

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 unfailing 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

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 Ishmaelitic merchants to intercept their wicked designs, or with his being sold to Potiphar, nor the strange course of Potiphar's wife, or the dreams of the butler and baker, who were fellow prisoners with Joseph? But we confess we cannot conceive how anything can be predestinated unless all things are. In regard to both the cases referred to, we are informed that God did control all the events. Peter, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, charged upon the Jews the murder of our Redeemer, in these words, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain," (Acts

2:23). Again, "For of a truth, against Thy holy child, Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done," (Acts 4:27,28). In regard to the case of Joseph, God had made known to his great-grandfather Abraham, His control over this matter, and that the children of Israel should sojourn in Egypt, and be entreated evil for the space of four hundred years (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.