospel. This went on four thousand years after the actual existence of sin. No failure took place, for the apostle when speaking of the old testament saints says, "These all died in faith;" all died in faith, not one died in unbelief, they all died in faith. This is something like the good old-fashioned doctrine of "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed:" these are the "as many as the Lord our God shall call." These are born not of blood (not because their parents were religious), nor of the flesh (not of their own fleshly, falsely called free will), nor of the will of man (not of the will of others, not of their parents, of themselves, nor others), but of God." From him cometh their salvation; and these will all die in faith, for these are the election of grace, and "the election hath obtained it." - Jesus is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins."

We come now to the last part of our subject, which is reception to final glory: He "appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" The Saviour is received to glory, and our reception to glory stands connected with him. He was received on the ground of his finished work with entire approbation, and that he may enjoy the reward of his work; so that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of the majesty on high."

Our acceptance then is in the finished work of Christ: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and must give account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad: Christ is made of God unto his people, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" these good things are brought into their hearts, and of these good things they shall give account. And those into whose hearts these good things are not brought, will have no real good deeds of which to give account, for "without faith it is impossible to please God;" "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" and every one shall be rewarded according to his works. And if we are wise by the wisdom of Christ, he is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; we shall be rewarded according to these good works, for our righteousness is of the Lord. If I do not while on earth receive these things, I leave no authority to conclude that I shall be received among the ransomed of the Lord: for if I do not receive

these good things now, I cannot give a good account at the last day, with these good deeds done in the body (the body here meaning the person) that is, wrought in the heart. Every one thus favoured will give account with joy and not with grief.

The Saviour and the saved are received into glory upon one and the same ground, namely, his finished work. By this, his finished work, they will appear "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." His work is a finished work, and nothing can make it unfinished; it is spotless, and nothing can tarnish it; it is incorruptible, and nothing can tinge it with mortality; it abideth the same in nature, extent, and purpose. Our entrance to glory will be honourable, and the Lord hath said, "My people shall never be ashamed:" and although standing as we then shall in the presence of assembled worlds, and above all in the presence of infinite purity; yet it will not be possible for us to be ashamed, for there will be nothing of which to be ashamed, precious blood and glorious righteousness have overcome the whole. Such is the honour, glory, and safety we have by this salvation, that no fire can as we stand in him consume us, no rising billows drown us, no lightning-flash can reach this promised land, no yawning earthquake destroy us, no stratagem entangle us : " Let the earth be removed, and let the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea; what can destroy those with whom is the Lord of Hosts, and whose refuge is the God of Jacob."

The Lord received his people in the ancient covenant in the mediation of Christ, he receives them in regeneration and in death, and he will receive them at the last day; and in each of these acts their acceptance depends exclusively upon the Lord, the life and death of Christ run through the whole. God the Father sanctified them by imputing to them the Saviour's work; the Saviour sanctified them, by finishing the work, which the Father gave him to do; the Holy Spirit sanctifies them by the fountain, which is opened for sin and uncleanness. The life they live is by the faith of the Son of God; he is their life, they walk in him, by him they will pass with safety through the valley of the shadow of death, by him they will rise from the dead-" He is the resurrection and the life," by him they will have an abundant entrance into the region of purity and bliss.

God the Father looks upon them in that completeness which he has bestowed, and in this completeness he holds them, and none can pluck them out of his hand; the Saviour looks upon them, and holds them in his own comeliness; the Holy Spirit holds them in the one offering by the which they are for ever perfected: and as long as the Saviour's work remains valid, so

long are they safe; and is there anything that can invalidate the obedience and blood of Christ? All the (so called) good things of this life are from two circumstances invalidated-first, because they are mixed with evil; and secondly, because they are of short duration. But neither of these things can be said of the work of Christ, "He is pure, without a spot," and he went to the end of the law, to the end of sin, to the end of death; the end is the end, and he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. And will God the Father ever make light of the work of his dear Son? Will Jesus ever forget his own obedience and atoning death? Will the Holy Spirit ever cease to glorify Jesus? Shall we ever cease to need him? Will God ever cease to love? can we ever cease to be his? Is there with him any variableness or shadow of turning? Is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day, and forever? Does not the Holy Spirit abide with his saints forever?

We are in receiving Christ Jesus transformed to his image. Conformity to his likeness consists in being of one mind with him, and his finished work is the true test by which we try ourselves; and if our experience has shewn us the necessity of this his finished work, and we are brought to stand opposed to all that stand opposed to that; brought to receive him as our all and in all, and that he is to us somewhat precious; or, that all the purposes of mercy, and relations of the Holy Spirit; rest upon this foundation. He that thus receiveth Christ, receiveth the Holy Spirit; he that thus acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also: but stand opposed to his finished work, and you stand opposed to every truth in the Bible.

There is but one way in which we can be in a state of conformity to the law of God, and that is by the finished work of Christ. By this his finished work, the law is established, honoured and magnified; and the law has no more against the church, than against Christ himself. This conformity to the law is the gift of a Father's love, the work of a Saviour's life and death, testified of by the Holy Spirit. It was the Saviour's meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; and if we are rightly taught, this precious work will be our meat and our drink; its transforming power brings us to God, makes his love the element of our souls, so that we dwell in love, even in the love of God-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This best, highest, and most noble of all dwelling-places, could not by us in the manifestation of it be inhabited, were it not for the finished work of Christ; it is this that removes every impediment, not a dog can (to any purpose) move his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

So then we are appointed to obtain salvation by the finished work of Christ. By this work we are conformed to law and gospel, to God and conscience, and shall be sure to die in a good (not a bad) old age, full of riches and honour, and shall come to the grave as a shock of corn in his season. But without the finished work of the dear Mediator, we should be driven away in our wickedness; but complete in him, approved in him, accepted in him, we shall find mercy in that day. The glory of our reception, and to be with the Lord, we must die to know; we can only say, if what the Lord has already done, he has done so freely, so fully, and so delightfully for the Father delighted in giving his dear Son, Jesus delighted to do the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit delights in testifying of Jesus; if what the Lord has done, he has done with irresistible willingness and pleasure, what will be the glory of meeting the Lord at the last day, all previous doings being a preparation for this great object? Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father?

The circumstances standing between this and that day are all known to the Lord. Many things take us by surprise, but nothing can take him by surprise. Nothing can separate us from him, nor hide us from him, nor lower us in his estimation, nor lay any thing before him to our charge. May it be our happy lot to walk and commune more and more with him, "for he is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death."

**Finis**

## **PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**Silas Durand, 1901**

[Editor's note: In the 1950's, this editor, along with about a dozen others, came to the knowledge of free grace while employed at Warner Robbins AFB near Macon, Ga. All became absolute predestinarians. The editor left the area to serve a free grace church in another state, and returned to visit his friends two years later. While away from them, they united with another group of people that believed some things were predestinated, but most things were left up to the creature to do without Him, and by so doing, they earned timely blessings. The editor, having been unfamiliar with this error, was quite surprised to find them going through the Scriptures attempting to decide what "was of the Lord by grace," and what was "left up to men to obtain blessings." It appeared a futile effort on their part, and they were

clearly baffled by the project. However, they never returned to their earlier belief that salvation from start to finish, in both time and eternity, was "of the Lord." ( Jonah 3:9). This experience is one reason we find this old article so interesting. It was written only a few years after the introduction of "conditional time salvation," or duty faithism among Old School Baptists. We hope the reader will profit by this interesting piece on Predestination.]

There are dear brethren who have thought that when Paul said, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," (Romans 8:28) He meant only "all good things." I have always thought that He meant what he said, that "all 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 experiences, 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 unto God, 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 supposedly dead, as they thought. Besides, the very things in which they meant evil against Joseph, God meant unto good. So which side will you put these works? Then, did not that wicked thing work for good, to "save much people alive." (Genesis 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 Savior, 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) Where, then, do you put these "wicked works," by "wicked hands"? on the bright or dark side? Where do you suppose God put them?

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," (Isaiah 46:10-11) with many others, on the 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, 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 them justly; we have to leave that to the Word.

But look on the good side of the line: have we got that all right and sure? You 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 "good" work that 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 of God that I was enabled to preach it. But what a tangle of briers 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 of 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, sweet, and good, now shown to us 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 (Isaiah 32:1-7).

One thing we know, that all good is of 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 to be 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 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 true Christian doubt this?

- "FRAGMENTS."

**finis**

**The Gospel Messenger And The "Absolute Predestination of All  
Things  
By  
Sylvester Hassell, 1902**

[The following article was placed in the Conditional Primitive Baptists' "Council Meeting Of Primitive Baptists" at Ramah Church, Pike County, Alabama. It seems to imply that this view is that shared by the Conditional Primitives, to wit: "the difference between the Predestinarian position and the Conditional position was "a more in expression than in reality." By such language, many who were unable to discern the spirit of the times were led to embrace the error. In time, the whole fellowship denying the absolute predestination of God drifted into a mixed doctrinal position that is referred to today as "Calminian" – half Calvinism and half Arminianism, with the greater emphasis upon duty-faith and duty-repentance in an earned "time" salvation. Elder Hassell, very much as Andrew Fuller and David Benedict before him failed to discern the danger inherit in the works-error.

**Some notes on the following seem appropriate, among these are:**

1. "The phrase is not in the Scriptures." Neither is "total depravity, but it is still true, and should be preached. Hassell used the term on pages 19, and thirty-six other places, with a full discussion on pages 535-537. Neither is the word "Sovereignty," yet Hassell used it on page 499 and twenty other places. "Particular" Redemption is not in the Bible, yet it is as true as any other subject in the Bible.
2. "Because it is not in any church Articles of Faith, and does not occur in uninspired literature before the year 1832." In spite of his reputation for scholasticism, Hassell apparently was unfamiliar with Jerom Zanchius' most popular work, titled "Absolute Predestination," written in the 17th century! Nor was he familiar with several articles in this work written prior to 1832.
3. "Because it totally ignores God – it does not say who did the predestinating." Every writer in this volume claims that only God predestinates, nor are we aware of any who thought someone else did.
4. "Because it does not make the slightest distinction between holiness and sin –" We invite the reader to carefully note if this is true in any of these articles on the subject.
5. "Because the phrase is highly offensive." So is the phrase "Condition time salvation"! So is Election, and Predestination (of any kind), and "total Depravity," and "Particular atonement." If we abandoned all phrases that is offensive to the carnal mind, we must close down all religious functions that embrace the truth of God.
6. "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat." I doubt Paul put eating porkchops in the same category as predestination.-Ed. ]

**Sylvester Hassell on Predestination of All Things**

While Elders Respass, Mitchell, Henderson, and myself, Editors of the Gospel Messenger, have felt and said, with both tongue and pen, that the difference between the most of Primitive Baptists who reject and the most of those who receive the doctrine of "the absolute predestination of all things" is a difference more in expression than in reality, yet we ourselves have never

avored or endorsed the phrase "the absolute predestination of all things," and I will now state in a brief way our reasons: -

1st. Because the phrase is not in the Scriptures.

2nd. Because it is not in any church Articles of Faith, and does not occur in uninspired literature before the year 1832.

3rd. Because it totally ignores God – it does not say who did the predestination.

4th. Because it does not make the slightest distinction between holiness and sin, but lumps them all in together, and apparently charges them both to the predestinator: although holiness and sin are infinitely different, according to the testimony of the Scriptures from beginning to end and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every child of God.

5th. Because in the London and other Confessions of Faith which refer all things either causatively or permissively to the sovereignty of God, the distinction between God's relation to holiness and sin is, to guard against misunderstanding, carefully given in the same sentence, by the declaration that God is not the author or approver of sin, and that He does not offer any violence to the will of the creature, nor take away the liberty or contingency of secondary causes; and in other places of such Confession it is repeatedly declared, just as the Scriptures declare, that God permits, leaves, and gives over His creatures to sin without compelling them to do so. [No scripture given for this view.]

6th. Because, although the first statement of this doctrine in 1832 and its last statement in 1902 were unusually and commendably moderate, many of its advocates have in the past and do now run it into the most unscriptural, God-dishonoring, and man-ruining extremes.

7th. Because the phrase is highly offensive to the most of our people (Conditional Primitives) and needs everlasting explanation and qualification to the great majority of Primitive Baptists, who understand it to confound God and Satan, holiness and sin, and therefore it should be abandoned by those who love God and holiness and their brethren more than they love a phrase devised or defended by any man or any set of men. The noble self denying Apostle Paul says, "If meat make my brother to offend (or stumbles him or causes him to sin), I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Cor. 8:13). Paul was the most pointed writer

on predestination in the Scriptures, and yet he never used the phrase – "the absolute predestination of all things," or "God's predestination of all things."

Predestination, like election, creation, redemption, regeneration, and resurrection, is a divine and infinite depth which no finite mind can fathom. It is God's business, and not ours; and the more we discuss it and try to explore and explain it, the more mysterious it grows, and the more confused and divided and embittered against one another we become. It does not occupy one two-thousandth part of the Scriptures, and yet some of us seem disposed to make almost everything of it, and want to be talking and writing and arguing about it always. Moses, the wise leader and lawgiver of Israel, says, "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. " (Deut.xxix:29). And the most reverent children of God are content to be wise in and seek not to be wise above what is written, but have the great mysteries of Divine Revelation as the Holy Spirit has left them in the Inspired Scriptures, and remembering that love is the fulfilling of the law, and is far more important than eloquence or knowledge or even faith and hope, they long to love their holy and merciful Father in heaven with all the powers of their souls, and to love their brethren as they love themselves, and to love and forbear with them as they feel that they, in their own imperfections need to be borne and forborne with.

With this article I desire to close the discussion of the subject of predestination in The Gospel Messenger, because experience has demonstrated that such discussion is interminable, unprofitable, unwholesome, confusing, subverting and dividing. S.H.

**finis**

## **ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**William M. Smoot, 1912**

“Eternal God whose lofty throne,  
Extends beyond all mortal sight,  
To puny man Thou art unknown,  
Revealed in faith's exalted flight.”

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” –

Ephesians 1:11.

We have before us a copy of the “Messenger of Truth,” a periodical claiming Old School, published at Laurel Fork, Virginia. In this paper, one of the leading articles is an Editorial attack upon the doctrine of PREDESTINATION. In the same paper appears communications relating experience to which we think no serious objection can be found. We have frequently been made to wonder how any one with an experience of Gospel grace could object to the doctrine of the Eternal, Irrevocable, and Absolute Predestination of All things, whatsoever comes to pass. We are not at all surprised to find opposition to this truth in the world, for the “natural mind” of man revolts at the sovereignty of God; it “is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 7:7). But we are greatly surprised that anyone who has ever felt the touch of the Divine presence, “the powers of the world to come,” should ever question this most precious, soul cheering, and God honoring doctrine. The prophet tells us, however, that, “The leaders of this people cause them to err” (Isaiah 9:16). It was bad nursing (II Samuel 4:4) that caused Mephibosheth’s lameness. And it is false preaching and false teaching that often poisons the minds of the children of God against Gospel truth.

The editorial to which we refer is written in the ingenious manner that characterizes writings of this character, opponents of the doctrine being apparently in fear that the character of God is assailed by the doctrine of Absolute Predestination; and rush to the front to vindicate the character of Him, whose infinite purity and holiness cannot be called into question; and is therefore not in any sense involved in any discussion of this or any other point of doctrine.

We will quote a few subtle paragraphs from the article in the Messenger:

“God said to Adam, concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ‘Thou shalt not eat of it.’ Did that mean that Adam could not eat of it? Or did it mean that he should not or ought not? If it had meant that he could not, that he was not and never could be able to eat of it, the penalty would not have been affixed, or if it had been fixed, it never would have been executed.” – unquote.

Now in this extract, we have a man of straw set up, and then demolished! The reader will notice the ingenious manner in which the terms could not, should not, and ought not are used. The writer slyly steps aside from the force and meaning of the Scripture that he is discussing. He fails to quote the whole verse, but clips from it one clause, leaving out the essential part. The verse reads: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). That God did not intend or predestinate that Adam should eat of this tree, as declared in the editorial to which we refer, is absurd in the face of the declaration: "In the day that thou eatest thereof." Here is not only the prophecy that he should eat of the tree, but the day appointed in which it was to be done. How could this language have ever been used if there was to be no day of the kind named? This declaration reveals both the foreknowledge of Jehovah and predestination. When the full verse is faithfully quoted the sense in which the word shall is used is clearly seen. "Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That is, Adam "should not," or "could not" eat of the tree and remain in the state of his original creation. The day that he ate of the tree should mark his fall. The changeless "shalt not" of his Creator was evidenced when he fell from that original state, fell under the law of sin and death, and reached the fulfillment of the second shall,

"Thou shalt surely die." The meaning of the first shall, is as clear as the second; the first calls for the second. We might transpose the verse, and it would not lose its force" "In the day [predetermined time] that thou eatest of the tree. . . thou shalt surely die; for thou shalt not eat of it [and remain in your present condition in Eden.]"

We might here inquire in what way could the coming of a Savior have been absolutely predestinated, and the entrance of sin, left out of such predestination, left to "chance." Savior and sinner, salvation and sin are relative terms; the one calls for the other. The same eternal purpose or predestination that absolutely provided, pre-determined, ordained, and predestinated the coming of Christ as the Savior of sinners, as absolutely and irrevocably ordained the fall of Adam, and the consequent entrance of sin.

"Lo, in the fall we are led to espy,  
'Twas all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

Adam in the original creation was simply an earthly man fitted only to occupy an earthly sphere. He was not fitted for heaven. The fall of Adam was essential to the revelation of Gospel grace in the face of Jesus Christ, and how could such an important factor be other than as the Scripture declares: “For if by one man’s offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). Leave out the fall of Adam and what would have become of the whole economy of Redemption? Hence both sin and salvation must have been embraced in the one full and complete design, purpose, or predestination of God.

When an artist designs a picture, the lines of light, and shades of darkness are embodied in the one design; the dark background must be there to bring out the life- lines of the picture. It is written: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep . . . and God said, Let there be light; and there was light” (Genesis 1:1-3). Was not this darkness as much a part of the creation as the light? Did not both spring from one creative word that made the heavens and the earth and “all the host of them?”

The Scripture so declares and also gives us the typical meaning of the darkness and light: “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isaiah 45:7). When did the Lord form the light and create the darkness; or makes peace and create evil?

The editor of the Messenger sums up his view of the fall of Adam in the following paragraph:

“Did God mean that He would not suffer Adam to eat of the tree? No; but He meant that Adam should not do so; that he had no right from God to eat of it. It was Adam’s duty to obey his Maker, but he disobeyed Him of his own will; he knew better and was not deceived. So the penalty ‘Thou shalt surely die,’ was a just recompense for his dis- obedience. By the disobedience of this one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And had it not been for the intervention of mercy through the atonement of Christ all men without exception would have remained in death under the penalty.” – unquote.

Here is Arminian “Free Agency” pure and simple; from which it is clearly seen that this writer, instead of placing the fall of Adam to the Predestination

of Almighty God's determinate counsel, places it upon Adam himself; as an old preacher in West Virginia used to say, "Adam made himself a sinner." And but for the intervention of Jesus Christ all his posterity would have remained in death. That is, the intervention of Jesus Christ was an after-thought, after-consideration, a revelation of the mercy of God at the expense of His justice, in order to extricate Adam from the pit into which he had placed himself. This is in line with the Article of Faith of the Kehukee Association of North Carolina, that God made Adam "able to stand, but liable to fall." What improvement does this make upon the Divine Character? Assuredly He must have foreseen that Adam would fall, if left liable to; and why not, we ask from the stand-point of human wisdom, was not Adam made unable to fall, and thus left without immortality to roam at will in the Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise? Such questions are as the "wisdom of this world" which "are foolishness with God." But we quote again from the Messenger:

"The believer has been created in Christ Jesus unto good works. These good works come in after creation; after regeneration; to the saints, after they have been quickened." –unquote.

Here of course is the "sinner born again theory," which is the heart's delight of all Means Baptist- the quickening and regeneration of the natural man. Again we quote:

"If we boast of the 'wills and shalls' of Jehovah, let us know how to do it. If they are as some affirm, and the commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' is addressed to all men, then no man ever stole or committed a theft." –unquote.

This is the first time we have ever seen in a periodical professedly Old School, the assertion that such a commandment, in the peculiar sense in which they were given, were addressed to all men.

The writer warms up in his discourse, and closes with the following:

"Those who preach that God purposed Adam's transgression have no authority for what they preach; they draw on their imagination, or use the imagination of others. It contradicts the Bible, sets at naught God's word, and makes prayer, preaching, exhortation, rebuke, reproof, and admonition vain things. We verily believe that many good brethren and sisters are deceived by this theory." – unquote.

Have we not here an example of the character described by the apostle: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them . . . shall speak evil of the things that they understand not” (II Peter 2:1,12).

In the writings of such honored elders, and Old School fathers as Gilbert Beebe, J.F. Johnson, R.C. Leachman, Samuel Trott, Thomas P. Dudley, Philander Hartwell, David Patman, J.M. Theobald, and a host of others, the doctrine now so bitterly assailed was clearly proclaimed for an hundred years. It has remained for a crop of youngsters who have crept in unawares (II Timothy 3:6) into the Means Baptist ministry to assume superior knowledge to the Baptist fathers of former days; and more important still to “holy men of God” who spake as they were “moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:21).

But let us pass to more fully consider the subject at the head of our article: ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION. We have but little use for the term “absolute,” only as it more clearly distinguishes the doctrine to which our enemies object. The word as we use it with Predestination, means predestination without limit. Yet predestination when used alone certainly means this also. The character of God is above reproach; can never be measured by human reason, or comprehended by the natural mind. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27). The revelation that He has been pleased to make of Himself manifests His eternal self-existence. “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14). “I am the LORD and there is no God besides Me” (Isaiah 45:5). “There is no power but of God; and the powers that be, are ordained of God” Romans 13:1. We might quote without limit testimony clearly revealing the infinite self-existence, the boundless power, and wisdom of God.

Self-existence is an attribute of Sovereign power. Eternity, nor time can hold but one self-existent Being, and that Being is the great “I AM,” all other beings depend for existence upon Him who “is before all things, and by Him all THINGS consist” (Colossians 1:17). “Predestination” is a New Testament term, and used but few times. It is somewhat similar, but not entirely in meaning to the word “purpose,” a word used more frequently, and in both Testaments. Paul instructed Timothy to “rightly divide the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15). To rightly divide the word of truth is to place each point of

doctrine in its proper place, for each point of the “doctrine of God our Savior” has a certain bearing in the great work of Redemption.

The apostle connects the doctrine of Predestination with Election, placing Predestination immediately after Election. “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29). “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” (Ephesians 1:1.5).

From the order in which these two points of doctrine are placed in this and other New Testament connections, it is evident that Election is one, if not really the basic principle of the Gospel system; and that Predestination is the Divine warrant of the eternal triumph of the election of grace. The full verse from which we have partly quoted reads: “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:29,30). Predestination is here given, insuring the call, the justification, and glorification of the election of grace.

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). In this text we have both the purpose and predestinated used with a slight difference only in the meaning of the two words. Predestination is used here as in other Scriptural testimony, connected with the “inheritance of the saints in light.” The choice in Christ is first referred to, and Predestination insures in all the heirs of promise the security of their redemption in Christ Jesus.

“According to the purpose of Him who worketh all things”. The “all things” to which reference is here made may be more especially the calling, justification, and glorification of the election of grace; but the doctrine of Predestination covers all this ground; not only directly, but all that has, what may be termed an indirect connection. In the revelation of the stupendous work of Redemption; crowned with the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was necessary that an arena be provided where this work should be done, hence time was brought into being for God’s good

pleasure, (Revelation 4:11,) and for the manifestation of the wonders of His will.

In the verse preceding the text the apostle clearly presents the work of predestination: “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ.” Time and time’s creatures were created for the development of this great work; it was to be made manifest “in the dispensation of the fullness of times.” Hence all created things directly or indirectly tend to the one great end for which they were created under the master hand of the great Architect of the universe; the Creator of all worlds; and the Disposer of all events.

Who dare question that this all powerful God, Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, who purposed in eternity; and holds complete control of all the eternal developments revealing the salvation and glorification of His chosen family, would fail to securely keep in the grasp of His Almighty power the manifestation of this eternal purpose through all the changing scenes of time; or that He would create anything which He could not govern; or that the far reaching revelation of the purpose or predestination of God should leave out of its secure, accurate, and irrevocable ordination a single event, to come by “chance,” permission, [permissive decrees], or any other agency save alone the eternal decrees, the purpose and predestination of Almighty God. He alone is responsible, as He alone possesses absolute power. He has not delegated such responsibility to any of His creatures, whether men or devils. He seeks not to evade His own responsibility, but entirely assumes it in the testimony before quotes: “I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the LORD do all these things.” (Isaiah 45:7).

As stated, the “all things” in our text may refer to the varied exhibitions of His grace in the salvation of Israel; yet they cannot ignore, but must necessarily embrace, the scenes of time in which these displays are made. For instance, the crucifixion of Christ was necessary, but wicked men must be raised up, a cross supplied, a wicked king enthroned; all these visible, temporal things must be provided [predestinated] at the proper time “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). And all these wicked agencies were raised up as Pharaoh was raised up and his heart hardened (Exodus 7:13) “for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:28).

The crucifixion of Christ so far as being a result of predestination, was neither an isolated, nor an exceptional case; but an example of all time’s

developments; all absolutely all, whether good or evil or indifferent, large or small, must have some bearing direct or remote upon the glory of God in Christ Jesus; the objects for which all worlds and all things were created by God.

“Predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things.” For the only and best of causes He can work “all things”; For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things [without exception] were created by Him, and for Him” (Colossians 1:16). We are aware that those who would pervert this testimony are experts in playing upon words, and might take exception to the phrase “worketh all things;” that it could not be construed to sustain the doctrine of predestination. The reader will notice that this clause is not the important clause of the text; but that the purpose and predestination of God, are the essential factors in the text; “Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things.”

Let us transpose this part of the verse, and while retaining its force, we see more clearly it’s meaning, “He who works all things has predestinated them according to His purpose.” That is, the inheritance referred to in the text is obtained [experienced] according to the purpose and predestination of God. Predestination then secures the execution of the purpose; the development of the eternal design; the Divine medium through which this development is secured; and this predestination is “according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”

Predestination also is the absolute ordination of the “all things” embodied in this purpose, and embraced in this working. The apostle in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans covers this same ground, but in a somewhat different manner. He tells us of the “all things” predestinated and working together for the good of the saints, and for the glory of God. In the “all things” are named tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and the sword, death, [all considered “evil”]; death, life, angels, principalities, powers &c. These are among the “all things” alluded to in our subject, and these can be termed of a temporal character: things of time.

We might take up the things to which the apostle refers one by one, and see how clearly we can trace the predestination of God. His ruling hand is seen in each event: as no depths of poverty [famine] to which the saints can be subject, no peril, misrepresentation, no depths of great sorrow [tribulation] or

sore bereavement &c. These things are essential to the development of that people who are chosen in the furnace of affliction; and the apostle concludes his summary of these things that attend their pilgrimage with the promise: “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

From what we have written then it will be seen that the Scriptures teach that God has created all things, and works all things in the sense in which He has predestinated them according to His good purpose to work together for the good of His elect; that these things must cover the things of time, as time itself was brought into existence for the good pleasure of God, and the development of His purpose, as purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began.

The enemies of the doctrine object to it, more especially upon the principle of the predestination of evil things. They assume to themselves ability to measure the character of Jehovah. What blasphemy! To claim ability to measure the character of that great, Almighty God clothed in the dazzling splendor, the infinite purity and holiness of heaven; and to measure His character by that wisdom which He is pleased to term “foolishness” (I Corinthians 3:19;) and all this in face of the declaration; that the world “by wisdom knew not God” (I Corinthians 1:21).

The text tells us that the “all things” which we have discussed in this article are working “after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). Mark the positive assertion: “His [God’s] own will.” He does not consult with men or devils. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord; or who hath been His counsellor?” (Romans 11:34). “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that form it, Why hast Thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20). These are pertinent questions to such foolish criticism. The entire question regarding the predestination of evil things, as the fall of Adam, rests upon what God Himself declares upon the subject. Could there be, or has there been an act of greater wickedness than the crucifixion of Christ? And yet what saith the Scripture of it? “For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed; both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27,28). To this Scripture we will add a few quotations of similar import. “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.” “Now the serpent was more subtle than any

beast of the field, which the Lord God had made” (Genesis 3:1). Was he not wicked?

Does not this Scripture do away with the foolish notion of some of a self-existent devil? Again, let us quote: “The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil” (Proverb 16:4). “I make peace, and create evil (Ra); I the LORD do all these things” (Isaiah 45:7). “Shall there be evil (Ra) in the city, and the LORD hath not done it?” (Amos 3:6). “I have created the waster to destroy” (Isaiah 54:16). “Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” (Romans 9:22). “And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (Exodus 7:3). “Declaring the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10).

Will opponents of the doctrine inform us how the end could be declared from the beginning, and events between left out? “He doeth 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 doest Thou” (Daniel 4:35). “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth” (Romans 9:18). “He turned their heart to hate His people” (Psalm 105:25). “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (II Thessalonians 2:11). We quote but a few from abundant Biblical testimony upon this subject. Evidently prophets and apostles were not afraid of the doctrine maintained in this article.

Events must take place by predestination or by chance; and how can anything be secured by chance? A single chance shot may at any time destroy the whole structure of God creation. If they take place by predestination, it must be of God, of men, or of devils; and how by the devil who is but a creature of God, and could not even go into the herd of swine without permission (Matthew 8:32); or yet in man whose breathe “is in his nostrils” (Isaiah 2:22). Then absolutely and truly of God who does what He pleases “in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places” (Psalm 135:6) do all these things take place.

“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL THINGS: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).

W.M. Smoot

From THE SECTARIAN: November, 1912.

## **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

**By**

**J. B. Bowden, 1926**

**"I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." — Isaiah 45:7**

We are aware of the fact that God created all things as is said by the Apostle Paul. For he said, 'for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him' (Colossians 1:16).

That is inclusive of everything! These two witnesses, Isaiah and Paul, though at least one thousand years apart, seem to agree as to the Wisdom and Sovereignty of God. Isaiah set forth the right of creation to the God of the universe without limit, and said that God formed the light, and created darkness. These two elements are direct opposite each other. Both alike are the creation of God. For in the beginning, God said, "Let there be light and there was light; " in obedience to the command of God light shined forth; thus showing the great power of God. Therefore, at the command of God all things were and are created.

Then we hear Him say, "I make peace, and create evil," and caps the whole thing by saying, "I the Lord do all these things." The thing that seems to frustrate some is that if we preach the truth as the prophets and the apostles did, in setting forth the Sovereignty of God as the sole Creator and whole Disposer of all things, we, they say, "make God the direct author of sin." And they set out to devise some plan to keep the sole Creator of all things that exist out of trouble! But viewing all things as they are, we must admit God is first to exist, and before all that is and was and shall be, foreknew all existing things, and in accordance to the extent of His foreknowledge He did predestinate, foreordain, and caused to come to pass His own eternal counsel.

As is stated by the same writer, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall

stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10). And another writer said, "Even for this purpose have I raised thee (Pharaoh) up, that I might spew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Romans 9:17).

"I make peace." This is what God said He did. Then if God does make peace, is He not the Creator of peace? vis, and I create evil." [" Evil" and "sin" are two different things] "I the Lord do all these things." Does He? What conclusion must we draw in regards to the existence of evil? Lets see. In Amos 3:6, we read, "Shall the trumpet be blown in the city and the people not be afraid, shall there be evil in the city, and I the Lord hath not done it? " And as He has "declared the end from the beginning," is it not possible and certain that the events that occur between the end and the beginning are embraced in the declaration? If not, then why not? Seeing He is before all things and by Him all things consist, and besides Him there is no God else, "I form" –create, bring into existence the things that are, is and was, - there is "no power but of God" (Romans 13:1). There is only one way that I can see the beauty of the doctrine of predestination and that is through inspiration, and we must bow to the ever-ruling hand of God's providence, and say these things are wonderful and deep.

When we behold God where He belongs, and that is as Supreme Ruler and sole Creator, we must be still and know that God is GOD, and that, as the apostle taught, He "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11) and that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose, for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:28,29) and without predestination there is and cannot be any conformity to the image of Christ. Man would love to dictate to God as to what He is Creator of, and what He is not. But, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness" (I Timothy 3:16).

"I have made the earth, and created man upon it, I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded" (Isaiah 45:12). And, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, What makest Thou?" "Woe unto him that sayest to his father, What begetteth thou? Or to the woman, What bringeth forth thou?" "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and the other to dishonor?" (Romans 9:21). We may huff and blow, sniff, snort, and falsely accuse the God of Creation, but the "foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that are His" (II

Timothy 2:19). And He mercifully and lovingly keeps them as the "apple of His eye." They are the ones that are commanded to not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, and to declare the whole counsel of God is to not overlook the fact that God is "before all things, and by Him all things consist," (Colossians 1:17), as did our forefathers as they did believe and teach the doctrine of the Eternal Decrees of God and were careful to give a "Thus saith the Lord" for all they taught.

I will here cite a portion of the old London Confession of Faith, so that we may have some idea of what our forefathers believed and taught:

"First, God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, (Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9) by the most wise and holy counsel of His will freely and unchangeably All things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither THE AUTHOR OF SIN nor hath He fellowship with any therein. (James 1:15,18; I John 1:5) nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor yet is the liberty of contingences of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which His Wisdom appears in disposing of all things; His power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decrees."

The doctrine of predestination and election and salvation by free grace for time and eternity, (which is but one and the same salvation) has been disbelieved by the world, and never will be truly believed by the unregenerate world, and will always be shunned by them until renewed by the Holy Spirit. So let us be found contending for "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

The light of day, the light of the Spirit, the darkness of night, the darkness of the mind are of God and will be revealed as it has pleased Him in knowledge and wisdom on to perfection as it comes to the end of all His appointed ways and times.

May the grace and mercy of an All-wise and merciful God be the theme of all who love the Lord in sincerity, is my desire for Jesus' sake, - Amen.

**finis**

**ABSOLUTISM MISREPRESENTED**

**By**

**Joseph W. Fairchild, 1926**

[Publisher's note: We selected this, the article by P.H. James and the article by Sylvester Hassell, as an example of the misrepresentation of the doctrine of Absolute Predestination by a collection of progressive elders who came among the Old School Baptists at the turn of the Twentieth Century. These elders advocated the Arminian view of Freewillism and a limitation on predestination, and widely spread misinformation that "the doctrine of Absolute Predestination made God the Author of Sin." They advocated a view that prior to regeneration, a man did not have a "free will", but upon regeneration, the child of God had received "grace" and could then either obey God and merit blessings, or disobey Him and "lose one's blessings." Whether he obeyed or disobeyed was left entirely up to the creature. Thus, their definition of "grace" was the same as the Arminians' definition of "free will." Their animosity was so great against the Sovereign dominion of God that they argued that those who preached Absolute Predestination preached that God is the author of sin. All who, for the previous one-hundred years, had read the Signs of The Times and the articles of the earlier Old School Baptists were well aware that such ministers did not preach that God was the author of sin, and all had vigorously denied that the doctrine implied that He was. As one will find in this publication, every author herein has denied the same. But this will never matter to the enemies of God's sovereignty.]

**PREDESTINATION,  
Joseph Fairchild**

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, IT bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:13-15).

Elder Lester's editorial on "Absoluters" recalled to my mind my first introduction to what is called Absolute predestination of all things. Years ago, when I was only a boy, I preached on Friday at the Three Forks of Powell River Association in Wise County, Virginia. On Saturday morning, a minister came to me and began talking about brethren preaching the Absolute Predestination of All Things. I listened to him a few minutes and then told him I regretted that brethren would get into such errors as he reported; that it is too bad, but I did not know how to prevent it. "But they tell me you are preaching it," said the brother. "No, I am not. The ones who

told you are mistaken. I do not believe any such stuff as that," I answered. Then the brother said, "Yes, you are Joe! You preached it in the stand yesterday! I heard you!"

I was shocked. I knew I had not preached that men are serving God when they are violating His laws, or that God is the author of sin, or in any way tempts or influences men to sin. I thought a moment and replied: "I may not know what the Absolute Predestination of all things is to you, but if I preached it yesterday I have been preaching it ever since I was brought to a knowledge of the truth. But one thing is certain: you are either mistaken in what I preached, or I am mistaken in what is meant by the "absolute predestination of all things." He assured me that he was not mistaken, and so we parted. I thought a lot about what he had said and what I had preached, and concluded that he had misunderstood me.

On Sunday, Elder James McDonald, of Tennessee, was one of the speakers. He was a stranger there and all were anxious to hear him. I don't think I ever heard the doctrine of God's Sovereignty explained more clearly than Elder McDonald explained it that day. Every point was made so plain that all who had eyes to see could see it. From every part of the congregation brethren and sisters were expressing their full approval. It was a feast, and the hungry were filled!

When Elder McDonald had completed his words of setting up the doctrine, he paused and said: "This is what I call the absolute predestination of all things. I may give it the wrong name. I'm not particular as to what you call it, but this is what I BELIEVE in the absolute predestination of all things. And it is what all my brethren mean when they speak of that doctrine."

I left that association confirmed as an "Absoluter" and so did practically all the rest of the brethren. And for years thereafter, I told the people that I believed the absolute predestination of all things. But I find the phrase causes confusion. It causes brethren and sisters to conclude we preach things WE DO NOT BELIEVE. How brethren can accuse men like Elders McDonald, Beebe, Durand, Chick and Gold of preaching that God influences men to sin, is the author of sin, that men have to sin because God predestinated that they should sin, and that they are as much doing God's will when they are sinning as they are when obeying His commandments, is more than I can understand. Is it possible that men of information can be so deceived or do they willfully misrepresent? I wish I could always feel that it is the former. Then I could have more charity towards those who misrepresent our humble ministers of

Christ.

But I do not want to give anyone an occasion to misunderstand me. My only reason for using words is to make myself understood and when any word or phrase causes me to be misunderstood, I would not be true to myself nor to the cause I represent if I did not abandon it. For this reason I quit using the expression: "The Absolute Predestination of All things," and I believe others should do likewise. It is not a phrase that I am anxious to get the children of God to receive, but the truth, and when any phrase causes them to reject the truth to which it is applied, that phrase should be discarded. We should love God's children better than any phrase of words, and when an expression causes little ones to stumble and fall we should cease to use it.

That is what I have done. What about you?

[Publisher's footnote: Many did, and found that the problem was not "the phrase" but rather, "blindness in part has happened to Israel". Those who quit it, today, do not believe it! It was never a "strife about words," or "choice of speech." Obviously, no child of God wishes controversy, but when God has a controversy with a people, they cannot help but be for or against the truth of grace. This antichristian spirit of "let's get along at whatever cost" led to a massive departure from the "faith once delivered to the saints." The Old School Baptists slipped into the same "down-grade" spirit Charles H. Spurgeon had seen among the Baptist Union in England in the 1880's. That is the lesson to be learned by this and the following article.]

## **Finis**

### **"TIME SALVATION" AND PREDESTINATION**

**by**

**P. H. James, Prescott, Arkansas —1928**

Brother Gold,

I am sorry such a controversy has been and is now in progress among the Old Baptists, over or about some points of doctrine, especially "time salvation" and predestination. I fear such a controversy has produced bad results. Such contentions incite passions, prejudice, and alienation, and I would be glad brethren would consider the ruinous effects of such debates and cease their striving about them.

I will offer a few thoughts on these two points, not for the purpose of stirring up strife or creating dissension, but merely to tell you what I hope I believe

in regard to these points: I believe the Lord has saved me all my life, from infancy up to the present hour, and hope He will save me with an everlasting salvation, as He will all Israel. Now, when I retrospect my life, I can see His preserving and protecting hand was over me, and when the recipient of His special grace and knowledge of the same, I could sing with the poet, "Through many dangers, trials and snares, I have already come," etc. The purpose of salvation was fixed — "ordered in all things and sure" - before the beginning of time, and "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ," etc. Made manifest to each one individually when they see Him by an eye of faith, "as the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," and when brought through "the washing of regeneration" they are living children; therefore, the exhortations and admonitions are address to living children, and not to dead subjects.

Although being raised from the dead by the voice and power of the Son of God, of themselves they "can do nothing," and if they render even one act of obedience to the law of Christ, (which is a Spiritual law), it is by the power of His Spirit, "For it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Not only works in us to will, but to do also.

Now, there are certain duties and obligations devolvent [sic] upon each child of grace, but as I have said, it is the living that feel the responsibility. Even children that live after the flesh die, must be raised to life before they can understand their duties, for "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." If "He works in us to will and to do," and we thereby receive the "answer of a good conscience toward God," do we need any praise for it? We have only done our duty as unprofitable servants. We have our joys, "times of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord," "filled with the fullness of God," as rewards, as "He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" and "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," but He deserves all the praise.

No doubt all true believers believe in the absolute sovereignty of God. They certainly believe that He "doeth 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 doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:11) "He declared the end from the beginning," etc. His sovereignty is established and all His attributes are embraced in His sovereignty and if predestination is one, then it is embraced there, it is certainly unalterable, therefore unlimited. Surely, no one would charge God with forcing His creatures to sin. He does not have to do such a thing. But some say, "If He predestinated sin and the wicked actions of men they are

thereby compelled, there is no other alternative." I conceive predestination to be one thing and coercion quite another.

"By the disobedience of one man sin entered into the world," etc. "Sin is the transgression of the law." Then by that act sin entered into the world, and if there had been no need of sin in the world, it seems God could have prevented the entrance of it into the world. God is perfect and whatever He does is right. "His judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out."

Now, if what I have written does not accord with the views of others, I hope they will not fall out with me, for life is too short, and we are too limited in our understanding of these things to cavil over them. "We only see in part and know in part" here, and if we spend our time in biting and devouring one another, we shall be consumed one of another, then all is chaos and ruin.

I have noticed in the controversy over these points that brethren on both sides have said or written nasty things, have "spoken unadvisedly with their lips;" but those contending for the unlimited predestination have manifested more charity and have written in a more tolerant spirit than the opposers. I feel persuaded that those who object so strenuously to predestination of all things, do not understand those who contend for it, and if they properly understood them there would be no difference. So they are, so to speak, "driving nails in a plank we are not sitting on."

May the Lord bless you and all the dear saints everywhere. May He sustain you by His grace in your declining age, and when it is His will to call you home, you may be numbered with the innumerable host redeemed by His blood out of every nation, kindred and tongue under heaven.

**Finis**

## **PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**W. T. Judy, Kearney, Nebr.**

**a.d. 1929**

We believe the Bible to teach the predestination of all things because God is wholly unlimited in His sovereignty over all worlds, principalities and powers. That being the case, He is entirely independent of any principalities or powers outside of His own eternal Godhead, and that makes Him dependent on no other than Himself Both the London and the Philadelphia

Baptist Confessions of Faith affirmed that God decreed within Himself according to His own eternal purpose and will "all things whatsoever comes to pass." Both Confessions also go on to affirm that this "does not make God the author of sin." That is what I believe and have contended for these many years.

Yet some now say that holding to predestination of all things makes God the author of sin. This I do not believe although we are repeatedly accused of believing it. But it doesn't make it so. For God to be the author of sin He would have to be the doer of sin, which He does not and cannot do. Man is the doer of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law," that God does not do nor can do, because He is under no law, and is accountable to no other than Himself because there is no higher authority or power than Himself. Therefore He does not transgress the law, let Him do what He will.

God placed man under law and man broke the law. By the breaking of the law, sin came into the world and man was the doer of the transgression. Therefore man is the author of sin. The truth of the predestination of all things by God does not in anywise change that fact.

God, the Father, decreed from before the foundation of the world that salvation should come to the Church by His Son, Jesus Christ and in Hebrews it says "and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all those that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). Now if God predestinated that salvation was to come by Jesus Christ, and yet Christ, (not the Father) is the "author of eternal salvation," why could not God decree sin to come into the world by man, and man be the author of sin? If He could do this in salvation, then why could He not in damnation? Those that put Christ to death did only what "God's hand and counsel determined beforehand to be done" (Acts 4:28). Yet that did not make God the author of the death of Christ, nor were those who did it any less accountable to God for their having done so. One can ignore this truth, but one cannot argue against it. Predestination does not make void man's accountability for his wicked acts. So teach the Scriptures and so, too, do those who believe in God's predestination over all things.

Some are fond of saying that if God predestinated all the wicked acts of men therefore God has no right to hold them accountable for what they do. This is looking at things in the light of carnal reason, and these matters cannot be judged in that way. The Scripture plainly teaches that God is unlimited in His sovereignty over all things and in His predestination of all things, and the

Scripture just as plainly teach that man is accountable for his transgressions.

Others try to make a distinction between God's foreknowledge and His predestination, and say that His foreknowledge embraces all things but His predestination does not. This would make God unequal in His attributes, and that cannot be, because the Bible says He is equal in all His ways (Ezekiel 18:25,29). God's foreknowing all things is nothing more nor less than that all things are sure to come to pass just as He foreknew that they would. Any thing or event that may or may not come to pass cannot be known beforehand with any certainty. The very fact that the Almighty knew beforehand all things is within itself proof positive that those things were sure to occur. Those things being sure to occur, what made them sure? Could any other power than God have made them sure to come to pass? The truth is that foreknowledge and predestination must stand or fall together. There can be no knowing all things without the predestination of all things.

God created all things. Can any imagine that He had no purpose for any one of these "all things"? The heavens and the earth were created by Him, and for Him. This was for a purpose and His purpose cannot be thwarted, and He saw that everything He had made was very good. He made everything after its own kind, and that it should bear fruit. He made man and gave him dominion over all things, and gave him a law to which the penalty of death was fixed. Man transgressing the law received the sentence of death and we, being Adam multiplied, are under the same sentence of death, being "dead in trespasses and sin" (Ephesians 2:1). This condemnation did not come by chance, but it was decreed in the mind of God according to His determinate counsel, and it came by man. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope" (Romans 8:20).

God knew that Adam would partake of the forbidden fruit before He ever made him, and it seems clear in my mind that it could not have been any other way. If it could have been so that he would not have partaken of it, God's arrangements (for Christ and His elect people) that were made before the creation of the world would have been of no use. Hence all of His determinate counsel would have been thwarted.

All things exist by the perfect wisdom of God. His wisdom is, as Himself, eternal. There is nothing of any nature that is strange to Him. He not only knew it or them, but He also declared them that we might know that He did. To Him, they are as sure to come to pass, and He knows it, as well as if they

were already passed. One thing, however tiny, that would be new or strange to God, would be the eternal destruction of the eternal Godhead. There is nothing so little, however so weak, that might be known to God if it were to get tangled up in the wheels of His great salvation but what would fully and completely destroy the whole of His great work of salvation, than for things to be differently from the way He designed them. For what would Christ suffer and die? For what reason would there be a Book of Life? Why divine election? Etc.

Therefore, we believe that God has all power and infinite wisdom. Knowledge itself is jointly coupled with this, for it would be folly itself to know a thing and at the same time not know it! And not only to know that just how and just where to have something for the accomplishment of His divine purpose and to have no confusion pertaining to His work and ways, prove the connection between His wisdom and power. His knowledge is coupled with wisdom, and both knowledge and wisdom are eternal. They are complete only in God. Then it is sweet to know that God is perfectly able to accomplish His will, and that He is as unchangeable as He is eternal. "I am the Lord, I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).

Through all of His attributes, His love and mercy are so interwoven that they are joined together in frequent Biblical expressions. They are solidly built to stand together. Those God loves are the objects of His mercy; and the objects of His mercy are those He loves, and no others. You will recollect that Joseph, through all of his trials of being sinned against by his brethren, came forth more than conqueror, and this while these trials brought him many lean years. When there was no corn, all of Joseph's brethren were forced to go down into Egypt on account of the famine, and Joseph forgave all, supplied them with corn and put money back in their sacks. He still had fellowship and love for them and restored order, for he forgave them all without their having asked. But said he, "Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." There was reproof, but he gave God the glory.

While we deplore the evils that bring about these famines and leanness of soul, it is all in the eternal purpose of God, and though it may be meant for evil by the doer of the work, God means it for higher purposes that are good, for "all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). We at times eat our bread in sorrow and may feel as though we were cast away, but with the still small voice comes renewed courage, and a hope that God in His mercy has

removed our fig leaf garments and has given us one of His own workmanship – His imputed righteousness.

Let us glory only in the wonderful work of God. In the ninth chapter of Romans, it seems that some of the brethren were not established in believing in God's all-sovereign power. Be that as it may, it was needful for them, as it is for all of God's people in all ages to be grounded in the truth. The children, he says, "not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth" (Romans 9:11), and thus proves that all events are under His control and works out to the fulfillment of His all-wise decree, whether they be the rising or falling of nations, or the falling of the drops of dew that revive the tender plant (Job 38: 26-28).

The Son of God, who was testified to be Christ, the Lord throughout the law and the prophets, was none other than the Son of God in the Godhead. He was to come and have the power of the Father manifested in Him, and with Him, and the angels should minister unto Him. He was to be called our Lord Jesus Christ. He was to fulfill His Father's will, which not only embraced the works of the Father as to His coming into the world, but also the eternal purpose of God by which He stood as it were "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Accordingly, wisdom viewed Him as "red in His apparel" (Isaiah 63:2). The fulfillment of God's purpose included all things necessary to that accomplishment, and so it was.

When David's mind goes back to his faithful servant, Uriah, whom he had killed so as to get Bethsheba, no doubt he sinks down and covers his face with shame, and we hear him cry out, "My sore ran in the night" (Psalm 77:2). Ah, yes, that sore never healed. Time, the great healer, never caused that sore to cease to run. God the author of sin, you say: Then why such accountability for sinners? Yea, only when God in great mercy raised David up together with Jesus Christ did he ever forget the awful crime he committed, and it must be done to carry out the purpose of God. This purpose did not lessen the heinousness of that dastardly deed. He must suffer all of this for an example to those who should come after, but in God eternal purpose, Solomon must be born. He was born of David and Bethsheba. "Whatsoever is under the heaven is Mine" (Job 41:11). This is the language of God. The One that said to Moses, "I Am hath sent thee." This great incomprehensible, eternal wondrous One is almighty in power, unlimited in wisdom, is He of whom it is written, "there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1)

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, everywhere at the same time, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, and into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall. Yet as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities whom He will. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the world and they that dwell therein; for He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods" (Psalm 24: 2). The Bible plainly teaches that God is the Creator and owner of all things. It is His. Not one inch may the wicked advance farther than God permits. Who can gainsay it? He overturns the wickedness of men and devils to the good of His people and to His own glory. Not a dog was allowed to bark at the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt; not a fly, frog, louse or hailstone was allowed to cross the line between the Egyptians and Goshen, where the children of Israel lived. The sea moved back and stood up like a wall at the command of God, so the Israelites crossed dry shod, and when the hosts of Pharaoh in their presumption and fool-heartiness followed into the midst of the sea, at the command of God down came the waters, and Pharaoh's hosts were swallowed up and drowned. "You are not your own, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which is His" (1 Corinthians 6:20). All these things the Bible teaches are in God's hands, and He works them according to His own will, to His own purpose. I cannot see how any one can deny the predestination of all things. In Peter's case, the Lord very well knew what Peter would say, and when, and under what circumstances, when Peter denied Him "thrice before the cock crowed." Yet, He said, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." You cannot deny that God brought up Pharaoh, the "Assyrian," to do just exactly as he did, and that God hardened his heart, to the very purpose that he would not let the people go from under his rule, to the end that God would do as He did, to "show His mighty power" on Pharaoh, and the riches of mercy upon His people.

I love the doctrine of the predestination of all things, for it alone ascribes all power, glory, and honor to my Master, and it is in that that I find my Sabbath (rest). This is a real rest and it matters not what my temporal troubles are, I still continue to enjoy this Sabbath day. When we understand the true meaning of the Scripture, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:2), we are ready and willing to confess that all true obedience of whatever kind we render to God is of the Lord, and not by our own creature efforts.

I do believe that God is a Sovereign and works His will, not only in the army

of heaven, but among the inhabitants of the earth also, and none dare say to Him, What doeth Thou? I firmly believe that all those chosen in Christ, shall receive the fullness of all spiritual blessings treasured up in Him.

In Ephesians, Paul declares that it is in Jesus we have obtained an eternal inheritance, and this being the predestinated purpose of God, "who works all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). There are some among the Old School Baptists who say that God predestinated all the good things, and who declare that all the bad things are against and contrary to the will of God, and tell us what is "good" and what is "bad." They seem not to realize that all God does is good and right, while much of His work with His creatures seems evil to us. None dare say that Job's afflictions were sent upon him for his disobedience, for God said to Satan, who was to tempt or afflict him, "bath thou considered My servant Job, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and eschews evil?" (Job 1:8). Now this forever seals the fact that Job was no greater sinner than the rest of mankind, but if we by faith follow the trials of Job to the end we shall see God's purpose in every event that was working to this end. After Job's possessions were taken and he was afflicted in person, so wretched was his condition that all earthly friends abhorred him, and even his wife asked him to curse God and die. This is just what Satan said he would do. But listen to the tried and afflicted saint. He said to his wife that she spoke as one of the foolish women. He said, "Shall we receive good at the Lord's hand, and shall we not receive evil?" Job's earthly blessings were good to him, but his afflictions were evil. "No chastening at the time it is administered seems good to us, but is grievous."

In the ninth chapter of John, there is recorded one of the greatest miracles Jesus ever performed. It was to open the eyes of a man that was born blind; and the question was asked, "Who hath sinned: this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus says, "Neither has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind." Where then are these supposed merited blessings and merited afflictions? The above being so, we must look elsewhere for some other cause for there must be a cause for every effect. Listen to Him whose words are spirit and life. He says that the cause is that the works of God should be made manifest. If we could look for God's works to be made manifest in all our deep heart exercises, instead of marking out the way God should do, we, too, as Job, could say, "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But if these "timely experiences of salvation" are merited, or conditional as to their cause, we cannot in any wise approach them as Job did his. We should notice that all of our heavenly, or spiritual, blessings were stored up IN Christ,

before the world was, and we were chosen heirs of these blessings there. It is according to the will and purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will, and we firmly believe that the great purpose of our God in all things is the salvation of His elect people whom He chose before the foundation of the world, and every link of that golden chain from the beginning of time is only manifesting to the people of God's fixed purpose or decree: to the end that His blessed name shall be glorified in all things.

In Jesus, I hope I see the purpose or predestination of God in all things, and to Him be glory, honor and power, now and eternally. Yea, all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. A hard shall that is, indeed! "The wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath He restrains." "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." When Balaam would have cursed Israel for Balak the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and he said, "Return unto Balak and thou shalt speak." "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?"

Sarah, the wife of Abraham (spoken of as the father of the faithful) was barren. She was old and it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women before even the promise was made. According to nature, all hope had expired, so much so that she laughed at the absurdity of the thought of her having a child. Nevertheless, at "the set time" of which God had spoken, she bear Isaac, (there is a set time for God to favor Zion) and when he was weaned, or separated from the consolations of the breasts of his mother, Abraham, the man of faith, made a great feast. The word that had gone out of the mouth of the Lord, which He declared should not return unto Him void, had accomplished His pleasure in the thing where unto He sent it, and the barren was made to sing unto Him who works and none can hinder. Abraham, who by faith staggered not at the promise of God, saw his day, the Lord's day, the day of His power, and was glad; he worshipped as he did at the altar when God staid his hand and provided Himself an offering in the ram caught in the thicket. What a time of rejoicing and singing and crying aloud there must have been at the great feast that he made!

When Abraham sent his servant to seek a bride for his son, Isaac, he commanded him saying, "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." He further told him that the Lord God of heaven, that took him from his father's house, and from the land of his kindred, and which spake unto him, and that swore

unto him saying, " Unto thy seed will I give this land, He shall send His angel before; and thou shalt take a wife unto thy son from thence." The success of the journey proved conclusively the selection to be "of the Lord." The Lord's love for Israel is the reason He brought them out and redeemed them out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The flock of God to this day is a "little flock", and they are little in a two-fold sense: so few in number that they are not reckoned among the nations of the earth, and so little and helpless and dependent that they, of themselves, can do nothing. God does the whole work in their salvation, and so by their experience they are barren and can bring forth no good thing except the Lord be entreated of them and bless them in fruit and in store.

When Zion does bring forth fruit, it is with great travail, with the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh – the warring of two opposing members. The flesh serves the law of sin while the mind serves and delights in the law of God after the inward man. Out of this strife we are made to cry, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We are taught that "the good I would do, I do not, but the evil I would not that I do." While enduring afflictions, we consider them bad, or evil; but they are ordained of God for our good. Who is qualified to determine what is truly good or truly evil?

Dear child of God, do you not realize that to be fruitful unto the Lord, you must be killed all the day long. Oh, may we all trust Him for all things, both for time and eternity. It is in Him we stand clothed upon with that righteousness from above. Shall it be said of the servant that he is better than his master? We have been stripped and shorn of our own righteousness under the law, which was proven to be nothing but filthy rags, so that our only hope should be of free grace, or, the unmerited favor of God.

I do not know of any professing the name of Old School Baptist who will deny that our God did most assuredly know every event of time before time ever was, but many today will not admit that all these events were predestinated by our God. How did and how does our God surely know that this or that event will positively occur if He has not purposed it? Is our God dependent upon some other power than Himself to bring about the things He purposed, or that He foreknew? He most assuredly purpose to cut off the wickedness of Babylon from the land of Israel (Isaiah 14:24-25). Did He not send the Babylonians there to destroy them? If not, who did move them to go where the Lord would show His wonderful power to save His people? "For the Lord of hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is

stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27.) If any are wise and can solve this mystery, let them tell the judgments of God which He has purposed against Egypt (Isaiah 19:12). Many tell us that God's purpose or predestination does not pertain to anything but those directly connected with the salvation of the Church, but the voice of inspiration tells it differently. It says, "The Lord of host hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth" (Isaiah 23:9). Upon whom does the Lord rely to see that all His works are done? Let us hear Him: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none like to Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure; calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country; yea, I have spoken it. I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 16:9-11). As we usually term these things in the text as being evil things, yet they are things that God purposed and predestinated. Does this use of evil to bring about good make God the author of sin? We declare with our afflicted and bereaved brother Job: "Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? Who shall say unto Him, what does Thou?" (Job 9:12). And says Solomon: "Where the word of a King is, there is power: and who may say unto Him, What doth Thou?" (Eccl. 8:4). Or with Nebuchadnessar, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He does 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 doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:11.) This I consider an array of indisputable evidence for the case of predestination of all things. Predestination is sure to carry to the complete fullness the purpose of God in the things predestinated, and we are taught that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28.)

Some today attempt to divide the "all things" into two classes, but no table is furnished to show what class of things are embraced in the "all things," and what class of things is not in that declaration. I admit that I cannot see while some things are being transacted how they can be for my good. I think Jacob was puzzled how the separation from his children was ever to be for his good, but when he was given to see his family's salvation in it, he could say, "It is enough" (Genesis 45:28).

God had told Abraham in a covenant, when Abraham was in a deep sleep, that his seed would be four hundred years in a land that was not theirs, and would serve them but in the fourth generation they would come out with much substance. God had as much purpose in Pharaoh, an Assyrian

conqueror of Egypt, being raised up to show His mighty power in destroying him and his hosts, as He did in raising Israel up to serve him. He had as much purpose in destroying the wicked world by the flood of waters, as He did saving Noah and his family, the beasts and all the things that were with him in the ark. It was just as much the purpose of God to draw Pharaoh and his host into the sea by the receding darkness upon them, as it was to have Israel to go forward through the sea. God only used His will and purpose in leaving out of the eternal covenant of salvation all the non-elect, as much as He did in making sure the salvation of the elect. How will one make a classification of just what is "good" and what is "evil"? Who can compile such a list? It is sure that the Bible does not!

When our Lord died on the Roman cross and said, "It is finished," the door of redemption had forever shut in all the elect of God, never to be opened again, and the non-elect host was forever shut out. Thus the seal of God's eternal knowledge fixed on all the chosen of the Lord and they were perfectly and permanently drawn.

"Salvation through our dying Head  
Is finished and complete.  
He paid what 'ere His people owed  
And canceled all their debt."

God in infinite wisdom and sovereign rule has, does now, and will make all things work together for good to them that love God. Some things we find that seem evil to man are hard to believe to be to our good, yet God does not view things as we. Joseph's abduction to Egypt and the lying of Potiphar's wife, who had him cast into prison, were for the purpose of his later interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. This in turn was that sufficient storage for natural sustenance of the people would be to the saving of posterity and the saving of Israel, through which people Jesus was born. As declared by Jacob, Jesus was to be born of Judah, of whom the scepter should not depart, and the "lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come." Then "to Him shall the gathering of the people be." Here it was all to come to pass, and all of the falsehoods of Joseph's brethren and the other wicked acts connected with this, had to be included. Yet Joseph said "God meant it for good, to the end to save many people alive," and to preserve this posterity, and those events were called "decreed things" by our forefathers. God, in the "decreed things" made them all work precisely together for good to all those who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. The taking of the young child Jesus and fleeing into Egypt with Him and the passing into Nazareth,

that He should be called a Nazarene, and His settlement, were all prophesied of, and all had to come to pass as they did. Otherwise, the prophecy would have failed, and the Bible would have been a book of falsehoods. So we see right in this case the fulfillment of the Scriptures, yet it was by "wicked hands" they crucified Him through a vile and corrupt spirit and were doing their own sinful, wicked desires, and God made it fulfill the prophecy. Clearly, this does not make God the author of sin. They that slew Jesus did identically the same things in time by their own wickedness, and their conduct had its origin from the same source. Yet it was God's determination and that the Scripture must be fulfilled, that there shall be a Son born, His name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from the sins. None of these things were left up to chance. God promised us eternal life before He created the world, and that life was in His Son, and the only way the promise could reach its completion was for the law to be fulfilled and taken out of the way by the sacrifice of the Son of God. He must be without spot or blemish, and none could do this but Jesus, who was the only mediator for men. He was the only one free from sin, and it required Him to be made of a woman made under the law; to redeem (all the Father gave Him) them that were under the law in order for the completion and fulfillment of the promise of God. It was necessary for wicked men to rise up and to do what "God's hand and counsel had before determined to be done." Certainly it could not be argued that "good men" would do such an awful deed. It was God, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up and they unknowingly crucified and slew the Lord of glory. This was all by the divine arrangement that He had decreed within Himself and it was the most wicked and heinous crime in the annals of human history, and the truth of the whole Bible.

Now may the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob keep us as He kept them, never letting us depart from ascribing to Him all the glory, honor, power, and sovereignty over all things, times and places, is my prayer in hope of life beyond this world of sin.

**Finis**

## **PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**Elder J. R. Hatcher, 1929**

When we are enabled by the Spirit to see the Lord's set compass properly leveled, and then look backward and forward at the unspeakable beauties of all of God's wonderful works, it humbles us at the dunghill, and extols the supreme God higher than the heavens!

When looking backwards through time, we hope that we see ONE Eternal God before there was a sun, moon, or stars to give light to transiently shine into the profound depth of uncreated persons, creatures, or things.

There, in this Eternal, or "Beginningless" space, was nothing to advise or instruct the Eternal God to do or not to do a single thing. It is there, we hope, that we see the Father, Son and Holy Ghost upon HIS unshakable throne, having an infinite knowledge, and omnipotent power, with infinite Wisdom too great to tell by finite little man!

It is there we see this great God in His eternal majesty, having all things to control, form and create just as He pleased. It is wonderful to even think upon such a Being! Where is that man or set of men, that would say that God was depending on uncreated things to direct His Eternal Purposes, which were fitly and precisely wrapped in Himself, who "alone inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15).

Right here, His compass stands, perfectly leveled by the power of the Eternal Jehovah, and right here is where the truth existed, and where the Fountain was, and our God was, is, and will always be the first great cause of all things, and upon it, all worlds, creatures, events and things must stand depend.

I believe that our God is Eternal, and that His purposes are the same, and that every one of them was declared in Christ ever since He has been God. Now listen: "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, 'Destroy them'."

"Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also His heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O People saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. 33:27 — 29).

Here we have God's everlasting arms underneath the people thus saved by the Lord, and we have the Lord's heavens above them dropping down dew. Then it is no wonder that they dwell alone in safety! Completely immersed by the heavens above and the everlasting arms beneath. What power can get to them? There is none.

Without another Scripture, the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy proves conclusively that God is Eternal, and the everlasting arms are all Powerful, and that His people are "saved by the Lord." The corn and wine represents the new covenant, in which the substance is the eating of "His flesh" and "drinking His blood," which the world could not understand in the days of our Lord in this world.

The above Scriptures are fenced with Jehovah's "shalls," and therefore they set forth the Eternal sovereignty of God over all worlds, creatures, events and things, even before a single thing was in actual existence. There in that eternal beyond, God "Declared the end from the beginning," and from ancient times, the things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." There is nothing to hinder Him from doing just as He pleases; for "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, in earth, in seas, and in ALL deep places."

Now, where is the man or set of men that can enter in this dominion of the eternal Jehovah and keep Him from doing His pleasure in heaven, in earth, in seas, and in all deep places? I tell you, they are not to be found!

In the first verse of the Bible, certainly shows the universal reign of Almighty God over all worlds, creatures, events and things. "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." In Revelations He says: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Here is the government of our God from the beginning to the ending, with all the intervening power from the first to the last (Revelation 1:8). In the 17th verse He says, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last."

As God has declared the "end from the beginning," who can undeclared what God has declared? Upon this one question, our God has challenged the whole race of Adam, by saying, "Who among them can declare this, and show us former things?" None of the race of Adam is able to declare the end from the beginning, neither can they declare future events (for they have not the wisdom to do so); but God is infinitely wise, and unlimited in power. He does just what finite men cannot do!

Poor, blind mortals are ready to deny God's government as being wholly governed by almighty power, and are ready to say that God is unjust! Why

would "the vain race of flesh and blood" contend with their Creator, God; when mortal man presumes to be more holy, wise or just than He?

"Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, 'Why hast Thou made me thus'?" Who is he that would be so vile as to reply against his Maker? "Fear not; for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west." Again, "Even every one of them that is called by My name (not another name); for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." And again, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Savior." "Yea, before the day was, I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall let (or, hinder — Old English) it?"

Dear reader: I have not time to comment on all these Scriptures; but I feel that you can understand them as they are written, because they are in your own experience, if saved by grace. I have been led into this precious doctrine of God's sinless and righteous predestination deeper, because I have suffered so much persecution!

There was not a thing to influence the Eternal God to create and form all worlds, creatures, events and things. The Everlasting God needed nothing to dictate for Him as to how He would create all worlds, creatures and things, and as to inhabit the worlds; for He was and is "the Almighty."

I do not believe that the Eternal God had to look down through time to see how His declarative works were going to run! This would impeach His foreknowledge, eternal counsel, and almighty power over His government! The only conclusion that I can form, is, that the everlasting God is and was and always will be God, and that without consulting anything, He determined in all eternity to create, make, and form this earth and placed people and all other creatures and things upon it, just as it pleased Him!

He needed no wisdom but His own. He needed no power but His own. He declared it as He decreed it. As the hymn writer said: "Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown hang on His firm decree; He sits on no precarious throne, nor borrows leave to be."

I know that these are strong words; so strong that the enemy, with bitter persecutions, will nibble at our heels; but I feel willing "to suffer afflictions with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." To "limit the Holy One of Israel," and desire to appoint boundaries for the Lord is today a common thing. The very idea that God left out some things

from His divine and righteous decrees to float at random upon the scale of "blind chance" (a name fit for nothing), would, if possible, upset the entire universe and dethrone the Everlasting God of heaven, and everything would go into nonentity, and not a thing be left to tell the sad story!

Our God says: "HE is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" "He declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." He gives no reason why He did declare this: only it seemed good in His sight. Who is he that would subtract some things out of God's declaration? Has God made a mistake and smart men wish to correct their Maker? Who knows what things to take out of God's purposes? Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths, without a murmuring word, and the whole race of Adam stand guilty before the Lord. God is the beginning, and He has been this in all eternity. So He declared all events of time, in their precise order so minutely that nothing can be taken from it nor anything added to it.

I desire for us to notice the universal government of our God. He stands alone in Eternity, and heaven is His throne and the earth His footstool. Nothing is present to hinder Him from declaring His purposes! See Him as He sits in eternity; "High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. " (Isaiah 57:15.) See Him as "He setteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. " (Isaiah 40:22.) In the 17th verse, speaking of all nations, says, "All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. "

Is it a fact that the Everlasting God is sitting on the circle of the earth, clothed in Majestic Power, beholding these less than nothings, and let these nothings tear down His universal government over all worlds, creatures and things? Is it a fact that our God has stretched out the heavens as a curtain, and spread them out as a tent to dwell in, will allow these nothings to tear down His government? No, a thousand times, no!

See Him immersed in the stretched-out heavens, wrapped up in a curtain of His own sovereign purposes, clothed with power of the universal government, and then look back through time and behold Him arrayed in Almighty Power, before the world began; and there chose His people in His Son, and predestinated them unto the adoption of sons to reign with Him in the glorified heaven of heavens! I say: Who but an enemy would dare say to their Maker, "You are unjust!"

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth." Has our God done all these things and had no design or purpose in them? No, sir. Such would be to charge God as being foolish! God's foreknowledge and perfect wisdom would not subjugate Him to guess at His unalterable purposes, thoroughly fixed in Eternity.

No wonder "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their (heavens) line is gone out through all the earth, and their words (gospel) to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom (Jesus) coming out of His chamber (eternity), and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race" —(knowing He was strong to get the victory).

Listen: "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it," etc. Now, did the heavens declare the glory of God, and God had no purpose in them? Was all those Scriptures a blind "chance"?

To my mind, God either predestinated all things, or else He predestination nothing! Those are the words of the Everlasting God, who gives no reason what He declared the end from the beginning; but He did that very thing.

It is a conclusive fact that the Everlasting God is the first great cause and the last great end of "all things." "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were create by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." The Everlasting God, being first and last, the beginning, and the end, is the Head of all things intervening between the beginning and the ending of vast eternity. (Col. 1:16,17).

We evidently know that this is the doctrine that caused the persecution of our Lord to death, and also put many of the saints to the stake for the name of Jesus. We cannot believe for one moment that those things were in the absence of God's absolute predestination of all things. He, in the universal reign of His dominion "Worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," and rules, governs, and controls them to the good of His chosen people, and to the glory of His high and lofty name; for neither "is there any creature that

is not manifested in His sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him in whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

The eternal God said to Job: "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine. " Now has it got to be a fact that the Everlasting God of the entire universe does not control all things under the whole heavens, which are His? Must we sacrifice this high and exalted truth to please the carnal mind of these who He refers to as "nothing and less than nothing and altogether vanity," and say that there are some things that God has not predestinated? No, a thousand times, NO!

The patient Job says of our God: "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at His reproof He divided the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through the proud. By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent," etc.

Has this Almighty God done all these things and with no purpose in them at all? Are they beyond His divine control? Is there any other power or powers that can do those things outside of Himself? No Sir! This God rules, governs, and controls, and holds in His own grasp all creation, from the falling sparrow to the dissolution of worlds, and "works all things after the counsel of His own will," and, "none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

The inspired Paul certainly believed in the "absolute predestination of God over all things; for he says: "God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing HE Eiveth ALL life, and breath, and all thinjis; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Here, is the Supreme God at the helm of the entire universe holding in His grasp all events of time in the chain of His divine providence, so definitely fixed, determined, and appointed, so that neither man or devils can break a

single link in this chain of events, which were so minutely and precisely determined before hand by this high and lofty King! HE even determined the times and set the bounds before appointed, and the place of the habitation of all men of all nations! I tell you that the Book is full of the absolute predestination of all things. There was nothing lost sight of in the perfect wisdom of our God. He says, "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass." But let me quote all this verse. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24). Now read the 26 and 27th verses and you have this: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

The Everlasting God has sworn to His thoughts and purposes here, and who would dare say that our God has sworn to a lie? The whole earth is or was in His thoughts and in His purposes! And there are none that can change this God or turn Him from His righteous decrees; but I must pass on, and not dwell here longer.

The most wicked acts of men, or even devils, were in the predestination of our God. They are instruments in His sovereign hands. When Jesus gave the sop to Judas, HE said unto him: "That thou doest do quickly. " And when Jesus was arrested, HE was manifested to His enemies by a kiss from Judas," the traitor, exactly as foretold in Psalm 109.

All these acts of men in persecution of the Savior were in God's purpose and determined by His Father. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. " (Acts 2:23). Again, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD, and against His Christ For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Th.2 hand and Thy counsel determined BEFORE TO BE DONE."

All these things are in the righteous decrees of a Sovereign God, in His thoughts, and sworn to from all eternity. They cannot be otherwise, for God has sworn to them, and He cannot lie! We "live in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). Who could He have promised it to that early? Certainly not a creature! And again, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and

which entereth into that within the vail" (Hebrew 6:19).

How blessedly sweet it is that our God hath (past tense) made all things sure, and that He sent His only Son, and Holy Spirit to prepare us to reign with Him in the glorified heaven of heavens on His own right hand.

Judas was pointed out in the foreseeing of the Scriptures: "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." Judas was a devil 'from the beginning' (Psalm 109). The Lord said: "Whom shall I send to go up to Ramoth Gilead to entice Ahab? And a lying spirit presented itself before the Lord," and it volunteered and said, "I will go; " and the Lord said, "Go," and thus the declared prophecy of Ahab's blood being spilled where Naboth was murdered was fulfilled, that the dogs should lick up Ahab's blood. This spirit was a "lying spirit" appointed to carry out God's expressed purpose!

Joseph was warned of God, in a dream, to take the young child, Jesus, and go down into the land of Egypt (darkness) to prolong the life of Christ until the "set" time for His crucifixion, and to fulfill another declared prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1). Many such things could be mentioned here if time would admit.

Almost numberless sinful actions took place in the long ago days, and many more yet to come to pass, and with what certainty could they come to pass, if they were not foreknown in God's determinate counsel, and predestinated by an All-wise God? There is no particle of reason that anything could come to pass without God's foreknowledge based upon His purpose, and His predestination. Foreknowledge could not exist without predestination; neither could predestination exist without God's foreknowledge. How would the end have been declared from the beginning, if it had not been established and therefore foreknown of God?

Look at the numerous crimes which have been committed, from Cain and all along down the line to this present time, and no doubt will continue on and on until time shall be no more, and what consolation could we have, if our God had not so nobly fixed His purposes to rule it all over for the good of His people, and to the glory of His name?

It was the wicked actions of Joseph's brethren when they sold him and caused him to go down into the dark land of Egypt, and God ruled this over to save "much people alive." His brethren dipped his coat of many colors in kid's blood, and thus impressed a lie upon their father, Jacob! This coat was

given to Joseph by his father and this stirred up jealousy, and caused his brethren to hate him, and when Joseph dreamed a dream, "they hated him yet the more. "

Joseph was a type of Christ, and when his brethren bowed to him, in fulfillment of his dreams, all jealousy was gone from them. These things humbled them so that when "Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs, and they drank and were merry with him," all jealousy was gone, and there was love and union.

Dear brethren, I have not time to dwell here; but all these things are in the experience of the children of God. How jealous we were, when we first felt we were unjustly condemned before God and could not be saved by the law! We could not, at that time, realize that our Spiritual Joseph had borne our sins away! We felt our guilt in crucifying the Son of God! Oh, how we were caused to bow before Him! Every time we tried our own righteousness, our corn was found in our sacks, and this trouble caused us to be spoken to "roughly" by our blessed Lord, the spiritual "Joseph." Our very hope shows that all these things were for our good. They humbled us down, and brought us into a sacred nearness with our God, and made us to praise His Holy name. All jealousy was gone, and we feel to be less than the least of the saints.

Where would we have been if God had none of those things for us? Is it a fact that God just did these things for us, just to try to see if His plan would suit His own convenience? Was it all guesswork with our God and "happened" by blind "chance"? No, Sir! If old Jacob and his twelve sons had gone through all those sad actions upon the scale of "blind chance." It would have insulted the foreknowledge and predestination of God. His wisdom, in the type, would have been a failure, and our hope blasted.

How would the virtue of Joseph have been tested, had it not been tested by Potiphar's wife, who so wickedly accused him? And how could our spiritual "Joseph" have been tested, had He not been so falsely accused by His enemies? David said, "Surely (not by chance) the wrath pf man shall praise Thee: and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). How excellent to know that our God has appointed the boundaries of wicked men and devils, so that they can not go beyond the limits of God's righteous Providence.

If Joseph had been devoured by some wild beast, then how could he have

been a type of Christ? If Herod had killed the blessed Son of God, at the time that he so wickedly had all the male children killed from two years old and under to the time of the young child's birth, then how could vile sinners as you and I be saved?

I do not believe that the sinful actions of men and devils are praiseworthy; but it is soul-cheering to realize that the All-wise God has so minutely, in precise order, arranged all events of time, so that He so wisely "declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure."

The righteous judgments of our God are wrapped up in the absolute predestination of all things, or declared in the unalterable decrees of the Eternal Jehovah. "His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33). We can only see them dimly when they are revealed to us. These judgments are as certain as the foreknowledge and predestination of our God, and are embraced in His declarative counsel before the world began. There is no workmanship so perfect as this; for all things move on in perfect harmony with the Eternal "Will" of God, whose Will, no court on earth can break! He "works all things after the counsel of His own will," and this to the praise of His grace, and was thus purposed in all Eternity.

"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Adam and Eve ate and they did die! And God executed His judgment upon them. This death was in the purpose and foreknowledge of God before He created them, and God meant it for good; for if they had not eaten thereof, how could we poor sinners have ever been saved? We did not make ourselves sinner; but the first Adam made us sinners. "By the disobedience of one man (the first Adam) many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of one (the Second Adam, Christ) many were made righteous" (Romans 5:19). Can any man or set of men tell us what the first Adam ever did for us, but make us sinners? Did he ever do one single thing that made us better than what we were in him? None of the race of Adam is able to change the truth of God's absolute predestination over all worlds, creatures, and things! None has ever set up a certain or perfect plan of salvation with all the kinds of predestination, that they know anything about. The predestination of men, in general, fails. It is hypocritical, and stands on the scale of chance. It might be this way, or that way, and thus disputes the Eternal Purpose of God, and denies the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of the great and sovereign Jehovah, the Creator of all worlds, creatures and things.

In speaking of false prophets and false teachers, our God says, "And many

shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of And through covetousness shall they with feign words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not"( II Peter 2:3). God allows them to go the full length of His decree, then puts His judgments upon them according to His decrees, for you see that their evil works are fenced in with Jehovah's "shalls." "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell - for God did it - and delivered them in chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (Jude 6), etc. All these sinful actions of angels, men and devils, were determined, foreknown, and so were all their judgments. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). They were "good" in God's sight, and our God meant them "for good," that His people be humiliated before Him, and cause them to bow at His divine control, and crown Him LORD OF ALL.

The absolute predestination of all things works in our experience. We feel it. It reveals sin in us. It makes us feel our exceeding sinfulness, and causes us to groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, "the redemption of our bodies."

So our God has always worked according to His own purpose, and according to His precise "will," and rightly chastises us for sin, and when the set time comes, that "Mystery Babylon," with her cup full of abominations, drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, then she shall fall, receiving the righteous judgments of our God. Yea, she shall receive them according to God's sworn-to-thought in all Eternity. In speaking of the beast in Revelation, our God says, "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 17:8). Who wrote those names in this book of life? Who left those names out? Did they "write" them there themselves? No! Well, then, it must have been our God who wrote them there, or left them out – and this before the world began! Oh, Listen! Did our God know the names of His people "from the foundation of the world"? If not, how could He have written their names in that book of life? Or, does it have to be a fact that our God had to wait to see who would be born, or how many that Mystery Babylon could deceive and lead away before He could enroll the names of His saints in the book? If so, then how could their names have been written there "from the foundation of the world"?

To forever settle this point, I will quote the following Scripture: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Thessalonians 2:19). How long did He know them? Listen: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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" (Ephesians 1:4).

This was before sin entered into this world! Now, is it a fact that the Eternal God did not have His people in His foreknowledge and Eternal decrees before the foundation of the world? Did He have to wait and see how His purpose was going to work in order to unalterably fix His decrees, and that just to suit the "free will" and "free moral agencies" (a name that does not exist, nor can it exist) of men?

Now we will go back to "Mystery Babylon." "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her," etc. Then shall the voice of our Royal King roar as "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, saying, Come out of her, My people," etc. A little more than nineteen and twenty-seven years ago, our dear Lord was sent into this world by His Father. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and there was no guile found in His mouth." "He being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding ALL THINGS by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." When He was brought before the courts of this earth, He was mocked, and scourged, and spit upon by His enemies, and then Pontius Pilate uttered the "Bildad" slang at Him saying, "Knowest Thou not I have power to release Thee, and I have power to crucify Thee?" "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." Then, if Pilate had no power at all, then it must be a fact that all power was vested in Almighty God!

The power that Pontius Pilate had, was given him "from above." Even Pilate was ignorant of God's purpose of having God's Son crucified, and that the just should suffer for the unjust! Jesus said to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world " Here we have the "end," which was "declared from the beginning" (Genesis 3:15), with every event of time.

Yes, every thing, it matters not how small it might be, was declared of Almighty God from the beginning. If it had not been for lice, how could the

magicians in Egypt have said, "This is the finger of God"?

Had there not been a spider, how could she have been in "Kings' palaces"? Had there not been a frog, how would Pharaoh have been plagued by them? I tell you that our Great God, when He created the spider, lice, and frogs, had a wise and noble purpose in them, though they be ever so small to us.

Dear brethren, I am glad that I believe in the Eternal fixedness of God's purposes. That He declared the end from the beginning, the things not yet done, saying "My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure."

I am now old and will soon be gone- will soon pass through the chilly waters of death, and while dying if I can only be made able to look, by that strong God-given faith, to the God I love and be borne away to that haven of Eternal Rest from the troubles of life, it will be a great sinner saved by grace!

I must close, hoping you will look over all my mistakes, and God bless this imperfect letter, upon such an important subject, to your comfort and to all who may read the same. "Fare ye well."

**Finis**

## **PREDESTINATION VS. LIMITED PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**Elder J. W. Gilliam**

**1930**

[ Elder J. W. Gilliam was the moderator of the Country Line Church at Elon College, N.C., which church was affiliated with the Country Line Association of Old School Baptists. He drafted the addendum to that Association's Articles of Faith on the subject of "GOOD WORKS" in answer to the slanderous charges by the opposition party to the doctrine of predestination that the "Absoluters" did not believe in "good works." He had a clear vision of where the Conditional Time salvation theory was carrying its adherents. The addendum is included as an Appendix to this publication.]

Dear Brethren, and Readers of the LONE PILGRIM:

I feel to write you a short letter concerning some matters that have already begun to disturb our beloved Zion. I am no prophet, but feel that I can read the "handwriting on the wall." And while I feel confident of the interpretation, I hope, for the sake of peace and fellowship among our

churches and brethren, that my conclusions are not well founded. However, I will ask you to look into this matter, and then judge for yourselves.

During the past twelve months, many of our ablest brethren; viz., Elders Isaac Jones, L.H. Hardy, Samuel McMillan, C.A. Davis, J. W. Flinchum, J.J. Hall, and others, have fallen asleep, and as we cherish and honor their memory we feel to say peace be to their ashes. They were valiant soldiers, and every one of these men were Predestinarian Baptist, and they did not hesitate to defend the historic doctrine, because it is certainly the fundamental doctrine of our faith, and ever has been. The bodies of these beloved veterans of the cross had scarcely grown cold before war is begun to be waged against the doctrine.

There is at present time such agitation by some of our brethren, (whose names I will not call), as I have not witnesses since I united with the Church twenty-two years ago. These brethren who are known to be the most aggressive in this agitation, and who are seemingly using every means at their command to line up brethren with them, and feel out the ministry on the question of the absolute predestination of all things are strictly limited-predestinarians, and many of them are out and out Conditionalists. Seemingly, these brethren have decided to kill the unconditional element of the Old School Baptist Church and ministry –those who are not afraid to defend the doctrine of Christ.

These brethren who are threatening the Old School Baptist Church with a division at the present time are making an open, as well as covert effort to crystallize sentiment against the doctrine of unlimited predestination. They slur the doctrine in their preaching, and refer to those who are preaching it as those who are "sowing seeds of discord." They further label them as those preaching "extreme doctrines," etc., and they get up and publicly invite such as they want to visit their churches and associations, as though the churches and associations belong to them. Furthermore, they, in their preaching, invite a discussion, and force an explanation and defense, by their inferences and insinuations in referring to this doctrine generally known as the "absolute predestination of all things."

Now, my brethren, I hope you can bear with me while I make a few suggestions. First, I wish to say that it is evident that there are two sentiments prevalent in the Old Baptist Church today. On the one hand, those who are established in the doctrine are emphasizing the doctrine of eternal unconditional election, predestination, obedience, and the resurrection of the

body, etc. On the other hand, there is a decided tendency to soften on these fundamental doctrines, and they preach election tenderly, predestination limitedly, obedience conditionally, and some touch the resurrection question in such a way as to leave you guessing as to what they actually believe!

Now, my brethren, I feel like it is hardly necessary for me to tell you that I am an absolute predestinarian, if I know my heart in the matter, but I do not believe that God makes men and women to sin, "neither tempteth He any man to sin," or do anything wrong, and that He cannot sin, and does not look upon sin with any degree of allowance, but on the other hand hates sin and punishes those who sin, all of whom are accountable creatures. But I fully believe that God is Sovereign over all worlds and events, and doeth His own will.

Now, we are not expecting to declare non-fellowship for our brethren who oppose us in the doctrine, but we are not expecting by the grace of God, to surrender on a single point of doctrine, so long as we have a "thus saith the Lord" for our belief. Therefore, my brethren, if you want a division and war in the Church on the question of the historical doctrine, just continue the present tactics, denial of the doctrine, and the manner in the which some are inviting debates on the question, and you will have no trouble in getting just what you want.

Now, my brethren, some of you will no doubt say that I have been too pointed in this letter, but let me say I have not been so pointed as I expect to be in the future, if it becomes necessary, for I believe the doctrine as proclaimed in the Bible and held to by our brethren and beloved and highly esteemed elders, Isaac Jones, L.H. Hardy, P.D. Gold, Samuel McMillan, C.A. Davis, J.W. Flinchum, J. J. Hall, and hundreds of others of like precious faith, and I am not ready to yield in favor of Conditionalism today.

All things are fixed, or they are unfixed; and if fixed, who fixed them? If God fixed them, then they are predestinated, and Elder Sylvester Hassell said in the LANDMARK about two years ago that "all God's predestination is absolute." If all things are not fixed, then things "happen by chance," and Adam in the Garden of Eden might have stood or fallen, and nothing future is certain, but all uncertain. Who among Old School Baptists are willing to believe such none-sense? If God has not complete control of the devil now, and has never had, where is the assurance that He ever will have in the future? If the devil stands out as a rival enemy with sovereign power, then the doctrine of the Old Baptists is wrong and Arminianism is right. If God

has not created all things, both visible and invisible, then pray tell me who has? If God has, then did He not have a purpose in such creation, and will God be disappointed in any of His works? Do not the Scriptures tell us that "all His works shall praise Him and His saints shall bless Him"? Then, who can annul His "shalls."

Again, my brethren, I feel like I could write on, and on, on this glorious doctrine of God our Savior, but I am writing hastily, and must bring this letter to a close. Please consider what I have said. I love the Old Baptists, and I want to live with them all the days of my life. I can say I have nowhere else to go, neither do I want to go elsewhere, and I want no new doctrine among us, and I expect to contend, by the enabling grace of God, "for the faith once delivered to the saints." If you think what I have written is not true, then I ask you to watch for yourselves. Yours in hope,  
J. W. Gilliam

**Finis**

**DOES CONDITIONAL TIME SALVATION AND  
FREEWILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM  
OF THE ORIGIN OF SIN?**

**By  
Stanley C. Phillips, 2005**

Many ministers holding to conditionalism and free will repeatedly charge the Predestinarians with advocating that "God is the author of sin." Predestinarians apparently have a different dictionary than the one used by their opponents for they do not equate the first, or immediate cause of an act, with being the same as the secondary or distant cause of an act. To them there is a very important difference, and in their understanding, alone, is there an answer to the supposed "problem of sin." To state this "problem" one would say that if God is omnipotent, or all powerful and absolutely and only "good," then sin could never exist in His creation.

Throughout the ages men have felt constrained to extricate God from being the "author of sin." All the great philosophers have dealt with the seeming problem, including Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle; and all their attempts have failed to be consistent with the existence of sin in a monotheistic universe. In modern times, the Conditionalists and Arminians among Baptists have hyped an imaginary solution to this "problem." The leaders of the opposition to predestinarians constantly repeat their position that "God did not predestinate

all things, including evil. He only suffers it, or permits it, but does not cause it." At that point their mental processes stop. Their followers repeat the slogan, and grin: "Problem solved!" But is it?

They ascribe to man a freedom of will whereby the man without external influence can either obey or disobey, and by disobeying he is the author of his own sin. By obeying His commandments they merit His blessings. Sounds good, doesn't it? But have you looked at it more closely? God created man. This they readily admit. He gave, they believe, to this man a "freedom of will." This they teach. And, they agree that He had foreknowledge what Adam would do with it if He gave it to him. Hence, the Conditionalists, believing in man's freedom of will, as truly makes God the AUTHOR OF SIN AS ANY Predestinarians MIGHT! Explain it in any way one pleases, but if God made man and gave him freedom of will, knowing what the man would do with it, He cannot escape from the charge of having been the first and direct cause of man's first disobedience, and all such acts since then. Hence, we can readily charge that Conditionalists make God the AUTHOR OF SW.

The Baptists' forefathers who wrote the London Confession of 1677 and 1689, wrote this: "God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things [not just "five things" as taught by Conditionalists], whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty of secondary causes taken away, but rather established. . ."

When the Conditionalists insist that God merely suffers sin, or permits it, they go far beyond making God the author of sin. They make Him the approver of sin as well; and even this they do not often charge against the Predestinarians! If they wish to relieve God of any culpability in the acts of sin, they must add to their statement that God suffers it because He cannot prevent it. Few however are this bold. They leave Him somewhat as an over-indulging Father: He will not make a man behave himself, although He could, but for unexplained reasons, He suffers, or permits him to sin, which He had rather they did not do. Thus, they have come no closer to removing the objections they have to God's determinate counsel being inclusive of all things than have their opponents. Their position still makes God the originator of evil.

In Christianity, this weak explanation dates back to Augustine. Augustine, as

a Pagan, was a Manichee – a dualist. That is, he, as the Zoroastrians (and even Daniel Parker's Two-Seeders), held that both Good and Evil were eternal antagonists. God and Satan were both eternal. Upon embracing the Catholic faith, Augustine found the early "Christians" were under assault by Pagans for believing that God was Almighty, or Omnipotent, and at the same time, ultimately and only good. As with the present-day Conditionalists, this seemed to embarrass him. How could he oppose such a charge as this? He introduced the concept of the freedom of the human will as his answer to the supposed "problem." Also, as the Conditionalists believe, he taught that God gave man an independent and uninfluenced freedom of will. Man could will to obey, and just as equally and uninfluenced, he could will not to obey. In his letter to Valentinus (426), he said: "Now He has revealed to us, through the Holy Scriptures, that there is in man a free choice of will. There is, to begin with, the fact that God's precepts themselves would be of no use to a man unless he had free choice of will, so that by performing them he might obtain the promised rewards." Sound familiar? It should! That is the exact position of modern-day Conditionalists and Arminians! It is "merited blessings as a payment for debt, rather than the free grace of God. He assumed: "Problem solved!" But was it? He found that it only aggravated the problem.

No sooner than he had a following, a disciple named Pelagius took this new-found explanation to its ultimate conclusion: he deified the human will! Now, Augustine found "dualism" right back in his life! He had vigorously opposed it in the Manichees and pagans, and now he vigorously opposed it in the Pelagians. He understood that the deification of the human will would lead to the paganization of Christianity. He was correct; as present "Christianity" demonstrates. In his *De Praedestinonia Sanctoriwn*, Chapter 4, he wrote: "The predestination of the saints is there (to Valentinus) set forth by me. But later necessity compelled me to defend the doctrine with greater diligence and labour, when I was disputing against the Pelagians." Still later, in his *Retractations*, he wrote that he "worked for the free will of man, until the GRACE OF GOD conquered." Again, a little later, Augustine wrote: "Hence, the truth is that it is not of him that wills or of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy, because even if He call many, yet He has mercy only on those whom He so calls as to make the call effectual in them so that they follow it. But it is false for anyone to say: It is not of God that shows mercy, but of him that wills, because God has mercy on none ineffectually."

All that to make this point: Augustine planted the seed of conditional time salvation and the freewill of man into the Christian dogma, but when he saw

that it did not serve the purpose he thought it would, he opposed it. Today, it still has not served any good purpose. It only encourages men to rebel against the sovereignty of Almighty God, and deify the will, and lead men to trust in the works of the creature for merited blessings. It is a paganization of Christianity. However, it is no answer to the fundamental question: How can God be omnipotent, or all-powerful, and perfectly good, and yet have sin to enter into the world He created, and death by sin? Think about it: If God made man with the faculty of "free" will, and knew how man would use it, did He create man exactly as He would? If He did, then does it not follow that it was His will for man to use the free will He gave him exactly as he actually did ?

Notice carefully that we have not admitted that God gave Adam a "freedom" of will. To do that, Predestinarians would be falling into the very trap that Augustine, Daniel Parker, and the Conditionalists have plunged themselves into. We all admit that man has a will: that is not the issue; the issue demands a definition of what we mean by "freedom" of this will. For it is here Predestinarians differ from Arminians and Calvinians.

We need to digress a few paragraphs, and then return to this subject. Adam is placed in a garden that God Himself had planted. In the midst of that garden God had planted a specific tree. This tree had a name, and names have meanings in the Bible.

The test tree was the "tree of the knowledge of good and ra (evil)." The Bible uses a principle of "first mentioning" to begin the foundation the Holy Spirit will build His revelation upon so that His people can learn the concepts and precepts He would have them to know. Here is the first mentioning of "ra", or "evil." Let us follow His lead from here a bit: Genesis 3:5 "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and ra (evil)." Verse 22: "to know good and ra (evil)." Genesis 6:5 "God saw that the ra (wickedness of) man." "every imagination of his heart was only ra (evil)." Genesis 8:21 "The imagination of man's heart is ra (evil)". The list is very long. But now read this one: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create ra (evil)." Isaiah 45:7. God created evil, and He "made the crooked serpent" (Job 26:13). Both of these appeared in the garden before Adam fell. And the penalty for transgression was affixed concerning the tree before Adam ate.

James gives us an explanation that should be connected here in this discussion. He wrote: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But

every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, etc. "( James 1:14). So, here is the tree, here is Adam with a will being enticed by his wife to eat thereof, which he did, and he fell.

We judge the degree of sinfulness, or criminality, by the severity of the punishment. A slap on the wrist indicates a minor infraction of a rule; hanging one until dead implies a serious sin or crime was committed. In either case, one in authority inflicts a punishment, and that against one who is accountable. Adam's infraction was severely punished, for not only did he fall, but also all his offspring fell in him. At this point, it is a mute question relative to the freedom of fallen man's will. It certainly cannot be uninfluenced now, and every act is deterministically guided by his fallen nature and other influences.

Did God, without any other god resisting Him, willingly make man as He did? Yes, exactly as His image of him was from eternity. Did He put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden on purpose? Yes, He surely did. Did God create the crooked serpent, and create evil. The Bible clearly says so. Does this make God the author of sin? Now we are back to the imagined problem.

Can God lie? The Bible says "no." Can God steal? Can God commit sin or evil? "He cannot deny Himself" Can He determine an event and not be the direct cause? Here we are now at the basic question. The Bible has the answer clearly demonstrated. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, YE have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. "(Acts 2:23). And, ". for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4: 28). Jesus told Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly. " (John 13:27). Can God determine something to be done, and not be the one that does it? He certainly determined that Judas betray Christ; and it was Judas, and no one else, that did it. Psalm 109 affixed the penalty hundreds of years before the event; and Jesus told him to do it; and the penalty was executed upon Judas; and Judas himself admitted his sin, hanged himself, and falling headlong burst himself asunder. Could it have been otherwise? Not at all! Judas, nor this writer or these readers have a "free" will; yet we are all accountable to God for our actions. Jesus told Pilate: "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:11. God is not the author of our sins, but He certainly determines the minute course of every event.

If there is a seeming problem, it is because men have revised the definitions of words. Predestinarians read the same texts that Conditionalists read: "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). We have no problem understanding that these "all things" are inclusive of the whole determinate counsel of God, because the next verse, to us, tells us that. We do not have to twist and turn and try to convince intelligent men that "all things means only five things." The next verse continuing: "For whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. . ." We do not use the Conditionalists' revised dictionary. The word predestinate still means what it has always meant: it covers all the things necessary to bring to pass, or fulfill, God determinate counsel in regards to "bringing many sons unto glory," or "conforming them to the image of His Son." And that, my dear readers, covers far more than "five things." If you know the doctrine of truth, then follow all the things necessary to conform one, and all, of God's children to the image of Christ. You will find that they have to be born who they are, and they are who their parents produced, who in turn were who their parents produced all the way back through the ages to Adam and Eve. You will find that it is "through much tribulation" that one enters the kingdom of heaven. Their election, their effectual calling, the events in their conversion and sanctification and belief of the truth, the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, their adoption, reconciliation, justification, etc., et. al. In fact, can we make a complete list of these "all things" in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that brings each of us to glorification? I stagger at the thought! "Five things?" How shallow! "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: "The effectually calling of the elect to life and salvation embraces more than "five things." Let the reader take time to list as many as he can think of. "and whom He called, them He also justified; "The manner in which God justified each of His redeemed children also touches on far more than "five things." It entails their commission of sins by which they are justly condemned, the imputation of these sins to Christ; the suffering of Christ for the penalty thereof, the shedding of His blood, His descending into hell and regeneration and resurrection, their spiritual birth, and the gift of the "faith of Christ" by which His righteousness is imputed to them. "and whom He justified, them He also glorified "And, this glorification includes more than "five things."

One on our mailing list pointed out that sin had to enter the world so that man would return to the dust from which he was taken. It is the writer's candid opinion that all of those events were determined by God freely, yet so that He is not the author of sin, does not approve of sin, nor has He

fellowship with any therein, and all that are born of God have an experience that teaches them this. When they pray for forgiveness, they are admitting their sinfulness and accountability to God; when they beg Him for blessings of a felt need, they are recognizing His sovereignty, and His intervention in all the affairs of their daily lives; when they say "Thank you Lord," they are recognizing His gifts and rendering praise to Him for their daily benefits. And, when Jonah was burped out of the whale's belly onto dry land six hundred miles from the Mediterranean Sea, -a time salvation indeed — he declared "Salvation is of the Lord " Jonah 3:9. And so it is.

There seems to be differing cognitive, or mental, processes between those who say that predestination makes God "the author of sin," and those who are predestinarians. Most often, those who believe it makes God the author of sin are those who do not believe in predestination. Those who do believe it, almost invariably deny that it makes Him the author of sin. It is rather certain that those thirty-seven men who wrote the 1677 Baptist Confession of Faith did not think so. They most clearly stated that God "decreed whatsoever comes to pass" and roundly denied that this made Him the "author of sin." They saw no contradiction in God being the "cause" of all things and not being the "author" of evil. The Conditionalists are not that astute. To them being the "cause" and being the "author" is quite the same!

The Confession authors would admit that they were the "authors" of the Confession, while denying that God wrote it! Yet they included it in the "decree of all things," and surely their opponents would agree that God did not write such a statement. So what might be the reason for the differing views? That God can cause something to come to pass, yet not do it Himself is Biblical doctrine. He caused a spirit to become a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. An evil spirit from the Lord entered Saul, king of Israel, and his madness perplexed David and Israel thereafter. What the difference is between the two opposing parties is this: The Conditionalists cannot separate the immediate cause from the ultimate cause; or the direct cause from the indirect cause; or stated another way: the primary cause from the secondary cause. This latter line of reasoning is the one used by the thirty-seven authors of the Baptist Confession. "Nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established," they wrote. Predestinarians, on the other hand, are capable of understanding this distinction. To them, it presents no problem. God made man, and has every right to enjoin upon him whatever laws or conditions He pleases. He could change these laws and/or conditions as He pleased. At first, Adam had two injunctions only: (1) cleave to his wife and replenish the earth, and (2) do not eat of the fruit of the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil. However, later, God increased the laws upon man to suit his changing status and God's dispensations. But under no circumstances did these laws subject God to them and place Him on equal footing with His creatures! God cannot sin; God can do no wrong. Why? Because He has no one higher than Himself to whom He would be in subjection. He is accountable to no one. Nor can He be. Whatever He does is right. Whatever He does is good. Whatever He does is just. And here is the most dreadful sin of the Conditionalists: they charge Him with being evil if He predestinated all things, which He certainly did. Changing the definition of the word "predestinated" does not change God's determinate counsel by which He governs the universe; and it is this predestination that brings His eternal purpose to fulfillment.

It is certain that the betrayal, persecution, and crucifixion of Christ was foreordained from before the foundation of the world. Conditionalists need not deny it. But it was Judas that betrayed Him, and it was "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel," who "were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:28). Apparently, the apostle found no contradiction between God causing this to be done, and the secondary cause by which it was done. The secondary cause through which the event transpired was made certain by the causality of God in His determinate counsel and foreknowledge before the creation of the world.

The relationship between God and His laws given to man is far different from the relationship between man and the laws that govern his actions among his fellow men. God can as easily send an "evil spirit" to make Ahab's prophets liars without violating any laws. Hence, He cannot sin in so doing. But man is fully accountable under the laws God has him subjected, for his conduct both towards God and towards his fellow men. In this way, God has a set standard by which He can judge man, demonstrate His sovereign rule, and manifest His glorious attributes of both justice and mercy. In this way also, He has established a standard for social intercourse among the societies of men whereby their citizens may maintain order and provide justice and equity for their own peace and tranquility. However, none of these standards are set for wicked men to set in judgment of their Maker. "Who art thou that repliest against God," Paul wrote pointedly. "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? " (Romans 9:20).

He can do "all things"; and does. But He can do no wrong! He is the ultimate cause of all things, and men, angels and devils are merely secondary causes

of their own assigned deeds, and are held accountable for them by their Maker.

God's attitude toward sin has to be different from that of His creatures. He is not under any laws and cannot do wrong. There is, therefore, relative to Him, no condemnation possible. However, He has enjoined laws upon His creatures, both moral as well as natural. In this regard, He can and does judge His creatures relative to their conduct in regard to His expressed laws. They, in turn, in the reflection of those laws under which they must behave, can and do judge one another. It is, however, quite hideous for them to make the same judgment they have of their fellowmen to be extrapolated to their Maker. If a cattleman puts up a "posted: No admittance" sign on his pasture gate, all men recognize that he can enter his own pasture. The "posted" sign does not apply to him. So in like manner: God's proscriptions to man apply only to man; certainly not to Himself He is free to change the "posted" sign as often as He pleases; add to it, or take from it. If He does, nothing He forbids applies to Himself There is, therefore, certain arrogance in anyone who would bring a charge against his Maker or to His doctrine. The doctrine of predestination is as large and as complete as its Maker: ABSOLUTE !

"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why cloth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" Is this not the Conditionalists viewpoint? Hear Paul's answer: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay . . .?etc. (Romans 9:19-21). Again, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Proverb 16:4). Can anyone limit this "all things" to only "five things"? And, finally, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places." (Psalm 135:6). No, says some: He does not have anything "to do with our daily affairs." Our conclusion is: He does His will.

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**PREDESTINATION**  
**By Frederick W. Keene**  
**(1856 — 1937)**

I came upon these words the other day. "None should go to the University of Predestination until they have been at the grammar school of faith and repentance." I have known one or two persons who imagined themselves to

have graduated from the University, and to have attained to all knowledge upon that subject, and yet made no profession and gave no token that they had been taught of God one jot or tittle of the knowledge of repentance towards God or faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many millions of Christless predestinarians in the world today. The Mohammedans are firm believers in the predestination of all things, but they do not know our precious Savior Jesus Christ. According to Josephus, the Pharisees were predestinarians, but with the exception of a remnant of them according to the election of grace they were enemies of God and of Christ. Let not any one think that I am making light of predestination, for with all my heart I believe in God's predestination of all things. It is (my soul confesses) all of the sovereign kindness of God to be taught of Him and He gives His own elect a teachable spirit; their hearts are opened to what He speaks. "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand; and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words" (Deut. 33:3.) Before I was sixteen years of age I was brought, as I hope, by divine teaching through sore exercises of soul to believe that God's decrees embraced all the things in the universe; that all that has been, is or shall be, is all declaring the one eternal thought of God; and since then, though unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out, so I believe. But I do not want that Christless predestination of Mohammedans and Pharisees. All these predestinarians are, in my view of them, only limited predestinarians. Their vision of God's predestination is so circumscribed, because, having no knowledge of Jehovah's covenant of grace in our Lord Jesus Christ "ordered in all things and sure," they have no eyes to see, no heart to perceive the vast realms of grace and glory, declared in the gospel of Christ, wherein the mightiest and most glorious, and, shall I say, the fairest and sweetest acts of God are wrought, in the Person of the "the Word made flesh," in the works of redemption, and regeneration, all according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here all the glories of the Eternal God are revealed, and here we may contemplate the heights and depths – the lengths and breadths of God's absolute, immutable predestination.

It is inconceivable that the all-wise, almighty God created and made any thing purposeless, or that any thing should fail to fulfill or exceed His purpose. Who can point to the things or creatures, or anything done by anything, animate or inanimate that were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, and say of Him whose understanding is infinite, and for whose pleasure they are and were created, He hath no purpose therein?

There is not an atom in the universe that God hath no purpose in, and it shall fulfill the purpose, and nothing else, of the all-wise, omnipotent Creator. I am comforted and strengthened in my contemplations of the eternal counsel of Jehovah's will, so comprehensive, so limitless and so clearly testified of in the Scriptures, and though "the glories of Thy mind leave all our soaring thoughts behind," though the heights and depths of the decrees and government "of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" are beyond our finite understanding, yet let me bow at His footstool, believing that all His ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He. We, it may be, purposed things a year ago, a month ago, yesterday, today we have other intentions; our purposes, whether new or old, we cannot bring to the desired end. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of God, that shall stand" (Proverbs 19:21.) God's purposes are all eternal, and He is without variableness or shadow of turning (James 1:17.) "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11).

His thoughts are not frustrated, they are not as man's that perish, but "the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11.) God's unalterable decrees and His foreknowledge are in absolute agreement. Shall we acknowledge God's understanding to be limitless? So the counsel of His will in absolute oneness with His understanding hath no bounds. "Great is the Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5.) "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23.) It is painful that there are a few brethren who are opponents of Jehovah's unlimited predestination, and that in their representation of the attributes of God they should reveal a lamentable lack of Bible knowledge of the Eternal God. The most of them admit His foreknowledge to be infinite, but imagine His determinate counsel to be circumscribed. If anything is, or transpires, how hath it being? How does it come to pass? If beyond the bounds of God's determinate counsel, then the things done would be acts of self determinate beings. But there are no such beings, save One, the Eternal God, who inhabits eternity. Eternity past and to come He inhabits. Jehovah's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence possess eternity. O, from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God, in all Thy perfections, infinite. The language of the Bible declaring our God is very sacred: "The determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23.) "The good pleasure of His will" (His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself) being predestinated according to the purpose of

Him who worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:5-11.) The counsel of His own will does not vary, for our "God is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him" (Job 23:13-14.) Thus Job spake when he was in the furnace of affliction. God's will is self-determined; in this He has no peer. He saith, "I change not." He is without variableness or shadow of turning. We read of "the immutability of His counsel" (Hebrews 6:17-20.)

How common are the utterances, "We must trust in providence," or when events have in some unforeseen way been in our favor, "How providential," but when our plans are frustrated, when our prospects are wrecked, when adversities and painful afflictions befall us, are they any less providential? And who is the Provider, the Governor of all providences? "The Lord Omnipotent reigneth!" Job's wife said unto him, "Doest thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." But he said unto her, "7hou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God; and shall we not receive evil?"

Perhaps we have known, or it may be have simply read of some dreadful event, and the thought of it has had a dreadful effect upon us; we have been staggered at the enormity of the cruelty, the crime, the affliction, our heart has been depressed, sick, as if it were bruised: Did it happen by chance, or is there an omnipotent, all-wise Jehovah who "lath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass, yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath pleasure therein?" (London Baptist Confession, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1.) I firmly believe the latter, and though we cannot see why God hath ordained it so, yet He is just and true in all His ways.

"There's not a sparrow or a worm  
But's found in His decree;  
He raises monarchs to their thrones,  
And sinks them as He please.  
If light attends the course I run;  
`Tis He provides those rays;  
And `tis His hand that hides my sun  
If darkness cloud my days."

Are you always in acquiescence to God's dark distressing providences? No, I

have been unreconciled, fretful, I have murmured. This has been my shame. But the Lord has in mercy subdued my heart, and though His providences I could not fathom, yet I have said in my spirit, "Thy will be done." I have loathed myself because of my hard thoughts of God, and prayed for forgiveness, and have felt through Jesus' precious blood that sweet pardon was mine. But some have raged and cursed God, and have died in their sin? Dreadfully so! The thought of this has humbled me before the Lord. Amazing grace, so sovereign, free, bestowed upon a worm like me!

"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed" (Isaiah 10:1.) This can never be said of Jehovah's eternal decrees. Read the entire chapter and know that in all the wickedness in men in seeking to carry out their wicked decrees it was all to the fulfillment of God's decree, and "the consumption decreed" ("according to the most wise and holy counsel of His will) "shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of the land" (Isaiah 10:22,23.) The Assyrians in their pillage and slaughter of the people, in their havoc and desolation that they spread over the lands, had no thought therein to fulfill the purpose of the most High God. "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." O, he was proud, he esteemed himself wise and prudent, glorying in his robberies and in his supposed "strength," a valiant man. Yet he was but God's "axe" and "saw" and "rod" and "staff" to execute His counsel, and his damnation slumbered not, for thus saith the Lord, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." Behold in this chapter the partial execution of man's unrighteous decrees, and therein the complete fulfillment of God's holy decrees. [Today, the Assyrians are the Kurds, and have no nation, but are ruled by Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq!] Behold judgment and mercy, the goodness and severity of God, and believe that not only in the providences, such as are portrayed in this chapter, but also

"In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,  
He executes His firm decrees;  
And by His saints it stands confessed  
That what He does is ever best."

He is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. "He doeth 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 doest Thou?" "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power: not one faileth" (Isaiah 40:26). "Fear ye not Me? Saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not pass over it" (Jeremiah 5:22). "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beast thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isaiah 40:15-17). "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:25-26.)

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31.) God saith to the church at Smyrna, "Ye shall have tribulation ten days" (Revelation 2:10.) If God has appointed the number of ten days they cannot be diminished, and we never shall have eleven.

**Finis**

## **PREDESTINATION**

**By**

**John C. Hall, 1936**

From some cause my mind has been much exercised upon the purposes of God. I do not know why I should be so constantly meditating upon this subject, yet it is so. A kind of irresistible impression seems to impel me to write, notwithstanding my great weakness. I am fully aware of the fact that I am not able of myself to grapple with so deep and sublime a subject; therefore it is with much fear and trembling that I approach it. I think it is with a heartfelt desire that the Lord may direct my mind so that I may write so as to glorify His name, and thereby edify His saints, believing that when God is honored through our Lord Jesus Christ that the saints rejoice and are edified.

It was the purpose of God to speak the earth into existence. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). This proves a purpose to create. In fulfillment of His purpose He made the firmament that His handiwork might be shown. For "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). That the dry land might appear, it is written, "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw it was good" (Genesis 1: 9,10). This was His purpose carried out. Take into consideration the fowls, the beasts, the fishes, the herbs, etc., then come to man, and in His creation we see the plural used: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (Genesis 1: 26,27).

In their creation they were made male and female. It is said that while they were in this state they were immortal. But God did not say so, and I shall not. It is also said that he was "made able to stand, but liable to fall" (Kehukee Baptist Association, Article of Faith). But God did not say so, and I shall not, for I do not know. That he did transgress and did fall is certain. If he had never transgressed and fallen, I own that I cannot trace the purpose of God in the perfect work of salvation; for if the man had not fallen, I own that I cannot see for the life of me why God should, from before the foundation of the world, have given any of the fallen race grace in Christ: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9). This is an affirmation of the apostle, as the preceding verse shows. This grace that was given in Christ Jesus before the world began, consequently, was before the creation of man. If this was according to God's own "purpose and grace" before the world began, it seems to me there must of necessity have been a purpose in the fall or transgression of the man, without which he never could have been the recipient of this grace.

I do not think that it is blasphemy to assert that as God purposed grace in Christ Jesus before the world began, He also purposed that the sinner should stand in need of it. I am not able to see how the Lord could "declare the end from the beginning" and not see and know every event from this beginning. The Lord by the prophet declares, or commands, thus: "Remember the

former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9,10). I am not able to see how He could declare things not yet done unless He purposed or predestinated that they should be done. To say that He permitted things to take place that He did not purpose seems to me to contradict itself, and makes the Creator no higher order than the creature. Man purposes and plans, but his purposes fail, his plans are frustrated. Not so with God, He purposes and it comes to pass. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Is this not according to God's predestination? The Lord's will cannot be frustrated in the least by any event that takes place under the sun, because every event is according to His purpose and predestination, hence it cometh to pass. "A time to be born, and a time to die: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:2). Who can put off his own birth? Not one! If there is a time for man to die, and he by some "chance" is cut off before his time, who is to die at his time? Can he fill the time if he is cut off before that time? If he passes over his time into someone else's time, then what? Who is to take him away after his time has passed, seeing that he has passed his time already? Yes, says an objector, but Hezekiah had fifteen years added to his days. Yes, and if you admit that, then you can never object to God's predestination, and are compelled to honor His purpose and will be compelled to acknowledge the "chance system" false. For saith the preacher, "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him" (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

We have seen that He declares that He will do all His pleasure. This being so, nothing can be put to it, and nothing taken from it, and it is clearly proven by this that all the idle talk about God being desirous to save "everybody" and some will not "let Him save them," must be of the devil, and they that preach it must be the devil's tools, for the foregoing is sufficient to show His absolute sovereignty. "Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon" (Jeremiah 51:29). If against Babylon, why not in all things else? It is certainly taught in the Scriptures that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," and then we clearly see that nothing in the heights or depths comes to pass without His purpose. No, not the falling of a sparrow (Matthew 10: 29-31; Luke 12: 6-9) or the rustle of a leaf.

The saints are saved according to His will and purpose and grace. The apostle says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them

that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30). But, says the objector, all "good" things work together, but not "evil" things. Some even limit the phrase "all things" to "some things" without any Scriptural precedent to do so. I answer, He that purposed the "good" also purposed the bad, and He controls both alike – He is GOD. But, says the objector, this predestination, calling, justifying and glorifying refers to the apostles only, and not to the saints generally. I answer, If so, then the apostles are all that are saved, because without these callings, justifying and glorifying it certainly must follow that none could be saved, or are saved. Besides, there were only twelve of the apostles, and the number saved (and consequently were predestinated, called, justified and glorified) is a great number, or multitude, that no man could number. So the idea that it was only the apostles must be of that wicked one, for it is certainly not of God.

In the purpose of God, we are taught the principles of election very plainly in the following: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her (Rebekah), The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans 9: 11-13). Are we to believe these verses, and yet condemn God's purpose, election and predestination? Surely not! Then we certainly are bold to not reverence God's way of saving His people, or to contradict His word. Are we to suppose that His purpose of election in the case of Jacob and Esau differs from His purpose with the rest of the children of men? It cannot be so without denying His right to govern and dispose of His own as seems good to Him. Again, read Ephesians 1:11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." I would ask, Who worketh things that are not after the counsel of His will? Since God "worketh all things," from whence comes other things? I must confess that if there be things either in Providence or grace that are outside of God's purpose, then I am a deceived mortal. I do rejoice that the saints have a hope "according to the eternal purpose which He (God) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:11). For it does seem to me that if we ignore His eternal purpose we are without hope. I think there could be no quarreling and wrangling among the Baptists if all would be strictly attentive to exactly what the Scriptures teach, for they certainly do teach the sovereignty of God

clearly.

God's eternal purpose, election and predestination are stamped upon every page of the Scriptures in one form or another. Our exalted Creator certainly purposed all events, or else He purposed a part and left some to "chance;" and we know that if it is based upon "chance," it may or may not be. Far be this from God! There is no "chance" work in grace or in Providence. All things have fixed laws, and one law does not annul another, so far as it relates to the works of the eternal God. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). He did destroy the work of the devil, and thereby proved Himself the Son of God. If not, then He failed to prove His Sonship. Then predict the events of time upon "chance," and to my mind we dishonor God, and make His Son out to be an impostor.

I know carnal reason revolts at the idea of God's complete sovereignty. But we are to understand that carnality never believes in anything above itself. It is the Spirit that reveals Christ as a complete Savior, and that clearly proves the purpose of God. Every purpose of God is to some wise end. When He said to Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee" (Romans 9:17), evidently the purpose of God according to what He in His foreknowledge intended, or purposed, was fulfilled in him. Certainly He would not purpose the course of Pharaoh and leave the rest of men to work "by chance." No, no, He declared the end from the beginning. Was not this end of all things, acts or events? To deny it, it seems to me, would be blasphemy. Then if many cannot fathom the deep things of God, none should ask why or, "What doest Thou?" The Lord saith of the church, or at least to the Ephesians by Paul, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18). Then the saints have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, therefore they alone can see a beauty in the purposes of God, and look for the fulfillment of them all, and God will not disappoint them; if so, then some things will work together for their ill, and not for their good.

It is a comforting truth that God purposes, and none can hinder or frustrate Him. Let us keep silent and hear the Lord speak of His purposes by the prophet: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in My hand, and upon My mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off

their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon the nations. For the Lord of host hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden" (Isaiah 14: 24-28). Looking at this wonderful prophecy, who can doubt the fulfillment of all the wonderful purposes of God, or question His sovereignty, or deny His predestination?

To my mind, if in the wisdom of God anything visible to mortals, or invisible to them, were to work contrary to the purpose of God, then all that was purposed in Christ would be likely to turn out to be a failure in what Christ purposed to accomplish. And should His purposes fail in one instance, it follows, of course, that all might fail, and that Christ has died in vain. Oh! How discouraging, how horrible, to think of even a remote possibility of a failure in the complete and perfect salvation wrought out by Christ at such an awful and wonderful cost! What a howl of triumph would rise from the dark dungeon of hell if one purpose of God were to fail. All the demons of that awful abode would arise and with demoniac yells make universal space resound with their shouts of triumph over the conquered Son of God; and we think Christ and all the angels of glory would stand trembling for the safety of the Throne of God! If one link in the golden chain of God's eternal purposes – election, predestination, or of the reign through Christ – could be broken, then farewell to the whole race of man, for all would be forever gone, eternally gone. But, to my mind, all things were purposed by the Eternal I Am, and His purpose is as sure to be accomplished as it is sure that His throne stands. I cannot see for the life of me, how His honor can be maintained if we teach a probability of the failure of His grace. Never, to my mind, has one single sinner been quickened to life but by the Spirit of God; and this, it seems to me, is because of the reign of grace, and this grace was given in Christ before the world began, and consequently was bound, in the very nature of things, to have been before there was a man made; and that must of necessity prove that God purposed to make man, and that man would need a Savior, because of his death in sin. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Romans 11: 33-36).

If in the wisdom of God all things are for Him, it does seem that it is reasonable to conclude that all and every event that takes place in the heights

above, or the depths beneath, or in the lengths, or breadths, either in earth or hell, are under His control, and that He purposed and foresaw them, and overrules them to His own glory; or else events are not "things." Then taking this view of the wisdom, power, mercy and love of God, I feel safe in believing and teaching that the God of salvation is a complete Sovereign, and therefore live in hope of His unfailing mercy, and that through the efficacy of the blood and righteousness of His adorable Son I shall yet praise Him who is my Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption (I Corinthians 1:30). Then God forbid that we should glory save in the Lord.

Dear brethren, I have thrown these thoughts together under the most trying circumstances, with much fear and trembling, knowing that I am imperfect, ignorant and short-sighted, often wondering, Can it be that such a creature as I am can be a child of God, saved by grace?

I have written my imperfect views, without consulting any man for his views. I alone am accountable for what is here presented. I desire that if this is published none will take offense because of it. I hope I have had the honor of God in view, and trust that I have had the mind of Christ. My race is nearly run. I shall soon go hence, and shall soon know the reality of these things. I am looking forward to the time of my departure. When I go I expect and believe I shall meet a satisfied Savior. My hope is to see the King in His beauty, and the whole of the purchases of Christ's blood, which will be a train that shall fill His temple — not one left out for whom He atoned. Then I shall be as the glorified saints, and methinks that all the hosts of heaven will be shouting, "Crown Him Lord of all." Then I shall be completely happy, as I stand with the sanctified family of God. To His name be all the praise, now and in a world which shall never end.

John C. Hall

Gogginsville, Virginia

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**GOD'S PROVIDENCE OVER THE  
EVIL ACTS OF MEN**

**By Elder Frank B. Beck, 1963  
Clarendon Street Baptist Church, Boston**

Why does God allow sinners to exist on the earth? Why does God allow sin? Why doesn't God save everybody? Why doesn't God destroy the Devil? Or,

is God powerless in these matters? Are the sinful acts of men a part of God's eternal purpose according to His determinate counsel, or something apart from His purpose?

### **The Problem Of Sin**

There is the problem of sin. How did sin originate? Did God purpose it, or permit it, or did it come in unexpectedly?

If we shall say that sin came in unexpectedly or unforeseen by God, then we charge God with imperfect knowledge. That is not the kind of God we know in the sacred Scriptures. He is perfect in Wisdom. "His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5) "He knoweth all things." (John 21:17).

That God did know beforehand that sin would enter the world is gathered from Acts 15:18: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world " This includes the work of redemption from SIN and hell, which knowledge must include sin.

If God saw beforehand that sin would enter into the world, why did He not prevent it? Suppose that we say that He could not, we charge God with imperfect power. Again this is not the God with whom we are acquainted in sacred Writ, He does as He pleases (Psalm 115:3) and "all power" is given unto Christ "in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18).

We cannot say that He could not. Then we must say that He would not. If we conclude that God could prevent sin from entering the world but would not, then it must be that the sinful acts men commit are included in the eternal purpose of God.

Concerning the evil acts of men be it said, that men sin of their own depraved wills. God is not the author of sin, nor does He "force" men to sin against their natural will. He doesn't have to — He leaves them to themselves and they willingly sin. They love it. But God uses the sinful acts of men to His own glory either in justice or in grace, in that He prevents sin, permits sin, directs sin, channeling the courses wherein He can manifest His glory, and determines how far the sinner or the Devil shall go. Further than His will, they cannot go.

### **I. God, In His Providence Prevents Sin**

God oftentimes prevents sin. This is according to His grace and is not a matter of obligation. He does not have to prevent it and oftentimes does not. In the case of Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech God prevented sin. Abraham

and Sarah had journeyed into Abimelech's country and Sarah was a "fair woman to look upon? (Genesis 12:11) Therefore Abimelech took Sarah, but God warned him not to touch her. (Genesis 20:3-6) Indeed, Abimelech "had not come near her." (verse 4) Why was that? Surely that was not the natural thing to do on one's wedding night, except that it was God "withholding Abimelech from sinning against Him," as we read that He, in fact, did (verse 6) On the other hand God did not prevent Shechem from committing adultery with Jacob's daughter Dinah. (Genesis 34) Well may we pray in the words of the Psalmist: "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins." (Psalm 19:13). If God withdraws His preventive grace to keep us from sinning, we will be as the lowest demons in hell. Man's fallen nature is itself sin.

## **II. God, In His Providence, Permits Sin**

God permits sin. This does not mean that He approves of it, for He judges it with the fiercest punishment. The severity of the punishment indicates the heinousness of the act in His sight. By permitting sin God, in righteous judgment, withdraws His preventive grace and leaves men to their sinful selves.

After David had committed adultery with Bethsheba God said to him: "Because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife, thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy neighbor and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun." (II Samuel 12:10-12).

God hates adultery (Malachi 2:16), but will withdraw His grace from David's own house so that those nearest David will take his wives openly in adultery. God will punish David with his own sin!

In order to deceive sinful and deceitful King Ahab, the Lord "put a lying spirit" in the mouth of all Ahab's prophets (I Kings 22:23) assuring him victory if he went forth to battle. This is what Ahab desired. He did not want to hear any other message. So God gave him up to his lies though He warned Ahab that he was being tricked. (I Kings 22:13-28). God did not make his prophets lie. They were already false prophets, or liars, and all that occurred was to have these lying prophets tell the same lie at the same time. God did them no wrong. It is the same principle that runs throughout the Word of God. God permits the wicked to have his own way, gives him up to his own sin. That this is so, examine the following references:

"But My people would not hearken to My voice and Israel would none of Me, so I gave them up unto their own heart's lust and they walked in their own counsels." (Psalm 81:11-12). We are informed that in the Old Testament times God "suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." (Acts 14:16). We are instructed that the Gentile nations gave themselves over to idolatry and that "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." (Romans 1:23-24)

That the Gentile nations changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped the creature more than the Creator and that "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections." (Romans 1:25-26) "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." (Romans 1:28)

The wicked have not the revelation of God in the Old and New Testaments and in the Person of Jesus Christ. They reject the truth and love falsehood. Therefore, God will give them over to falsehood. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they SHOULD believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thessalonians 2:11,12)

Why is this? "Because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (verse 10) All who continue in unbelief of the truth are to this end "appointed" (I Peter 2:8) and were "before of old ordained to this condemnation." (Jude 4)

God permits the sinful acts of men as a means to an end, to show forth the glory of His Justice and Holiness. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout the earth" (Romans 9:17).

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Exposition Of The Doctrine**  
**By**  
**Elder J. W. Gilliam, 1932**

An exposition of the doctrine relating to God's Decree, His Purpose, Predestination, Providence, Good Works, and Obedience, as approved by a

majority of our churches in the Upper Country Line Association (North Carolina) in their conferences in 1932, and now authorized, forms or constitutes a part of the Articles of Faith of this Association, as follows, to-wit:

Our position and contention on certain controverted questions of doctrine disturbing our people at the time is as follows: London Confession, Chapter III, Of God's Decree, Section 1: "God hath (Isa.46 :10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15,18) decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is GOD NEITHER THE AUTHOR OF SIN (James 1:15; 1 John 1:5), NOR HATH FELLOWSHIP WITH ANY THEREIN; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather (Acts 4:27,28; John 19:11) established, in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things and power and faithfulness (Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5) in accomplishing His decree; Sec. 2: Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all (Acts 15:18) supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything (Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18) because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions;" Chapter V: Divine Providence, Section 1: God, the Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, doth (Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10,11; Psalm 13:5,6) uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest event to the (Matthew 10:26,30,31) least, by His most holy providence, to the end for which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of His (Ephesians 1:11) own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy; 211 . Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass (Acts 2:28) immutably, and infallibly, so that there is not anything befalls any (Proverb 16:23) by chance or without His providence; yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either (Genesis 8:22) necessarily, freely or contingently; thirdly, God in His ordinary providence (Acts 27:31, 44; Isaiah 55:10,11) maketh use of means; yet is free (Hosea 1:7) to work without (Romans 4:19,21), above and (Daniel 3:27) against them at His pleasure; Fourthly, The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence, that His determinate counsel (Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1; I Chron. 2:11) extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men (and that not by mere permission); which also He most wisely and powerfully (2 Kings 19:28; Psalm 76:10) boundeth, and

otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to His most holy (Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6; 7:12) ends; yet so as the sinfulness of their of their acts proceedeth ONLY from the creatures, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be THE AUTHOR OR (Psalm 11:21; John 2 :16) APPROVER OF SIN. . . .

OF GOOD WORKS, chapter 16, Section 1: Good works are only such as God hath (Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21) commanded in His holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by man, out of blind zeal (Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 19:13), or upon any pretense of good intentions."

N.B. We believe that God has wrought all the works of His children in them (Isaiah 26:12), and they as "His workmanship, are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10), and that their ability to do good works is not of themselves, but WHOLLY of the Spirit, and according as God "works in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), and that as the branches are in the vine, so are His children in Him, and have their fruits unto holiness and the end everlasting life (Romans 6:22); and that it is of God that His children are in Christ, and redemption, and hence God not only puts them in the Way, which is Christ, but "they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5), and that the preservation of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of (Romans 8:30; 9:11, 16) election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:9, 19; John 14:19) and union with Him, the (Hebrews 6:17,18) oath of God, the abiding of His Spirit and the (I John 3:9) seed of God within them and the nature of the (Jeremiah 22:40) covenant of grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof;; and in our conclusion, join with Elder Sylvester Hassell in saying that "While the sinner has destroyed himself, all his salvation, from first to last, is of the pure, unmerited, almighty grace of God." (Hassell's History, page 942).

Now upon the subject of obedience, our faith lays hold on Christ Jesus, the Savior of sinners — the obedient One, for strength and every necessary help in time of need, confessing that of myself, I can do nothing, but all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. When God works the will, He also must work the strength, and obedience always follows. David said unto the Lord, "When Thou sadist, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord will I seek" (Psalm 27:8), and again, Paul declares, having

received grace and apostleship, for the obedience of faith among all nations (Romans 1:5) his obedience, saying, "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:15), and we believe as God has said, "My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it" (Isaiah 55:11); and when Jesus was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, we hear His words, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt (Matthew 26:39); hence, concerning His people (the children of obedience) He says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110:3), and all the promises of God "in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Corinthians 1:26). All obedience is based upon love — God's love towards us, which causes our love toward Him, and with His mind in us, His will and pleasure becomes our will and pleasure — acquiescence — obedience.

Submitted by Elder J. W. Gilliam

N.B. The above expression of the doctrine was adopted by the churches of our Association in 1932, and ordered inserted as part of our Articles of Faith.

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