

# WRITINGS OF GILBERT BEEBE, FROM THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## Heirship and Eternal, Vital Union

*From Signs of the Times -November 1, 1879 Vol 48.*

In reading an article in the Gospel Messenger for October, 1879, written by our esteemed brother, Elder T.J. Bazemore, one of the editors and publishers of that periodical, we are led to believe that he has misapprehended the views which are entertained by us, and by those generally who hold the doctrine of the eternal, vital union of Christ and the church, and also of the true basis of the heirship of the sons of God. We do not design to inaugurate a controversy or unpleasant discussion; for widely as we may seem to disagree in our understanding of these subjects, we feel confident that a calm, dispassionate investigation will obviate our seeming discrepancy of views.

If we had not on former occasions fully expressed our convictions on these two cardinal points of the doctrine of Christ, we would feel more hesitancy in entering upon a discussion of the subjects involved; but having frequently presented our views, which we presume brother Bazemore is aware of, we feel called upon to either retract or establish what we have stated, or at least to labor for a more full and clear understanding of each other. Let nothing however that we may write be construed so as to indicate any unfriendly feeling towards the publishers of the Messenger, both of whom we highly esteem and respect.

First. The heirship of the sons of God we have held to be exclusively founded upon their sonship in Christ Jesus, as made known to them by their spiritual birth, in which they receive, not the adoption, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father, (Rom. 8:15); for in verse 23 of the same chapter we are told that "we who have received the first fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." And in Ephesians 1:13 and 14, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of

truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, [or were born again,] ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” In this first chapter to the Ephesians the apostle speaks of our being predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself; and in the tenth verse he says, “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him; in whom also we have received 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. In whom ye also trusted &c.” The reception of this spirit, by the new birth, is the earnest or certain assurance that the purchased possession [the people redeemed from the family of mankind, which is all the purchased possession of Christ that we have any knowledge of] shall be ultimately disrobed of mortality, and clothed with immortality, after they shall have been changed and fashioned like the glorious body of their risen and glorified Lord. For this adoption we are now waiting and groaning, but for it we are now sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

If then we have rightly understood the Scriptures on the relationship of sons, that sonship develops a vital relationship to a parent in whom our spiritual vitality existed before it was made manifest by a birth. A birth is not the origin of life, either spiritual or natural; it is the bringing forth a life which existed in the parent before the birth. If life did not exist antecedently to the birth, it never could exist subsequently to the birth.

The apostle says, “For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” And, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” The heirship is thus made to depend on the vital relationship of children; and as the heirship is a joint heirship with Christ, so also must the relationship on which the heirship is predicated be a joint relationship with Christ, for he himself is the life of all who are joint heirs with him. For the life of all the saints is hid with Christ in God. “When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory,” (Col. 1:3,4). If

then our spiritual life, sonship, and joint heirship is so identified with Christ, as the only begotten of the Father, that our life is hid with Christ in God, it is based on what we call Eternal, vital union, and not on the birth either of our flesh or spirit, which develops, but does not originate, the relationship and consequent joint heirship.

But brother Bazemore says, "There is a doctrine called eternal, vital union, which is in our view a strange and unscriptural doctrine;" and asks, "How can there be a vital union between the living and the dead? How can there be a vital union between that which is, and that which is not? In a state of nature the sinner is dead in sin, without eternal life, without spiritual vitality or motion; and how, then, can there be any actual, vital union between him and Christ while he is in that state of death and sin? Christ is life, a quickening Spirit; and how can there be any vital union between him and the sinner, while the sinner is dead in sin?"

We have never understood our brethren who hold and contend for the scriptural doctrine of eternal, vital union, to hold that this sacred union of life was given to the children of God in the earthly Adam, nor that it eternally united the two natures of which the children of God are partakers while in the flesh, for neither before, nor after the new birth do we find any union, harmony or agreement between the flesh and the spirit, of which two natures they are partakers; for these are contrary the one to the other, causing a continual warfare in them until their final change shall come, or until death shall be swallowed up of life—until God shall change our vile body, and fashion it like the glorious body of our risen Lord.

We shall not be likely to differ on the simple signification of the words—eternal, vital union. That which had its origin in God the Father, and was given to the body and members of Christ before the world began, must be eternal; and that which the inspired Word of God calls eternal life, must be vital; and that which joins in indissoluble relationship the Head and body of the church of God, we call union. Can this be what our esteemed brother calls philosophy and vain deceit, and of which he warns the saints to beware? Is this doctrine taught in the Bible, and by the Spirit of divine inspiration, or is it only after the traditions of men, and after the rudiments of the world? Let us see. The apostle Paul says, "The wages of sin is death;

but the gift of God is eternal life,” [Not through the earthly Adam, but] “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” When did God give us this eternal life? (Rom.6:23). If eternal life is a spiritual blessing, it was given us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [not in Adam,] according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, (Eph.1:3,4). The most solemnly attested record which the Bible contains, which is borne in heaven by the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and witnessed in earth by the Spirit, the water and the blood, which all agree in one, is summed up by the inspired apostle John in these emphatic words, “And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life,” (1 John 5:7,8,11,12,20).

We learn then that the life which was given to the saints as members of the body of Christ, was with and proceeded from God the Father, and was given to them in Christ by the Father, and is, in the unrestricted meaning of the word, absolutely eternal life; not only everlasting, but eternal, without beginning or ending, not created, but begotten of God the Father, and given to all the sons of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they all, in their spiritual relation to God in Christ, were sanctified or set apart by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and ultimately called by him; “Who hath saved us and called us with a 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,” (2 Tim.1:9).

Some of our brethren have admitted that all this was true in purpose, but was not actually done in eternity, before the world began; but when God has said that all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places were given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, it seems to us presumptuous to deny that this unspeakable gift involved an act or action of God. We hold that the gift was actually given us in Christ, and safely secured to us in him, just exactly as God has stated it in the words of inspired truth. Christ himself is the life—the eternal life of all his members, and God did actually love them with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness does he draw

them; and no man can come unto Christ except the Father which sent him draw them.

Now let us inquire whether this eternal life or vitality which God has given us in Christ Jesus actually unites Christ, the Head, and his church, the body of Christ; and whether it is an eternal, or only a time union. We do not ask whether this vital union was manifested and experienced by any of us here in the flesh before the world began, for that is not claimed by any. Our life which was given us in the earthly Adam is not that life which is begotten of God, and given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; for if it was, then all mankind would be the children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. But all the children of God are children and heirs of God by virtue of being begotten of the eternal Father, and recipients of eternal life in Christ Jesus from everlasting. And of them, as the children of God in Christ, it is said, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same," (Heb. 2:14). It was not their partaking of flesh and blood that constituted them children of God, any more than it was Christ's "also likewise [or in like manner] partaking of the same" that constituted him the Son of God. He was as perfectly the Son of God before he partook of flesh and blood, as he was after his assumption of flesh and blood; but his being made flesh, made of a woman, and made under the law, made him manifest as the Son of man, of the seed of David, after the flesh. As his Sonship of the Father was in no sense changed by his partaking of flesh and blood, so neither was the spiritual relationship of his members changed by their partaking of flesh and blood. But his coming in the flesh of which his children are partakers, brought him under the law which they in their earthly nature had transgressed. And thus we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, taking on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; not to make him the Son of God, for that he had always been; but as his children in their earthly nature had sinned in the flesh, he took their nature on him, that he might suffer in the flesh, and under the law which they had transgressed, and redeem them unto God by the sacrifice of himself, and rise again from the dead for their justification.

Now, we ask brother Bazemore, if the law of God could have recognized in the blessed Jesus the right to redeem them from its

stern, but just demands, if they were not his property before they sinned and fell in the earthly Adam?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and life of his body, the church, is called the “only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ... and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,” (John 1:14,16). In this chapter John testifies concerning him; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” And the same inspired apostle, as we have already shown, in his first epistle, first and fifth chapters, declares that this life which was and is in him, was with the Father, and was manifested, and that God hath given us [his children] eternal life, and this life which God hath given us is in his Son. Let this testimony be admitted, and we think no God-fearing man will deny that this eternal life is eternal vitality, or that this life is a unit. It is one undivided and indivisible life in its nature, because it is hid with Christ in God; and although it extends from the Head of the church to all the members, permeating the entire mystical body of Christ, it cannot be separated from him. For he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life; consequently it is the unity of Christ the Head with the church as his body, and the fulness of him that filleth all in all. This union of life in Christ Jesus is what we understand our brethren to mean by the words—eternal, vital union; and if it is not so taught in the Scriptures, and in the experience of the saints, we confess that we have read our Bible for almost four score years to but little, if any profit. If it be only philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, then we have long rested upon a fallacious hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

We are not contending for an eternal, or even a time union, between the flesh and spirit of the children of God and heirs of glory, for such a union has not yet taken place in us. We find no harmony between our flesh and that spirit which we hope and trust we received when we were born of the Spirit; but from that hour when Christ, who is our life, was revealed in us, we have felt most painfully and continuously the warring of our flesh against the spirit, and a law in our members

warring against the law of our mind, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members.

But can this doctrine of vital union of the Head and body of the church, which we have so sweetly enjoyed so many years, now that we are about to lay off our mortal tabernacle, be but a delusive phantom? Have we in melody of heart, in joyful and melting strains, joined with the poet in the delightful theme of his songs;

“Twixt Jesus and the chosen race,  
Subsists a bond of sovereign grace,  
That hell, with its infernal train,  
Can ne'er dissolve or rend in twain.”

Or,

“In union with the Lamb;  
From condemnation free,  
The saints from everlasting were,  
And shall forever be.

In cov'nant from of old,  
The sons of God they were;  
The feeblest lamb in Jesus' fold,  
Was bless'd in Jesus there.

Its bonds shall never break,  
Tho' earth's old columns bow;  
The strong, the tempted, and the weak,  
Are one in Jesus now.”

And this oneness of vital relationship is in Jesus, not in the earthly nature, which has yet to be changed, and fashioned like Christ's glorious body. Adam, we are told, (Rom. 5:14), is the figure of him that was to come. And if there had not been a union of natural life extending to his posterity, his transgression could not have involved them in the condemnation and death that by his offense passed upon all of his undeveloped race. “Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,

so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” As in Adam, who is the figure of Christ, God made of one blood [or life] all the 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, &c., (Acts 22:26), so that eternal life which is begotten and born of God, which was given to the heirs of God in Christ their Head, is one life—a unit, and not a plurality of lives. It was given to them in the Son of God, as the same eternal life which was with the Father, and is the same in all the members of the body of Christ. It is in Christ, and it is Christ. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life,” (John 11:25). “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” (John 14:6). “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” (Gal. 2:20). “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,” (Phil.1:21). “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory,” (Col. 3:2-4).

These scriptures, if we rightly understand them, prove two important propositions; first, that our life which is in Christ Jesus is eternal life, or vitality; and secondly, that this eternal life, being in Christ as the Son of God, and with him hid in God from everlasting, is a unit of life; and Christ, who is our life, although living in all his members, is not divided. As there is but one Head of the church, so there is but one body belonging to that one Head. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,” (Eph. 4:4-6). The apostle speaks of those who would beguile the saints, by “not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God,” (Col. 2:19).

Our natural life, on which death has passed by reason of sin, was given us in that Adam which is of the earth, earthy; but our spiritual—eternal life was given to us and securely preserved for us in that Adam which is the Lord from heaven. Our natural or earthly life began when man became a living soul; but our life which is in Christ Jesus is as ancient as eternity, for it is eternal life, and has its origin in God. Therefore that life which is born of the flesh is born of corruptible seed, and is mortal. But they who are the subjects of regeneration

and the new birth, are born of God, of an incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever; and they are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” And, “Now are they the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what they shall be; but we know that when he [Christ] shall appear they shall be like him;” for God has predestinated those whom he did foreknow to be conformed to the image of his dear Son, that he may be the first-born among many brethren, (1 John 3:2; Rom.8:29). In the vital unity of this eternal life, between the Head and body of the church, Christ is not ashamed to call his members brethren; for in his Mediatorial relation to them he claims them as his body, his flesh, and his bones.

“Hail, sacred union, firm and strong,  
How great the grace! How sweet the song!  
That worms of earth should ever be,  
One with incarnate Deity.”

Again we will assure brother Bazemore, that notwithstanding the seeming difference in our views on the doctrine of the eternal, vital union of Christ and his body, the church, and the basis of the heirship of the saints, we esteem him as a beloved brother in Christ; and we have read many of his articles in the Gospel Messenger for the year past with pleasure, and this is the first we have noticed from his able pen from which we seriously dissent. And we hope and believe that on more mature consideration of the subject, he will greatly modify the doom to which he has [we think unintentionally] consigned us, together with a very large majority of the Old School or Primitive Baptists of our acquaintance, who hold the doctrine of eternal, vital union as the very foundation of our hope of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which cannot fade away.

## **Eternal Life**

Sign of the Times - January 15, 1859.

“This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John 5:20

That this testimony is given by the inspired apostle concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, we presume but few if any will dispute, since there is no other character or being found in heaven or earth to whom we can apply these titles without involving the sin of blasphemy. The whole theme of John in this epistle, as well as in all his writings, was to bear record or testimony of him, and to show by the most indisputable testimony that he is as here declared, the true God, and eternal life. It is highly important that the children of God should be instructed in regard to his being, his attributes, his fullness, and of the relationship subsisting between him and them; and to meet this necessity the Holy Ghost inspired John to write unto the scattered family of God that they may have fellowship with each other, and that their joy may be full, (1 John 1:1-4).

As the doctrine declared in our text involves the fellowship of the saints one with another, and their fellowship also with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, how very important it is that we in striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, should search diligently these Scriptures which testify of him.

Two important points are established by the declarations of our text. First, that Jesus Christ is the true God, and secondly, that he is the eternal life. On these two points we will offer a few remarks for the prayerful consideration of our readers.

First. He is the true God. It is not said that he is a true God, as though there were a plurality of true gods: for the Scriptures proclaim but One living and true God, and he himself has said, "I am God, and beside me there is no other." Hence the definite article is used to signify that Jesus Christ is the same God of whom Moses testified unto Israel saying, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee, are the everlasting arms," (Deut. 32:27). He is the same God who said by Isaiah, unto the seed of Israel, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all ye the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else," (Isa. 45:22). Yea, he is that very God who has said he will have no other god before him. He is therefore called, the only wise God, our Savior. And in our text he is also distinguished from all false gods, or imaginary deities, the true God. This descriptive characteristic, implies that there are those that are called gods, and worshiped as such, that are not true. Jesus himself testified, all that ever came

before him, were thieves and robbers: and he admonished his disciples that many false christs would come, and commanded them to beware of them.

He is the true God; all others who claim that honor, or who are revered as such, are false, delusive idols, whether they be of gold or silver, or any material substance, or existing only in the vain imagination of their worshipers. But when we claim that Jesus Christ is the only true and living God, we hold that all the fullness of the eternal Godhead dwells in him. The eternal Father is in him, and he is in the Father, and he and his Father are one. The Holy Spirit of the Lord God, in all his infinity is given to him without measure or limitation; it dwells in him, and is one with him. All that constitutes the Godhead, with all the attributes and perfections belong to him, and are essential to his nature, so that in the absence of any of them, if it were possible that any of them could be absent from him, he would be disqualified to be a Savior, or to be worshiped. God has declared that he is God and beside him there is no Savior, and he has forbidden his creatures to worship any but himself, therefore in worshiping Christ, we worship none other than the true God. The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding these personal distinctions by which they are severally set forth in the record of truth, are but the one only living and true God, for these three are one. In his eternal Godhead we hold therefore, in distinction from the views advanced by those who lately assailed our faith on this subject, that Christ, in his Godhead, is self-existent, independent and eternal. That his Godhead is unbegotten and underived, it is the Godhead of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, and we would as soon think of applying derivation to the Father or Spirit as to that fullness of the Godhead which is embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although he is the true God, equally and identically with the Father and the Holy Ghost he also sustains and gloriously fills a mediatorial identity, in which he is as fully identified as one with the church as in his Godhead he is one with his Father. Hence our apostle not only declares him to be the true God, but also proclaims him as the eternal life. He himself declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the Resurrection and the life." The scriptural record of this Eternal Life, as given by the apostle John, and by all inspired writers finds its origin in the eternal Father; and hence its eternity, "That which was

from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.," (1 John 1:1-3). The manifestation of this eternal life which was with the Father, is represented as a begetting, a bringing forth, a setting up, and a Sonship, while its incarnation extended the manifestation to the saints on earth, so that they could see with their eyes, and handle the Word of life. Let us not forget that this Life is eternal, the manifestation is not the origination of it; for before it was manifested, it was with the Father. The begetting, or birth, is not the origination of that life which is made manifest by a birth. This eternal Life, is the Life which our Lord Jesus Christ is unto his body the church, which is the fullness of him that filleth all in all. "For me to live is Christ." "When he who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory." When this eternal life was manifested, of course it appeared, and in it all the saints were and are manifested in glory, even in that glory which the divine Mediator had with the Father before the world was. This is what we understand to be the eternal vitality, or immortality of the church of God. It was with the eternal Father, hid with Christ in God, and it was given unto the saints together with all that pertains to life and godliness, and the unspeakable gift of God's dear Son, whom God has given to be Head, Life and Immortality of the church, which is his body, all the members of which the omniscient eye of the Father did see, yet being imperfect, and in his book all its members were written which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them.

These views, if correct involve what is called the doctrine of Eternal Vital Union. That in the life of all the saints of God is one life, it is Christ, and Christ is eternal, as the Immortality of his body. The manifestation of this eternal life involves a spiritual generation, proceeding from God the Father, in manifestation of the eternal life which was with him, and all this eternal life with all spiritual blessings, was given us in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Hence, in the Sonship of Christ is found all our vital relationship to God. This is the record that God hath

given to us eternal life, and the life is in his Son, so completely identified with the Sonship of Christ that he that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. For he only hath immortality dwelling in the light. The children of God having spiritual, eternal life given them in Christ before the world began, are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; they are a seed that shall serve him, and be counted to the Lord for a generation.

This is the doctrine of the Bible on the subject of the true God, and Eternal Life, and a prominent and fundamental doctrine of the apostolic Baptists in all ages, and in all parts of the world. It sets forth Eternal, Unconditional Election, and life given to the chosen or elected people of God, before the world began. Yet there are those now, as probably there have been in past ages, who would confuse the minds of the saints, in order to rob them of the comfort which an understanding of this subject inspires. John says, These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. Satan and his legions oppose the doctrine, traduce, misrepresent and persecute those who hold, and proclaim this doctrine. Not because Satan has any hope of being able with all his allies on earth, in or out of the Christian profession, to overturn or destroy it, but the joy of the saints cannot be full without the consolation of this doctrine, the object of the powers of darkness to prevent the fullness of joy which the subject inspires.

May the Lord lead our minds by his Spirit into this and all truth, and deliver us from all error and delusions, for Jesus' sake, and then we can well afford to bear all the reproach which may be heaped on us for the truth's sake.

“Then let the loudest storm arise,  
Let tempests mingle earth and skies,  
No fatal shipwreck shall we fear,  
For Christ, our life, is always near.”

# **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL AND TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED**

*From Signs of the Times -February 15, 1869.*

There is, and long has been, much controversy between legalists and the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as to what the gospel is, but also in regard to whom it is or should be addressed. If all the parties engaged in the controversy could understand the scriptural signification of the word, those who are now zealously contending for a universal application of it to all mankind indiscriminately, would desire rather to restrict than to extend its application, as they have ever exerted themselves to suppress its publication. What they call gospel differs very widely from what Christ and the holy apostles proclaimed in the primitive days of the gospel church. Our Redeemer encountered the same class of zealous fanatics, who compassed sea and land to disseminate their false gospel, but a perversion of the gospel of Christ; and exposing and denouncing their hypocrisy charged them with teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men. The voluntary religious institutions originated and enjoined by men without any divine authority from God are now very widely taught and greedily received by graceless men, and such teaching is by them dignified with the name of gospel. Their preachers may entertain conflicting opinions in regard to what is contained in the Scriptures, for the doctrine of the Bible and the laws and institutions of Christ are regarded by them as minor points, while opposite sects can freely unite in opposing the doctrine of Christ, and in the propagation of any or all of the inventions of men. They can and do, with much seeming cordiality, take each other by the hand, and with wonderful reciprocity compliment each other as "truly evangelical," while in truth there are but two points in which they are really agreed among themselves; the one is that salvation is attainable by works, and the other is in denouncing the Old Primitive order of Baptists. As to precisely what works will secure salvation, and by what mode of warfare they should fight the Old Baptists, they may differ widely without interruption of fellowship. What they call gospel may be obtained in any quantity from the schools of men, in which every man

is engaged in teaching his brother and neighbor, saying, "Know the Lord." From Infant and Sabbath Schools, and Bible Classes, as well as from Theological Seminaries; from books and tracts, and various other sources, they can procure all of that kind of delusion which they call gospel in indefinite quantities. We would by no means misrepresent them; but we have failed to understand their language, if what they call gospel is not with them an article of commerce. Do they not propose to send it to the heathen; to Burma, Hindostan, and to all the distant islands where they can find a profitable market? They gravely tell us, in a business way, what amount of capital must be invested, what number of men and amount of money, how many ships and seamen must be employed, and how long it will take to supply the world.

What of their falsely called gospel they retain for home consumption, if we may judge from ruling prices, ought to be superior to what they ship to foreign markets, as those who retail it from their pulpits at home frequently amass large sums by this traffic.

To make their false gospel salable, they must, of course, adapt it to the taste of all. Those who have no ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches, have no difficulty in hearing the doctrines of men; hence there is a great cry about preaching to sinners. Their doctrine is precisely what unconverted sinners can feast upon; for instead of being told that they are condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on them, they are told that they are probationers, free agents, and have ability to move by their prayers the power that moves the world. Instead of being told that "No man can come to the Father but by Christ," and that "No man can come to Christ except the Father draw him," they are told that they can do a great deal for the Lord. And this is profanely called preaching the gospel to sinners. While with an air of affected superiority, they charge the Old order of Baptists, that we do not preach the gospel to sinners, while they themselves do not preach a word of gospel to saints or sinners. It is not gospel to utter falsehood in the name of the Lord; there is no gospel in telling men what they can and must do, or be damned. To call on dead sinners to repent and believe the gospel implies ability in them to do so, whereas the gospel proclaims that Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. It is as exclusively the work of our exalted Savior

to give repentance as it is to forgive sins, and the dead sinner can no more do the one than the other. True repentance which is unto life and needeth not to be repented of, must proceed from life. If the repentance be spiritual it proceeds from a spiritual source, and must be preceded by the quickening Spirit of God. The sorrow of the world worketh death; but godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life; and to be godly, in distinction from the sorrow of the world, it must come from God, it must be given by the exalted Prince and Savior. Faith is also the gift of God, Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of it, if it be genuine; for it is not the faith of the creature, but it is the faith of the Son of God, and without it no man can please God. Paul says, It is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. To preach the opposite to what the inspired Scriptures teach, is not preaching the gospel to saints, nor to sinners.

But we propose to show how the Scriptures define the word gospel. Compare Isaiah 61:1, with Luke 4:18, and you will see that what is by the prophet called good tidings, is by our Lord rendered gospel, and to prevent any caviling, the good tidings in the prophecy, and the gospel in its fulfillment, are defined to mean, good tidings to the meek - "to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Observe who these meek, poor, broken-hearted, prisoners are, and what gospel is preached to them. The Spirit of the Lord God qualifies those on whom it is poured, to follow the blessed Savior in preaching good tidings, or gospel, to the meek; not to the proud, haughty, and self-righteous. It proclaims liberty, not to free agents who were never in bondage, who have all the religion they live for, and could have as much more if they pleased to work for it. The poor broken hearted, helpless prisoner hails with joy the tidings that proclaims his release from prison. But how could the same tidings be joyful, or gospel, to those who are not poor, nor captive, nor broken hearted, nor meek? When Jesus said to the poor dying thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," we cannot doubt it was good tidings to him. But would the same words, if spoken to his murderers

who were reviling him, been appreciated as gospel tidings? The gospel is discriminating; it finds out the "humbled sinner in whose breast a thousand thoughts revolve." You who complain of the Old Baptists, that we do not preach the gospel to sinners, would you have us, if we meet a band of robbers, pirates or murderers, say to them, in gospel terms, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom?" Or to a company of Atheists, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Jesus?" If this is not what they mean by preaching the gospel to sinners, how far short of this do they come, when they address the most blessed and sacred assurances which Christ gave to the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the peace makers, and the persecuted saints, to unconverted sinners, as an inducement to them to "get religion," saying to them, Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; Ask, and it shall be given to you? Not one of these gracious promises were ever addressed by our Lord or any minister of his to any but to quickened subjects of his saving grace. Instead then of preaching the gospel to saints or sinners, they pervert the gospel, in attempting to give the children's bread unto dogs, in direct defiance of the special command of Jesus Christ, who positively forbid that that which is holy should be given to the dogs. By their artful misapplication of the Scriptures, they are charged by an apostle with "turning the truth of God into a lie," by making the Scriptures seem to say what they do not say; and so by handling the word of God deceitfully, they not only lead the blind into the ditch, but frequently perplex and worry many of the unsuspecting honest hearted enquirers after truth. We have at this moment a case before us that is in point. An esteemed and dear friend who has long been held in captivity among the New School Baptists, has recently withdrawn from their communion, writes us that there is still one point of difference in which she cannot yet feel satisfied that the Old order of Baptists are right, and that is the point which we are now discussing; namely, that our pastors confine their addresses to the churches, or in other words, do not preach the gospel to sinners, and she refers us to the parable of the king's son as favoring her position, or as being in the way of her accepting the views supposed to be held by us.

Without digression from the theme of this article, we will examine the objection to what is supposed to be our views, and the bearing of the parable upon the subject.

First, we will correct a misapprehension of the position and practice of the ministers of our order. While we believe and preach the gospel, as Christ and his apostles did, wherever a door is open for that purpose, openly addressing our preaching to every one within the sound of our voice, the gospel which we preach discriminates between the living and the dead. It is a savor of life unto life, to those who are quickened by the Holy Ghost, and a savor of death unto death, to them that perish. It is "to the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." And if our preaching is not a savor of death unto death to the ungodly, and a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, and if it be not a savor of life to the quickened, and if it be not to them that are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, then it is not apostolic preaching. Who ever knew an Old School Baptist to refuse to preach the gospel to any but saints? We cannot search the hearts or try the reins of those to whom we preach; but the word which we preach makes the discrimination; for it is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, (Heb. 4:12,13). The gospel which we preach is good tidings to the meek; but if any part of our audience are not meek, it is not gospel, or good tidings to them. All who have an ear to hear, are more than welcome to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. But if any have not hearing ears, the preachers cannot supply them; for the hearing ear and understanding heart are of the Lord. The Son of God alone has power to cause the dead to hear his voice and live; for the words which he speaks to them, they are spirit, and they are life. Therefore his sheep hear his voice, and he knows them, and they follow him; for he gives to them eternal life, and they shall never perish. He, and he alone has power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. All this the Old Baptists preach to every creature. But we do not give the children's bread to any but the children, nor do we give what belongs to the dogs to the children.

But let us examine the parable of the marriage of the king's son, (Matt. 22:1-14). Unto whom, and for what purpose was it spoken by

our Lord, and why spoken in parable? The context will show that it was addressed to the Jews, including the Pharisees, who were so much enraged on hearing it, that they went and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk, (see v. 15). As whatsoever God speaks is certain to secure the object for which it is spoken, (Isa. 55:11). What was accomplished by this parable shows conclusively for what purpose it was spoken. And the reason why he spake to all but his saints in parables, is given in his own words to his disciples, in Luke 8:10. "And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?" Alluding to the parable of a sower, "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." We must reject Christ's own explanation of his reason for using parables, or admit that this parable was spoken expressly to discriminate between his disciples to whom was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and all others from whom that gift was withheld, and by the inscrutable purpose of God all but the disciples, in seeing should not see, and hearing should not understand. Instead of his parables being used to elucidate, illustrate, and make the mysteries of the kingdom of God clear and plain to the understanding of the ungodly, they were designed to make them the more obscure, that they might be a stumbling block to the Jews, and folly to the Greeks. "Therefore Jesus rejoiced in spirit, when he said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Perhaps our esteemed friend will perceive that neither this nor any other parable, correctly understood, will sustain the position taken, that the address of the ministers of Christ should be indiscriminate. The same gospel preaching which elucidates the mysteries to the saints on whom the heavenly gift is bestowed, involves them in parabolic obscurity to all but such. Still the question may return, What does the parable mean? We have already shown that it was intended like all the parables to baffle the wisdom of the Scribes, Pharisees and work mongers of that and of all subsequent ages, and bring down their lofty imagination, humble the pride of man, and cause that none should glory, only in the Lord. It was nevertheless full of wholesome instruction to those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. The kingdom of God, which in this parable or similitude is compared to a king who made a

marriage for his son, embraces Christ and his people in both the legal and then prospective dispensations. The marriage of the king's son represents the public espousal, and marriage of Christ and his bride, the church, which was then about to be consummated, according to prophecy. The oxen and fatlings, representing all the sacrifices under the law, had been killed, and the Bridegroom had come to redeem his bride from under the law, that she might be identified with him in his resurrection from the dead. The marriage festivities, or feast, was now about to be spread, in the opening of the gospel dispensation. The Jews, as a nation or people, had been notified and bidden to the marriage by the prophets, and they had professed to be anxiously awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom and announcement of the feast. "The law and the prophets were until John." John the Baptist had announced the advent of Christ as the Bridegroom, saying, "He that hath the bride, is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth because of the Bridegroom's voice: thus my joy is fulfilled." John's mission was to make ready a people prepared of the Lord. Seventy servants had been sent to announce to the commonwealth of Israel that the feast was prepared; but they were not ready to leave Judaism, nor had they any disposition to embrace Christianity. These servants had been forbidden to go with this proclamation to any but those Jews which had been bidden by the prophets. "Go ye not in the way of the Gentiles," nor into any city, even of the Samaritans were they not to enter, but to go exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "But they made light of it." He came to his own, and his own received him not. He grew up among them as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when they saw him there was no beauty or attraction for them to desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not, (Isa. 53:1-3). Again other servants, the apostles, were sent out, with the same charge to go only to the Jews which were bidden; but they made no serious matter of it; and they slew the servants. This was literally true of the disciples and apostles which were sent with this message to the Jews; they not only rejected their message, but put the messengers to death. All this preceded the wrath which was brought upon the Jewish nation, when nationally they were destroyed, and Jerusalem and other cities were terribly destroyed.

Then said the king to his servants, or ministers: The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, the carnal Israelites, were not worthy. The law could make nothing perfect. Their legal self-righteousness was but filthy rags, and would not answer for a wedding garment. They with all their filthy rags, or legal works, were now utterly rejected, and the decree of the king is published, that none of them which were bidden, or to whom the prophets had been sent, should taste of the supper, the gospel feast. And now the servants are sent forth to the Gentiles, who had not been bidden to the feast as were the Jews. Comparing the version of Luke 16 of this same parable with that of Matthew, we perceive that when those who were whole had declined the feast, the servants were instructed to gather from the streets and lanes of Jerusalem, or Israel, the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind; quite a different description of guests; yet the very description to whom the gospel is good tidings; and of this description there were gathered by the apostles from the secluded lanes and streets of Israel all the original constituent members of the gospel organization. And the apostles reported to their Lord, saying, "It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Poor, helpless, halt and blind sinners who felt their poverty, and had no works or merits of their own to plead, were gathered to the gospel feast; but those of that character called from the Jews did not exhaust the provisions of grace, and the gospel proclamation is by divine command extended to the high-way and hedges of the Gentile world. "Go ye," the ministers of the everlasting gospel, who had received a "Go ye" from their King, "and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." Certainly not as many of the self-righteous work-mongers, but as many as they should find of the character already gathered into the marriage, of the poor, lame, broken hearted, helpless and guilt-stricken; bid them welcome, in the name of the King to the marriage. But none others should partake of the feast, as we see how he fared who came in not having on the wedding garment. The broad phylacteries of self-righteous Pharisees would not do; the guest must be clothed with garments of salvation, as sinners saved by grace alone, and covered with the robe of Christ's own righteousness, that is the wedding dress; and a profession of religion without it will avail nothing. All who come in without God's grace will be thrust out without his favor.

Again, permit us to ask, What is there in this parable that can be justly construed to favor an indiscriminate address of the gospel ministry to all mankind?

The work of the gospel ministry is very clearly and fully stated in the words of our risen Savior to the apostles immediately before he ascended to heaven. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This is a most vitally important introduction to their commission. If there are any sinners who have power to resist his will, or to secure their own salvation, or to prevent their own salvation, then all power in earth is not in him. If ministers have power to save souls, to quicken dead sinners, or to prevent their quickening and salvation, then there is power besides what is vested in him. Or if Theological Schools have power to prepare men for the gospel ministry, or Mission Boards have power to commission men to preach, then that power is not exclusively found in him. The fact is not only in itself important, but it is also important that all who are called by him to the work should know it; for it is upon this very therefore that they are commanded to go. Go ye therefore, or from this consideration. It does not allow the alternative, to them to tarry at home, and send somebody else. "Go ye therefore." And what? "Teach all nations." He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, having all power in both worlds, has a right to send them over every state, territory, and division of the universe; and no king, potentate or ruler of the earth has any legitimate right to forbid, or throw impediments in their way. All nations. The command of Christ is no longer restricted to the Jews; now the middle wall of partition is taken down, and the messengers of Christ are commanded to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. For God has a people in every tribe and nation, and his gospel shall search and find them out, and call them out; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That is as was understood and practiced by the apostles, baptizing all who gladly receive the word, and who believe with all their heart on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus by baptism adding them manifestly to the apostles, and to the apostolic church. "Teaching them." They need instruction, and Christ has by his supreme authority authorized this manner of instruction, by and through the diversified gifts which he has received for and given to them. But what are they to teach them? Not the arts and sciences of

this world; for in the knowledge of them the ministers of Christ are generally quite limited themselves. But the orders of the King are very plain and definite. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." No new lessons that Jesus has not commanded the apostles. No progression beyond the commands of Christ. Nothing that he has commanded may be omitted. Nothing that he has not commanded may be added. If any man shall add to the words of the book of this prophecy, or instruction, God shall add to him the plagues written in this book; and if any man shall take from the words of his instructions, he shall be expelled from the church of God, the communion of the saints, and from the privileges of the Holy City, New Jerusalem. But, "Blessed and happy are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs."

We have been the more particular in showing what the gospel is, by whom, and to whom Christ has commanded it be preached, that not only our friend, but all who read may see that very much of what passes currently for gospel at our day, is but the teaching for doctrines the commandments and institutions of men, instead of the all things whatsoever Christ commanded his apostles to teach. In conclusion of this extended article we wish to add a few words in regard to the object and utility of the gospel ministry. The apostle, who is commanded to teach us, defines it thus: "Feed the flock of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." Jesus commanded Peter, saying, Feed my sheep, and feed my lambs. None but the flock of God can feed upon the gospel; none but they can live on every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The beloved disciple and inspired apostle John says, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error," (1 John 4:4-6). Finally, as the sun in the heavens can only be seen in its own light, so the light and glory of the everlasting gospel can only be discerned in its own divine radiance. Until God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts, we cannot comprehend the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL

*The Preceding writings are from the March 1, 1863 edition of the publication  
"Signs of the Times" founded and published for over  
45 years by Elder Gilbert Beebe.*

We have received a communication from the north, over the signature, "A Friend of Truth," desiring our views in regard to what are called the invitations of the gospel; whether they are addressed indiscriminately to sinners or exclusively to the quickened children of God. We learn from the letter that some of our esteemed brethren are differing seriously on the subject. Such passages as Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," etc. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The marriage of the king's son: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Also the first and eighth of Proverbs. Some brethren take the position that these are invitations to sinners indiscriminately, and others contend that these are invitations addressed only to the children of God.

In giving our views we beg leave to differ, very respectfully, however, from both parties. We deny that there are any invitations, either in the law or gospel, to saints or sinners. We think that a little reflection on the subject will satisfy all honest inquirers after truth that it would be altogether incompatible with the eternal perfections of Jehovah to issue invitations to any of His creatures.

First: We will remark that none of the communications from God to men are anywhere in the Bible called invitations, and it is therefore speculative and idle to argue theologically a position or question which has no scriptural foundation, and therefore, like the endless genealogies and questions about the law, which the apostle warns us against, is only calculated to gender strife, but cannot edify or comfort the family of God.

Second: An invitation is a complimentary request or message from a party having, and claiming to have, no authority to enforce the request, or message, which concedes to the party invited the undisputed right to respectfully decline the invitation, leaving it

entirely optional with the party invited to accept or decline without transcending his right.

Third: All those who have been brought to a saving knowledge of God will admit that He speaks the word, and it stands fast; He commands and it is done. "Where the word of a king is, there is power," and God is the King eternal, and the word that proceeds from Him shall not return unto Him void of the work whereunto He hath sent it. Even the carnal Jews perceived that our Redeemer spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Should the writer of these remarks receive a card of invitation from the President of these States, or from the Governor of New York, the fact of its being an invitation guarantees the right to accept or decline without involving a wrong or a crime in doing either. But should either the President or Governor, as chief magistrate of the nation or the State, send an authoritative message to any citizen, summoning him to be or appear at any place, that message would be clothed with all the authority and power of the magistrate from whom it issues; but it could not be regarded as an invitation, because it does not concede to the party to whom it is addressed any right to decline or disobey its authority.

Will any of our brethren contend that when the God of heaven peremptorily says to the seed of Israel, "seek ye my face," that they have a right to disobey or regard it only as a mere invitation? If He says to them, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else," does this imply that the people thus addressed have the same right to decline it as an invitation to obey it as a sovereign mandate from the throne of God? Since God has commanded men to look to him for salvation, have they a right to look anywhere else for that salvation? If there be any authority implied in the address it destroys the nature of the invitation. Indeed, we cannot, without detraction from a proper sense of the eternal power and majesty of Jehovah, entertain the preposterous idea that He deals in invitations to any of His creatures in heaven, earth or hell. All His words are big with power and high in authority; He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and submits nothing to the volition of any of His creature's wills. But in regards to the passages referred to, they bear the impress of His divine

authority; they can none of them be disregarded or disobeyed. The passage referred to, Isaiah 45:22 is a sovereign command to the seed of Jacob scattered to the ends of the earth, to look to Him for salvation, because He is God, and beside Him there is no Savior. All who looked anywhere else, or to any other being, or to themselves, for salvation, were not only guilty of disobedience, but also of idolatry.

The passage, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden," etc. is sufficiently clear and explicit. It is addressed to all who labor and are heavy laden, and to no others; and whenever and wherever these words are applied by the Holy Spirit to any poor, laboring, heavy laden sinner, that sinner will as surely come to Jesus as it is sure that the dead will rise when the voice of God calls them forth. The dead neither labor nor are they heavy laden, they slumber unconsciously in their graves; and all men are dead in sin, and as destitute of spiritual vitality until they are quickened by the Spirit, as the body of Lazarus was of natural life before Jesus raised him from the grave. But as soon as a sinner is quickened by the Holy Ghost he becomes a laborer, and is burdened with a heavy weight of guilt, and such are called to Jesus and find rest to their souls in bearing His yoke, which is easy, and His burden, which is light. To take the yoke of Jesus is to come under His law, to be baptized in His name and be yoked together in communion and fellowship with His disciples in all the privileges of the church of God. But are the unregenerated called to be baptized and identify themselves with the church of God? Philip did not so understand it when he said to the Eunuch, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest," (Acts 8:37). None but believers are called or commanded to be baptized and come under the yoke of Jesus, for they must first be delivered from the yoke of Moses, the yoke of bondage.

In Matthew 20:16, in the conclusion of the parable of the householder and his hired laborers for his vineyard, Jesus used these words, "so the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." There was murmuring among some of the disciples; the sons of Zebedee desired distinguished places in the kingdom and some said, "We have forsaken all," etc. "What shall we receive?" The parable was to rebuke this selfish principle, and to show not only the right of our Lord to choose from the whole company of His called children whom He pleased, to labor in His vineyard, but also to

reward them equally. Those who had labored the most or the longest were amply rewarded, but Jesus chose to make those who had labored least, equal with those who had borne the heat and toil of the day.

Again in Matthew 22:14, the same words are used at the end of the parable of the marriage of the king's son. The application was made to the Jewish nation, which had been called as the carnal or fleshly descendants of Abraham, and under the covenant of works. God, by the prophets, had informed them of the approaching marriage. In the type they were bidden to the marriage, but in the election of grace they were not the chosen people of God. As the apostle Paul explains, "For they are not all Israel. which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9:6-8) Although the whole nation of Israel was called in the type, or shadow of good things which were to come, how very few of them were found to be included in the covenant of grace. Esias, also cried concerning Israel, "Though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved," (Rom. 9:27). "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election [or the few chosen] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded," (Rom. 11:7).

We have not time nor space to enlarge on these parables, but it is sufficient for us to demonstrate that there are none called by grace but the chosen people of God, whose salvation is fully secured in our Lord Jesus Christ. "For whom He [God] 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," (Rom. 8:29,30). In this calling none but the predestinated are called, and all who are called are justified and ultimately glorified. They are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to His own [God's own] purpose and grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, (2 Tim. 1:9). To prove, therefore, that they are the called according to God's purpose, is to prove that they love God; that all things work together for their own good; that they are predestinated to bear the image of the Son of God; that they are justified and glorified in Christ. The passages,

therefore, which speak of many being called, do not, nay, they cannot possibly relate to this holy calling in which Christ, the good shepherd, calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. For in this calling, the dead shall hear His voice, and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25) The promise of God is unto "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," (Acts 2:39).

The declaration of Christ to the self-righteous Jews that He had not come to call or save righteous people, but to call sinners to repentance, does not admit of the construction that He had come to call all the sinners of Adam's race to repentance, for millions of them had already left these mortal shores. The Pharisees upbraided him for associating with publicans and sinners, and He told them that this was His business in the world, to save sinners. The whole did not need a physician, nor did the righteous need one to save and purge them from sin.

The first chapter of Proverbs is also referred to as favoring the doctrine of invitations, etc. But an examination of the Proverbs of Solomon will show that Solomon personifies Wisdom; and Wisdom, we are told, is justified of her children. In a spiritual sense, Christ is the Wisdom of God to His children. He is of God made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But wisdom, abstractly considered, is the opposite of folly and madness. As rational beings, we disobey the maxims or proverbs of wisdom when we transgress her dictates; and wisdom will laugh at us in our calamities, into which we foolishly plunge ourselves, and mock us when our fear cometh. The voice of wisdom is loud in her reproofs when we rush heedlessly into trouble. But the wisdom of God is only known to those who are made wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

Brethren should be careful to avoid any interpretation of the Scriptures which will clash with other plain declarations of the inspired word. We may fail to comprehend or understand some portions of the divine testimony, but our ignorance will not justify us in forcing interpretations which must necessarily conflict with the teachings of the word and the Spirit of the Lord. If our views are right, both the word and the Spirit will harmonize with our views, but if we entertain opinions or views which the Scriptures do not so justify, they must be

discarded as wrong and pernicious. Now, in conclusion, we will reiterate to our legally inclined brethren of the north the appeal which the great apostle to the Gentiles made to the bewitched Galatians: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2,3). Review your own experiences, see if in your own salvation you only accepted an invitation and availed yourself of it to secure your acceptance with God, or were you awakened to a sensibility of your guilt, lost and helpless condition by the irresistible and almighty power of God? Was it left optional with you to decide whether you would live or die, when the arrows of the Almighty you were arrested and arraigned before the bar of eternal justice? Why did you there cry, "Lord, save, I perish?" Why did you not say, "Lord, I will accept thy invitation."

## **The Work of the Gospel Ministry- To Open The Eyes of the Blind**

**From Signs of the Times -April 15, 1858**

In this chapter, the apostle Paul, in making his defense before Agrippa, related his remarkable conversion to the Christian faith, and in the course of that relation, mentions the words which were spoken to him by our Lord Jesus Christ, whose voice, pealing from the high throne of his supreme glory, came with almighty power and irresistible force to his heart, at once removing his violent prejudice against the truth, and making him to feel most sensibly his lost and helpless state and condition as a sinner against, and persecutor of Jesus Christ.

Elder Harding desires our views on a portion of the words which were spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to Saul on that occasion, and by him narrated in his address before Agrippa, namely "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

In the context we are told that our Lord designed to make Saul a minister and a witness, both of the things which he had seen and of

those things in which he would afterward appear unto him; and that he would send as a minister and a witness unto the Gentiles, open their eyes, &c. Not by any means implying that Paul, even as an inspired Apostle had the power to quicken dead sinners among the Gentiles or the Jews to see the things of the Spirit which are foolishness unto the natural man, and which no unregenerate man can either see or know because they are spiritually discerned, but ministerially and as a witness of Jesus, he was to open their eyes. God has a people among the Gentiles whom he was about to call, quicken and bring to his fold. They were now afar off, and in darkness, error, idolatry, and under the power of Satan, but they were soon to be called by grace, and instructed. To qualify this witness and minister, he must like the husband-man, first be a partaker of the fruits, and as we see in his own experience, when quickened by the life-giving voice of Jesus, he found himself in darkness, in bondage and ignorance, and instead of being led to fancy that he would be able to give eyes to the blind, by any power which he possessed, he found himself unable to open his own eyes, but remained in darkness until one of the Lord's ministers and witnesses was sent to him, as he was now about to be sent to the Gentiles, saying to him, by divine authority, and in the name of Jesus, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight."

The work for which Paul was qualified, and to which he was called, was to open the eyes of God's quickened children among the Gentiles, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Certainly his ministry had this effect. God's people, to whom he was sent, had been brought up in Pagan darkness, and although quickened and prepared by a divine power for the salutary benefits of Paul's labors, had never had their sight directed to the adorable way of salvation by grace. To open their eyes, implies that they had eyes to open; not their natural eyes, for with them no man can see the kingdom of God, as it is written, "Eye hath not seen." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." But when "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, has shined in their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face ministerial labors of the servants of Christ to remove from them their "grave clothes," as Christ commanded in the case of a quickened Lazarus' and to take the napkin from his eyes, as Ananias had done to Saul, and as Paul was to do to the quickened Gentiles', by preaching to them the

glorious gospel of God our Savior, administering to them the ordinances of Christ, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them," and warning them to be aware of false teachers and false doctrine. Should Paul, or any other person, open the eyes of a dead man, it would not enable the dead to see, for if dead they can see no more with their eyes than with their hands or feet, but opening the eyes of the living, removes that covering from the eyes, which prevents their seeing. Hence to open the eyes of God's quickened children ministerially, is to turn them from darkness to light. Living persons, if their eyes be shut, are in darkness, and when in darkness, as Peter said, they are blind, and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they have been purged from their old sins. Much may be written on the subject of that darkness to which God's living children are subject, sometimes by reason of doubts, fears, unbelief, &c., and sometimes by following their own carnal reasoning, instead of living by faith upon the Son of God. But the darkness from which the Gentile converts were to be turned, seems to have been from pagan idolatry and superstition, to the divine radiance of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The darkness of this world is connected with the power of Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, and Satan and his emissaries are spoken of as rulers of the darkness of this world. But God has delivered his children from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of his dear Son- hence they are admonished to walk as children of the light. Perhaps there never was a time when the power of darkness was more strikingly demonstrated than at the present day, in which men put darkness for light, and light for darkness. And the power of their darkness is so great that they who are under it "Wonder and perish, while God is working a work in their day which they shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto them." Even God's people in all there natural powers are inclined to darkness rather than light, and the constant tendencies of their natural mind is to run into it, but God has provided for the effectual turning of them from it, and from its Satanic power, unto God. And the gospel ministry, and especially the apostolic gifts And labors are eminently calculated to secure this object. "That they may receive the forgiveness of sins." The forgiveness of sins, and the reception of that forgiveness by the sinner are very different things, "Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins."

There are many witnesses on earth who can testify that Christ has power on earth to forgive sins. But the forgiveness of our sins cannot afford to us consolation until such evidence or assurance of their forgiveness is afforded us to enable us to receive that forgiveness by faith, then we realize a full and free discharge from the guilt and condemnation of them. Isaiah had neither power nor commission to forgive Jerusalem, but God commanded him to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare was ended, and her iniquities were pardoned. They were already pardoned, but they were to be apprised of the fact, that they might receive the forgiveness, and rejoice in it. A quickened sinner, until thus enlightened, will seek for justification by the deeds of the law, and will labor and mourn in darkness where he is annoyed by the tempting power and cruel suggestions of Satan, until he is enabled by grace to see how God can be just and the justifier of a poor, guilt-burdened sinner, but when the assurance is brought home to his understanding that "he has received at the Lord's hand double for all his sins," then he receives the forgiveness of his sins. This is to them a great and glorious deliverance, and in it they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, Now they receive not only the evidence of the remission of sins, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, but they are placed experimentally among the heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, and as heirs, they receive inheritance among them which are sanctified. Not a purchased possession or a reward for their efforts at reformation, their use of means, or payment for services rendered to the Lord, but an inheritance, the gracious patrimony of their heavenly Father. And this inheritance being a joint inheritance, is among them which are "Sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called." "Saved and called with an heavenly calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began." The King who sits upon the throne of his glory, who has separated them from the goats, and put them on his right hand, says to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And that faith which is in him, of which he is both the author and finisher, is given them, and by it they receive their forgiveness and inheritance among them which are set apart, separated or sanctified.

But let it not be forgotten that a part of the legacy is, that in this world the heirs of glory shall have tribulation. "If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution." God has chosen his people in a furnace of affliction, and the saints are destined to encounter many trials, temptations, doubts, fears, reproaches and afflictions, but they have the blessed assurance that these comparatively light afflictions, which are but for a moment, do work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while they look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Hence, "We know that all things do work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

## **What is Faith?**

*From Signs of the Times—June 15, 1860.*

Webster defines the word as signifying "Belief, assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence." And what he denominates Evangelical faith, justifying and saving faith, he says is the "assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will, or approbation of the heart." And, this definition is established by the colleges and universities of our country generally, and endorsed by all Arminians and legalists everywhere. But the definition of the term as used in the Scriptures, as defined by the inspired apostles, differs very widely from the popularly received definitions of men. The apostle John speaks of it as a child from heaven, born of God, and inspired with heavenly life, and triumphing over the world. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world: even our faith," (1 John 5:4). That faith which is the creature of the carnal mind of man, the mere assent of the judgment of our fleshly mind, although cordially received and confidently relied upon, is but, at best, a creature of our own, born of the flesh, and can no more overcome the world, than can the flesh itself—because no stream can rise above its fountain. Differing then, in parentage and birth as widely as the distance between earth and heaven, these two kinds of faith have no vital relationship with each

other. The faith produced by the convictions of our natural judgment, however cordially assented to or endorsed by the will of man, is nevertheless a child of [the] earth, which, could it overcome the world, would overcome itself, as it is an element of the world. But that faith which is of God, and in God, is the faith of the Son of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ is himself the author and the finisher of it. This is the faith of God's elect. By it, the saints are distinguished from the world, as none can possess it unless they be born of God, and as without it no man can please God. We do not understand that the birth of faith is distinct from the birth of saints; but an element of the new, heavenly and spiritual birth, which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; that birth which is of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever; and, therefore, unlike the flesh, which is grass, and the goodness thereof, which is the flower of grass, for they must wither and fall away; but the word of the Lord, the source, fountain and origin of true faith, liveth and abideth forever. This true and living faith is, then, an element of the heaven-born child of God, and only by it can we overcome the world, the flesh and the devil; only by it can we approach the throne of grace, draw nigh unto God, or cry Abba, Father. For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and the belief in God's being and perfections is the act of vital faith.

This heaven-begotten and heaven-born faith, is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. It is more than a shadow, for a shadow is not the substance of anything, though shadows do prove the existence of substances which cast them, and to some extent may portray the outline or shape of the substance of which they are the shadows, yet they have no substance in themselves. Thus in the ceremonial law, the meats, drinks, sabbath days and new moons were the shadow of good things to come—but the body, or substance, is Christ. And as the faith of the gospel is the faith of Jesus Christ, and as the righteousness which alone can justify us before God is by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved us and given himself for us, so it must be a substance, in distinction from all shadows, passions or exercises of the natural mind, or energies of unrenewed men. The Christian's faith and hope are inseparably associated, and must operate together in the spiritual exercises of the saints while in their pilgrimage state. Faith is not the substance of hope, but it is the substance of the things hoped for, by the Christian.

The things hoped for by the new man are spiritual, heavenly and eternal, for it enters within the veil, and is fixed on things which are not seen by the natural perceptions of men. Nothing short of the faith of the Son of God can make real, or give substance to, the things thus hoped for. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; and all the revelations of the Spirit to us are made to our faith. Hypocrites may hope, but their hope shall perish; for it is ideal, having no substance. But the hope of the Christian is a reality, and faith points to Christ as the Hope of Israel, and the Savior thereof, and gives reality to the things hoped for; and until hope shall yield to fruition, it is the substance of the things hoped for, as well as the evidence of things not seen; of eternal things, which are imperceptible to the eye or intelligence of unregenerated men. "While," says Paul, "we look not on the things which are seen; but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." We could not hope, in a gospel sense, for spiritual and eternal things which are not seen, if faith did not present them; hence faith is the substance on which hope is sustained, and just in proportion to the development of faith in us, will be the steadfastness of our hope, so far as Christian experience is concerned. When our faith is not in manifest exercise in our hearts, our hope fails, and we approach the borders of despair, and in great anxiety cry out, My hope is perished from the Lord! But the renewed manifestation of our faith, obtaining a victory over the world, says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God," (Ps. 43:5). The faith that is born of God will lay hold of and endorse no other doctrine than that of God our Savior; it will point out no other path for the saints to walk in but that which Christ has marked out by his precepts and examples, and it will admit as genuine, no other experience than that which is led by the Spirit of God. And while all other kinds of faith may be attainable by the powers of the flesh, and when attained, can join affinity with other kinds of the faith, that of which we speak can only come from God, and never can be known or felt by any while in an unquickened state, and when implanted in the heart will not amalgamate with the faith of men nor of devils.

Another peculiarity of this faith is that it will endure trials of the greatest severity, and God has ordained that it shall be tried. All the sore afflictions, tribulations, persecutions and temptations to which the saints of God are subject, are designed for the trial of their faith, and when it shall be sufficiently tried, they who possess it shall come forth as gold, purified and refined. The power of faith shall be known by all the saints, in its victories over the world, the flesh and the devil. It shall triumph over death, and vanquish the gloom and terror of the grave. As in times past it has quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness made strong, caused the saints to wax valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, women receiving their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection, others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings—yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments, they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. And what shall we more say? for time would fail to tell of Gideon, of Barak, and of Sampson, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets. This invincible, almighty faith by which all these victories were gained is directly ascribed, in this very connection, to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the author and the finisher of it. Into the unity of this faith all the saints of God thus far developed have come, and into it all the redeemed of the Lord shall ultimately be brought; for, There is one faith, even, as there is one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of all, one body, one Spirit and one hope of our calling.

Having briefly treated on the nature, the origin, the peculiarities, the power and vitality of this faith, and labored to discriminate between it and all other kinds of faith, we will close by inquiring whether we, dear brethren, are in possession of it, and by pointing out some of the reliable evidences of its existence in our hearts.

The apostle has said, “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.” How important is this investigation; in nothing can we be more deeply interested. Without this faith, we may please men, we may gain the applause of the world, we may gratify the lusts of our carnal nature; but without it we cannot please God. In its absence we cannot know God nor approach him. Only by it can we rest upon the

provisions and gracious promises of the gospel, find access to the throne of grace, understand the truth, endure the trials of the way, quench the fiery darts of Satan, overcome the world, have communion with God, fellowship with his saints, or finally pass the chilling terrors of death and the grave without fear or dread. What are the evidences of its existence in our hearts? Of the many which God has graciously given, we can at this time only mention a few:

First- The faith of the Son of God in our hearts is always associated with hope and charity. Now abideth faith, hope and charity these three. If, then, we have the faith, just as its power is manifested in us, to the same extent will our hope be established in God, and our charity, or love, flow to God and to all who bear his image. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts will center in God as its author and source, in his people, his truth, his government, his laws, his ordinances, and all the privileges of his church.

Second- Having this faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, or, in other words, are reconciled to God, rejoice that he is God, that he has all power in heaven and in earth; that he reigns supreme over all beings, all worlds, and all events, that he has numbered the hairs of our head, and will not suffer one of them to fall unbidden of him to the ground.

Third- If we have this faith, we shall learn by experience that we cannot control it, exercise or enlarge it—but on the contrary, it will assuredly control, exercise and govern us.

Fourth- Having this faith, we shall assuredly also have fears, trials, temptations and great conflicts with the world, the flesh and Satan, for our faith must be tried, that its power may be understood and appreciated.

Fifth- If our faith be of the operation of God, it will give us such views of the perfections, power and majesty of God, that we shall abhor ourselves, in dust and ashes, while we admire, gaze and wonder at the amazing power and grace displayed in our salvation.

Sixth- This faith will lead us to trust alone in God for our eternal salvation, and for the salvation of all his redeemed family, while it will effectually destroy in us all confidence in the flesh. The more we

know of God, by faith, the greater will be our confidence to resign our present interest and our eternal destiny to his hands, and beg that we may not be left to be filled like Ephraim, with our own ways.

In proportion as we feel the reigning power of this faith in our hearts, we shall be ready, willing and anxious to honor, praise, revere, obey and glorify God. It will lead us to love the assembling of the saints, to frequent the house of prayer, to pray for the prosperity of Zion, and to follow after those things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another. And under its power each of its recipients will be led to esteem others better than himself. And although we may feel poor, and weak, and altogether unworthy of a place or name among the children of God, we shall feel an irresistible drawing of heart and soul to be in their company and fellowship.

## **REPENTANCE**

Signs of the Times -December 15, 1865

In replying to the inquiries of brother Samuel Rixey, of Culpepper C.H., Va., we will in the onset observe that although we are not very familiar with all the theories of theologians on the subject of repentance, and therefore but poorly qualified to follow them in all their applications, explanations, divisions, and nice distinctions as to the meaning of the word, when applied literally, we nevertheless feel willing to give to our brother, and to our readers generally, such views as we can gather from a close attentive reading of the scriptures. That the word is used in our version of the Bible with a variety of application is certain, from the fact that it is not only applied to good men, and bad men, but also to God himself. And that it does not apply to God in the same sense that it does to man is clear from the declaration that God is not a man that he should repent. That is, God does not repent, yet in the same chapter, (1 Sam. 15:29, 35) we are told "the Lord repented that he made Saul king over Israel." And this he did, simply by deposing him from the throne, and supplying the throne with a better man. Repentance when applied to God does not intend a sorrow for what he had done, a conviction of having done wrong, or even a change in his mind or purpose; but, as we understand, it signifies a change of his outward administration in his dispensations, and all in perfect harmony with his eternal and

immutable purpose. Nor does the term when applied to men always mean sorrow, or regret, for what we sometimes denominate evangelic or gospel repentance, which is unto life, is not, but results from a godly sorrow for sins. In the text referred to by brother Rixey (Mark 1:15), the word is used in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom by Christ himself, and not in the ministration of the law by Moses; it was not therefore legal repentance, but a repentance preparatory to a cordial reception of the gospel of the kingdom which Christ was preaching. If the term legal be used as an adjective, to signify a repentance demanded or required by the law, we should first inquire whether the law ever did, or could, demand or accept of any kind of repentance. It is not in the nature of any absolute law to require repentance. The law of God does not require that we shall be sorry for having sinned, but it forbids that we should sin. It requires perfect and perpetual obedience, and condemns to death for the first transgression.

“And could our tears forever flow,

And could our grief no respite know,”

It would avail us nothing by way of explanation. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy.” No repentance or mercy can flow to transgressors, from the law.

From the confused theory of Arminians of a legal repentance grows also the doctrine of obligatory repentance. That repentance which is unto life and is connected with godly sorrow is the gift of God; it proceeds from a godly principle implanted in the heart, and which cannot possibly flow from an ungodly source. Any sorrow or repentance that could come from an ungodly sinner’s heart, or from any sinner’s heart before a godly principle is therein implanted, would be like the fountain from whence it emanates - ungodly. We search the law and gospel both in vain to find this obligatory repentance which is in so great demand among all the legal work-mongrel tribes of the Arminians. We do not wonder that our dear brother’s mind has been puzzled and perplexed to bring the obligation of repentance upon unregenerate sinners. We might as well speak of their obligation to remit their own sins as to procure their own repentance, seeing Christ alone is exalted to be a Prince and Savior, for to give,

both the one and the other unto Israel. It would be equally as proper and scriptural to speak of their obligation to be saved, to go to heaven, and to make themselves sons and heirs of God. But, does man's inability to repent, or to believe, or even to keep from sinning, relieve him from his obligation to do so? Certainly not, if it can be found that such obligations are upon him. Now the sinner is one that has sinned. Sin is the transgression of the law; but where has the law under which the unregenerate sinner is held, either required him to repent or believe the gospel? The law truly forbids him to transgress, and holds him answerable for every transgression. Sin, not a want of repentance or faith, is what the sinner is condemned for. Without the faith of the Son of God, no sinner ever did or could believe the gospel; for believing the gospel is the assurance of faith, and that is the gift of God. Is there any obligation devolving on a graceless sinner making it his duty that God shall give him either faith or repentance? How absurd! But suppose the sinner could control the convictions of his own carnal mind so far as to make himself believe that he is a Christian, that he was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that Christ died for him, that he is freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, would that carnal assurance make it so? Would he not believe an untruth, even if he believed literally just what the Christian believes? Because that which is true in the case of one that is born of the Spirit is not true of him who only possesses a carnal assurance. The heaven-born child believes that God is his Father, and has the witness in himself. The Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is born of God. But if the unregenerate sinner without that witness believes himself to be an heir of immortality, he is deceived, and believes a lie. But to believe the gospel is to believe all this. It is precisely so with all that passes for true gospel repentance, if it be not the work of God, and the gift of God, it is all delusive and vain.

But, we shall be asked, did not John the Baptist and our Lord preach to the people saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?" All this is admitted. But if we carefully observe when, to whom, and by whom this repentance was preached, it will enable us the more clearly to understand what manner of repentance was called for.

“The law and the prophets were until John.” Since that time, and until these words were spoken by our Lord (see Luke 16:16), the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it. At this particular time John was sent from God to prepare the way of the Lord; to preach that the kingdom of heaven, so long predicted, was at hand; that the Messiah had come; that Jewish rites and ceremonies were now about to be abolished; that their fleshly descent from Abraham was no longer to avail them; for God was able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. John’s mission was only to the Jews, to preach repentance to them, and to baptize them with the baptism of repentance. This repentance and baptism both signified a turning away from the works, rites, ceremonies and ordinances of the law, as a ground of acceptance with God; and a coming out from Jerusalem, and a reception of Christ as that Messiah which was to come, and which they professed to be looking for. Their repentance did not signify that they were at that time born of the Spirit, or that they had not been subjects of that spiritual birth for many years. But it did signify that they came out from Judaism, sensible that the works of the law could not purge their consciences from dead works, to serve the living God; and hence they came to John’s baptism of repentance, confessing their sins, and professing their faith in and reliance upon that Christ whom John pointed out to them as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Remember John was sent to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. His work was stated by the angel of the Lord in Luke 1:13-17. It is also recorded in prophetic declarations of Zacharias in Luke 1:68-79. “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Now observe, John’s commission was to go before the face of the Lord, to announce his coming, and to “give knowledge of salvation” to God’s people, by remission of their (God’s people’s) sins, and to make ready a people, already prepared by grace, for the Lord, by calling them out from the house of bondage, and by baptizing them with the baptism of repentance, or reformation, saying unto them that they should believe on him that was to come, that is on Christ; and

that they should receive him as the true Messiah, and look to him alone for salvation. The repentance which John preached, and to which he baptized the people prepared for the Lord, is further defined in its peculiar nature and effects by the rejection of the Pharisees from John's baptism of repentance. "O, generation of vipers! Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say unto yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham," (Matt. 3:7-9). Had these Pharisees and Sadducees possessed the repentance which John preached, they would have signified it by a turning away from their cherished traditional hopes of being saved by their fleshly relation to Abraham, and by a reliance alone on him whose kingdom was about to be organized. The repentance preached was an abandonment of all confidence in the flesh, and a ready and hearty acknowledgment of Christ. "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees." They were about to be cut off from Abraham as their root, and scattered among the Gentiles. The wrath to come, of which John spake was that wrath which had long been accumulating and now hung impending over Jerusalem and the Jews as a nation. Every tree in this wilderness of Judea, which God had not by his grace made good and fruitful, was to be cut down. Their confidence in Abraham as their root, and the covenant of circumcision was now to fail them, and only such Jews as God had prepared, and John was commissioned to make ready, should be admitted into the kingdom which was at hand.

The preaching of Christ referred to by brother Rixey was addressed to the same people, and was a continuance of the preaching of John. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel," (Mark 1:14,15). This time appointed was Daniel's weeks, or the "fullness of time," when God was to send forth his Son; the time allotted to the legal dispensation, the time for the worldly sanctuary and carnal ordinances was fulfilled. The good news, tidings of great joy to those who could show fruits meet for repentance; the gospel of the kingdom, which the God of heaven was to set up, was now preached, and those who had oil in their vessels were to go into the marriage, and the door was to be shut. This proclamation was

made that all such as were prepared for the announcement should abandon their former position under the works and ritual of the law of a carnal commandment, and adhere to the gospel. This proclamation was not a proposition that if they would repent and believe the gospel they should be saved for doing so, for that would suppose that a bad tree could bring forth good fruit, without first being made good, which Christ says is impossible, (see Matt. 7:18). We are told that when Jesus thus came to his own (his own people, the Jews) his own received him not. "But unto as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John 1:11-13). The twelve disciples also which were sent out were in their commission forbidden to go with this message to the Gentiles, for God had not yet granted repentance to the Gentiles, (See Acts 11:18). Nor were they allowed to bear these gospel tidings to the Samaritans, "But, go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, (Matt. 10:5,6). The time had not yet come for the gathering in of the other sheep which were afar off among the Gentiles. For this preaching of repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name must begin at Jerusalem, (Luke 24:47). At the preaching of John, of Christ, of the twelve, and of the seventy, as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed, and came forward, confessing their sins, and professing faith in Christ, renouncing their former hopes of salvation by the deeds of the law, or works of the flesh; and signified the same by being baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and not unto Moses. We have perhaps said enough to signify our views as to the nature of the repentance preached to the lost sheep of the house of Israel by John, by Christ, and by the disciples, before the crucifixion and resurrection of the Son of God, to satisfy brother Rixey that we do not understand the repentance preached by Christ in our text to be either that, strictly speaking, which results from fear of wrath, nor that which proceeds from godly sorrow for sins, but rather a turning away from their former legal works and adherence to abrogated rites and ceremonies, to receive that promised Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets had written, and whom they were expecting should come. And although the words were addressed to the Jews generally, they were only applied to a people prepared for the Lord. All such on hearing the proclamation came from Judea, Jerusalem, and from regions about Jordan, to Jordan, and were baptized of John in the river Jordan, confessing

their sins, thus fleeing from the wrath which was then about to come upon Jerusalem, and other cities of Judea, and thus by baptism signifying their death to Moses, and resurrection with Christ to newness of life.

## **They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine**

Signs of the Times—October 1, 1856

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2

Timothy 4:3-4

The apostle Paul, and all the apostles, were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and thereby duly qualified to give such instructions to Timothy, and to all other gospel ministers and gospel saints, as they were then, or ever should be in need of. Without the immediate inspiration of God, they could not have predicted the things which should come to pass in subsequent ages, both in reference to the church of God, and the development of the man of sin. In reference to the manifestation of that wicked spirit which was to be developed, Paul had already informed Timothy in the first epistle, (4:13), that the Spirit had spoken expressly on that subject, saying, “Expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;” and the Spirit had with equal clearness expressly spoken of the lies they should tell, the hypocrisy they should practice, what should be the state of their consciences, what heresies they should utter, and what restrictions they should lay upon the church. Now, in closing this second and last epistle, when he was ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand, in his valedictory charge, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead, repeats to him the admonition to “preach the Word,” and that constantly; and the admonition is enforced by reminding him of what the Spirit had expressly said, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” The time specified, is the time which God had appointed, until which time the man of Sin could not be manifested. “And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then, [at that time]

shall that wicked be revealed,” The time is expressly declared by the Spirit, as the last time. All the powers of darkness could not anticipate the time which God had determined on for the fulfillment of these important events, nor could all the efforts, devices, good works or bad works, of saints or sinners, postpone that development one hour or one moment beyond the appointed time.

Some very conscientious and good brethren have seemed afraid to admit that God has set the bounds of wickedness of men and of devils, so that they have no power to change them; but we would ask such brethren whether the Spirit would speak to us of things which it would be wrong for us to believe? Would the Spirit tell us expressly, things which we ought not to know? Has not the Spirit told us expressly that the wicked shall be revealed in his time, and that God withholdeth it until its time, and has pledged his word that it shall in its time be revealed? Read the Scriptures on this subject, and then ask yourselves, could the beast with seven heads and ten horns, have risen up out of the sea before the great red dragon had been manifested? Or could the second beast have preceded the first? Or could the image of the beast have anticipated any of its predecessors? If they could not, it was because God had ordered things as they came to pass, even so, likewise the apostasy predicted in our text, has its time fixed. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” But who are they that will not endure sound doctrine? Some have supposed that this could not mean Christians, and that it must mean the world or antichrist. But when, we ask, has the world or antichrist ever endured sound doctrine? Did the world, the Jews or pagans, endure the sound doctrine set forth by Christ and his apostles, in their days? Did the carnal Israelites endure the sound doctrine that was reported to them by the prophets? Which of them did they not slay? The truth has, in all times since sin entered the world, been opposed by the world, and by all unconverted men. We cannot therefore suppose that the Spirit spake thus expressly of a time when nothing unusual was to be revealed. These non-endurers of sound doctrine are marked as apostates, thus, “Some shall depart from the faith.” We do not understand that these apostates are the children of God, born of the Spirit, or that they ever possessed the vital principles of faith in their hearts. But we do contend that they are those who have professed the faith of the gospel, and have been held in the fellowship of the church of God, otherwise they could not

depart from what they never professed to hold. Christ has said, "Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." And again, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." Thus signifying that all who enter not in by the door into the sheepfold, or church, are thieves and robbers, and all who come in without his grace, shall he cast out without his favor. These things began to develop in the apostolic age, and John speaks of some who went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us. So in those events which are traced in the revelations made to John on Patmos, there were times signified in which the world rushed into the church nominally, but they could not endure the sound doctrine of the gospel, for they had neither ears to hear, nor hearts to understand or love it. Whatever direct allusion our text has to the times of the apocalyptic beasts, or false prophet, we feel justified by the words "last times" in the context, in applying the prophecy to the present time, including the last forty or fifty years. We do not feel sufficiently liberal to apply this subject to the various Protestant or Catholic denominations,<sup>1</sup> by which the church of God has been surrounded in ages past, for we do not believe they, or any of them, ever did, or ever could, depart from the faith of the gospel, for they never, any of them, strictly speaking, held it, and they could not depart from what they never professed to hold.

Within the space of the last half century, the prophecy of our text has been manifestly realized in the Baptist Church, which, as a church, is the only organization that has ever stood on the foundation of the apostles. Many in this last time have departed from the faith, and in their apostasy have demonstrated that they could not endure sound doctrine. Those who are now denominated New School, or Missionary Baptists, or at least those churches who took that ground at the time of the division, once professed to hold the faith which we now hold. The same articles substantially, which were held by us before the separation, are held by us now, but these prominent sentiments which have distinguished the church of Christ from the apostles' days, and which they professed to hold once in common with us, they have now departed from, and do now wantonly repudiate them. They are, therefore, very manifestly embraced in the prediction of the text, as having departed from the faith. We challenge the world to point us to a single church or congregation of them who can at this day endure the sound doctrine which in all former ages

characterized the Baptists, from the time of John. Neither Old School-Baptists nor New School Baptists, will deny—either of the following propositions namely: first, that we were once all included in one religious denomination, and all professed the same faith and order. Second, that we are now very widely apart, that we do not all hold the same faith and order, and therefore one party or the other, or both, have departed from the faith which we all once professed to hold.

Now, as it is not very likely that either party will admit that they have so departed, but as each charges the other with having departed from the faith, we have but one alternative for the settlement of our respective claims—to the word and to the testimony. What does the Spirit expressly say, by the mouth of the inspired Paul, shall be the distinguishing marks or characteristics of those who in the last times will not endure sound doctrine? And with which party are these marks and characteristics found? Will any sane man who has any knowledge of the Old School Baptists, say that we have, since the division, after our own lusts, heaped to ourselves teachers? Will the New School Baptists themselves so charge us? So far from it, they have continually thrown it in our teeth that instead of having heaps of teachers, that we have but very few and they have been predicting that in a few years we shall have none. Some of them have exultingly said they expected to live to see the last of the Old School preachers buried. If, then, we have no such heaps of teachers, it cannot be that we are the party who are advertised in the holy Scriptures as having heaped to ourselves teachers.

Again, who will charge that the Old School Baptists have itching ears, leading them to lust after heaps of teachers, and evincing such lusts and such itching, by running after all the new doctrines and institutions of the age? Is it not proverbial that the Old School Baptists are behind the age? That they are an anti-effort, unprogressive people, and more than five hundred years behind the improvements of the age in which we live?

Once more! Will any one say that what preachers we have, have been raised up by any effort of ours? That we have number of our minister? Do our teachers or ministers, show so much of the wisdom and polish of this world, as to give any just grounds to suspect that they have been called, qualified or brought into the work the agency

of men? No rational man who has any knowledge of us believes any such thing. The marks, therefore, which are to identify and distinguish the class of apostates in our text, cannot apply to the Old School Baptists. Nor can it be said in truth, of Old School Baptists, that they are turned away from the truth, turned unto fables. We have been constantly charged with obstinacy, for so pertinaciously adhering to the Scriptures, as our only standard and rule of faith and practice. Our refusal to depart from the Bible as our standard of morality and religion, and to unite in the various schemes of the age for reforming society, reclaiming drunkards, converting sinners, and evangelizing the world, has brought down on us such epithets as Hardshells, Iron Jackets, and a profusion of titles indicative of anything but a readiness to turn away from what we hold to be the truth, and of being allured by fables. Flatteries and frowns alike have failed to draw the Old School Baptists from the Bible as their standard, We could mention cases where flattering titles of presidents, vice-presidents and directorships in popular, humanly devised religious societies, and lucrative missionary appointments, have been tendered, as a bait to draw some of our number from their steadfastness in the faith, and other instances could be particularized where proscription, reproach and calumny, have also been employed for the same purpose, but all in vain. How then can any of the marks which divine revelation has fixed on the apostates, described in our text, apply to the Old School Baptists?

As these marks cannot be found on the Old School Baptists, they cannot be the people who have departed from the faith, or who cannot endure sound doctrine. We will now proceed to show that the New School or Missionary Baptists have them all as plainly stamped on them as was the mark which was set on Cain, and as indelibly written as were the words, "Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots," &c., on the forehead of the woman that John saw sitting upon the scarlet-colored beast, (Rev.17:5.)

The Mission Baptists who have gone out from us, have very clearly demonstrated that they cannot endure sound doctrine, not only by going out from us, on account of our holding sound doctrine, but also by heaping to themselves teachers. Their ears have itched for such doctrines as would make them popular in the eyes of the world, and give them a place and respectability with the worldly religionists of the

age. This appears from their pleading the necessity of Theological schools, colleges and universities, for training young men for the ministry, because other religious denominations around them have such worldly institutions for that purpose, and lest they should thereby draw all the learned, wealthy, and influential, into their societies. This itching for popularity has shown a lack of confidence in God to raise up suitable teachers for them, or a sufficient supply to compete successfully with other denominations. The instruction of the King of Zion to his disciples, is, to pray the Lord of the harvest to supply laborers for the gospel ministry, but their own lusts have dictated to them to heap teachers to themselves, in defiance of the command of Christ, and in contempt of his authority. They not only prepare for themselves a number corresponding to their congregations, but they heap them, so that they have quantities of them for transportation to foreign lands, and an abundant surplus to be employed as itinerant beggars, colporteurs, &c., at home. Thus they not only crowd out from their pulpits all such as would offend their delicate itching ears, with sound doctrine, but have troops of them to send forth, like the frogs of Egypt, into all the land, to come up into our houses, our kneading-troughs, and our ovens. Is this picture overdrawn? Are there not hundreds of this heap now, and at all times, lounging about the cities and large towns, waiting for a call, and begging their way along, because they are too lazy to work for an honest living? Will any New School or Missionary Baptist deny that such is the case?

Who can deny that the New Order of Baptists raise up, call, educate and qualify their own teachers? For what other purpose do they organize their State Education Societies, build their colleges, and establish their Theological schools? Their white cravated mendicants are constantly abroad in every neighborhood, soliciting funds and their petitions are spread out before every State legislature, asking for State patronage, to aid them in their work.

Another mark of their apostasy is found upon them: They have turned away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables. In no part of the religious world can any be found who are more deadly set against the truth, or who manifest a greater hostility to the very doctrine which they themselves once professed to hold, than do the New Order of Baptists, who are commonly call the New School, or

Mission Baptists. Their ears are turned away, and instead of listening to sound doctrine, they are turned to fables.

Webster thus defines the term fable: "1. A feigned story or tale, intended to instruct or amuse; a fictitious narration intended to enforce some useful truth or precept. 2. Fiction in general. 3. An idle story; vicious or vulgar fictions. 4. The plot or connected series of events in an epic or dramatic poem. 5. Falsehood; a softer term for a lie."

Are the New School Baptists turned to fables, as thus defined? Read their publications and the tracts which they have turned to, which they approve, and which they circulate. Read their "Dairyman's Daughter." Their "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and a thousand more of their fabulous stories which have been manufactured to order, and then decide whether these fictitious stories are the sound doctrine of the Bible, or fables.

But, not only in the tracts which they publish and circulate, but in the general ministry of the teachers which they have heaped to themselves, a system of fiction, instead of reality prevails. The sovereignty of God, and the exclusive work of the Spirit, in the quickening and regeneration of men, is denounced, and the power, ability and will of the creature, is extolled. Salvation is by them ascribed to the will and works of men, and the heaven-taught truth of God, that salvation is alone of God by grace, through faith, and that not of the creature, but the gift of God, is by them rejected, and the fictitious doctrine of men, that salvation is effected by the use of means, instrumentalities, and that the gospel, or something else, is the means, and their heaps of teachers are the instruments of saving souls from hell, and of advancing them to heaven is preached instead thereof. They have turned away from the truth of the gospel, to the fiction and fables of the schools, from the eternal realities which are taught by the word and Spirit of the true and living God, to the vain, delusive, fabulous fictions of their own vain imaginations, and to a teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men.

In conclusion of this long article, in which we have, as we believe, fully proved that all the marks of apostasy given in our text, are legibly written on those who have gone out from the Old School Baptists,

and that none of them can be found upon the old apostolic order of Baptists which remain on the old Bible grounds, we would urge upon our brethren the solemn truth, that we have nothing wherein to boast over those who are turned unto fables. God has, as we hope, made us to differ, and all that we have, we have received of him. Let us then rejoice, not that others have fallen, but rather that our names are written in heaven. And let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. May we trust alone in him who is able to keep us from falling, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

### **Footnotes:**

1 We speak of those denominations; Christ has but one church on the earth. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," (Eph. 4:4-5). We freely admit and fully believe that as there have been many nominally connected with the church of Christ, who were not children of God, not born of God, not taught by his Spirit, so there have been many of God's children nominally connected with the various branches of antichrist, but so long as they remain there, they are living in disobedience to their Lord and Master; and, by that order of discipline which he has established in his church, we cannot extend our fellowship to them, as long as they continue to rank and file with the enemies. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," (2 Cor. 6:17,18).

## **The Relative Duties of Ministers and Churches**

Signs of the Times—May 1, 1857

Great care is required in the discussion of so delicate a subject, lest on the one hand we give countenance to the popular notion of manufacturing our own ministry, and offering inducements for ungodly and covetous men to crowd themselves into the work, uncalled of the Lord, and for filthy lucre's sake. Or, on the other hand, in avoiding that disorder, we run so far into an opposite extreme as to

overlook, and thereby fail to obey such instructions as are clearly laid down in the Scriptures.

We would observe first, that no man is to take this work on himself unless called thereto of God, as was Aaron to the priesthood. We can find no authority in the Word for human interference in offering inducements to draw out young or old men into the work, until such gifts are developed as afford satisfactory evidence to the church of God that they are called of God to that work. When such evidences are obtained, the church is required to consider them carefully and prayerfully, in the light of the Scriptures. Then it becomes us to inquire, first, has God by his Spirit made them willing to serve in that calling? For they must enter the work, not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a willing mind. Paul says to Timothy, "This is a true saying, If any man desire the office of a bishop (or pastor) he desireth a good work," (1 Tim. 3:1). Finding in the church a brother entertaining this desire, we are taught to examine closely to see if he possesses the following indispensable qualifications, (for some may have a desire to render themselves conspicuous in the church, and may covet the ministerial work from very improper motives, and such have given the churches great trouble. Some have been licensed to the work to get rid of their clamor, or as the easiest way to dispose of them, instead of saying to them that the church lacks the evidence of their calling. But in all such cases, the church has suffered from their disregard of the divine rule). Let them first be proved, and here is the rule: "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife: vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach," (1 Tim. 3:2). These are put down as indispensable qualifications, and the church of God is to be the judge whether the proposed candidate, or volunteer for the work is in possession of them, as positive and indispensable qualifications. If in all these particulars all is satisfactory, we are next to consider the negative, or the disqualifications, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil, (1 Tim 3:1-7).

There are many other portions of the New Testament which treat upon the qualifications of the ministers of Christ, but our limits will not allow us at this time to present them. From the above established rule we learn that the brother to be recognized as a minister of Jesus Christ must sustain an unblemished reputation in the church, and his walk and conversation before the world, (those that are without) must also be irreproachable. Of course we are not to understand that the world are to speak well of his doctrine, or allow him to escape reproach and persecution such as Christ and his apostles bore. But he is not to be known in the world as a brawler, a striker, a man given to wine, or greedy of filthy lucre, not covetous, or, like the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, Give! give!!

Next in importance to the unblemished character sustained by the candidate for the Christian ministry is, Is he apt to teach? Many men of intelligence and of grace are destitute of this qualification, and the church would starve under their ministry, if they were not otherwise fed with knowledge and understanding. And if the minister cannot command intelligible language, how can he be apt to teach? We would not insist upon eloquence of speech, as these terms are used by men, for Paul, who as a learned man could have commanded. He, refrained from it in his ministry, and came not in the excellency of speech, or of wisdom, but he was with them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and his speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that the faith of the saints should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Still there may be, and unquestionably is, a fault with at least some of our brethren in the ministry, and an inexcusable carelessness in regard to their language. If to be apt to teach requires that the instructor should, like the wise man, search out suitable words, and if, as he has by the spirit of inspiration told us, that "words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver," it must be proper and right that preachers of the Gospel should at least make themselves familiar with their mother tongue.

To do this, we presume there are very few cases, if any, where anything more is necessary than a trifling effort on the part of the preacher himself. If the church be at fault, it is that they do not urge upon their preachers who are deficient, the necessity and importance

of spending some of their leisure hours in studying their grammar and dictionaries. We have known young men to enter the ministry whose opportunities had been very limited, and consequently were very deficient in their language, who have grown to be old men, without any perceptible improvement in that particular, but it would be hard to find a case where a good practical knowledge of the rules of grammar might not have been acquired by them in that time without in the least restricting their ministerial labors, or detracting from their opportunities to labor for the support of their families. There certainly can be no good reason why a young preacher should idle away time which might be employed in the attainment of profitable knowledge, and in mental improvement.

No brother is at liberty to construe our remarks as intending any reflection upon our aged brethren in the ministry, who have never been privileged with opportunities which are common in our day. Many of our aged fathers in the ministry were raised amid the turmoil and strife of the Revolutionary War, or in parts of our country where the country was new, and opportunities were very limited for mental improvement, still their usefulness has been realized very extensively, and their praise is in all the churches. We only design to call the attention of the young to this subject, and not only ministers, but all others, would realize an advantage by applying themselves as opportunity presents, to the attainment of useful knowledge.

To secure all the advantages which we recommend, we see no need of building or establishing Theological Seminaries, or of waiting one moment after being called to the work of the ministry. The most stupidly dull and clownish preachers we ever met with have been among the students sent forth from Theological Schools. One from Hamilton Seminary, in our State, once edified the people in our vicinity, by informing them that the Ganges, where pagans sacrifice their children to its waters, was located in the Canada's. But aside from their deficiency in geography, they are uniformly, so far as our acquaintance with them extends, by no means in advance of pagans in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. The things of the Spirit of God can only be taught by the Spirit, and all our spiritual preparations for usefulness in the church of God most come from above. Still public speaking requires the articulation of sounds, by which ideas are expressed and conveyed, in order to which our

natural and physical organs are employed, and our natural understanding is brought into requisition. Hence the propriety of correct language. "How forcible are right words." Some have betrayed an unwillingness to take the trouble to learn the proper use of words, and their precise meaning, lest it should encourage pride and vanity, either in themselves or in their hearers, but that very class of speakers are more frequently than any others found straining to use high-flown words that they do not understand themselves, and very incorrectly imagine that their hearers are as ignorant of as themselves.

Our impression is that the most simple language we can possibly command, if well understood by the speaker, in public preaching, is by far more suitable and instructive, and to our ear, it is the most eloquent and forcible. None but coxcombs, and vain, conceited fops, will strain to use terms in public speaking which they imagine their hearers do not generally understand.

While on this subject, the reader will permit us to say, that there are many disagreeable faults into which preachers are very liable to fall, such as speaking with a sing-song tone, or with affection, an unusual key, with unbecoming and awkward gestures which a little care on their part with some occasional hints from faithful brethren, would serve greatly to relieve them from, and render them far more acceptable and pleasant to their hearers. But we have pursued this part of our subject as far perhaps as is profitable at this time, especially as we are conscious that the writer has very many faults to correct in himself, as well as to point out in his brethren.

The improvements suggested can be acquired without money, or exemption from labor. We know a precious brother who has attained a high elevation in literature without the aid of schools, or exemption from labor. He told us that he had often carried a book in his bosom when ploughing, and while his team were resting, he would employ the moments in study until he had acquired the education which he now finds of priceless value to him as a minister of Jesus. There are many other important requisitions for a preacher of the Gospel, which we have not time nor space to dwell upon in this article; and our remarks on the duty of the church to the preachers of the Word, must also be deferred for the present.

## **That I May Know Him**

From Signs of the Times—August 1, 1867.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.” Philippians 3:10

Although the apostle Paul had more cause to glory in the flesh than others, circumcised as he had been on the eighth day—of the stock of Israel—of the tribe of Benjamin—a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless; yet now being born of God and taught by the Spirit, he counted all these things, in which he had once gloried, but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord. Now the fullness of his aspirations are summed up in the single desire that he might win Christ, and be found in him without a rag of his own law righteousness, but having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; and that he might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Without attempting a general investigation of the position and experience of this eminent servant of God and apostle of Christ, we propose to offer a few remarks on the two leading propositions embraced in the words which we have placed at the head of this article. Namely,

First, a knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Lord, and,

Secondly, a knowledge of the power of his resurrection.

First, a knowledge of Jesus Christ not only surpasses all human knowledge that can be attained by study from the schools of men, but is an immediate revelation from God, and made only to those who are quickened by the Holy Ghost. Christ has himself said, in his most solemn appeal to his Father, when lifting up his eyes to heaven, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).” Hence, Simon Peter, and the other apostles, when confessing their knowledge of him as

the Christ, the Son of the Living God, were by him assured that the revelation of this knowledge to them was not from or by flesh and blood, but it was revealed to them by his and their Father which is in heaven. The school of Gamaliel from which Paul had graduated, was probably as orthodox in its theology as an institution of the kind that has ever been set up or patronized by the children of men since the world began; and yet with his perfect knowledge of the Jews' religion in which he had been thoroughly educated, he was a stranger to Christ, and betrayed his total ignorance of him when he appeared to him on his way to Damascus by inquiring, "Who art thou, Lord?" We are expressly told that none of the princes of this world knew him; for had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. The knowledge which the apostle had of Christ, he was free to confess, came immediately by revelation from God. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me," etc. (Gal. 1:15). "At that time Jesus answered and said, 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," (Matt. 11:25-27).

How excellent must be that knowledge which comes immediately from God, and which being revealed to us by his word and Spirit, quickens every one to whom the revelation is made; so that they are born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Every one therefore, saith Jesus, who hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me. Well might the apostle, and well may we, cheerfully give up all that we once held dear, and even gladly give up all things else for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and to know him as our Lord; for none can call him Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. We cannot know him and be ignorant of the Father; for the Father is in him, and he is in the Father. He and the Father are one. And he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. And, remember, that thus to know him is eternal life.

Secondly, all who know the Son desire to know the power of his resurrection. Perhaps this subject of the power of the resurrection of

the Son of God has not been as fully investigated in our day as many other important branches of the gospel; not however because it is any less important; but probably because the minds of the brethren have not been led to the consideration of it as they have been to other points.

That Jesus died for his people, and that he arose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, has been generally accepted by the saints as an incontrovertible truth, and scarcely doubted or denied by any at the present time. And indeed we were to speak only of his personal resurrection, that is of his crucified body which was laid in Joseph's new tomb, the subject would be of peculiar interest. In vindication of his declaration that he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it up again; his resurrection has fully demonstrated that power. But when we consider that the power of his resurrection is the power of immortality in which all the subjects of salvation are quickened, and in which alone they can know the things of the Spirit, or be qualified to reign in glory, the subject is invested with thrilling interest. The power of the resurrection of the Son of God is a subject so awfully sublime and glorious as to baffle and confound the wisdom and philosophy of the sons of men; surpassing all human understanding it leaves all our intellectual powers in the distance. And even the most enlightened of the children of God confess their utter inability to comprehend its amazing fullness. Even the apostle himself with all the abundance of revelation and inspiration frankly acknowledges his inability to comprehend the fullness of its glory. He says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 3:11-14).

The mark of the prize of the high calling of the saints of God is presented in the risen and glorified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his resurrected body has ascended into heaven as the first fruits of them that slept; and to that exalted mark the eye of the faith of God's elect aspires; while with eagerness we press through all the

opposing impediments, in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. That mark of ultimate glory is exemplified in the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord, who is the first begotten from the dead, and by the power of his resurrection the final glory of all the saints is secured.

Let us consider, so far as light may be given us, the power of his resurrection, which Paul desired to know, and which all the saints shall ultimately know, to the saving of their souls.

Carefully avoiding all vain speculations on this incomprehensible subject, let us prayerfully search what God the Lord hath spoken on the subject by his inspired apostles. In the first chapter of the epistle to the saints which were at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, after setting forth the election of the saints in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and their predestination to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, the holy apostle goes on to affirm that God has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him to whom also we have received an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption [or resurrection] of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory," (Eph. 1:13,14). Wherefore, the apostle ceases not to pray, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling," (Eph. 1:17,18). Namely, to a resurrection to that immortal glory of which they have now the earnest, and to which after that they believed they were sealed. And that they might also "know what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the

heavenly places, Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,” (Eph. 1:18-22).

In these Scriptures and their immediate connection, we are informed of the power of his resurrection; when so far enlightened as to know what is the hope of our calling and of the riches of the glory of Christ’s inheritance in his saints. In that light is revealed to us that the power of his resurrection is the power by which we were quickened and made to believe in God. His resurrection power to usward who believe is according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. And this power is not only great, but exceeds even greatness, and exemplified the supreme greatness of the mighty power of God himself.

That power of God which was displayed in the creation of the world, in sustaining and governing all things is truly very great; but the resurrection power, by which we are made partakers of the resurrection and glory of Christ is still greater, and is therefore called the exceeding greatness of his power. It is exceeding in as far as it goes beyond all the exhibitions of the omnipotence of the eternal God, in his works of creation and providence.

To the natural eye and understanding of man, no more power is displayed in the resurrection of the crucified body of Christ than in the resurrection of Lazarus or of the widow’s son; but to whom God has given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, this power excels all to her demonstrations of his might. They are made to know the power of his resurrection, which is to them the power of God unto salvation.

When we consider the identification of the church with Christ in his mediatorial works, as his body and fullness, and he the head over all things to that body, that he was made lower than the angels for the sufferings of death, in that angels are not capable of dying; that he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, in which “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” He was made of a woman and made under the law to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; a partaker of the same flesh and blood that his children were partakers of, thus legally embodying all the seed of Abraham, as his body and members, and this for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for everyone of them; and that he might thus bear our sins in his own body, and meet the penalty of the holy law in their behalf, and cancel all the demands of divine Justice; and so redeem them from under the law. "He was delivered for their offences." Their sins were found on him, and the penalty was exacted at his hand. He died for them, and in him that law was honored and fulfilled which required that they should die; and as he died for them all, so they were all dead. And he was raised from the dead for their justification. The power of his resurrection was so exceedingly great as to abolish death, so far as he and his members were concerned, and bring life and immortality to light in his resurrection. As the apostle in this first and second chapters to the Ephesians shows that in his resurrection and exaltation above all principalities and powers, he is given to be the head over all things to the church which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The divine record does not leave the subject here but goes on, "And you hath he quickened." The division of this record into chapters and verses, by the compilers of our version of the Scriptures, should not be allowed to divert or mislead our minds from the connection of the subject. Remember, the apostle is dwelling on the exceeding greatness of the power of God in raising up Jesus from the dead, and in putting all things under his feet. It is evidently in his resurrection that he has quickened his body, the church; which in all its members were, before they were quickened, dead in trespasses and sins; and were by nature, in their earthly or Adamic nature, children of wrath even as others. But the power of his resurrection was to change their relation to the law, as a first husband, by marrying and identifying them by the power of his resurrection with the risen body of Christ. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another; even to him that is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God. Romans 7:4 and Ephesians 2:1, omitting the supplied words, should read in connection with the last preceding verses. "And hath put all under his feet, and gave him the head over all to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Even you who were

dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked, etc.” “But 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; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Christ and his church, as the head and the body, are quickened together. We who were dead in trespasses and sins, who were by nature children of wrath, are quickened together with Christ. Such is the amazing greatness of the power of his resurrection that in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, his body, the seed of Abraham which he took on him are quickened together with him who is the head of that body; and God has raised up that body together with Christ, and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. “Know ye not that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in its lusts,” (Rom. 6:3-12).

Now precisely the same sense is conveyed in the words recorded in Colossians 2:10-15, as in Ephesians 2:1-8, and in Romans 6:3-12. Compare them carefully. “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” But when was Christ circumcised without hands? Not when he was circumcised at eight days old, after the manner of the Jews, for that was performed with hands: but when he suffered in the flesh, was put to death in the flesh, and put off forever the body of that flesh which was made of a woman, which identified him with the seed of Abraham under the law,

so that although we have known him after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more. He was not quickened from the dead by a return of fleshly or Adamic vitality, to be subject again to die; but by the power of an endless life; by that immortality which Paul calls the glory of the Father. In that circumcision all his body and members are circumcised, redeemed from the flesh, from the relation in which they stood to the law, to sin, and to death. And being thus dead with him, we were "Buried with him in baptism," wherein also ye are raised with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Now in this baptism with Christ there is a death to the law signified, and putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; and life and immortality to the church brought to light by the resurrection of Christ, in which the apostle positively declares that the church is risen with Christ her risen Head. Whether we are authorized to call this baptism with Christ regeneration depends not on what our modern lexicons may say as to the proper meaning of words, but rather, as we conceive on the sense in which this word is used in the two places in the Bible. We will not contend with brethren as to the sense in which the word is used, for we are forbidden to contend for words to no profit. We are content to call this doctrine baptism, or redemption, or salvation, or by any other Scriptural name. In the doctrine of the new birth as taught by our Lord and by his apostles in its personal experimental application to the saints, we all agree relative to our being called from death unto life, from darkness into marvelous light; when this resurrection life is made manifest in our personal individual experience. By the same quickening spirit and power that brought from the dead the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ all the saints from Abel down to the last vessel of mercy shall be brought in, all are or shall be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, (Rom. 8:11).

The same resurrection power that brought up from under the death and dominion of the law, the church embodied in Christ, quickens with resurrection life in the new birth, and gives assurance that the same resurrection spirit and power shall ultimately quicken the mortal bodies of the saints in their final resurrection at the last day.

## **Risen With Christ**

From Signs of the Times—1868

“If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” Colossians 3:1

Before we can with certainty determine that we are the people of whom this apostolic admonition is applied, it is important that we should know something experimentally of Christ, and of the power of his resurrection, and of the fellowship of his sufferings, and be conformed to his death. We presume that no one of all the saints will dispute the necessity of a saving acquaintance with the crucified and risen Christ, before any sinner is competent even to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. In the depravity of our polluted nature we cannot see the kingdom of God, nor receive the things of the Spirit, which can only be spiritually discerned. Two questions are here involved. First, Has Christ risen? Second, Have we risen with him?

On the first question, we think there can be no doubt that allusion is made to his resurrection from the dead, and in that resurrection from under the law, to meet and cancel the demands of which, he was crucified and slain. When he was made flesh, we are told that he was made of a woman, made under the law. And being made under the law, he learned obedience, and in obedience to that law which he humbled himself to come under, he laid down his life, that is, he was put to death in the flesh, bearing our (all his people's) sins in his own body on the tree. This body in which he suffered was a body which was prepared for the sufferings of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man; for every one whose sins were laid on him. For this mediatorial sacrifice he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Not that seed which is merely the natural progeny of Abraham; for we are told that the

children of the flesh are not the children of God; but in Isaac his seed should be called. "So then, if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," (Gal. 3:29). "We, then, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." These, then, which are Christ's as the seed of Abraham, were under the law, involved in transgression and guilt, and required to be redeemed. These were the people of whom it was said, "He was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons," (Gal. 4:5). In taking them on him he must needs take on him their sins; but this was done that he might put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself. It was for this "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all," (Isa. 53:6). And for this great and gracious end, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief," (Isa. 53:10) that with his stripes they might be healed. In this body then in which he was put to death, we see was embraced all those who by virtue of being Christ's are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; and the death which was inflicted on him in that body was inflicted on him as the seed of Abraham. How could it possibly have been otherwise? For what else could he have suffered? Had he not taken that seed on him, no sin could have been found on him; only in his relation to and identity with them could the sword of justice smite him, nor could his sufferings and death have effected their redemption on any other conceivable ground. In this body "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death," (Heb. 2:9). For this very purpose, for the nature of angels was not quite low enough to reach our case, he must needs take on him the seed of Abraham, that the grace of God to usward might abound. In speaking of his ascension to glory it is said, In that he ascended, what is it but that he first descended into the lowest parts of the earth? So in that he has risen from the dead, what is it, or how could it be, except he had first bowed his sacred head in death?

The resurrection of Christ with which the apostle in our text connects the children of God, as having risen with him, must be his resurrection from the dead. He says in the preceding chapter, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath

raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,” (Col. 2:10-14). This same apostle, in writing on the same subject to the Romans, says, “How can we that are dead to sin live any longer t herein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God,” (Rom. 6:2-10).

Now, in the light of these Scriptures, shall we inquire, first, Was Christ buried (or immersed) into death when he died on the cross for the redemption of his people? Second, Were all the seed of Abraham which he took [with] him, and for whose sins he was delivered up, buried with him by that baptism into his death?

Both questions seem to us to be clearly met and settled in what we have copied from the apostle in the foregoing quotations. But in addition, let us accept what further light is given in the Scriptures on this subject.

First. That Christ’s baptism into death was accomplished by his death on the cross is still more fully confirmed by his own application of the figure of baptism. “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and now am I straitened till it be accomplished,” (Luke 12:50). This baptism was prospective, and could not mean his baptism in Jordan by John, for that had been accomplished at the beginning of his public ministry. It was still to come, and he was pained until its fulfillment. It must have been that baptism described by the Psalmist, when he said, “Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy

waves and thy billows are gone over me,” (Ps. 42:7). Also in the sign of the prophet, “For thou hast cast me into the deep, into the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me,” (Jonah 2:3). The ordinance of Christian baptism figuratively sets forth the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, together with the doctrine of salvation, the experience of the saints, and their final resurrection from the dead. All these strikingly impressive figures would be rendered unmeaning to us if inapplicable to the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Second. Were the seed of Abraham, embracing all who are Christ’s, baptized with him into this death? No person of common intelligence, we think, will understand us to inquire if we were all literally and personally put to death with Christ when he suffered on the cross. What we mean is, were we as the seed of Abraham, which he took on him, embodied in him, so that the sins which he bore were our sins; the flesh in which he suffered the just penalty of our guilt was our flesh, or, in other words, was that our flesh against which the wrath of the divine law was poured out? If this question be answered negatively, how shall we understand the express declarations of the Scriptures already quoted?

How, on any other ground, were we buried with him by baptism into his death? Jesus said of the sons of Zebedee, “Ye shall drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,” (Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:38; Luke 12:5). Paul says, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God,” (Gal. 2:19). What! Dead; Paul? When did you die to the law? “I am crucified with Christ.” Paul did not mean that his earthly body was defunct; for he adds, “Nevertheless I live.” But does he mean that his fleshly body is, or was at the time when he made this declaration, animated by the resurrection life and immortality of Christ? Certainly he did not; for lest he should be so understood, he says, “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh” (not the life of the flesh, but that living Christ which was in him) “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” (Gal. 2:20). This death with Christ for him was indispensable to his salvation, that he might live unto God; being redeemed from the body of the sins of his flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, and his relationship to the law of sin and death annulled, and he “dead to the law by the body of Christ,” (Rom

7:4) that he might be married to him that is risen from the dead, and partaker of his immortal resurrection life; that in this new, regenerated state he might bring forth fruit unto God. "If one died for all, then were all dead," (2 Cor. 5:14). And henceforth it is said of all who are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

As we cannot think any of our brethren will dispute the position of the apostle, that the saints were buried with Christ by baptism into death, we will now inquire, were they also raised with him by baptism into life? We say by baptism, for that word signifies not only immersion, or burial, but resurrection, or rising again. No one will deny that Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day; but did he leave those for whom he suffered still under the law, under the curse, and in the dominion of death? Or did he not rather destroy death, and him that had the power of death? The trump of triumph proclaims a victory over death, hell and sin, and loudly heralds forth the triumph of him who has abolished death, and hath brought immortality to light through the gospel. Hence the words of our text have meaning in them. "If ye then be risen with Christ." And those in the context, "And you being dead in your sins," etc., "hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." This accords with the testimony thus stated, "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places;" "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, and the fullness of him that filleth all in all." This fullness of the body of Christ, we are told, he hath quickened from a state of death in trespasses and sins. And let it be observed, this quickening is given by the apostle as exemplifying the mighty power of God in raising Jesus from the dead. There is a deep meaning in the words of 1 Peter 1:3, when read in connection with Paul's testimony in the first and second chapters of Ephesians, showing how "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," (Eph. 2:4-6).

We are not disposed to dispute with brethren in regard to the application of the words washing and regeneration, as used in Matthew 19:28, and Titus 3:5. But certainly, whether these passages refer to it or not, baptism, to our mind, not only implies, figuratively, death, burial and resurrection to newness of life, but also a washing, cleansing and purging, by putting away the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, and also a regeneration or begetting of a new, spiritual and immortal life. If in the flesh and nature of the seed of Abraham Christ died, and that seed was buried with him by baptism into death, it was also quickened and raised up in new, resurrection life by his resurrection. Therefore, as Peter affirms, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom this immortal resurrection life proceeds, hath begotten us by his resurrection. That immortality which came from God the Father, and quickened and raised up Jesus from the dead, entered the body, the church, in the resurrection of Christ, just as sin had entered the posterity of Adam by the transgression of one man. Thus the church of God was begotten by the communication of life from God the Father to the body in which Christ had suffered death. The infallible conception of immortality in the body of flesh in which he suffered, it being the flesh of the seed of Abraham, embracing all who are Christ's, secures with unfailling certainty the spiritual birth, and manifestation of all his members into the life and liberty and perfection of the sons of God, in due time, all in their appropriate order; Christ the first fruits, as the First Born among many brethren, and afterwards them that are Christ's at his coming. The descent from God of this life and immortality to the body of Christ, is figuratively presented to John, thus: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it (the city), and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life," which is quickened and made fruitful by the river of life," (Rev. 22:1,2). "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them towards the former sea, and half of them towards the hinder sea, in summer and in winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One," (Zech. 14:8,9). This resurrection life in Christ, begotten of the Eternal Father, in his resurrection, raises up from the curse and dominion of the law, and from the power of sin and death, all the seed of Abraham, or in other words, all his saints under both dispensations,

before and subsequently to his death and resurrection. And his resurrection life is developed alike in going towards the former and the latter or hinder sea.

Resulting from the begetting of the Father, by the resurrection of Christ, and the conception of the same in his mystical body, like leaven hidden in three measures of meal, until all is leavened, this river flows, broad and deep, excluding all gallant ships and galleys with oars, imparting immortal life, first, in the new birth, by which we receive the first fruits, and finally in the resurrection of the bodies of all the saints from natural to spiritual bodies, from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal bodies, from terrestrial to celestial, and from the image of the earthly to the image of the heavenly Adam. "For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," (Rom. 8:29).

We see no cause of strife or contention on this subject. All sound Old School Baptists believe that the children of God, in the regeneration, are begotten of God the Father, quickened and born by his begetting power by the Spirit, and that our new birth seals and secures to us our final deliverance from all corruption and corruptibility, in a glorious resurrection of our bodies, in which they shall be made spiritual, pure, holy and heavenly, and capacitated for the immortal joys of God's right hand. In a subsequent number, we propose to urge on all the children of God, being the children of the Resurrection, the admonition of our text, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," etc.

## **RISEN WITH CHRIST: THE HIGH VOCATION**

"If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:1-4

Having dwelt somewhat elaborately on the resurrection of our divine Redeemer from the dead, and of that immortality which he brought to light for all his members when he abolished death, and when he,

having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Rising from the dead, he ascended up on high, bearing to the realms of glory the life and immortality of all his members, having obtained eternal redemption for them, is sat down on the right hand of God, angels and principalities being made subject to him. Fully accepted in the courts of glory in his mediatorial work, he forever lives as the Resurrection and Life of his people, all of whom, having part in his resurrection, in him have reached their heavenly places, are presented in him, are in him accepted of the Father; as under the law the whole harvest was accepted in the acceptance of the first fruits, or first ripened sheaf, so his people are in him presented without spot or blemish, and their resurrection, their life and immortality within the veil is hid with him in God, and so perfectly identified with him that when he shall appear they shall also appear with him in glory.

We will in this article attempt to urge upon the consideration of the saints the admonitions of our text as based upon these divine assurances. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." In perusing this subject there are several inquiries suggested requiring to be answered, and among them,

- First, The place or seat which is occupied by our risen and exalted Prince and Savior, on the right hand of God.
- Secondly, The things which are with him, and after which we are to seek, and how they may be distinguished from the things which are on the earth.
- Thirdly, Why we should seek the things which are above, and why we should not seek the things which are on the earth.
- Fourth, How, or in what manner we are instructed to seek the things which are above, by setting our affection on things above, and by repudiating the things which are on the earth, and by mortifying our members which are upon the earth.

First. That our Lord Jesus Christ ascended up into the heaven of eternal glory, where all the glorified saints and holy angels dwell, and where all his children shall ultimately find the consummation of their happiness, the sacred Scriptures do not allow us to doubt. But still the

seat which he now occupies at the right hand of God the Father is the seat of his Mediatorial glory. That seat is upon the throne of his spiritual kingdom. The inspiration of the Holy Ghost has testified through the apostle that God has “raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all,” (Eph. 1:20-23). It is as the Mediatorial Head of the church that he is thus “exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins,” (Acts 5:31). In his eternal Godhead he could not be exalted to any higher glory than that which he eternally possessed. But in his mediatorial relation to his church, he had bowed his heavens and come down; had descended to the lowest parts of the earth; was made flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, had humbled himself; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross, had slumbered in the grave; but now being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, by the immortality of his own indwelling and eternal Godhead, he is made both Lord and Christ. He is as the risen and exalted Savior inaugurated in his throne as King of saints and Priest unto the Most High God, and wears his imperial crown, and sways his sovereign and irresistible sceptre over all principality and power, having all power in heaven and in earth, extending over all flesh, that he may give eternal life unto as many as his Father has given him. God has given us the record of his Son. In that most sacred record we find it written that “the heathen raged, and the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed,” etc. “Yet,” saith God, “have I set my King over his holy hill of Zion, and hath given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and he shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel,” (Read the second Psalm). In his exaltation he ascends up where he was before, to the glory which he had with his Father before the world was made, and is made higher than the heavens. Unto him, as the Son, the Father has said, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath

anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Nor is this all. God hath said to him in the same connection, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and, as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail, (Heb. 1:8-12). But still in all this amazing exaltation, grandeur and supreme glory, he does not leave the precincts of his kingdom; all this indescribable glory is the glory of his kingdom, and the fullness of his mediatorial power. His kingdom being spiritual comprehends all his spiritual subjects in heaven and in earth, as he is from everlasting to everlasting and his throne is forever and ever. Those who are redeemed from the earth and quickened by his spirit are brought from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and sit down in this kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our natural birth develops in us no capacity to see this spiritual kingdom; no human excellence can fit us to enter it: for “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom.” “Flesh and blood cannot inherit it,” (John 3:3; 1 Cor. 15:50). Those who are gathered into it do not leave it when they die. The Savior did not leave it when he ascended up to where he was before. The apostles are still in his kingdom, and still occupy their thrones of judgment. Their flesh may slumber in their graves, but no place can be vacated in the kingdom where the risen and exalted Jesus presides in the throne of his everlasting kingdom. Death shall depose all earthly kings and time sweeps all their thrones and powers away. The elements of nature must be dissolved, and even the natural heavens shall depart. But to the Son of God, and to him only is it said, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever,” (Heb. 1:8).

In this spiritual kingdom are the heavenly places, or the many mansions, to which our exalted Savior has raised his people, and in which he makes them sit, in him. All whom he has redeemed and raised up have in their earthly relations occupied earthly places, legal places, places of pollution, sin, condemnation, wrath and death; but in him who is our Resurrection and our Life, we are raised up from under the law, from guilt, from wrath, from death and from the grave, and with him we now occupy the place of his feet, which he has made glorious, the place where his honor dwelleth; these, in distinction from our places in the flesh and under the law, are truly heavenly places in Christ Jesus. All the vicissitude of the children of God, in being

changed from glory to glory by the Spirit, all our spiritual emotions, enlargements and abasements, in the spiritual life, are heavenly places. In the closet, or in the banqueting house, in songs of praise, in the fellowship of the saints, in communion with God, and in all the order and ordinances of the gospel we find and fill our heavenly places in Christ Jesus now; and when we shall quit this militant state we hope to sit in heavenly places of more unmingled and uninterrupted bliss, and to be perfectly released from all the trials, sorrows, tribulations, doubts and fears to which we are now subject. But what pen shall describe the heavenly places of our final triumphant state, when leaving the streams which now make glad the city of our God, we shall bask in the fullness of immortal joys at the Fountain Head above? It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. Then shall we reach the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord to which we now are pressing forward.

This heavenly kingdom where God has set his King is on the right hand of God. David in spirit saw the Queen, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, brought to the King, all glorious within, with clothing of wrought gold, and shining in raiment of fine needle work, and standing at the right hand of the divine majesty, in gold of Ophir, (Ps.45:7-14). The seat of Christ on the right hand of God shows that all the perfections of eternal deity approve the Mediatorial work and government of our heavenly King, and where he is, there shall his children be.

Secondly. We are to speak of the things which are above, and after which we are exhorted to seek. What things are they? First of all in the order laid down, our Lord has instructed his disciples to seek the kingdom itself, and God's righteousness, and leave it for God, who knoweth all our need, to supply all of earthly comforts that in his wisdom we require. We have shown that the kingdom of God and his righteousness are above, and where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. The imperative command to seek it first shows that with his saints it is to have the precedence of everything else. Worldly cares, necessities, and wants for the body, as to what we shall eat, or drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed, can never be of sufficient importance to justify a disciple of Jesus Christ in neglecting the kingdom and government of our blessed Lord and Master. Therefore our obedience to Christ should always be first and paramount. As

soon as we are born of the Spirit, this charge is upon us. Until we are born of the Spirit, we are destitute of the necessary capacity to seek the kingdom of God; because it is spiritual, and totally invisible to all who are not born again. "Verily, verily," saith Jesus, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The kingdom is spiritual, and all the things which are above in the heavenly places are spiritual, and the Scriptures positively testify that none of the faculties, senses, and avenues of intelligence to the natural understanding of man can possibly know the things of the Spirit. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The things of the Spirit can only be known by revelation of the Spirit. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. 2:9,14)." But as soon as a man is born again, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and all such children shall be taught of God; and God, who has hidden these things from the wise and prudent of mankind, has revealed them unto babes. As soon then as we are born of the Spirit, we are first of all things commanded to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. As the new born babe requires the care, nurture and affection of its mother, so all who are born of the Spirit require the protection, watch care and maternal offices of that Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all. The direction is not to seek some kingdom, or some church, or some religious establishment organized by men, but the kingdom of God. There is no time to spare; not a moment can we delay without disobedience, and disloyalty to our King. The place to serve him is in his kingdom, and that kingdom is his church. He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," (John 14:15). As soon as his love is shed abroad in our hearts, we have the reliable evidence that we are born again, and that it is time to fly to the arms of that Jerusalem which is the mother of all those who, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But beware of her whose house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death; for "Now she is without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner," (Prov. 7:12,27). The kingdom of God differs widely from all other kingdoms, as God's righteousness differs from filthy rags. When you find the kingdom of

God, you will also find his righteousness. His kingdom is where he reigns, where he rules, where his laws, ordinances, doctrine, and order prevails, and no where else. Find his kingdom, and you will find there your best friends and kindred, and there God your Savior reigns. You are not to seek his kingdom and your own righteousness, for they will not agree. Some of the children have feared to take the yoke of Jesus, and obey their Savior's commands, because they are not satisfied with their own righteousness. Poor erring child, that is not the kind you are directed to seek. Could you find as much of your own righteousness as the old Pharisees boasted of, it would do you no good.

“Nothing in your hand you bring  
Simply to his cross you cling.”

Nothing short of God's own righteousness can justify us in his sight; and the more you accumulate of your own to prepare you for his kingdom, the worse off you will be. Cast from you all the filthy rags of your own righteousness, and if you be risen with Jesus, seek his kingdom and his righteousness, and strive to enter in, and to abide within her gates; for Jesus has said, Many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. But, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,” (Rev. 22:14). The things which are above, and which all who are risen with Christ should seek to embrace all spiritual things, the bread of life, the waters of salvation, the light and liberty of the gospel, the fellowship of the saints, the laws, ordinances, and institutions of the house of God, the doctrine, discipline, walk and deportment enjoined upon the saints; these are all spiritual, and all pertain to the kingdom of heaven which is above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Finally, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus are above. And “Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning,” (Jam. 1:17). Abundant encouragement is given to the children of the resurrection to seek those things; for in rising with him, they are partakers of those characteristic marks which belong to and distinguish the heirs of promise from all others, as the blessed of the Lord. They are poor in spirit to whom the kingdom of heaven is given, for it is their Father's good pleasure to give it to them. They are mourners whom God has

promised to comfort. They are the meek who shall inherit the earth. They hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they shall be filled. They are merciful, and they shall obtain mercy. They are peace makers, and shall be called the children of God. They are persecuted and reviled for righteousness sake, but great is their reward in heaven.

To the people thus described by our Lord, he gave the gracious assurance, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened," (Matt. 5:3; 7:7). The things which are above are essential to our comfort, and to God's declarative glory; they are worthy of our highest aspirations; so that to seek them is a duty as well as a privilege to all who are risen with Christ. But those who are not risen with him are still among the dead, and have neither the desire, knowledge, life nor ability to seek; therefore, to them no such command or encouragement is given. Thirdly. Why should we seek those things which are above? Some of the reasons given are these: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," (Col. 3:3). In what sense are we dead? We have not yet laid off the body of our flesh, for we are still subject to the strife and enmity of our fleshly passions, lusts, affections, and the vain desires of our old carnal and depraved nature, and still find a law in our members warring against the law of our mind, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our flesh. If we were delivered from this, and our mortality were already swallowed up of life, we should no longer require to be admonished to mortify our members which are upon the earth, or to crucify the old man with his affections and lusts. When freed from the body of this death, we shall require no exhortations to seek the things which are above.

Still, those who are risen with Christ are dead in the sense of what the apostle is dwelling in the context. They are crucified with Christ. "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him," etc. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are subject to ordinances, which all are to perish with the using," (Col. 2:11,12,20,22). Elsewhere the same apostle has testified that the saints are dead to the law by the body of Christ, and married, and

now under law to him that is risen from the dead; and now as risen with him, we are not to dig up Moses, the dead husband, whom God has buried, nor touch, nor taste, nor handle those ordinances which belonged, in their time, to a worldly sanctuary, as carnal ordinances, which all were to perish with the using. Dead, henceforth and forever to the law, and risen with Christ to a higher and more exalted state, we are above the rudiments of the world, and are to count ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto righteousness. By the circumcision of Christ, the flesh is cut off, and we who are of the circumcision are to worship God in the spirit (not in carnal ordinances), rejoice in Christ Jesus (not in Moses, or the law of carnal commandments represented by him), and have no confidence in the flesh. "Ye are dead," possessing no quickened principle, faculty, or element of our fleshly nature by which it is possible for us to serve God acceptably; for the body is dead because of sin, and is put off by the circumcision of Christ. Without this circumcision we cannot arise with Christ into his spiritual kingdom; for with our flesh we always serve the law of sin; and "This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. 15:50). "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the spirit of Christ dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you," (Rom. 8:8-11). Our flesh has not risen with Christ; it is still flesh, carnal nature, corrupt and mortal, and in it there can nothing good be found; but if in spirit we are risen with Christ, having the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus, as the quickening, resurrection life and spirit of God, then have we the assurance that our mortal bodies shall by that indwelling resurrection spirit be raised up from the dead a spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal body, changed and fashioned like his glorious body. Have we not, on this division of our subject, presented sufficient reasons why we that are dead unto sin should not continue in sin, or we that are dead to the law should not attempt to serve God in the oldness of the letter, or on any legal work-mongrel principles, or why we who are risen with Christ to a higher, holier state should seek those things which are above? It may seem gratuitous and uncalled for to show or attempt to give any further reason why we should obey

the admonitions of the word; it is enough to know that it is enjoined by the authority of our King.

Fourthly. We close this extended article with a few remarks in which we call the attention of the saints to the manner of seeking, as marked out by the apostle. Both affirmatively and negatively, we are instructed as to the course enjoined. Affirmatively, "Set your affections on things above." On the very things which we are commanded to seek; things pertaining to the kingdom and exaltation of Christ, the things of the Spirit, in the enjoyment of which our carnal or fleshly nature cannot participate; cherish an affectionate regard for them; count them your peculiar treasure, more to be desired than choice gold. Bind them to your heart; let not the remembrance of them slip from your mind, or be displaced by the cares, trials, reproaches, crosses or persecutions which may intercept your pathway. Like Moses, choose rather to suffer the afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin; and esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. In setting our affections on Christ and the things of his kingdom, he has said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And we are to love one another with a pure heart fervently, love his courts, the assemblies of his saints, his house of prayer. Preferring Jerusalem above our chief joys. Preferring the society of our kindred in Christ to that of earthly society. Esteem our place in the church of God as more honorable, more sacred, more pleasant, and of infinitely greater worth than thrones of power or records of earthly fame. And with the psalmist, reducing and condensing all our desire in one, let that one thing be that we may dwell in the house of the Lord forever, enquiring in his holy temple.

"Not on things of the earth." If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us. True, we have a nature which is of the world, which has not risen with Christ, and which loves the world, and would allure, captivate and draw us away from God, and from the contemplation of those heavenly things which are above. But these are the vile affections of the flesh; and the love of the Father is not in our flesh. The carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Hence the Christian is admonished to put off the old man, crucify, mortify, and resist all the carnal propensities of our fleshly nature, deny ourselves of all

ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. The things of this life which are needful, we should receive from the hand of God with thanksgiving, and use them in his fear, as not abusing them, knowing that their fashion passeth away. But we may not make idols of them by bestowing our affections on them, so as to neglect our high and holy vocation, or sell any of our birthright privileges in the house of God for their tempting pottage.

How is it with us, brethren? Are we walking according to this divine rule? Are our affections withdrawn, as they should be, from the world and its vanities? Do we never neglect our spiritual privileges to secure some earthly object? Let us heed the admonition of the word, "Forsake our vain delights, and bid the world farewell." Renounce it with its alluring charms and vanities, and see that our affections rest on things which are above.

How desirable the state suggested by our subject. Our affections withdrawn from the earth, our conversation in heaven, swerved by no worldly attraction or allurements, from the pathway of holiness, and saying in our hearts,

"Our joys are all packed up and gone,  
Our eager souls would follow them To our eternal home."

Middletown, N.Y. June 1, 1868.

## **The Sabbath**

Signs of the Times—January 1, 1855.

There is much said at the present day on the subject of a Sabbath day, as being of perpetual obligatory force on all mankind throughout all time. But in what part of the Scriptures they find a precept to that effect we are not informed. They certainly but seldom, if ever, refer us to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue; and we have supposed their reasons for not doing so were obvious.

1. Because we are expressly informed by Moses himself that, that very covenant, or law, was made exclusively with those Israelites who were all of them then present, and alive on the day that the ten

commandments were presented to them from the Mount of God. It was a law which, had not been given even to the patriarchs, (See Deut. 5:1-4).

2. Because the fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given, to observe the seventh, and not the first day of the week, as the Sabbath of their God—because that God had rested from the work of creation on the seventh, and not on the first day of the week.

3. Because the children of Israel were by the fourth commandment required to observe the seventh day altogether differently from the manner in which professed Christians pretend to observe the first day. The children of Israel were to totally abstain from all labor, themselves, their wives, their children, their servants, and even their cattle; no fires were allowed to be kindled, no horses to be harnessed, no meetings to be attended, no Sabbath Schools to be kept, no collections for mission or other purposes, to be taken up on that day.

4. Because the penalty for a transgression of that precept, was altogether different from that inflicted by modern Sabbatarians for a breach of the Sunday laws of our own, or any other lands. That provided in the Jewish law, being death by stoning, and the laws of men only requiring fines and imprisonments.

5. The fourth commandment required those unto whom it was given to labor six days, including the first day, and the Sunday laws of our land forbid our obedience to that part of the fourth commandment which requires us to labor on the first day of the week.

We know of no partial obligation to keep the law. If the Sinai covenant, which was given exclusively to the children of Israel, is binding on the Gentiles to any extent, it must be binding in its full extent. An inspired apostle has settled this question beyond all reasonable dispute, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” (Jam. 2:10). And Paul to the Galatians, 5:3, shows who are debtors to keep the law. He says, “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” But in searching the Scriptures, we can find none who are obligated to obey part of the law, or partly obligated to do the

whole law. "Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law," and they are of course bound to go according to the letter of the commandment. The grand question then is, whether the whole Sinai law is binding on all men, and throughout all time? If so, then all are involved in the curse, and the salvation of any of the human family is impossible. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for all have sinned; and consequently by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God.

The doctrine of redemption is very prominently set forth in the gospel; and Christ has not only redeemed his people from the curse, but also from the dominion of the law; and the apostle has made the emphatic proclamation to the saints, "Ye are no more under the law, but under grace." The inquiry then is reduced to this, How far are we obligated to keep a law that we are not under? When Paul found some of the brethren inclining to the works of the law, he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed on them labor in vain, for they observed days, and months, and times, and years. In his allegory, (Gal. 4:21-27), Paul sets forth the old Sinai covenant, by the person of Hagar, the bond woman, who could not be the mother of a free child. For this Agar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which Jerusalem he affirms, is the mother of all those saints, who, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. In the second chapter to the Colossians, we are informed that Christ has blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took them out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. This language would seem to be plain enough for an ordinary Christian, taught of God. These ordinances of the old covenant were a shadow of things which are realized in the body of Christ, or in the gospel church, which is his body, his flesh and his bones. We trace the shadowy import of the Sinai Sabbath to the body of Christ, or to the gospel church, and there we enter into that rest which was shadowed forth by the legal Sabbaths of the old covenant. The antitypical Sabbath, being found alone in that rest which remaineth for the children of God, and into which all those who, with a

true and vital faith, believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, have entered, is clearly set forth in the New Testament, particularly in the third and fourth chapters to the Hebrews.

This gospel Sabbath we understand to be the whole gospel dispensation; in distinction from the old covenant dispensation, and it begins severally with each believer in Christ, as soon as they truly believe in our Lord Jesus Christ; and are enabled to rest alone on him for their justification before God. We have not the time nor the space necessary to show the analogy which the typical Sabbath of the law bears to the rest which is enjoyed by the saints in the gospel. A very few particulars must for the present suffice, and,

1. The old covenant Sabbath was given exclusively to the circumcised children of Israel, and to no other people; so the gospel Sabbath, or Rest, is given exclusively to the spiritual Israel, who are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

2. The children of the old Sinai covenant were often charged with the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and that sin, with them, consisted in their performing on the seventh day, such labor as was only lawful for them to perform in the six days in which they were commanded to do all their labor. So under the gospel dispensation, the saints, by adhering to the abrogated institutions of the old working dispensation, observing days, and months, and times, and years; or by looking for justification before God by anything short of the blood and righteousness of Christ, do violence to the holy Sabbath of the gospel. As in the types, many of the children of Israel could not enter into rest, because of unbelief, so we find that our doubts and unbelief, which often press us down, render it impossible for us to enter into that rest which remaineth for the children of God. Our own experience teaches us that when we doubt the reality of our interest in Christ, or the application of his promises to us, we are like the troubled ocean that cannot rest: we labor, and toil to do something ourselves, to reinstate ourselves in the favor of the Lord. When we feel cold, we are prone to kindle fires of our own, and to comfort ourselves with sparks of our kindling, and endeavor to walk in the light of our fire; but if we are truly the children of God, we shall for all this lie down in sorrow; for this Sabbath-breaking. No fires were to be kindled by the

Israelites on that day. Nor will the Lord suffer us to warm or enlighten ourselves by any fires that we can make. Christians are commanded to forsake not the assembling of themselves together for the worship of God, and for their mutual edification. To obey the command, suitable times must be appointed for such meetings; the first, or any other day of the week, may be designated, provided that we attach no special sanctity to the time; and the first day of the week is as suitable as any other day. The apostles met frequently on the first day, and also on all the other days of the week, they were daily in the temple praising God, &c. So we conclude that the Christian church is at liberty to make her own appointments, as to time—provided that she allows no man, or set of men, to judge her in regard to the time, and when she makes such appointments, each member is in duty bound to attend the appointment, unless providentially detained.

As Christians we have no right to observe any day religiously in obedience to human legislation; either Sabbaths, first days, or thanksgiving days; because God has forbidden that we should allow any man to judge us in these things. We require no human legislation on the subject. The order and decision of the church is more effectual with the saints than all the pains, penalties and fines, ever imposed by the rulers of the darkness of this world. Let us observe the admonition of the apostle, and “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

The Sabbath of the Jews, required no grace in the heart, no spiritual emotion of the new man, to qualify those to whom it was given, to observe it. Their service was in the oldness of the letter, and theirs was a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances. Any circumcised Jew, whether a believer or an infidel, could abstain from labors on the seventh day, and that was all that was required of them. But the antitypical, or gospel Sabbath, requires faith in Christ; for none but believers can enter into that rest which remains, for the people of God. The hour has is come and the true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. Not only the Scriptures of the New Testament declare it, but the testimony is corroborated by every Christian’s experience. Christians know that they cannot believe only as the Lord gives them faith; and equally well do they know that they cannot rest unless they believe.

When faith, which is of the operation of God, is given, the recipient requires neither the thunder of Sinai, nor the arm of secular legislation, to incline him to keep the Christian Sabbath of gospel rest. The starving soul requires no coercion to incline him to eat, nor does the weary, heavy laden soul require legal enactments to drive him to his rest. As the Sinai Sabbath required the carnal Israelite to abstain totally from servile labor, so the gospel Sabbath requires the spiritual Israelite to cease from his work, and trust, and rest alone on Christ, for his justification and acceptance with God. As the Sabbath-breaker under the law was to be stoned to death, by all the children of Israel, so the legalist who would attempt to drag the ceremonies of the legal dispensation into the gospel church, or to justify himself before God by the works of the law, is to be stoned, (not with stones literally, but with the smooth stones from the brook of gospel truth), by all his brethren, until his legal spirit yields up the ghost.

Those who have no higher conception of a gospel Sabbath than to suppose it consists in the literal observance of one day out of seven, have yet to learn that “Whom the Son makes free, are free indeed.”

## **EPHESIANS 2:8**

*From Signs of the Times—October 15, 1867.*

Please give your views on Ephesians 2:8. “For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

Bell Buckle, Tenn. June 4, 1867.

Reply: —The doctrine of salvation by grace, without any merit or works, conditions of terms to be performed on the part of the saved to procure or secure it, is so clearly stated and affirmed by the Holy Ghost, through this inspired apostle in this epistle, as well as in all that has ever been written by holy men who have written as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, that it cannot be successfully controverted by all the ingenuity of wicked men and devils. The supreme glory of God in the eternal salvation of his chosen people is most gloriously displayed by the sovereign reign of his grace in its complete accomplishment.

The positive declaration, "For by grace are ye saved," is too plain and emphatic to require any explanation. The fifth verse affirms the same truth. "By grace ye are saved." The inquiry arises, not as to how, but who, are saved by grace, and in what sense is it through faith; and the testimony that neither the grace by which, or the faith through which, salvation comes are of those who are saved, but are the gift of God, deserves our special attention.

First. Who are saved by grace? The unequivocal answer to this inquiry is found in the beginning of the epistle, "The saints" which were, at the time this epistle was written, at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus; whether at Ephesus or elsewhere, and at all times. Those who are in Christ Jesus, we are told in the fourth verse of the first chapter, were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and in the tenth verse of this second chapter, that they are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Thus having created and chosen them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, and having before ordained that they should walk in good works, and be holy and without blame before him in love, their faithfulness in Christ Jesus is most clearly established. For if God has chosen them in him before the foundation of the world for this express purpose, that they should be holy and without blame; and if God has before ordained that they shall walk in good works; how can it possibly be otherwise than they should be the faithful in Christ Jesus, as stated in the identification of those to whom our text is addressed?

The first inquiry, Who are saved? being settled beyond all doubt, by the plain and unmistakable testimony given above, which cannot possibly admit of any other construction than that it embraces all who were chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and before ordained that they shall walk in good works, and be holy and without blame before the heart-searching and rein-trying God. And consequently, all who are so chosen and ordained of God are saved by grace, and not by anything that is in any sense of themselves; we have next to consider:

Second. In what sense we are to understand that this salvation by grace is through faith.

1. The apostle Paul, in all his epistles, distinguished the two dispensations of law and gospel, the former as of works, and the latter as of faith. Hence we are to understand that salvation by grace comes to us through the gospel, and not through the law. For if a law had been given that could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law. But such could not be the case; for by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God, or be holy and without blame before him in love. "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect; because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed," etc.

2. Faith is defined by the Spirit of inspiration, as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Heb. 11:1). The eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in himself before the world began, is invisible to the sight or understanding of natural man; even those who were embraced in the electing purpose and predestination of God were by nature children of wrath even as others, and as destitute of ability to see, feel, or know, what God had laid up in store for them as any other of mankind; and the knowledge of their salvation comes to them through faith; by revelation of the Spirit to their faith; and their faith is, as we shall presently show, not of themselves, it is the gift of God. Personally and experimentally, no man can have a knowledge of his calling and election of God until he is born of that Spirit whose fruit is faith. "All men have not faith," neither has any man faith until it is given to him; for our text declares that it is the "gift of God." Jesus Christ is the Author and finisher of it, and it is the faith of the Son of God. Therefore it is very apparent to those who have the faith of Jesus Christ, that their salvation by grace is through faith, but:

3. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." The hope of the gospel received by or through faith, is thus stated: —"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," (Titus 1:2). In the purpose, predestination and promise of God, the salvation by grace of all his chosen people in Christ was secure and perfect

from everlasting, and that eternal grace which reigned in our salvation was given to us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, according as God had chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world: "According to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with a 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, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," (2 Tim. 1:8-10). This manifestation is made to and through the faith of the Son of God. When Christ appeared, and abolished death by his own death, or "through death destroyed him that had the power of death," and rising from the dead brought life and immortality to light, he finished transgression and made an end of sin for all his people. This he came to do, and his name was called Jesus because he should save his people from their sins. He put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself. He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; and we are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Having thus saved us according to God's own purpose and grace which was given us in him before the world began, we are, and shall be, called with a holy calling in due time, according to the same purpose and grace. This salvation was finished and complete according to God's own purpose and grace when Jesus rose from the dead and brought our life and immortality to light in his resurrection life. The faith of the Son of God, when his soul was made an offering for sin, did see his seed, and prolonged his days, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands (Isa. 53.10). Through the same faith of the Son of God in his members, the saving virtue of his blood and righteousness was anticipated, applied, and savingly received by Abel, Abraham, and all the Old Testament saints; and through the same faith of the Son of God all the redeemed of the Lord, under the present dispensation have, do, or shall receive a knowledge of this salvation, and they shall all know and confess that it is wholly of grace, through faith, and in no sense, in any wise or measure of themselves. "It is the gift of God;" which it could not be if obtained as a reward of merit, or in consideration of anything done by us. For the apostle testifies, that if it be by works, then it is no more by grace; and if by grace, then it is no more by works. It cannot possibly be of both,

or partly of grace and partly of works. We are not left to guess on which of these two opposites our salvation rests; for we are so plainly told that it is of the one, and that it is not of the other. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Infidel Arminians (we say infidel, because none who believe what God has said can be Arminians) in their desperate effort to pervert this Scripture, say that the grace by which we are saved is of God, but the faith through which we receive it is of ourselves; and that by faith as a condition, we may obtain the grace, and so secure the salvation; and this heaven daring logic finds a ready market in our guilty world. But suppose their logic good, would it not follow that if we procured the grace by our faith, that the whole, grace, faith and salvation would all be of ourselves, and not the gift of God? If, as they affirm, God has offered this salvation on certain terms to everybody, and some comply with the terms and are saved, and others reject the terms and perish; then the declaration of our text would be falsified, and men who complied with the terms would have right to boast over those who rejected them. And would it not further prove that neither the grace nor the faith, nor even the blood of Christ, saved anybody? If the salvation of sinners depends on what they do to obtain it, then the apostle is found a false witness of God to us. But the Scriptures abundantly testify that the grace by which the saints are saved is the grace of God; therefore it is not of ourselves; and the faith through which we are saved is the faith of the Son of God, and the fruit of the Spirit, it therefore cannot be of ourselves. It is the gift of God. This grace by which we are saved, as we have proved by 1 Timothy 1:9, was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. And this faith through which we are saved is the faith of Jesus Christ, and fruit of his Spirit by which we are quickened and born again; and that it is through the faith of Jesus Christ that we receive the salvation which is by grace, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," (1 Pet. 1:9).

In conclusion, let us review the array of the apostle's testimony in its connection. God the Father 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. This Christ in whom God has given all spiritual blessings, God has raised up from the dead, and hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And you, the body of Christ, hath he quickened; for he is the life of his whole body—and he filleth all, in all the members of that body. So in his resurrection, he has brought life and immortality to light, and vitalized, or redeemed from death, the ministration of the law; and quickened, and raised them up together, and made them sit together in the heavenly places in him. That in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Thus the faith of Jesus Christ, through which salvation comes, looking down the dim vista of ages to come, holds in view all the millions of his redeemed, whom he has redeemed from death, and of whom he is the resurrection, and the life, although they are in themselves dead in sins. In the ages to come he will shew, exhibit, bring to light, all the members of that body over which God has given him to preside, and call them all by his grace, deliver them experimentally from sin, and bring them into the glorious light of the gospel; and cause them all to come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. The faith through which salvation by grace is received, holds the certain ultimate gathering of all things which are in heaven, or in earth, and down to the end of time, even in him.

We confidently believe no quickened child of God can hate or resist this doctrine of salvation by grace. Some may fail to understand it; but so far as it is opened to their understanding they are obliged to love it, and to rejoice in it. But the trouble is with many, if not all, to know that they are embraced in this great salvation. That assurance and consolation they can only receive through faith. When their faith prevails above their fears, then they set to their seal that God is true; and then they can and do rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. As the carnal Israelites could not enter into rest, because of unbelief, so when darkness and doubts, and unbelief from our fleshly nature prevails over our mind, we labor and toil through wearisome nights through which we pass; but when the eyes of our understanding are enlightened that we may know what is the hope of

his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in his saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead; then, believing we rejoice, and enter into rest.

## **Entering Rest**

*From Signs of the Times—April 15, 1869.*

Reply to Sister Walker, on Hebrews 4:1 and 2.

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” Hebrews 4:1,2.

The inspired writer in comparing the typical with the gospel dispensation, shows that the former, although a carnal people, having but a worldly sanctuary, were with their ordinances and service figurative, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very [or exact] image of the things to which they pointed, could never make, with their perpetual sacrifices, the comers to their altars perfect; but still they bore a striking typical resemblance to the things which they prefigured.

Israel under the first covenant were typical of the spiritual Israel, whose circumcision is not outward in their flesh, but inward, in their hearts, not made with hands, but in the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God. Their consecration as the people of God, chosen in the flesh of Abraham, and heirs of the promised rest, in the land of Canaan, was beautifully emblematic of the spiritual seed of Christ, which were chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, and in their relation to him, heirs of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that cannot fade away. In all that is

written of the carnal Israel, something may be found pointing to corresponding realities in the spiritual, or anti-typical Israel under the new covenant dispensation. Their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and their wearisome journey through the wilderness, and their final rest in the land of Canaan, with their constant inclination to murmur, and rebel against God, and the judgments visited upon them for their infidelity and idolatry, all foreshadowed the waywardness of the children of God under the gospel dispensation. The failure of the unbelieving Israelites whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, to enter and rest in the promised land of Canaan, is urged as an admonition to the people of God, under the gospel dispensation, to “labor to enter into rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

The rest prefigured by the land of Canaan, and by the Jewish sabbaths, is not, as some have supposed, the state of ultimate happiness which awaits the saints in the consummation of glory, for that ultimatum cannot be dependent in any degree upon contingencies of any kind. Christ has engaged by irrevocable decree to raise up at the last day, to that divine abode, all that his Father has given him. Canaan could not prefigure such a state of uninterrupted blessedness; for there was much fighting, and many sore conflicts to be endured in that land; neither could the Jewish sabbaths, for they were often desecrated, subjecting those who violated them to pains and penalties, very unlike the perfect security of the saints in glory. But we are informed in the connection of our subject that those times and places of rest under the old covenant, pointed to and typified the rest which remains under the gospel dispensation to the people of God, into which they who believe have entered.

The argument of the inspired writer of our text is that in the type, the Lord swore in his wrath that the unbelieving Israelites should not enter into his rest, so that they could not enter in because of unbelief; thus representing that the rest which is enjoined in the gospel cannot possibly be entered or enjoyed in the absence of faith. As none but those who are born of God have, or possibly can have that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit, none but they can possibly know experimentally anything of spiritual or gospel rest. And even the saints can only enjoy it when their faith predominates over the infidelity of their nature. On this very account the admonition comes to the saints, —to those holy brethren who are partakers of the

heavenly calling, to “fear, lest a promise being left them, of entering into his rest, any of them should seem to come short of it.”

His rest, or the rest which God has promised to his people, is said to be glorious. Not only is it a respite from labor and bondage, but a confident reliance on Christ, as a full and sufficient Savior, on his atoning blood for the remission of our sins, on his perfect righteousness for our justification before God; his Spirit bestowed on us in our new birth, to qualify us to appreciate and enjoy spiritual things; a firm reliance on his promises, and a complete cessation from all our own legal works, and legal thoughts. Such a rest is promised to the people of God, and that promise is left on record for them. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,” (Matthew 11:28,29). While the wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, our Lord giveth his beloved rest. That this rest is provided for the people of God, and that the promise of entering it is left for the comfort of the people of God, is certain. Why then are we admonished to fear lest those unto whom it is promised should seem to come short of it? Every child of God while in the flesh knows what this liability means. Such is the nature of the rest, that it is only entered and enjoyed when and while we believe. Whenever our doubts and fears prevail, we are tossed with tempest, and not comforted; labor, toil and unrest, weariness, fainting and distress will certainly come upon us. How can we rest upon a promise which faith does lay hold on and appropriate to us? God gave a promise of rest in the land of Canaan to the Hebrews, but it was seldom they relied on that promise while in the wilderness. When God made for them a wondrous pathway through the Red Sea, or displayed some wonderful power in their deliverance, they were for the moment satisfied that God would fulfill his promises; but when their way was intercepted by dangers and difficulties, they invariably murmured and said that they were brought into the wilderness to die. How very like the murmuring tribes are we, when by some signal display of God’s delivering power, our faith rises above our fears, we feel strong in the Lord, and confess how slow of heart we have been to believe. Yet while believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Then we find the place where he feeds, and where he causes his flock to rest at noon. But as soon as the gathering clouds appear, and hide

the sun from our sight, we recall our doubts and fears, and sometimes even doubt that we have ever seen the sun, or known its light. Do we not at such times seem to come short of the promised rest?

The admonition, "Let us therefore fear," is not that we should cherish doubts and nurse our unbelief; but resist them; for it is said in verse 11, "Let us labor therefore to enter into rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The example referred to is that of the carnal Hebrews in the type; they could not enter into Canaan because of unbelief. Nor can we enter into our spiritual rest while we cherish our doubts and fears. It is impossible for us to rest, only in a confident unwavering reliance on our God. Whether the people of God enjoy it or not, that rest remaineth for them. Do any of the tried and tempted, doubting, fearing, trembling saints enquire how they are to labor to enter into it? To such we say, it is not by searching for some good thing in your flesh, or fleshly nature; for Paul himself could not find it there. Not by looking to Mount Sinai; for if so much as a beast should touch that mountain it must die. The law is a ministration of death. Not by making a pilgrimage to the empty sepulchre of the dear Redeemer; you will not find him there; for he has risen. Seek not for the living among the dead. Our glorious Leader has given us directions. He says, "Come unto me." Come away from Sinai, come away from yourself, come away from everything else. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. To perform such labor as this, you not only need to have life, but he who calls you unto him commands you to take on you his yoke. You cannot rest under the yoke of bondage which entangled the Galatian saints; for no yoke but that of Jesus is easy, no burden but his is light. How can you labor to advantage unless you put on his yoke? And when in his yoke, equally yoked with believers, you have confessed your allegiance to him, then "learn of him." He will teach you as never man taught. He is meek, and will teach you to be meek; he is lowly, and will teach you lessons of humility; and in that meek and lowly spirit which you learn of Jesus, as God is true, you shall find rest to your soul.

Now remember all that faith which is indispensable to gospel rest is of God; it is the faith of the Son of God, and the fruit of his Spirit of which you are born again, and without which it is impossible to please God. And all that infidelity, unbelief, doubts, fears and lack of

confidence which disturbs, disquiets and distresses you, is of your own carnal nature. When faith lifts up her eyes to the eternal hills, joy, peace and rest possesses your heart; you forget yourself, lost in the contemplation of eternal things, and like Paul when elevated to the third heaven, you are so perfectly stripped of all selfishness that you are unconscious of having a body, or whether in it or not you cannot tell. But when doubts and unbelief prevail, then you know where the body is, and you begin to worry and fret about yourself. The way of salvation by grace looks lovely and beautiful, but, O, says old self, how do I know that I have any interest in it? What is that to thee? Faith leaves that all with the Lord; and we venture the assertion that no child of Grace ever entered into gospel rest, except when his faith was sufficiently strong to leave all personal interest with God. Faith says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," (Isa. 26:3, 4).

When our confidence in God is firm and unshaken, we rest in that confidence. But when we doubt and fear, and even dispute all that he has ever done for us, we become restless and comfortless. In our firm reliance on God, on his promises, on his work that he has wrought in us, we sweetly and peacefully rest; but when we are tempted to distrust in God, and indulge our doubts and fears, we seem to come short of that rest. And when we consider the strong and constant tendency of our carnal minds to doubt and dispute what God has said and what he has done, do we not find that we have reason to fear that our rest will be broken? "Let us therefore fear" such insidious and treacherous propensities of our carnal or fleshly minds. These are what the word admonishes us to fear, for these are what invade, disturb and prevent our rest, so that although we have the promise and oath of God who cannot lie, to rest upon, we seem to come short, and do indeed often come far short of that rest which such gracious promises are sufficient to secure.

"For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." To them the promise of temporal rest was preached; and the preaching of the gracious promises of God is gospel preaching; but gospel preaching cannot bring rest and assurance to those who do not believe. The Hebrews could not be profited by the preaching of the promises when they had no faith in them, and did not believe them; they were not

mixed with faith in them. It is even so with Christians now under the gospel dispensation. Unless we have faith and that faith predominating over our doubts, we cannot be profited in a way of rest when we hear the gospel preached. We will ask the doubting, fearing, trembling Christian, how has it been with you? You have heard the promises preached, they have seemed great and precious. Did they bring you rest? O no. Why? Because I could not believe they were for me. Well then you could not enter into rest, because of unbelief. You saw that they were blessed provisions for somebody, and longed to be that somebody. So instead of entering into rest, you seemed to come short of it. Can you find any other reason why you could not rest in the preached word, but your lack of faith and confidence to appropriate its consolation to your own case? The promise, you heard preached to the weary and heavy laden, and you were weary and heavy laden; but you did not feel satisfied that it was for you. It was preached to all who have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches; you had an ear to hear it preached to the churches, —you saw and were fully satisfied that it was for the churches of the saints; but your unbelief told you that it was not for you, and so you failed to rest upon it, or to be comforted by it, because of your unbelief. The promises to the carnal Israelites, which were typical of the gospel, did not profit that carnal people, because they had no faith to believe them, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness—and they entered not into the goodly land of rest. And have we not reason to fear there are thousands of God's dear children, who are born of the Spirit, who love the truth, who have an ear to hear, and who desire above all things to be numbered among, and in fellowship with the children of God, whose mortal bodies fall in the wilderness, without ever entering into the church in her gospel organization? Not so; not because the laws and order of the kingdom of Christ forbids them; not because they do not love her gates, and earnestly long for the milk and honey which forever flows within her sacred borders; but simply because they listen to and are swayed by the infidelity of their own carnal minds, and reject the testimony of God. To all such a promise is surely left of entering into his rest; and although we see them hugging their chains and fetters, and, like Rachel, refusing to be comforted, still the promise is none the less unto them, and to their children, and unto all them which are afar off; yet they seem to come short of it. That is, of resting upon it, by entering in through the gates into the city, where they may have right to the tree of life, but continue to

remain without among the dogs and sorcerers, and other bad companions. But the enquiry may be, what is to become of them? We answer, although their unbelief may prevent them from the enjoyment of rest, while here in the flesh, and deprive them of the communion of the church of God, so far at least as to seem to come short of it, still their unbelief cannot make the promises of God of none effect. Notwithstanding all their shortcomings, their spiritual and immortal life is hid with Christ in God. Into the promised rest which their unbelief has disqualified them for the enjoyment while here below, they shall be brought when Christ our Lord in fulfillment of his gracious pledge shall raise them up at the last day.

We would not confine the application of the admonition of our subject to those timid, trembling, doubting children of our God, whose unbelieving doubts and fears prevail to keep them from the bosom of the church, and from the enjoyment of the rest into which believers have entered; for there are very many who have walked for many years in the fellowship of the churches, and who have often witnessed the sweet comfort of resting confidentially and steadfastly on the promises of the gospel, who at times are driven by their doubts, fears and unbelief from their resting place, and are tossed with tempests and not comforted. Their faith is sharply contested by their fears and unbelief; and at all such times they truly seem to come short of that rest which remaineth for the people of God. And they learn by experience that rest arises with the triumphs of their faith and confiding reliance on the God of their salvation, and declines with the prevalence of their doubts and fears.

Before we close this article, we will remark, that although there is no virtue in doubts and fears, no child of God while in the flesh is altogether free from them; nor is it possible that any but the heaven-born should ever be annoyed with such as we have described. They are the muddy streams which flow unbidden from our carnal nature, and war against the spirit of holiness which God has given to us. They are often excited by the tempter, and sometimes the saints are left to their buffetings, as a wholesome chastisement for our follies, or for the trial of our faith; but from whatever cause they may come, they disturb our repose, and disquiet and trouble the saints. But who ever heard of a hypocrite or unquickened person being troubled in this way? Should we meet with any who have long professed discipleship

to Christ, who are strangers to the annoyance of doubts and fears, we could repose no confidence in their profession; and yet because we are troubled with them, what bitter things we write against ourselves.

We are to strive to enter into rest, by fighting valiantly the fight of faith, making war against our unbelief. "To you who are troubled," the apostle says, "rest with us." The apostles rested in God, and not in themselves. The direction of God is, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you. "Trust in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion that cannot be moved, but abideth forever." Do you believe what God the Lord hath spoken, that he rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky? Do you believe that "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms?"

"Then let the earth's old pillars shake,  
And all the wheels of nature break,  
Our steadfast souls shall fear no more,  
Than solid rocks when billows roar."

## **THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS**

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..," (Isa. 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," (2 Thess. 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,," (Eph. 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,” (Rom. 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,” (Deut. 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?,” (Num. 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,” (Isa. 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” 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,” (Ps. 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," (Isa. 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, (Gen. 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, (2 Thess. 2:11). God said by the mouth of Isaiah, that He would “choose their delusions,” (Isa. 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 our 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. Pre-destination 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 verily 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,” (Heb. 1:1; 1 Pet. 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," (Rom. 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," (Eph. 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,” (Jer. 31; Matt. 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.

## **February 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?” (Isa. 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," (Rev. 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," (Eph. 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 Ishmaelitish 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 (Gen. 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," (Ps. 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," (Dan. 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,” (Rom. 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,” (2 Thess. 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.