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The Predestinarian Business Office  
% Grady E. Dearman  
206 Opal Drive  
Laurel, MS 39440

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Grady E. Dearman  
206 Opal Drive  
Laurel, MS 39440

Woodrow W. Hudson  
208 Fredrick Street  
Bastrop, LA 71220

Stanley C. Phillips  
Route 4, Box 157  
Quitman, MS 39355

## ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES

By Elder S.A. Bradshaw, 1957

*(Elder S.A. Bradshaw followed his father in the ministry, and served the churches of the Little Zion until he was infirmed at the age of 82. Annually, it was his custom to send letters to the members of his flock. The following is such, written December 22, 1957. We thought it very appropriate to share it much more widely than it was in his lifetime. - Editors)*

To my brethren in hope: I greet you this morning, believing still, in the God who created the heavens and the earth. the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our only salvation. I would that I could express my true thankfulness to Him without variance, but being in the flesh (which contains all the weakness of man) I am constrained to confine all desires in a hope; which hope is greater than all the world, in that it reaches beyond all the sorrows, trials, and tribulations of this life unto the holiness of our God.

Being mindful of my continued weakness (which is ever present with me) I am made to wonder Oh! so often, "Lord am I one of your little ones whom you have loved with an everlasting love?" knowing of a truth, surely, I have been wicked all the days of my life: which brings to mind the Scripture that asks the question: "What is man that God should be mindful of him?" I think I can truly say, as Paul did, that in me (that is in my flesh) dwells no good thing — and when I would do good evil is present with me."

At this season of the year it appears that more sadness comes my way that at any other part of the year; seeing and believing, as I do, that Jesus is Lord of EVERY DAY, even the Sabbath. Then, seeing the WORLD blooming forth with its GREAT SHOW of brilliancy:

many with PRETENDING hearts attaining to the heights of HYPOCRISY; making a great outward SHOW, yet in the heart as RAVENING WOLVES; makes us think of the Scriptures which speak of this day when men will wax worse and worse until the coming of the Lord.

One thing I want to mention in this: (for which I hope that all of our thankfulness and praise is to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and that God's continued mercy has kept us, as a militant church, from the entanglements of the world) that we should be in peace with one another and our sister churches. We freely admit that at times the prospects for continued peace looked gloomy, (which no doubt was for our good) that our confidence might not be in ourselves, but in Him who rules and controls all things. None of us can claim any credit for ourselves, for it is God that works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Therefore, it is good that we give Him all the honor and the glory.

Now to speak something concerning the signs of the times: I think it good that we should mention some of the prophecies which are fulfilled in our midst today. 1st, We read in the Old Testament that there will come a time when there will be a famine of the WORD and at which time men will go far and near seeking to hear the word, but will not hear it. This time, to me, seems to be at hand; since, in my opinion, there are only a very few that are preaching, to please God and not to please men. Too, it is true, that, according to the Scripture, there must come a falling away, which also is much in evidence today. Upwards of 18 or 20 years ago, I was received with open arms by nearly all the adjacent associations called by our faith and name. But, today there is only one that receives me; and it feels to be a part of us (for which I hope

that I am thankful to our Lord). Now I will ask you, for fear that I have overlooked some vital point: Have I departed in any way from declaring the same truth that I did 20 years ago, or have I failed to contend for the true order of the Church as I did 20 years ago? If I have, I am ignorant of my departure. I don't think that I have. Neither do I believe that of myself I have kept the faith; but God, according to His own purpose and grace and for His name's sake, has kept.

Now brethren, as we have mentioned touching our experience, the signs of the times, etc.: (the Lord willing) I desire to write in part concerning the love and mercy of God toward His people.

2nd., We believe, that God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, which constitute the Godhead, did enter into a covenant before the world came into existence, and that God's Holy will was to be carried out in every thing, even to the actions of His Son and the Holy Ghost. For Jesus said "*I came not to do mine own will, but the will of the Father that sent me.*" And I am confident that the will of God is being carried out by every creature that He created, not in the righteousness which is by the creature, but rather by the righteousness which is in the purpose of God, for which it (the creature) was created; which shows forth our belief that God has a purpose in every thing which He did create. Now, that His purpose was with Him and in Him before the world was brought into existence, (Eph. 1:4-6) stands to reason; that He having all power both in heaven and in earth sufficient to speak, and the things done were put into effect according to that which He predetermined coincident with that which He purposed: the evidence made manifest in the death, burial and resurrection of his only begotten Son.

Not only did the coming into the world of His only begotten Son manifest his predetermination, but also His predestination to the end that all things which He foresaw might come to pass in the specified time which His foreknowledge did designate. So to us, the events of the world which are taking place today are nothing more than that which He did decree in His foreknowledge before the world was made.

Now, being established in the superiority of God in every thing; believing that “he doeth his will in heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth”: we most surely believe in the election of his people, who were chosen in Christ before man was formed from the dust of the earth. Not only chosen, but also predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, who did stand, as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world — a perfect offering for sin for those who were given to Him: the church of the first-born, even Christ’s body; of which, you little children, have become a part: His workmanship created in Christ, whereby you are the happy recipients of His love. You now stand before God in love, being fully justified, not by your accepting Him or rejecting HIM, but rather through the tender mercy of our God who has called you and qualified you through His Spirit IN you, giving you power to become the sons of God.

Now being sons of God, you are no longer alienated from God, but drawn nigh by the blood of Christ whose body bore the sins of His people even in death that they would never-more be remembered against them. Therefore, let us rejoice that our hope sustains a part with those in the Lord; and that our faith is grounded upon the true principles of the gospel: which throws light upon those things which are above, even to the cleansing

of our mortal bodies from the isms and schisms of the world.

Dear brethren, knowing as I do, that life is just a span, and that I have already reached three score and ten years — it brings to mind my constant care for you: praying, I hope in the Spirit, for you daily and believing that God will provide for you unto the coming of our Lord. Now in conclusion, I wish to admonish you in the Lord to hold fast to that which is good, ever looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith. And bear in mind, that God has never left Himself without a witness. I desire a continued interest in your prayers, through which we have an advocate with the Father, made so by our Mediator Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Your brother in hope,  
S.A. Bradshaw

### **THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE CLEARED FROM LICENTIOUSNESS**

By John Gill, Dec. 28, 1737

1. The doctrine of God’s everlasting and unchangeable love to His elect, in every state and condition and circumstance of life into which they come.

This is no ways contrary to the purity and holiness of the divine nature; for though He loves the persons of His people, and delights in them as considered in Christ, He takes no delight in their sins; sin is the abominable thing He hates; He is of purer eyes than to behold it with approbation and delight; *He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with him:* nor does He encourage them in sin; or connive at it, but rebukes and chastises them for it in a fatherly way; though at the same time He does not take away His loving-kindness from them; for He takes pleasure in their persons, though He

bears a displeasure to their sins; nor does this doctrine in the least lead men to sin, but on the contrary, most strongly engages to the love of God, and a cheerful obedience to Him. His love to them indeed does not arise from their love to Him, it being prior to theirs; but then they *love Him because He first loved them*; (John 4:19) and this love in them to Him, constrains them to a willing obedience; when their hearts are *enlarged* with it, then do they run with alacrity the ways of His commandments; when this loving-kindness of God in choosing them in Christ, redeeming them by His blood, and calling them by His grace is before their eyes, and they have a sense of it upon their hearts, they *walk in His truth*; (Psa. 119:32;26:3) in the truth of His Gospel, and have their conversations as become it. This love, according as it is shed abroad in their hearts, *cast out fear*, and influences them to serve the Lord *without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives*. (I John 4:18) What can lay a man under a greater obligation to love the Lord, fear and obey Him, than this consideration, that He loved him when he had no love in his heart to Him, nay was an enemy to Him; and that His thoughts were concerned about his everlasting salvation, when he had no thoughts of God, nor any for himself? Such a consideration as this, must work much more powerfully upon him, as it must upon any ingenuous mind, than such a one as this: that the Lord began to love him and continued to do so, because he loved Him and was obedient to him; and would continue to do so as long, and no longer! That is the purest obedience that is influenced by love; it is the obedience of a child, and not of a slave; and must be the most acceptable unto God; nay, there is no other service that **IS** acceptable to Him, but what springs from love influenced

by His own.

2. The doctrine of the eternal, personal election of some of mankind unto everlasting salvation.

God works indeed are not the CAUSE of God's act of election: *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*: (Rom. 9:11-13) Nothing that is temporal can be the cause of that which is eternal; nor the will of man, nor any thing done by it, be the cause of the will of God; but yet good works are what *God has fore-ordained*, that His chosen people *should walk in them*. (Eph. 2:10) Holiness is a means that is FIXED in election, and an end that is secured by it. All those who from the beginning, from everlasting, are chosen unto salvation by Christ, are chosen to it *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*; (II Thess. 2:13) all that are *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, are so *through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ*; (I Peter 1:2) which sanctification is as INFALLIBLY secured, as salvation itself; for though men are not chosen because they were, yet they are, *that they should be holy*; (Eph. 1:5) and in consequence of electing grace become so through the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God. Election is the source and spring of all true and real holiness. There would not have been such a thing as holiness in the world, since the fall of Adam, had it not been for electing grace; *except the Lord had left a seed, and reserved a remnant for himself, according to the election of grace*, the world had been as Sodom and as Gomorrah; And so it is, where

there are no instances of this grace. Strange then, that this innocent doctrine, so friendly to holiness and good works, should be thought to open a door to licentiousness! Besides, holiness of heart and life is an evidence of election; the internal grace of sanctification is an evidence, being a fruit of it to the person himself: *Knowing, brethren, says the apostle, your election of God; for our Gospel came not unto you in word ONLY, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.* (I Thess 1:4,5)

External holiness, or that which appears in the outward conversation, is the evidence of election to others. hence that advice is given to the saints, to *give diligence to make their calling and election sure;* (II Peter 1:10) that is by good works, as in some copies it is read, and as the sense requires; since both calling and election are to be made sure by some third thing. Not that they can be made surer in themselves, or to the believer, than they are; but a more sure and certain evidence may be given of them to others. Nor does any thing, nor can any thing more powerfully engage men to holiness and good works, and to honor and glorify God that way, than the consideration of this: that they are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that they should shew forth the praise of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.* (I Peter 2:9)

3. The doctrine of the absoluteness and unconditionality of the covenant of grace, is far from being a licentious one.

It is true indeed, that the good works of men do not put them into this covenant, nor their evil works, their transgressions and sins, turn them out of it, who are in it; yet this does not suppose that God overlooks and connives at the sins of His people; since it is expressly

said, and it is a part of this covenant, *If His children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*" (Psa. 89:30-34) Besides, nothing more fully provides both for internal and external holiness, than the covenant of grace; and that by the most absolute and unconditional promises: it provides for internal holiness, by such promises as these; *"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh:"* (Ezek. 36:25,26) And in another place, *"I will put my law in their INWARD parts, and write it in their hearts."* (Jer. 3 1:33) It provides for external holiness, and that in the most EFFECTUAL manner; since God in it promises, saying, *"I will PUT my Spirit WITHIN you, and CAUSE you to walk in my statutes; and YE SHALL KEEP my judgments and DO THEM."* (Ezek. 36:27) Nor is there any thing under the influence of divine grace that more powerfully operates upon, and stirs up the desires of the saints, their care, diligence, and industry to discharge their duty, than the ABSOLUTE and UNCONDITIONAL promises of grace; such as these: *"As God hath said, I will dwell IN them, and walk IN them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty. Wherefore, says the Apostle, having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse*

*ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" (II Cor. 6:16,18; and 7:1) Add to all this, that God in the covenant of grace provides in an absolute and unconditional way for the saints final perseverance in faith and holiness; saying, *"I will PUT my fear in their hearts, that they SHALL NOT DEPART from me."* (Jeremiah 32:40)

4. The doctrine of particular redemption by Christ, is free from any imputation of libertinism. It is indeed a redemption FROM the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law; but does NOT exempt from obedience to it, as it is in the hands of Christ; for saints are still *"under the law to Christ;"* (I Cor. 9:21) nor do any more delight in the law of God after the inward man, or more cheerfully serve it with their mind, than those who are most sensible, that they are become dead unto it, and delivered from it by the blood of Christ. Redemption is a DELIVERANCE FROM SIN, from all sin, original and actual; and that not only from the guilt of sin, and the punishment due unto it: but in consequence of redeeming grace, the redeemed ones are DELIVERED from the DOMINION and GOVERNING POWER of sin, and at last from the being of it. Christ saves His people from their sins; lie does NOT indulge them in them; the Deliverer that *"comes out of Zion, turns away ungodliness from Jacob."* *Strange!* that a redemption from a vain conversation should ever be an encouragement to one; or that a person's being ransomed out of the hands of Satan, and taken as a prey out of the hands of the mighty, should be an argument with him to give up himself to him and his service; or can be thought to have any tendency to engage him in a state of bondage to him, to be led as a captive by him at his will! Besides, the great

end of Christ's giving Himself for any of the sons of men, is, *"that He might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS."* (Titus 2:14) Nor does anything lay such an obligation upon men to *glorify God with their body and spirit* as the consideration of this, that they *are not their own, but are bought with a price*, even the precious blood of Christ; nor can any thing like the love of Christ, the redeeming love of Christ, constrain men to obedience, *to live not unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.* (II Cor. 5:14,15)

The doctrine of Christ's bearing our sins, and making satisfaction for them to the justice of God, is another pure and holy doctrine: For though Christ has borne all the sins of His people, all the guilt and filth of them, and all the punishment due unto them; has taken all away, for His blood cleanseth from all sin; it removes all this is in sin, and belongs to it; yet this gives no encouragement to sin; for one end of Christ's bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, was, *"that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness."* (I Peter 2:24)

Though Christ as a priest has satisfied justice, by fulfilling the law, yielding perfect obedience to its precepts, and bearing the whole penalty of it; yet this does not free those for whom He has made satisfaction from the obligation to regard the law, as held forth by Him as King of saints; whom they own, and look upon themselves obliged to own as their judge and lawgiver; and indeed consider themselves under still greater obligation to obey His laws and commands, since He has finished transgression for them, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. Though they *"through the law*

are dead to the law," yet it is, that "they might live unto God;" (Gal. 2:19) the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself a pure and spotless sacrifice for sin, "purges their consciences from dead works, that they may serve the living God:" (Heb. 9:14) It is only such who "walk in the light" and have fellowship with Christ, whom His "blood cleanses from all sin; for if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;" (1 John 1:6,7) Christ's suffering, "the just for the unjust," the punishment due to sin, was "to bring us to God." (I Pet. 3:18) not only to reconcile us to Him, and to enjoy His favour, but to walk with Him, to walk in His ways, and to walk humbly before Him; whereas if it gave a loose (approval) to sin, and encouraged in it, it would set us at a greater distance from Him: Christ's satisfaction for sin does not at all weaken our obligation to duty, but increases it.

6. The doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, is a doctrine according to godliness, however it may be traduced as a licentious one. It neither makes void the law, nor discourages the performance of good works; nor encourages in sin. It does not annul, or make the law useless. "Do we" says the apostle, "make void the law through faith," that is, by the doctrine of justification through the righteousness of Christ, received by faith? "God forbid; yea, we establish the law," since we assert that men are justified by a perfect righteousness, which is every way agreeable to the demands of the law, and by which that is magnified and made honorable. Nor does it at all discountenance the discharge of duty, but is the greatest motive and inducement to it. Thus, the apostle, having observed that we are not saved by works of righteousness done by us, that we are justified

by the grace of Christ, and are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life, adds, "This is a faithful saying; and these things," that is, these doctrines, "I will that thou affirm constantly;" (Titus 3:8) that thou assert them without any doubt or hesitation about them; and that thou dwell upon them in thy ministry, and frequently inculcate them; that to this end and purpose, "they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." Nothing like these doctrines will induce them thereunto. Nor does this doctrine give any countenance to sinful practices; for though God justifies the ungodly, yet He does not indulge them in ungodliness. Christ's righteousness justifies from all sin, but does not justify persons in a continuance in sin. Besides, *faith*, which receives this blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of salvation, (Psalm 24:5) which is the reason why men are said to be justified by it, *works by love*; (Gal. 5:6) is an operative grace, is attended with the fruits of righteousness, is evinced by good works, made perfect by them, and is without them dead. Yet some will say, the doctrine of justification by faith is no licentious doctrine, but the doctrines of eternal justification and eternal union are. This comes from another quarter, from a set of men who should know better. What diabolical charm? what satanic influence can there possibly be in a *date*? If justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, without the works of the creature, has no bad influence upon the life and conversation; the moving of the date of it higher than where it has been commonly put, can never be attended with any bad consequence that way; nor can any consequences arise from it, but what must also unavoidably follow upon eternal election: (Editor's note: Eternal justification and

eternal vital union referred to here, is believed by Predestinarian Old School Baptists to be immanent acts of God prior to, or before, the fall of man. The date Gill refers to is “before the foundation of the world.” Twice in the history of the Old School Baptists, this view has been disputed: in the 1860’s, those opposing Daniel Parker’s “two-seed” doctrine, opposed it believing it to be the source of that heresy; and in the early 1900’s division, those moving towards merited blessing by freewill works also opposed it believing it negated good works. Gill gives a sound reason why it does not do so.) And as for eternal union with Christ, it is the foundation of all good things Christ has done for His people, of all the good things the Spirit works in them, and of all the good works which are done by them; and therefore can never give birth and countenance to evil practices.

7. The doctrine of free and full remission of sins, according to the grace and mercy of God, and by the blood of Christ, and for His sake, and not on account of our repentance and good works, as procuring it, has no influence to make the conversation of a truly sensible sinner bad, but the reverse. Sin never appears so odious, and in its true colors, or so exceedingly sinful, as it does in the glass of pardoning love. A soul is never more ashamed of sin, and confounded on the account of it, or blushes at it, than when he is most sensible and most satisfied that God is “*pacified towards him for all that he has done;*” (Ezek. 16:63) and that all is forgiven through the blood of Christ: nor does he ever more truly and heartily, and in an evangelical manner, *mourn* over sin, or is humbled before the Lord for it, than when he *looks* to Christ, and views all his iniquities borne by Him, and washed away in His blood; (Zach. 12:10) nor can any

thing more powerfully engage men to FORSAKE their evil ways, and course of living, and turn to the Lord, than this consideration, that he does *abundantly pardon;* (Isa. 55:7) and indeed the end which the Lord has in setting forth Christ in His purposes to be the propitiation for sin, and procure the remission of it, and in providing this blessing in the covenant of His grace, and in sending Christ to obtain it, through the shedding of His blood, and in publishing and proclaiming it in His Gospel, and in applying it by His Spirit, is that He might be heartily and sincerely feared and worshiped; “*there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” (Psa. 133:4) He would have been feared with a slavish fear, or dreaded, as He is by devils, if there had been none; but He would never have been feared by sinful men, with a filial (fatherly) and godly fear, or have been worshiped in sincerity and truth, had it not been for pardoning grace and mercy through the blood of Christ; and such must be very disingenuous indeed, that can abuse such a doctrine as this, that because God has pardoned them, therefore they will sin the more against Him; if there are any such that go on in sin upon such a presumption, that their sins are pardoned, they manifestly show, that they never had ANY true sense of sin, or application of pardon to them.

8. The doctrine of God’s seeing no sin in His people, is spoken against as an immoral one, and giving liberty to sin; but is pure, holy and innocent: For this doctrine does NOT suppose sin not to be sin; or that is not sin which is done amiss by them; or that God does not in any sense take notice of their transgressions. Though they are, as considered in Christ, “*holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight;*” (Col. 1:22) yet, as considered in themselves, they have and do



many things which are faulty and blameworthy. Though God sees no sin in them, with respect to the article of justification, yet He sees ALL their sins, with respect to the article of His omniscience; or though He sees them not with His avenging eye of justice, yet He sees them all with His eye of omniscience. Again, Though He sees no sin in them, to condemn them, yet He takes notice of their iniquities and transgressions, so as to rebuke and chastise them in a fatherly way on the account of them. *“There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;”* but then these are described as such *“who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Rom. 8:1) God has nothing against His people, as they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and washed in His blood. But He has many things against them, which he takes notice of in a providential way, for their good, and his glory: *“Nevertheless,”* says Christ to the church at Ephesus; *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”* (Rev 2:4,5) This is the true state of this doctrine: Let any one judge, whether, in this view of it, it can be thought to be a licentious one.

9. The doctrine of efficacious grace in conversion, or of effectual vocation by the powerful and insuperable grace of God, can surely never be reckoned to have any tendency to lead persons into a vicious course of living; since they that are called by it, are called with an *“holy calling, and unto holiness:”* They have new principles of grace and holiness implanted in them: they are formed anew for God, are made new

creatures, new men; and have *“put on the new man, which after God is created in,”* or unto, *“righteousness and true holiness:”* (Eph 4:24) They are *“created in Christ Jesus unto good works;”* and are put into the best capacity of performing them, from the best principles, with the best views, and to the best ends.

10. The doctrine of the saints final perseverance can never be chargeable with encouraging immorality; unless continuance in faith and holiness is an immorality; or that it can be thought, that the way to persevere in holiness is to abound in sin. Nor does this doctrine make the use of means, or exhortations to diligence, care and watchfulness, unnecessary. The apostle Peter, though he asserts that those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, and are begotten again according to his abundant mercy, *“are kept by the power of God though faith unto salvation;”* (I Pet 1:5) yet exhorts these same persons to *“gird up the loins of their mind, to be sober, and hope to the end, to be holy in all manner of conversation, and to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear;”* (I Pet 1:13,15,17) and makes use of their sure and certain redemption by the precious blood of Christ, from a vain conversation, to move and engage them to a regard to these things. And indeed, though there is no danger of true believers falling, so as to be lost, and perish; yet inasmuch as though the weakness of the flesh, the temptations of Satan. and the snares of this world, they may so fall, as to dishonour the name of God, wound their own souls, and stumble others, there is good reason why *“he that thinks he stands, should take heed lest he fall.”* (I Cor 10:12) It is, indeed, in the way and use of means, that the *Spirit of God leads on the saints in faith and holiness to the end.*

Thus we have see that the several peculiar doctrines of grace are pure and innocent, having no manner of tendency to licentiousness; but the genuine nature and design of them are, to promote holiness of life and conversation. We might easily recriminate, by shewing that the charge of licentiousness may be brought with much more truth and justice against the opposite doctrines: As for instance; if Christ has redeemed all mankind, every individual of human nature, then may a profane sinner say, "I am redeemed by the blood of Christ, and shall undoubtedly be saved, let me live as I will; for Christ could not die, or His blood be shed in vain." Should it be said, that though it is asserted that Christ died for all men, yet none can receive any benefit by His death, but such as believe, and repent of their sins: Be it so, since it is affirmed that man has a power to believe and repent when he pleases; the profane sinner may go on to say, "Seeing this is my case, I am endued with a freewill, I can believe and repent at pleasure. I will take my fill of sin, and at a convenient time I will reform, repent and believe, and doubt not but all will be well with me." So the doctrine of the saints apostasy may be improved by wicked men, to encourage them to continue in sinful courses, and to procrastinate all concerns as yet about a future state: "For," may the sinner say, "if this is the case, that a man may be truly converted, be a true believer, and penitent, and a real child of God, and *yet* so fall and apostatize, as to be in the same state he was before; may amend. and fall away' again, arid in this way to go on to the end, so that it is very uncertain and precarious in what state he will die; then I may, for the present at least, indulge myself in sinful pleasures; for certainly it will be acting the wiser and more rational part, for me to amend,

repent, and put myself into a good state, since these are in my power, toward the close of my days, when it may be more rationally concluded I shall continue therein, and so die in a happy situation." Thus I say, we might easily recriminate; but I choose not to load principles with consequences which are denied; nor should our opponents charge ours as they do, when we declare our abhorrence of every thing of his nature.

To conclude: Let us, notwithstanding these imputations, value and esteem the doctrine of grace, and not entertain the less opinion of it on this account. Let us stand fast in it, abide by it, and earnestly contend for it. Let us endeavor by the assistance of the grace of God, to have our conversations as become the Gospel; to adorn the doctrine of Christ in all things; to "hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience;" and so to live, as to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and such to the blush, who falsely accuse the doctrine of grace, and our conversation in Christ.

### **"OLD, BODY - NEW, SPIRIT"**

By Grady E. Dearman

There are some Scriptures hard to be understood. Now, the Scripture verses that you understand and with which you are satisfied might be the ones that drive me back to the Bible for years before the Lord grants me understanding. I think most of us have listened to a discussion about, or read an interpretation of, a certain Scripture and have come away feeling strongly there was more to that Scripture than had been brought out. Well, that is just how I felt about the "Porter" in John 10:1-18; that is, until I read the autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson: an

early 1800's preacher on the midwestern frontier.

The first sermon he preached in 1810 (in Kentucky) was on this Scripture. He set forth his belief that the "door" is the door of prophecy; that the "porter" is John the Baptist; and that Christ is the "Shepherd."

When I read that, it seemed all the slack had been taken up. I had to agree with Elder Thompson: Christ *is* the Shepherd, the porter *is* John the Baptist, and the door *is* the door of prophecy. This was more light than I had expected. Many times this portion of John's gospel had perplexed me, and now here it was — opened and understandable.

The "Shepherd" is the Lord, and the "door" is prophecy about the Lord. This I had known, yet did not understand who the "porter" was. So, here is the situation: I had been given the identity of the "Shepherd" and the "door", but not until I had read Elder Thompson's account was I enabled to identify the "porter." You may have known that —but I didn't.

When I finished that part of the autobiography, I laid it aside and read John 10: 1-18 with understanding. The words of the eunuch to Philip came to mind, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" I hope the joy I felt, and the thanks I expressed for Elder Thompson's writing was acceptable to our God.

For several days I fed on this revelation and drew much comfort from it. Once, I mentioned it to Elder Phillips, but I saw immediately he had known for a long time that which had only recently been shown to me. I concluded he *did* appreciate that Scripture, but he could not understand why I was SO exercised about it. Which only goes to show that we don't all see alike at the same time. (**note:** *A good point can be made here:*

*ministers ought not to expect all other ministers to reach the same degree of revelation at the same time. All must grow according to the measure of Christ as it pleases Him. It ought not to be an occasion of disputation .- S.C.P.)* Next time he may have a truth revealed to him which I have known and loved for a long time. In fact, I might say to him, "Why Stan, I thought you knew that!"

In a short while I settled down to where my view of the "door", and the "Shepherd" and the "porter" became established — in fact, I felt that I knew about all there was to it. This arrogance (or, pharisaical pride) troubles me often.

Anyway, the smugness did not last long, for a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction with *myself* and *my* understanding of the Scripture hovered over me. It is humbling to the flesh to be shown we know only "in part."

No matter where I began to read in the Bible I would eventually turn to John 10. Understanding the truth of a Scripture is not by perspiration, but by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There just was *no way* humanly possible for me to draw more meaning (for me) from this parable. I gave up.

Sometime later, I read in Hebrews 10: 19-20, "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*" This Scripture opened up more understanding.

In the account which the Lord gave in John 10, the "porter" was a real person: John the Baptist; the "Shepherd" was a real person: the Lord Jesus Christ. The "door", then, must also be a real person: the Son of man — the One of whom prophets spoke. And as Christ Himself prophesied, "*The Son of man indeed*

*goeth, as it is written of Him:”* (Mark 14:21)

The problem which appeared was: How could the “Shepherd” go through the “door” when they both are the same person? How can a person go into himself? The Lord said plainly He was the “door” as well as the good “Shepherd”.

Evidently the two characterizations are meant to display two aspects of Christ’s nature — separately, yet distinctly different. The prophecy of Immanuel (with us, God) in Isa. 7:14, 8:8 and which is quoted in Matthew 1:23 tell us God will be with men. And that “with us” presence was not a vague awareness of someone, but was literally a man who was born as a man, lived as a man, was a tangible person touched and felt by His followers. He was God Almighty in the veil of flesh: the body of Christ and the Son of man.

Further, just any “body” was not acceptable. It must be a “body.. . prepared.” The body of Christ was born of the virgin Mary. He became, through that body, identified with His Bride or “His people.” He was “holy, harmless and separate and apart from sinners.” Such a Savior “became”, or was needful for, us.

John the Baptist (the porter) was illuminated by the Holy Spirit to perceive Jesus of Nazerath (the door) as the Son of God (the Shepherd).

Many “saviors” have strutted through the pages of world history, but they, after all, were only men — of sin born. But, there has been only one who fitted as a perfectly prepared door to be “opened” (accredited by the prophet, John the Baptist). how very significant that the blood of the Passover should be sprinkled upon the lintel and doorposts as a type of the sacrifice of the Son of man, who “*indeed goeth as it is written of Him.*”

*“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:”* and, “*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the BODY of Jesus Christ once for all.* “; and, “*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living WAY, which He hath consecrated for us, through the VEIL, that is to say His flesh.*” (Hebrews 10:5, 10, 19-20)

In the moments of His death on the cross, Jesus’ body was pierced by the spear, the earth shook, the rocks were torn apart and the veil in the temple was torn into two parts. Only hours before the high priest of the earthly Jews had torn the priestly garment apart, contrary to the law; and remember, brethren, how king Saul had the kingdom torn from him and given to a “better”? So, also was the “old” torn away to reveal the “new.”

My beloved brothers and sisters, I close with the words written by Paul to the Corinthians: “*For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: OLD things are passed away; behold, all things are become NEW.*”

## NATURAL CONVICTION, VS. THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL

By Gilbert Beebe, Jan. 16, 1843

To those who are unacquainted with the real grounds of difference between the views of the Old School Baptists and those of the new order, some remarks on the above subject may be interesting. The subject of evangelical faith is frequently treated as though there existed no difference between the natural convictions of the mental powers of man, and that faith which the apostle says is "*Of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.*" — Col. 2:12.

In order rightly to understand this subject, we would inquire into the nature and origin of the two essentially different kinds of faith. That there is a kind of faith, common to intelligent beings, which is essentially different from the faith of the Gospel, is clear both from Scripture and observation. "*Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well, the devils also believe and tremble.*" - James 2:19. That devils are susceptible of that kind of conviction that compels them to yield to the force of truth, and believe that of which they are rationally convinced by testimony, is a sufficient demonstration that intelligent beings without spiritual life are capable of conviction, and may be led to believe that there is a God, a heaven and a hell, because they are unable to resist the testimony presented to their minds that such is the case.

And because unregenerate men, and even children, are capable of such convictions, many have attempted to prove that genuine faith is a fruit of the natural mind, and a condition of life and salvation. Upon this false conclusion, all the machinery of the present age is brought to bear upon the intellectual powers of men, in order to bring them to

believe certain things in regard to God and a future state. From their cradles to their tombs they are taught religion as they are taught earthly things, in the same natural and systematic manner that they are instructed in the arts and sciences of this world.

Modern religious inventions, such as infant, Sabbath (Sunday) and theological schools, &c., are all based upon the same false and deceptive theory, and the general motto with Arminians (free-willers) is moral suasion. While we admit that natural men possess intellectual powers of the mind sufficient to draw correct and legitimate conclusions from all given principles in nature, and to believe all such things as are supported by such testimony as they deem sufficient, yet we contend, and by the eternal truth of heaven we prove, that their belief or disbelief in this manner can **NEVER** change their nature, make one hair white or black, nor bring them one step towards God, holiness or heaven. Whatever this kind of natural faith may be, it certainly, as God is true, is **NOT** the faith of God's elect, is **NOT** that faith which is of the operation of God, is **NOT** the faith which is the fruit of the Spirit and the gift of God, and is in no wise connected with salvation, or devils possessing it might escape the vengeance of eternal fire.

As every stream must be of the same nature with the fountain whence it flows, so every kind of faith must in nature agree with the source from which it emanates. To trace the origin of natural faith (by which term we include all that the natural man is capable of possessing) to its primeval source, where is its origin? Whence does it flow? As unregenerate men and even devils can and do possess it, it must have its origin in something short of grace. Our Lord Jesus has himself declared, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh,*"

(John 3:6) from which express declaration we prove that all that a natural man is or can be is of the flesh. All his power and faculties, physical and mental, his soul, his body, and all that pertains to unregenerate man is born of the flesh, and consequently is flesh, and as in this state possessing no power or ability other than that which he possesses as a natural man; and by virtue of his natural birth of the flesh, he can be and is capable of reasoning and forming conclusions from given premises, can and does believe or disbelieve, according to the weight which testimony presented to his understanding may have on his mind. Therefore all his belief or disbelief is earthly, sensual, and we may add, in the language which God has inspired, *devilish*.

If the Arminian's own statement of the origin of his faith may be relied on, it is of the flesh; for all Arminians agree that man by nature possesses all power necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that faith is an act of the natural man, that he is endowed by nature with this power, and is required on pain of damnation to exercise it. Hence, from their own theory, their faith is altogether natural, and precisely of the kind which devils have.

Unlike the faith of the Gospel, which has God for its author and object, the faith of Arminians is communicative, or perhaps we might better say contagious, for it can not only be taught by every man to his neighbor, and every man to his brother, by Sabbath Schools, tracts, &c., but even without the use of such popish inventions the contagion spreads like a pestilence wherever grace does not prevent.

any accuse us of misrepresenting the popular views of the religionists on the subject of faith? We refer such for a farther confirmation of the correctness of our

conclusions to the uniform practice of all the various branches of the anti-christian kingdom of his diabolical majesty. This natural faith is manifested by Catholics when they count their beads or say mass; by their firstborn harlot daughter, in reading prayer, and bringing her carnal offspring by *rantism* into the pale of what they call their "church"; by the balance of her brood in various ways, catechisms, six month's probations or apprenticeship, and by all the different modes by which they urge them into their churches and to subscribe their creeds.

Nor are the new order of Baptists exceptions to these examples, for they have sufficiently aped the Catholic mother and her Protestant daughters, and what they have lacked in the sprinkling system of paedobaptists (*infant baptizers, Ed.*) they have made up by excelling all their Arminian brotherhood in the invention of traditions with which to make void the commandments of God. In the doctrine that man possesses sufficient natural abilities to exercise faith, all the various orders of worldly religionists agree, and they retard genuine faith as being no more than that which they can persuade men into by reasoning, coaxing, wooing, beseeching, exciting and captivating.

Nor is it at all strange that they should thus regard faith, when they consider the Gospel itself, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, only as a commodity which they can monopolize and export or import free from duty or tariff, according to the amount of capital they are able to invest in the enterprise. They talk of getting up revivals of religion, of making converts, of evangelizing the heathen and of converting the world to their faith, in as cool and calculating a manner as though they did not know that Isa. 45:22, John 6:44 and Acts

4:12 were passages of Scripture.

From all that we have written, our readers may perceive that we believe what God our Savior has said, "*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" — John 3:3. And that all the excitement that can be produced upon the animal feelings or mental powers of natural men are abortive and vain; and although silly women, aye, and men too, may be captivated, and thousands may be led out of one false notion into another equally absurd by moral suasion, yet, until we find authority in the Scriptures to believe that one heresy is more sacred, in the divine estimation, than another, or that one lie is less pernicious and abominable than another, we must maintain our conclusion, that all that emanates from the flesh is carnal, earthly and devilish, and that they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God. (Rom. 8:7,8) And although man may possess any quantity of humanly devised and humanly communicated faith, still he remains a natural man, a child of wrath, an enemy to God, a despiser of truth, and will assuredly sink down to the perdition of ungodly men with all his religion and faith, if he be not saved by' a method as far superior to any ever taught by man as the heavens are higher than the earth, or as Christ is superior to Adam.

That men may be persuaded by argument to abandon some vicious practices, and thereby become better citizens of the world, better husbands, fathers, sons, neighbors, &c., we freely admit, and all this may be done without one spark of grace. But because this may be done, we have no right to represent, as an inducement to such reformation, that such reformation will effect the final destiny of the reformed; for such is not the truth, and such a doctrine would set aside the Savior's blood and righteousness, as being indispensable to

the salvation of a sinner: could we by labor or by art wash out the blackness of an Ethiopian, or change the spots of a leopard, this would not change their natures. The Ethiopian would remain an Ethiopian still, although a white Ethiopian, and the leopard, though externally differing from his kindred leopards, would not become a lamb. The old pharisees were as busily engaged in their day, in this kind of superficially religionizing, as the modern pharisees now are; and our Lord charged them with being whited sepulchres, and of making clean the outside of the cup and platter, &c. Even if we had the power to regenerate dead sinners, and should put that power in requisition for that purpose, it would not constitute, so regenerated, the sons of God nor heirs of glory. It would only make them *our* own sons, and the heirs of ourselves. Those to whom Christ has given power to become the sons of God, are "*born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John 1:13)

Joshua made no distinction between one system of idolatry and another, but gave those children of Israel to whom it seemed evil to serve the true God, their choice between the gods that their fathers served on the other side of the flood and the gods of the Amorites in whose land they dwelt. (Josh. 24:15) Not that Joshua did or would countenance idolatry in any way or to any extent, but rather that he would have them know that all was alike, and go god of human invention is preferable to another. The calf which Aaron made of the Egyptian trinkets was no better than the gods which Rachel stole from her father, and the gold and silver lavished on a greedy and insatiable missionary priesthood in this nineteenth (or present day) century to which the salvation of sinners is ascribed, is no less idolatrous than it would be if it were moulded

into the shape of a calf or in any other shape. To ascribe the work of God, such as the regeneration of souls or the preparation of men for the ministry of the Gospel, or sustaining them in the work, is as abominable and idolatrous as to make a god in any other shape or of any other material, or to worship it in any other way. We may just as well be Catholics, Mormons or pagans, as to be anything else, if we be not born of God, so far as religion is concerned. *“No lie is of the truth,”* although ungodly teachers are charged with handling the word of God deceitfully, and of turning the truth of God into a lie.

In distinction from all these views of faith, as held by the popular work-mongers of all distinctive names and denominations, the Old School Baptists, (so called, not in reference to any school other than the school of Christ) hold that faith is the GIFT of God: and that faith peculiar to the heirs of salvation, is the faith OF Jesus Christ; that it is established in the hearts (not heads) of His people, by the operation of God; that it is the FRUIT of that Spirit by which they are regenerated. And as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so also that *“which is born of the Spirit is spirit;”* (John 3:6) and as we derive all our natural powers of the body and mind from Adam, so we derive all our spiritual life and action from Christ. As a pure fountain cannot send forth corrupt streams, so neither can a corrupt fountain send forth pure waters. In short, what the Old Fashioned or primitive order of Baptists are, is what all orders of Arminians oppose and reproach; and so long as the world shall continue to love its own doctrines and men, so long may we, of the Old Order, expect the New School Baptists and all other workmongrel orders to outvie us in worldly respectability, in numbers, and in worldly influence. It is

perfectly in harmony with their faith to make their own converts and ministers, and if they want many or few, to make to suit the quantity to their wishes. But not so with the church of God, she is true to her Head, Husband and Lord. She asks not for nor desires any sons or daughters of whom Christ is not the legitimate Father. She asks not for ornaments, other than those in which Jerusalem is adorned as a bride for her Husband. And although in this world she has to labor and suffer reproach because she trusts in the living God, yet she esteems the reproaches which are heaped on her as being better than all the honors of the world or treasures of Egypt.

We have now lying on our table, a sermon by T.G. Keen, before the ministerial meeting in Kentucky, and published by request of that New School Baptist body, in which our description of their views on this subject is sustained thus:

“The mind must be penetrated by the force of Scriptural truth BEFORE a spirit of holiness can be diffused, or a principle of virtuous living implanted. Religious reflections must in the order of NATURE, PRECEDE religious feeling. One of the most predominant feelings of HUMAN NATURE is to overthrow the authority of God, and to stamp with folly and weakness every essential truth.

“There is no affinity between the faith of the Gospel and the grosser feelings of the degenerate mind. The spirit of incredulity has been deeply imbedded in our fallen nature, and it is greatly strengthened by habitual culture. And it is an incontestable fact, that important results as the effect of any scheme, are not believed till the abstract cause is established by the most irrefragable proof. This is in a peculiar sense applicable to the reception or rejection of the Bible. As well



might we dream of some flaming meteor passing through the sky and illuminating the human mind, as to expect the triumph of Christianity WITHOUT its doctrines being fully established by the most conclusive testimony.” — *unquote*.

If by the spirit of holiness the Holy Ghost is meant, they deny the power of God to quicken a dead sinner without a preparatory work performed by the flesh; and if such is not their meaning, it will be hard to interpret such jargon. We understand them to say and mean that we may as well look for some flaming meteor passing through the sky to enlighten dead sinners, as to look for the Holy Ghost to enlighten them without the intervention of those *pious occultists* to remove the *mote*, in whose eyes huge beams remain. At antipodes with this sentiment is the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles. See John 6:63; I Cor. 2:11.

## CHOOSING ACCEPTABLE WORDS

By S.C. Phillips

It is imperative, in true Gospel preaching, for the preacher to choose Scriptural words consistent with Biblical doctrine. Too often, when strangers listen to a Predestinarian elder, they bring to bear preconceived concepts with regard to the words and phrases of the elders; and misunderstand the rationale for the use of Biblical and inspired terminology. This, too often, leads to misconceptions and stereotypes of our ministers and our faith.

Some listeners, even some “Calvinists,” are misled by the application of a Gospel address to “children of God” used frequently by our ministers. It is one thing to tell children of God that God loves them, and quite another to tell an indiscriminant audience the same

thing. Thus, we are often falsely accused of not believing that we should “preach the Gospel to sinners.” Why then do we insist upon such a term as “children of God?”

In a mixed audience it may be assumed that three types of people are present. Some might well be reprobates to whom the Gospel is a “savour of death unto death to them that perish,” (II Cor. 2:16). To tell these people, or even to imply, that they are loved of God is totally false according to the holy Scripture. “Thou *hatest all workers of iniquity*.” (Psa. 5:5) and “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*.” (Rom.9:13) Suppose such an one as Esau is present. Can anyone imagine Paul saying to Esau that “God loves you,” when God firmly states otherwise?

Hopefully some present may be elect unto salvation but not yet quickened to life and immortality. Since the law is a schoolmaster to bring such to Christ; to tell them, prematurely, that God loves them is too great an assumption on our part and extremely misleading to them. It appears that such an expression would harden one in complacency and sin, or imply that God takes a lighter attitude toward sin than in fact he does. It is true “that when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly” and this is perhaps the most comforting truth in which a person can ever rejoice. But he can not rejoice in this truth until God brings him to it by the operation of free and sovereign grace.

Others present are “quickened sinners.” A quickened sinner has spiritual life begotten in him by the Spirit of God. There are two classifications within this group: First, in regeneration one is quickened from spiritual death by the Holy Spirit to spiritual life. In this stage, all that the sinner can truly know is that he is a sinner justly condemned before the eternal and righteous standard of God. Telling

him that God loves him would indeed be true. Yet at the first, his own experience in the knowledge of his corruption and depravity will prevent him from believing it even if it were told to him. Later, however, at his deliverance the knowledge is received with great joy and rejoicing in faith through free grace. Thus, by appropriating the term “God loves you” the children of grace can rejoice in hope of eternal life before a full assurance of faith is given. Thus the sinner is encouraged to press on in his search for evidences that he is as loved of God as others around him, or be about the commandment to “*give all diligence to make thy calling and election sure.*” (1 Peter 1:10)

Naturally, the other class of quickened sinners are those who believe and rejoice in a felt forgiveness of sins. Telling the children of grace that “God loves His people” is fully confirmed by their faith and experience and they then can well understand the truth of such a sweet expression.

The Gospel is good news to all who spiritually believe it. But the dead in sin do not believe it, and it evokes no more response than any other historical slogan. Until one is “lost,” fully and completely lost, only then can he rejoice in the Gospel that such lost ones as himself are “found of God.” “Christ died for sinners” is very good news to “quickened sinners,” but not so to the self-righteous sinner. For this reason Predestinarian Baptists use caution in their address before mixed assemblies. As ministers of God they must make sure they speak according to sound doctrine if the Gospel is to have the effect purposed in its proclamation.

Another word used almost universally by ministers with an Arminian foundation is very obnoxious to true believers’ in free and sovereign grace. To tell one that God *wants*

something done is an “uncertain sound.” God does not *want*, - - man *wants*. God wills, pleases, purposes, - - - but never once has He ever *wanted* anything! The word is totally inconsistent with the character and attributes of our Sovereign God who “*doeth His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou.*” (Dan. 4:35) Every sovereign grace believer has been taught through either logic or revelation of God that God “*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*” (Eph. I:11) Certainly such should readily understand why sound believers object to this freewill, or Arminian concept of a “wanting God.” God is all sufficient and stands in need of nothing. The Holy Scriptures have never used this word as an anthropomorphism in expressing God’s will and purpose. Thus, Gospel ministers need to give care to delete it from their vocabulary of free grace.

Another word often used which is inconsistent with sound doctrine is the word “let.” Seldom do we ever hear anyone but an Arminian use it, yet occasionally it shows up. One might be heard to say “They just will not let God take care of it” No one *lets* God do anything! He does it or He does not. He is never “trying” to get people to do things. Consider, if you will: If one asked you to “*Try to pick this tea cup*” wouldn’t it be a strange expression indeed! No one *tries* to do simple things. They *try* to do things they cannot do. If they can do it then they did not try, but did it! The holy Spirit, equal in the Godhead is almighty. He says “live” and sinners live. He says “come” and the sheep come. He is **absolutely effectual** in whatever He sets out to perform.

Just as surely as God has *ordained* His workmanship unto good works, just that

certainly the Spirit “*works in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.*” (Phil. 2:13) and has “*wrought all our works in us.*” (II Thess 2:17) He does not try to do it; He does it. Thus, ministers who believe arid preach the truth of our sovereign God ought, also, to delete this uncertain sound from their speech.

Particularly is this true in preaching admonitions, exhortations, and corrections. “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” (II Tim. 3:16,17) Since this is the utility of the Scripture, then they must be applied in a Scriptural manner. To do otherwise leads to conditionalism based upon creature effort and merit, and then to Arminian freewillism, and finally culminating in Pelagianism, infidelity, and atheism. All one needs to confirm this observation is to look around at those bodies which were once ardent Calvinists but which are now outright unbelievers. Sound doctrine **MUST** be accompanied by sound speech.

The inability of many Calvinistic ministers to use expressions consistent with their doctrinal knowledge perpetuates a weak doctrinal foundation in their congregations. How else can one account for church groups which were once very sound and orthodox allowing ungodly ministers to creep “in unawares” and bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord (*despotes*) that bought them?

A gradual apostasy is almost imperceptible at the outset except by the soundest of believers. Among many of the modern Calvinistic assemblies, exhortations by ministers sound exactly as those delivered by full-fledged Arminian ministers. Gospel

duties and deportment appear to be based upon the reward system of creature-merit rather than the effectual operation of grace.

To a Predestinarian such loose speech habits appear hypocritical or double-tongued. In one sermon, presented by the speaker as a “doctrinal discourse”, the truth of free grace may resound in honor and glory to God. In the next sermon, classified as “Christian living message,” it is as pure a form of Arminian freewillism as anything Mystery Babylon puts forth. It leaves the hearer confused and frustrated, or perhaps deceived. Worse, a sound sovereign grace exhortation to live sober lives is often branded “hardshellism” (as if it takes a reward system to motivate born-again children of God to walk and behave as children of grace ordained unto good works!) Yet, the truth of the matter is: God’s grace works effectually in the children of grace to make them graceful.

The crowning glory and display of God’s sovereignty to the church is the transformation of rebellious, wicked sinners into saintly vessels of mercy.

## **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

By David Bartley, 1902

**Omniscience** - *boundless knowledge, Omniscient* - *knowing all things.* God only is omniscient, for He alone knoweth all things. All His intelligent creatures, whether men or angels, are greatly limited in knowledge, being finite in all their powers. Not so with God, who is unlimited in every perfection of His, for He is the infinite One. Infiniteness cannot be measured nor bounded, and, therefore, God is absolutely unlimited, both in His being and in all His faculties or power. So His knowledge is as unbounded as His

eternity, and omnipresence, and omnipotence, for these, with all His other perfections, ascend upward and downward and outward forever and forever, all filling infinite eternity, having no bound or limit. And in all these majestic and awe-inspiring attributes, our blessed God and Father has always been present in all His limitless or infinite universe, and now is at once and ever seeing and knowing all things.

This is profoundly wonderful, and it overwhelms us, beloved, because we are so infinitely less than nothing, as compared with God, and we know nothing perfectly. But the omniscient One, who fills eternal space or limitless ether, sees and knows us and all things at a glance, perfectly and exactly as we are. For although His word says that all the nations are as the small dust of the balance, which is too small for us to notice, yet they are all so clearly seen in His omniscient eye that He watches the little bird, and numbers the very hairs of our heads. No wonder that David the king would say, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*" (Psa. 139:6) "*how precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: When I awake, I am still with Thee.*" (Psa. 139: 17-18) All this is just as true of every child of God, as it was of David. how blessed for us that it is true!

Yet there are those who are so wise in their own eyes that they make light of all this, and even ridicule the belief that the infinite One takes notice of all little things, because they in their self-importance would not. And so they measure God by themselves, and think themselves so wise that they can judge of what the Almighty should be and do, and set limits for Him. It is a rich mercy, however,

that our omniscient God does see and care for the smallest particles of dust in his boundless dominion, because unless he did, those vaunting nothings who reply against their Maker, would be left to their own reward, that is, to perish in their littleness.

While Baptists and many others admit the omniscience of God, that lie forever knew all things, still this does not prove that it is so, and we must, therefore, turn to the law and testimony of the Lord in proof of this, as also of every other attribute and truth of God. For, on the other hand, some Baptists and many others deny the omnipotence of God, His unlimited sovereignty, but their denial of this truth does not disprove it by any means, for if it did, then "*His eternal power and Godhead*" would be destroyed. The apostle Peter said of his Lord, "*Thou knowest all things.*" (John 21:17) James said, "*Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.*" (Acts 15:18) And as to the extent of His works, Solomon said, "*The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*" (Prov. 16:4) "*He hath made every thing beautiful in His time.*" David asks, "*He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not lie correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not lie know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*" (Psa. 94:9-11) Hannah said, "*The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.*" (I Sam. 2:3) "*Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard,*" (Psa. 19:2-3) sang the sweet psalmists of Israel. "*For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*" (Psa. 139:4) To His disciples the Lord said,

*“Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known.”* Of Christ, Paul says *“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* The wise man said, *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”* Paul said of Him, *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”*(Heb. 4:13)

All this Scripture fully establishes the omniscience of God, and shows that all things were forever known unto Him, so that His foreknowledge is perfect, unlimited or infinite. To deny this, is equal to saying that the Lord was both ignorant and changeable; for every increase in knowledge shows former ignorance, and change to more perfect knowledge. It follows also, that if God did not possess perfect knowledge from all eternity of all things that should ever be, then neither could He *“work all things after the counsel of His own will,”* (Eph. 1:11) nor could Paul have truly said, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose;”* (Rom. 8:28) for both His counsel and His purpose would be at fault concerning everything which God did not perfectly see and know from the beginning. This is a self-evident truth. The most perfect man in knowledge is yet ignorant of many things, both present and future, and so he cannot provide for or against anything or all things unknown to him, even if he has the power to do so.

This absolute truth as certainly establishes another truth; that is, His counsel and His purpose and His power are as unlimited as His knowledge, and all are alike

infinite and changeless. To deny this, is to deny that God is, and say with the fool, *“There is no God.”* For as truly as the omniscience of God saw and knew all things from the beginning, or ever the earth was, so surely did His wisdom and counsel and purpose also determine all things; because either Himself or some one else must determine all things, before they could be foreknown as certain to come to pass. This is a self-evident fact. If it were possible for God to not foreknow something, then that thing or act would never exist or come to pass. To say He could, would be as absurd as to say that a lie is the truth. Therefore, beloved, all must admit, either that the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God are one in the same or else they must deny the certain foreknowledge of God, and limit Him in knowledge, even as they limit Him in His *“determinate counsel”* and purpose; for it is self-evident that the divine foreknowledge of all things makes all things absolutely certain.

we know, beloved brethren, that when God knew all things in the beginning, there was no other being besides Himself that could have determined the certainty of all things, nor of anything whatever. Therefore, the God of omniscience is equally the God of omnipotence, and His foreknowledge and fore-ordination are co-extensive and co-equal, for they are parallel and harmonious one with the other, as also with every divine attribute. To deny this, would be to say that God is divided against Himself, and that while He is unlimited and infinite in some of His perfections, He is limited and finite in others. But our infinite God declares that His ways are equal; and we know that there is no weakness or defect or lack in Him, but in all His divine nature He is a unit or one, and so

He is Infinite Perfection.

O beloved, how this divine truth fills us with supreme reverence and adoration in His holy presence; and inspires our spirit with confidence and trust in Him, and the heart with the love that castest out fear. And now, as God is omniscient, perfectly foreknowing all things in His unlimited universe, this fixes the absolute certainty of all things, and also makes it evident that God Himself determined their certainty, because not anything yet existed, outside of Himself, when he foreknew all things in eternity, before He had created heaven and earth, with all the fullness of them. For unless the infinite Creator of the universe had before determined in His wisdom and counsel and purpose all things, His omnipotent power could and would have prevented them, and He in his infinite wisdom would have purposed and ordered differently. Certainly he would. To say otherwise, is to charge God with folly, and such folly that even an intelligent man would not knowingly be guilty of.

Therefore, beloved children of God, the infinite foreknowledge and the infinite foreordination of all things, both stand or fall together.

This is inevitable, because there is not the least discrepancy, conflict or op. position in the uniting and perfect attributes of him who is at once all knowledge. all wisdom and all power, and who says. "*I will do all my pleasure.*" It certainly follows, therefore, that the infinite and blessed and holy Lord God Almighty, who "*declared the end from the beginning,*" both determined and foreknew all things.

For unless God had before determined all things, they could not possibly exist or come to pass: and unless all things are certain to come to pass, they could not exist in the

foreknowledge of God. These are undeniable facts. So then, a denial of God's determination of all things, is a virtual denial of his foreknowledge of all things. and there is no sensible escape from this fact. Hence, Arminians who limit the Almighty in his foreknowledge. as they do in His other attributes, are more consistent than conditional Baptists, who limit Him in His "determinate counsel" and "eternal purpose," while they admit His unlimited foreknowledge. For the eternal and infinite Jehovah, whose presence fills all immensity and all eternity, is as almighty and unlimited in all his attributes as lie is in any one of them. This is perfectly self-evident, and God has thus most infallibly and gloriously revealed himself in the Bible.

While many brethren, who limit the holy One, do not so intend, and do not see that they are replying against God, or else they would tremble before the Majesty of Heaven and beseech His forgiveness for their ignorant presumption and folly, and shrink with horror from this whirlpool of dark infidelity, which is fast swallowing up the faithless world; yet the fact is solemnly the same, that all the divine attributes are alike unlimited, and they all cooperate and join in unison as the pillars of the universe, which God upholds by His power, and are the glorious high throne from the beginning, or else the kingdom, dominion and power of the Most high, all are denied and charged with weakness and fearful failure.

We know, beloved brethren, that all the Arminian religious world, no less than open infidels. So thus charge the God of the Bible, with weakness and woeful failure, with *wanting* many things done in which lie is defeated. But we know that the Almighty, who "*doeth His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,*" has

no *wants*, never *tries*, and knows no failure,  
but “*worketh all things after the counsel of  
his **OWN** will.*” And this because  
omnipotence is as limitless as omniscience.  
And now, beloved, well may be glad and  
rejoice in the Lord.