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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

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ONE SALVATION

By S.C. Phillips

“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” — Luke 2: 29 - 32.

My intention is to deal with the statement which was re-quoted in the October issue of *The Predestinarian*, to wit: “Elder Stanley Phillips. . . does not understand the differences between eternal and time phases of salvation.” The statement is true in part. This writer does not now, nor ever has been able to fully understand that theory of two-salvations; one being *eternal* which is by free grace, and the other being *time salvation* which is by the freewill of man. I honestly tried to understand. I studied the Scriptures which were given to support it; I weighed the theory against my own experience; and I finally concluded it to be an untenable position with regard to Scripture and a subtle piece of deception — and I abandoned it altogether as being unworthy of further serious consideration. However, I am not (I hope) totally lacking in understanding. I do perceive what the theory teaches and the arguments on its behalf perhaps better than its advocates.

We understand the serious ramifications of its effect upon Primitive Baptists as they follow the Missionaries into will-worship. I labored seven years among the people holding that position, and know full well where that theory has led many of them as the vanguards for the future of that movement... right into the “progressivism” of other two-salvationists who seriously and faithfully are engaged in earning their blessings by “good works” here in *time*. These have their Bible Studies, seminary, musical instruments, Easter and Xmas services and

even an evangelical association, or “missionary”, and are in fact two-salvationists “Primitives.” They are only doing what they preach. I do have some insight into the two-salvation, or grace-works system. But there is no benefit in it for the child of grave who is possessed by the One salvation which is sufficient for them in both time and eternity.

Our salvation is ONE — The Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . is the God of all grace,” (I Pet. 5:10) that “. . .in Him should all fulness dwell ;“ (Col. 1:19). For those who “. . . have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” — “Christ is all, and in all.” (Col. 3:10-11)

In order to feel one’s need for salvation, there are certain condemnations wherein the poor needy wretch must be found. He must be ignorant of any possible way to save himself, lest lie ascribe his salvation to his own merit and consequently boast of his own wisdom. He must be so sensibly unrighteous, that his own righteousness appear (as it truly is) “as filthy rags” in the sight of God and himself. He must have a clear ‘view of his own corruption and pollution in sin and iniquity. And he must know by experience that “he that committeth sin is a servant of sin.” And thus finding himself to be a bond-slave under the dominion of sin, feels the need for redemption. Any salvation (so-called) which does not deliver a poor sinner from his ignorance, unrighteousness, corruption and pollution, and bondage to sin is a fake. That “thing” called *time-salvation* does none of these things. In it there is no wisdom nor righteousness, sanctification. nor redemption. But in that One true Salvation, we find all these accomplishments, for, “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory IN THE

LORD.” (I Cor. 1:30-31)

In Him, we are *delivered* from the ignorance of the carnal mind, (and “to be carnally minded is death.” “because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God. neither indeed can be; so then, they that are in the flesh CANNOT please God.” Rom. 8:7-8) But being in Him, Christ is made unto us wisdom, and that by covenant promise: “But ye have art unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” (I John 2:20)

In Him, the regenerate elect have a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees,” for Christ Himself is made unto them Righteousness. “In HIS DAYS Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: arid this is His name whereby He shall be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jer. 23:6) Yea, it is written, “ — this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness IS OF ME, saith the Lord.” (Isa. 54:17)

As a polluted and vile creature, the chiefest of sinners has the Lord Jesus Christ for his sanctification. He is “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.” (Jude 1) “For by one offering He hath perfected FOR EVER them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14); and this: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once . . . ” (Heb. 10:10) Yea, it is through this offering — “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” that . . . God of peace . . . make you perfect in EVERY GOOD WORK to do His will, WORKING IN YOU that which is well pleasing in His sight, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Heb. 13:20-21) Certainly this is not conditional with ifs and admonitions. The Lord Jesus is made unto His people sanctification.

And must we labor to prove that the Lord

is made unto us redemption? The word “redemption” is used in reference to the purchase, and subsequent release of *bond-slaves*. Sinners have, by their works of iniquity, “sold themselves to sin” and are justly held in bondage to sin. Those who commit sin are “the servants of sin.” The word “ransom” has reference to the payment of a price to set *captives* free. The slave is freed by redemption; the captive by the ransom. The Lord Jesus preached the prophecy in Isaiah, saying, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach DELIVERANCE to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set AT LIBERTY them that are bruised” — and, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” (Luke 4:18-21)

Now, the blood of goats and calves could not redeem these slaves of sin. “...But by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb. 9:12) The manifestation of this was a work done in “time” on Calvary’s tree, and for His people who are in a “time” state. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE from DEAD WORKS to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14) Works, dead or alive, are done in time — not in eternity. He did this Himself, and thus it is of grace, and not by works of the creature. Jesus “is made unto us righteousness and redemption.” He, and He alone is our full salvation.

Salvation is a deliverance. In the glorified state of eternity, I can think of nothing from which the redeemed must be delivered, or saved; for nothing shall enter there that is defiling or unclean. All experimental salvation is in this time world, and without salvation here, there is no promise of such

hereafter. It is here that we are saved from our sins, and this by the blood of Christ. It is here we are saved from wrath, and that by Christ’s bearing it in our behalf. In all cases, it is still one great theme: “Salvation is of the Lord”!

This writer was born, reared, baptized, educated, and ordained a freewill in a Southern Baptist organization. If ever a man made a whole attempt to merit blessings by freewill, this writer did. I am not ignorant of that deception of the flesh. When God dragged me bodily and spiritually out of that madness, He dangled me over the fires of hell, and “the pains of hell gat hold of me.” He kept me there until, like Jonah, I confessed “Salvation is of the Lord.” I hate that abominable deception, even though I yet find it’s residue in my members.

When I first examined the theory of time-salvation, a very capable, patient, and loveable elder of that persuasion labored gently with me to show me that way. He explained to me that before regeneration a man did not have a freewill. I had been taught that by experience. He explained that in regeneration, God gave grace to a sinner. I felt I knew that glorious truth. He explained how that this grace now could be used to gain blessings by obedience, or be neglected and miss blessings — and that I knew to be the same freewill doctrine in which I was reared. That was not my experience in grace. To me, his definition of “grace” was the same as my old definition of “freewill,” and God had delivered me from it by His own mercy and effectual grace. I yet believe, without any modification, that grace is unmerited, undeserved, unexpected, and always effectual in a living child of God.

When we are commanded to love one another, it is not conditional. It is by the “fruit of the Spirit.” When we are given joy in our Salvation, it is not earned by us — it is by the “fruit of the Spirit.” When God calls us to peace, it is not oh our own making — it is by

“the fruit of the Spirit.” When we are called to long-suffering, it is by the “fruit of the Spirit” When we are commanded to be gentle unto all men. it isn’t conditional. It is by the “fruit of the Spirit.” To do good, and communicate, is not of the flesh, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will present with me: but how to perform it, I find not.” (Rom. 7:18). but rather, it is by the “fruit of~ the Spirit.” Faith is not given us to exercise like a muscle in the leg — it is by’ the “fruit of the Spirit,” and the “gift of God.” We are commanded to be meek, yet meekness is a “fruit of the Spirit.” We are commanded to be temperate in all things, and yet temperance is the “fruit of the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:22) All these things commanded us would surely fail to be done, unless God effectually empowered us by His blessed Spirit to do that which He has commanded.

Yes, it is true, that Paul told the Philippians to “work out your own salvation.” By why should anyone claiming to believe in sovereign grace lift it totally out of the text and say it is conditional with “ifs and admonitions.” A minister of Christ, of all people must be studious of the Scriptures and rightly divide them before the hearers. If one merely reads that passage he will see it refutes, rather than supports, that time-salvation theory. For it reads: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye HAVE ALWAYS OBEYED, not as in my presence only, but how much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For IT IS GOD which WORKETH IN YOUR BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS OWN GOOD PLEASURE.” (Phil. 2:12-13) Paul is not referring to earning blessings. He is admonishing, and encouraging the church upon his final departure, to solve their own problems now, knowing that Christ is the Head of the church and works the will and performance of His will in them. They could expect His divine leadership in the church’s

affairs.

I was then, and am yet, satisfied with one salvation, for He is my all in all, and as Paul said, “...nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that HE is able TO KEEP that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” (II Tim. 1:12) God’s people do not need a supplementary salvation, for Christ needs no help. ONE is sufficient if it be that One “who loved us and gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of GOOD WORKS. (Titus 2:14) That is, those who have the true “grace of God that BRINGETH salvation” that “hath appeared to all men, teaching US that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Titus 2:11-12).

When I first was introduced to that homogenized grace-works hybrid, I marveled. I thought then: “If one salvation isn’t enough, two will not do much better.” That was twenty-six years ago. About six years ago. I ran up with one minister of that persuasion preaching fourteen more salvations! I guessed I should not have laughed (it is too serious) — but I did. Fifteen, or fifteen thousand salvations cannot enhance a sufficient Salvation in the least.

Finally, to the minister’s citation of “choose you this day whom ye shall serve” as a time-salvation exhortation —it is not worthy of much attention. I suppose every freewiller in the world thinks that is in the Bible — but it isn’t. The nearest thing to it is found in Joshua 24: 15, and if anyone thinks “it is EVIL to serve the Lord” they may as well choose one false god over another. It will avail no more good today than it did those pagans of ancient times.

I doubt seriously, however, this minister represents anyone other than himself, for I have never before heard of any “free grace”

minister use the conditional law covenant, nor Joshua 24: 15, as being applicable to the saints of God. It seems to be the experience of all God's people in regeneration to run to the law of works. All I have met say they did. And all of them find, in the end, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" and in God's own time enter into the Gospel sabbath, or rest. One must work before he rests. But churches should be careful not to receive anyone until he is converted to faith in Christ as his salvation and hope. Certainly a church is premature in ordaining a man to the Gospel ministry who still believes he is under the law.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD COMMENDED

(from the Gospel Messenger, 1886)

"But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid." — Rom. 3:5

It has ever been a point difficult for men to understand how God can govern the world in righteousness while the wicked actions of men and devils are made to subserve and fulfill His purpose, and that He should take vengeance on them for their wickedness. Nothing, however, is more certainly true. David was well instructed in this divine truth, and being under the special teaching of God, he speaks with the strongest confidence, saying, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee." (Psa. 76:10) None were more subject to, or made to suffer more from the wrath of man, than was King David, except the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, whom David in his sufferings often represents and personifies. Yet, still his faith in the sovereignty of God triumphed over all these sufferings and still enabled him to say, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder thou wilt restrain." God is not unrighteous to take

vengeance on man even for the very wrath or sin which He overrules to His own glory. Wicked men are nonetheless criminal in their wickedness because of the defeat of their wicked purposes, nor can they justly claim exemption from vengeance being justly executed upon them on the ground that their wickedness has been defeated and overruled of God to the accomplishment of His purposes and to the glory of His name. Such is the overruling power and wisdom of God, that wicked men and their wicked acts are made not only the instruments to accomplish the purpose of God, but they' are also the instruments of their own defeat and destruction.

After the Lord had given a great deliverance to His people of Israel, by a sling and stone in the hands of a youthful stripling, the women came out of the cities to meet King Saul, dancing and singing that "Saul has slain his thousand and David his ten thousands." (I Sam. 18:7) This was too much for Saul to bear, and the vengeance of his heart was stirred up against David. But when we trace the conduct of David all along through the trials he had to endure, it will be seen that he was deeply impressed in heart all the time that both he and all his adversaries were in the hand of God. And when David himself had sinned greatly against the Lord in the deliberate murder of Uriah and adulterous relation with his wife, the purpose of God that Christ should come according to the flesh through the lineage of David by that woman, did not take away the unrighteousness of David in that wicked deed, nor blot out the guilt of his enormous sin; but it was expressly told him by the Lord that, "The sword shall never depart from thy house BECAUSE thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, I WILL raise up EVIL against thee out of thine OWN house, and will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy neighbor." (II Sam. 12:10, 11)

Upon this and a thousand other similar things, finite and feeble men will say that if the righteousness of God in vindicating His law and fulfilling His purposes is more clearly set forth and commended by the unrighteousness of David, why doth the Lord yet find fault, and why doth He take vengeance or inflict any punishment for such sins? We do not propose to enter into any lengthy argument or defense upon the objection. It is sufficient to say that as David acted voluntarily through carnal, fleshly lusts in what he had done, and contrary to the revealed and express command and law of God, he was criminal in the sight of God. No divine command or divine impulse prompted him in his wicked deeds. God only left him to act out freely the inclination of his own corrupt nature, and though his unrighteousness in the overruling purpose and power of God should commend the righteousness of God, yet there is no unrighteousness with God in taking vengeance on David or on any other person for his wickedness.

The decree of God had gone forth. It had been proclaimed by the prophet in David's ears, and the word could not return void. It must accomplish the Lord's pleasure, and it must prosper in the thing whereunto He had sent it. "The sword must never depart from" the household of David. But while it is thus decreed of God in righteousness, no wicked man, with selfish and wicked designs prompting him, to use the sword of power against David or his household, can justly plead exemption from punishment for his sin, on the ground that his act was decreed of God as a chastisement or punishment to be inflicted on David for his sin. David well knew that God is a sovereign, and His decree had gone forth never to be reversed; and he well knew that both himself and the wicked were in the hand of God; and though it was certain that the afflicting and bloody sword of

wicked men should never depart from his house, yet he is encouraged to pray most fervently to the Almighty' Sovereign, "Deliver my SOUL from the wicked, which is THY sword." (Psa. 17:13) The wicked are God's sword to execute His wrath, or to inflict punishment, judgment or chastisement against other transgressors. David had to contend against them and to suffer severely from this sword as appointed against him of the Lord. Nor had he any hope of being sustained under the heavy load, or even temporarily delivered from this sword, only by Him who had appointed it against him. He knew that God alone could restrain the wicked from going beyond what was proper for him to suffer for his sin, and therefore he prays. "Deliver me from the wicked, which is Thy sword." God is not unrighteous to take vengeance against sin in any way that seemeth Him good, and which will most effectually accomplish the design of His will in executing just punishment upon transgressors. If a wicked instrument or a man with wicked intentions and purposes will more effectually sting us for our sin than to fall into the hand of a righteous man, he is turned loose upon us till our transgression has received a just recompense of reward. Then the Lord restrains the wicked from further aggressions upon us. And while it is wicked in the man by whom we are afflicted, the AFFLICTION ITSELF is appointed of God as a just retribution for our sin, while at the same time the wicked man by whom we have been scourged and chastened is guilty before the Lord, and he in turn is held accountable for what HE HAS DONE and must suffer for it.

We are aware that these are deep and wonderful things, and with the Psalmist we might well exclaim, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psa. 139:6) Or in the more rapturous strain of the holy apostle break forth as if lost with wonder and say, "O the depth of the

riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" (Rom. 11:33) How daringly presumptuous it is for any creature to assume to counsel the Lord or dictate as to what is right or wrong for Him to do or not do.

We have numerous Scriptural examples of the wrath of man being so directed and circumscribed as to fill the purpose of God in some chastisement against His people, and also terminating in the destruction of the very instrument by which this chastisement was inflicted.

After King David had felt the force of the sword of Saul and even of his own son Absalom as a just chastisement for his desperate sin, and was made to flee in shame and disgrace with "all his servants and all his mighty men," from his own son; and, to add to his affliction and sting him still more deeply with a sense of guilt and shame, there came forth a man of the family of Saul, Shimei by name, and cursed David, and tauntingly threw stones at him, even when surrounded with his cabinet counsellors and mighty men of war, saying, "Come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial."

See how readily David could interpret all this as sent upon him from the hand of God! When one of David's mighty men saw and heard the indignity which was cast upon the humiliated King of Israel, he says, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord, the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But no, David could not allow that; for he so forcibly felt that the Lord was inflicting a just retribution upon him for his sin in the matter of Uriah, that even though a wicked man was used, David says, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David. Who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so?" And again he says, "It may be

that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." (2 Sam. 16:10-12)

David in this case, as in many others, had hope that even this deeply humiliating affair should, in the end, be for his good. He had hope that the Lord would look compassionately upon his affliction, which he then patiently, resignedly and penitently endured; and that was not lost nor disappointed, for he afterwards wrote, the Lord would turn it all to good for him. His hope saying, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." And again, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." (Psa. 119:71)

But let us observe here that unrighteousness, of itself considered, CANNOT work the righteousness of God; but when circumscribed by the power and providence of God and kept within such channel as to inflict a just punishment against transgressors — this punishment — this administration of justice on the guilty, DOES commend and set forth most clearly the righteousness of God. (Beautifully put, Elder Hassell! — Ed)

Shimei, in cursing David and throwing stones at his mighty men, was NOT innocent, though God had bid him do it. He did it with wicked and malicious design. The purpose of God being just, and for the humiliation and ultimate good of David, could NOT EXCUSE the wicked design nor malicious feelings of Shimei. He was guilty before God in this, while at the same time, his cursing was but the administration of a just punishment upon David, and designed of God ultimately to result for his good. Shimei is still guilty of a wrong, and he subsequently is left to forfeit his life even by his own proposition, and thus, he had not only a just retribution for his sin in cursing David, but he himself had become the instrument of his own destruction. This

circumstance is very instructive, and in the dying charge given by King David to his son and successor, Solomon, he charges him not to hold Shimei guiltless for his cursing, but to bring down his hoary “head to the grave with blood.” (I Kings 2:9) In obedience to this sacred charge, when Solomon was firmly established upon the throne, he takes an oath of Shimei that he would NEVER leave the city of Jerusalem, nor pass over the brook Kedron under pain of death. For three years things went along very well, but eventually some of Shimei’s servants ran away from him, and in his eagerness to apprehend and bring them back, he either forgot his oath or concluded to risk his life, and thus he passed over the brook, but the wickedness of cursing David is brought to bear as the main sin that had caused his death. The king said to Shimei, “Thou knowest all the WICKEDNESS which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David, my father; therefore, the LORD shall RETURN THY wickedness upon thine own head.” (I Kings 2:44) In this text it is expressly stated that what Shimei had done was wickedness, yet God had let him loose upon David as a just punishment for his sin, and thus the Lord “returned Shimei’s wickedness upon his own head.” What shall we say to these things? “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?” God forbid that we should cherish such a thought!

There are but few aged christians, especially ministers, but what have done wrong at some time of their lives as church members. Their general character and deportment may have been good, and there may have been no just cause for any disciplinary dealing against them by the church, but still, as they are all men of like passions with other men, and have in their earthly nature many fleshly lusts that wars against the soul, they may have become a little puffed up or a little vain and proud even of their good name, or of the standing and

influence they have among their brethren, or they may be overcharged with many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition; they may be getting along very well as they and others might think; nothing is seen particularly wrong by the eye of man, but God sees pride and vanity in the heart, and he knows what will most effectually take away or nip the rising bud of vanity. Sonic one with malicious, envious principles and motives is let loose upon us, the restraints that have hitherto kept him back from us are now removed, to curse or censure, throw stones, backbite, lie in ambush, or secretly thrust the arrows of bitter words, causing suspicion, envy, jealousy, and discontent against us by evil — affecting the minds of our brethren. (!!!!) We are, perhaps, misconstrued, misrepresented, ridiculed, and held up to contempt. We may feel that we could bear almost anything else better than this, and that if the affliction had come in some other shape, or from some other quarter, we could be more resigned to it, but O, “this is too bad.” Yes, it is bad, and it may be wickedness in the instrument by which this blow at our peace is inflicted, but still the EFFECT upon us is precisely WHAT OUR GOD DESIGNS IT should be. It humbles our pride and withers our vanity. The Lord sees that we need just such a trial, or just such a punishment, and if the instrument be a man of base and malicious motives, he too must suffer for his sin. God is no respecter of persons. He that doeth wrong must suffer for the wrong that he hath done, no matter what his rank, station in life, or former standing in the church may have been.

And if a child of God suffers by the hand of man even wrongfully, he is, in no instance, to avenge himself of the wrong done him by doing a similar wrong, or by inflicting any injury upon those who have injured him. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Sometimes christians suffer for

righteousness sake and not for any wrong done by them. Even in this case they should take it patiently. It is for the trial and development of their faith and other fruits and graces of the Spirit. And if he who wrongs them is prompted by any spirit of vain glory, envy or personal ambition to be something when he is nothing, or to promote and raise himself upon the downfall of others, he will likely fall into his own pit, or be caught in his own net.

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NOTICE

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ALL IS WELL IF CHRIST BE MINE

From The Gospel Standard, 1842

(Note: The Strict Baptists brethren in England have given us a valuable heritage in true spiritual writings. They, more than American Baptists, have emphasized the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit within the believer's soul; whereas the American Baptists have dealt more readily with doctrinal issues — which can be awfully dry at times. Cold dead orthodoxy can be a bad disease in the absence of the Spirit's divine operations. Too little doctrine, can lead to a drifting away from the foundation, as evidenced among most Primitive Baptists today. Dreams and visions, replacing the Gospel of Christ, can stifle the spiritual substance of the church, starving the members

into a weak and unstable faith. The beauty of the old articles in the Gospel Standards is found in the doctrinal presentations in a spiritual and experimental manner, which feeds and edifies the inner man of the heart in each living saint. It is for this reason we so often share these articles with our readers. The following is just such an article. Author not cited. — Ed.)

O what a mercy that the Lord will not cut off the hopes of His people! It hath pleased the Lord to make them His people by His own sovereign grace, in His own eternal purpose of love, in all covenant blessings, in the sure mercies of David. He hath viewed all of them alike precious to Himself, and therefore can never forget them, for they are graven on the palms of His hands, and their walls are continually before Him. Well, my dear friends, how are you getting on in your souls? Are you full of trouble; yet cast down by reason of the way; yet doubting, and fearing, and fighting, and sighing; and yet longing for and looking towards that blessed hope and kingdom, where your Lord and Master dwells? In the midst of all this, can you, at times, say with David, and in the same faith, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want!" Is it not wonderful that One so high should condescend to come down to take the charge of such little, insignificant beings, and guide them safe to glory? If I see the Saviour as my Shepherd, as the Shepherd of my soul, I shall, I must, feel an attraction, for my soul will be drawn out towards Him. O, my dear friends, there is too much of speculating upon the precious truths of religion. If we really look at Jesus as our Shepherd, then we shall see how He takes the charge of ALL our concerns. And if Christ takes charge of us, how safe we are! what can go wrong? O, how secure our feeble and trembling souls are! There is not one whom He has taken under His care but what He is feeding, and if you are in His

charge, He is feeding you in body and soul, and will provide ALL THINGS needful, yea, He *has* provided everything needful for His church. What poor tottering trembling creatures we are, as if we had no one to take care of us.

Why, Jesus is all-sufficient! If we trust Him, we shall lack nothing that is for our good, for He will make all His goodness pass before us. So, if we feel our poverty, He will make us rich with the precious blessings of faith, and love, and every needful grace; if we feel our nakedness, He will clothe us with His robe of righteousness, which is “unto all and upon all them that believe” in Him, without which no soul can ever be admitted into His kingdom; if we are weary, Jesus will carry us in His bosom, and lead us along to the fountain of all blessedness, and bear us up, and give us up and give strength to lean on Him as our best Beloved, and will strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; if we are straying, He will bring us back; and O the strayings of our poor minds! Prone to err as the sparks fly upwards.

Although I have been in the way so many years, I feel my wicked heart as prone to stray from the Lord as ever it was; and if God were to enter into judgment with me for one day’s living, and that even my best, I must perish for ever. I can only get comfort as I am enabled to look at that precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, and as I can see that all sins past, present, and to come, were all atoned for in that one sacrifice offered on the cross. When I can see that Jesus died for all my offences, and rose again for my justification, and all according to God’s sovereign will, this gives me comfort when nothing else will. I can never look at any thing that I have ever done; everything is mixed with sin; but when I am enabled to look at the finished work of Christ, and can say that it was for *me*, this does indeed give comfort. Christ died for the redemption of His people.

Now just look at that. What a glorious act it was! If the Lord had not died to redeem my soul, I must have died for ever! But how ready the Lord was to accomplish this great work. “I have a baptism to be baptized with,” says Jesus, “and how I am straitened till it be accomplished! Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!” And may it be ALL OUR SALVATION and all our desire to know that Jesus died for us, and that He is the chief Beloved of our souls, the one thing needful for time and eternity. Jesus sits at the helm of all our affairs, and delivers us from numberless dangers, for sometimes we are in as great danger as the lamb which David delivered from the paw of the bear.

What then do we not owe to Jesus! What should be our affection to Him, and our conduct towards Him! We have often fallen into pits of trouble and darkness, and there should we have remained, had not Jesus rescued *us*. Our sufferings would be eternal were it not for the grace of Jesus. Who but Jesus could have wrought such deliverances for us? Christ is with us if we are called to go through the fire, and through water, for He says, “I will be with you, yea, I have been there before you, and can feel for you in all your trials and sorrows.” Do not mind, my beloved, what the mere professing world may say; they know nothing of Jesus’ faithfulness and grace to His own people; they are out of the secret, and therefore will persecute the children of the free woman. Having no spiritual knowledge of Jesus, nor of the work and operation of the Holy Ghost, they are in nature’s darkness in which they were born. If we have the true light shining in our souls, then indeed we are blessed, for our adorable Jesus will perfect His own work in the souls of all His redeemed family, and all that the Father hath given Him, in an everlasting covenant, shall come to Him. Christ bore with the manners of His people in the wilderness, and when they went astray He used various

means to bring them back again, but He never lost sight of them, even in their most awful state of wondering and backsliding from Him. But He said, "Return unto me, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you."

Our Lord says, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." God's flock is a little flock. It is but here and there that we find a traveler seeking the heavenly rest, for the greater part seem to mind their own things rather than the things of God. But the Lord's people are a people separate from the world both in heart and life. "Ye are not of the world," says Jesus, "even as I am not of the world; if ye were of the world, the world would love its own." We must have the Spirit of Christ to be His, and all Christ's people have a mark set upon them, and that mark is the Spirit of truth, for we must partake of His Spirit, and have His likeness, to be transformed from the world and all things of it. The ungodly cannot understand why the Lord's family separate themselves from them. O no; they do not know the feeling of the regenerate soul, although they note the change that grace has made. It is not the *persons* of the righteous that the world hate; it is because they profess godliness, and have the Spirit of Christ, and have renounced their ungodly practices, and turned their backs upon their sinful ways. This is the grand reason of their hatred. Another reason why the world hates us is because we love to meet together. This was evident in the days of our Lord, and it was this which enraged the self-righteous Pharisees. But, beloved let none of these things move us, neither may we count our lives dear unto us, so that we may finish our course with joy. O it will be a joyful thing to be found at Christ's right hand at the last great day; and if, through grace, we are now believers in Him, then He will own our worthless name before His holy angels.

Notwithstanding all the trials of the

Lord's people, there is still a happiness attending them all through their pilgrimage, and this springs from the hope that they have of eternal life through Jesus Christ. At times the soul is enabled to look forward with pleasure to that period when it shall part with the body of sin, to groan under it no more, leaving every infirmity, trial, and temptation for ever, and that for a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Numbers of people make a great mistake, and worship a false god. Anything will do but the true God. My friend, find out where your soul fixes its affections, where your thoughts most are, and there is your god. I know that, by nature, we hate God; but if our hearts are reconciled, by grace, to Him, our inmost soul at times draws near to Him in love and affection, and this proves our adoption, because we have the spirit of His children. If indeed the Lord is our God, then we are "bought with a price," and shall strive to glorify Him in all we do or say, for this will lie near our hearts. Our chief happiness consists in having the power of God to support us, for what my' beloved can hurt us if the Lord be on our side? In the Lord have we righteousness and strength, and infinite wisdom also to instruct and guide us. With such a Teacher, what lesson can be too hard for us? There is a fulness in Christ to supply all our needs; what then can we want when the Lord supplies our necessities "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"? There is also the grace of Christ to adorn, to form anew, to beautify; is not this happiness? We have also the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and this is a great source of happiness. Again, my beloved, Christ is made over to us in an everlasting covenant, and is become the treasure of our souls. The believer is engrafted into Christ, and is one with Him. He has the Spirit of Christ, the mind of Christ; the inexhaustible treasures of Christ are all his, and he lives upon Him here and to all eternity.

The Christian has joys that the world knows nothing of. If he is in trouble, or cast down, he cannot be destroyed, for the wings of his God spread over him. All the sufferings of the Christian in this world tend to teach him what his God is. If Daniel had not been put in the den of Lion's, he would not have known what an almighty deliverer he had in his God.

Perhaps you are longing to say that Christ is yours, and are fearful. If you long and desire to know more of Jesus and His salvation, you are in a blessed state; and if your heart is made willing, all is willing, and heaven is willing; be not afraid. Think, beloved, of the death and resurrection of Jesus; it was to bring us nigh to God, and from it flows ten thousand streams of comfort, peace and joy. If Christ is ours, we are risen with Him; there is a change, a new creation in our hearts; our best affections are set on God; at times Christ fills our hearts, our thoughts, and desires; and here the Lord will rest for ever, for He saith, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." When our Lord rose from the grave, all His blood-bought family rose with Him, and the church being one with Him, she shares with Him in all things, in His joy, His triumphs, His glory; all is made over to her. Does Jesus rise to live for ever? so does the church; "I give unto them eternal life." Has Christ arisen to sit in heaven? so believers are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Does Jesus rise to reign? so believers are made more than conquerors through Him, for they shall "sit with Him on His throne," "even as He overcame, and is set down with His Father on His throne." The very day the Holy Spirit breathed life into your soul, you were alive for evermore. You are to go to heaven, my beloved, to see His glory.

May you be enabled to look, then, to what the dear Lord has promised, and rely upon it; for although your poor body may be scattered to the four winds, not a particle of it shall be

lost; the very dust of the righteous is precious in the sight of the Lord; and may you and I rest assured that nothing shall separate us from His love. - R.T.

CRUMBS FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE

A Sermon Preached at Edenbridge (Eng.) 11th of May, 1947 By W.J. Walder

"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." —
Isaiah 51:1-2.

Our text is directed to a certain character, "ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." There is a people, then, we know by the word of God; we know it by the new experience; we know it by observation, that there is a people that follow after righteousness. There is a people who truly seek the Lord, and there is a wonderful promise in the Scripture to such, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will abundantly pardon." "He has not said to the seeking seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain," but He has said, "Seek and ye shall find."

While they seek, there is something to which they are directed for their strength and encouragement, and it is this, that they may look from whence they came, that they may look unto the rock whence they are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they are digged. While they seek, this shall be for their

encouragement, and it is to this truth that we would desire to direct you at this time.

The first words that we observe are, "Hearken to Me," — does this mean to the prophet? No! To the ministers of God? No! But hearken unto God and listen for His voice. It may come through those means, and undoubtedly God does work through the means. His voice is heard in the preaching of the Word, in the written Word. His voice is heard by His sheep, and they' are here commanded to hearken to Him. Why? Because they are so ready to hearken to other things. They have hearkened, it may be, long enough to their own doubts and fears, to the aspersions which Satan has cast at them. They have borne long enough the fiery darts of the wicked one, the wiles of the devil. The word and truth of God must make headway against the strongest opposition. It is as a seed sown. The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and hid in the earth — a small seed, struggling against mighty opposition. You will find, my friends, that the kingdom of God has great enemies. There is nothing in this world that can give any support to the kingdom of God; it is right (lead against it. He that is a friend of this world is an enemy of God. You will want no half measures in confederacy - The things of this world, its aims, desires and pleasures are against that seed which is planted like a grain of mustard seed. It makes headway against that opposition.

Now the world has a voice of its own; do not hearken to that; hearken to Me. Do not hearken to the voice of this world, because "all flesh is grass and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, the fashion thereof perisheth." Many have been seduced by the voice of this world. I know that none who fear God will be finally drawn away and enticed, but there is the seducing voice of this world. Bunyan rightly describes the voice and attractions of

this world as Madam Bubble, a wanton who has cast away many. But there are those who count this world a bubble, all vanity below. The voice of the world will be calling, but "hearken to Me." The voice of the world will say, "there are very few that believe in renouncing the pleasures that I have to give and go after mirage, after something that has never been seen. Come and take your fill of the pleasures of this life." "Hearken unto Me," hearken to God — the voice that breaketh the cedars. Those who hearken to God now will hear the voice of love when all other voices are still.

Perhaps we might go a little further as to the voice of the world. You know, friends, those who have been stablished, strengthened and settled through much of the work of the Holy Ghost, through many' afflictions, through the experienced faith of God, are not altogether without the voice of this world in them. Some turn away late from the way because of its call. They go a long distance in the pilgrim way — they are never truly in it, for none that are truly set in it will ever fall away. But there are those who appear to travel along and yet are seduced in the end by the voice of this world. They turn away. It is a solemn thing. After appearing to run so well in the race, there is something that hinders them and turns them out of the way. "Ye did run well; what did hinder you that ye should not obey the gospel?"

"Hearken to Me," not to flesh. The flesh, you know, dislikes the way of God. It dislikes the soul experience that there is attaching to the things of God. Now I would like to say this here, that if we are truly seeking the Lord and following after righteousness, there will be some soul exercise. Now that will have to strive against the natural laziness of the sluggard. Is there anything in our flesh that likes soul exercise? There is not in mine. It does not like that way. There are times when it would rather turn away to the weak and

beggarly elements of this world than read the Scriptures of truth, valuable as they are known to be. That is the way of the sluggard, friends, do not hearken to it. Is there one here that follows after righteousness, that seeks the Lord? Do not listen to the voice of sluggard flesh that would not come to His Word. You see, the Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

“Hearken unto Me.” “My Word shall not return unto Me void. It shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” There will be the voice of the sluggard within, especially after labouring. You know, the times when we feel the most disinclined for further exercise is when we are already tired out by the exertions that we have been through. Perhaps someone here has prayed long and earnestly for light and salvation, like David, whose eyes failed with looking upward. It is then that the voice of the flesh says, “Why pray any more? Why seek the Lord any further? You have not obtained that which you have asked for.” The voice of the flesh never says that God sometimes tarries, that His chariot wheels are long in coming. The flesh never says, “Wait on the Lord.”

“Hearken to Me” — not to the voice of the flesh, ye that follow after righteousness. There is much opposition to the truth of God’s grace. The world does not like it. We have tried to show, in a few words, that the flesh dislikes the way. It dislikes the exercise of prayer. It wearies and tires of the exercise of hearing the Word, but “Hearken to Me”, persevere in the truth.

What a great promise hangs upon a “nail in a sure place”. “Incline your ear and come unto Me. Hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Perhaps those who have been brought up from childhood under the sound of the truth feel

that year after year goes past and they have not obtained that which they sought after. There comes weariness as regards hearing, but “incline your ear and come unto Me.” “Hearken unto Me.”

There will be another thing more potent than these — the voice of the devil. Those who have had the truth made known to them in some measure will not question this. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” (Gen. 3:15). There is the enmity. Satan’s kingdom is not divided against itself, (sic) he is not divided against those that do his will and bidding, he does not come and tempt a man of the world who is walking in his own ways, he does not come with his suggestions against those who are already well bound in his chains. He comes against those who are of the seed of the Lord, he comes and bruises their heels, like Dan. “Dan shall be a serpent by the way, and an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.” (Gen. 49:17) Some men’s hatred has been cruel, but there is nothing so cruel as the hatred and enmity of Satan. He hates those who hate him, from the new birth to the grave. “The wages of sin is death.” Often Satan’s malignity is shown in what they say at the end. Some in extreme cases have worn out their bodies in his service. Some he brings, in extreme cases, to self destruction; some to the utmost rigour of the law; so that men’s hands are lifted up against them. This is the enmity, and by all means at his employ Satan will try to turn away one who follows after righteousness and seeks the Lord. He tries to turn them by his words, but sometimes he comes as an angel of light. “Hearken to Me”, not to his suggestions, not to all those doubts and fears which he would raise in your heart. I believe that all of God’s children have in some measure their fears, misgivings and doubts. There is no virtue in them, they are, as

it were, subject to these attacks and they listen plenty' long enough to them, they often give ear to them when they' should hearken to the Lord. They listen to the voice in themselves which points out their dead and dark state. You know, my friends, if we only build upon what we feel, the foundation will not stand very' sure. The Scriptures does not teach us to build upon what we feel. I know we shall be afflicted by what we feel; our comforts will be affected; our joys and peace in believing will be affected by where we are and by what we feel, but not so our state and standing, it stands in God's election. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.)' Believers, especially seekers, are very prone to listen to what they feel. How is it with you? I feel dark, and cold, and dead. You have not obtained that which you sought after, but hearken to Me and not to this voice. Still seek. Hart says,

"Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak.
'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek."
"The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long;
And to Him the weakest is dear as the strong."
(Gadsby's 804)

"Hearken to Me," not to the voice of doubt which says there is nothing to be found. There is something to be found by those who seek the Lord.

What else is there that will raise confusing voices?

"If unto Jesus thou art bound
A crowd about Him will be found, Attending day
and night;
A worldly crowd to din thy ears,
To hide Him from thy sight." (Gadsby's 302)

"Hearken unto Me." What does my word say unto thee? Does it forbid thee to come and tell thy case? No! The words "Hearken to Me" to a sinner are "Come" — the voice of the Gospel. He hates to put away. His voice says, "Come." I used to hear a minister who

made this remark, that if all the Gospel could be compressed into one word, that one word would be "Come." There is truth in it. The Word of God is, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden;" (Matt.11:28) "Let him that heareth say. Come. And let him that is athirst come." (Rev. 22:17) "Hearken unto Me," riot to those things that drive you away.

"Ye that follow after righteousness" — they have not obtained it — they have not attained to that which they sought after. They are yet following after righteousness, pressing after it, following, they are yet seeking. These are the characters spoken to, and does that not embrace every believer? It does not shut out any believers, does it? It does not shut out any child of God, although it has special reference to those who are pressing forward to the knowledge of God. I believe that every one who is taught of God will be included in this word, "ye that follow after righteousness." It is still a following after, though long in the way. What we have said applies as much to the mature believer as to the seeker.

"Ye that seek the Lord." They are yet seeking the Lord.

"For on their Lord they're waiting,
They seek Him night and day;
His aid they're supplicating

In His appointed way." (Gadsby 292)

No believer ever ceases to seek the Lord, and how often this word is in them, not exactly as it is written, but in substance, "And now come I to thee." They come to Him in their troubles and distresses for further grace.

So then this word embraces all God's elect, and shuts out none of them. Yet it is more particularly directed to those who have not yet found that which they seek after. Now the instruction to them is, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn." Sometimes, you know, friends, the only kind of encouragement that the soul gets is to look to the rock. What is joined more firmly together than a rock? It is all of the same nature, and so is clay. Without

a power more than of itself will there be any moving of a rock. I cannot imagine anything more firmly joined to where it is than a rock in a quarry. It is fixed there, so is the clay in the hole. It takes a lot of power to move clay out of a pit. There is always a tendency for it to remain where it is, because it is of the same nature as that which surrounds it. Now, look unto the rock, look to the sameness of the nature which is in you to those who have been left in the world. The apostle Paul says, "and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," (Eph. 2:3); and he also says, "Are we better than they? No, in no wise." (Romans 3:9). "Look unto the rock" — the sameness, and firmness with which you were joined to the rock. Look upon the rock in the quarry, friends, and see how it is all joined together in one piece. Was it not with us? Were there not those same inclinations — and strong ones — to go after the things of this world? We were determined to go after them. "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn." What a mighty power it was that dug us out of this rock and brought our feet out of the miry clay and established our goings — some power outside ourselves. There is no power in a rock, fixed in a quarry, to move itself. There is no power in the creature to move itself out of the quarry. This is done by divine and blessed grace. Some may not see so striking a work in them as in others. It has been expressed to me more than once by some that they wish the work had not been so gradual, but more of a striking nature, because then they would have felt more sure that the work had been begun. But "look unto the rock." Look at the change which has been brought about. Look, for instance, to the desire, what is sought after. Look into your own heart, what do you see? Can you say, in some measure, "The desire of my soul is to Thy name and to the remembrance of Thee,?" or is there that in you which says, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways"? Is the Word

of God a weariness to you, or is there something in it which draws you, continually hoping that you may find something, and that the Lord will meet with you? "Look unto the rock." Look to your desires. Is there a desire after God? Is there a thirst for Him? Is there something which longs, and can only be satisfied by Him?

"The God of spirits only can

Fill up the vast desires of man." Gadsby

Is there that in you which cannot find any satisfying rest in this life? "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Heb. 4:9) As He has prepared a rest for them, so He also prepares them for the rest. It is something which is repulsive, especially to children, to lie down and rest when the body does not need it; but when the body does need rest, when there is a spirit of rest in the body, how sweet it is. It is so with the soul. Can you say —

"No satisfying rest

Earth's fluttering joys impart;

The portion of a beast

Will not content my heart"?

Surely if so, you can look to the rock whence you are hewn. Your desires and ambitions are not what they' formerly were. "Look unto the rock," look to your powerlessness to deliver yourself. because you were entirely satisfied with the things of this life, you found your all and happiness in them, and would not deliver yourself if you could. "Look unto the rock." You are hewn out of it never to return.

I remember when quite a boy, a minister coming to the place where my parents attended, it was so long ago that my memory is only of the man and there appears nothing of what he said. Less than a year *since*, while conversing with some friends, his name was mentioned in this way, "Do you remember old Mr. So-and-so?" "Yes, I can just remember him." "Well, I remember him saying this, that he went during the interval of service to the quarry. (There is a stone quarry near the

chapel). He was feeling as if he knew nothing of the things of God.” You know, my friends, that is not an uncommon experience even for a minister, they’ have to look to the rock whence they’ are hewn. While he was standing there in this condition he saw a small piece of rock that had come out of the quarry. This friend went on to recount what he said about it. He said, “I picked it up and put it back into its place — it was within easy reach — but it would not stay there.” My’ friends, can you stay in the world longer than the necessity of attending to your affairs compels you? Is not your desire for something different? “And being let go, they went to their own company’.” (Acts 4:23) Do you desire the things, and House, and Word of God, arid secret spiritual exercise? Do you desire to escape from the things that hold you — your occupation, maybe. What a relief it is when the busy times of our lives are past for a little while. How refreshing it is to turn to the things of God, the peace of His Word, the quietness of meditation, the blessing of prayer and communion with God. “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn.” There was a time when it was just the opposite. You counted it as escape when you could go from the House of God, when perhaps you could escape the daily exercise of reading the Word in the home. “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.”

I feel that one or two further things must be said regarding the hole of the pit. David says that God delivered him from the horrible pit and the miry clay. I feel there is that which is a state of soul blessing when we can see from what we have escaped. “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” We have escaped certain destruction, an horrible pit, the pit of damnation and destruction. If you get a sight sometimes of what you have been saved from, it will make your heart rejoice. Has this been

your prayer, “Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men”? You could not bear the thought of spending a long eternity in the company of wicked men. You have been glad enough to escape from them. You are looking to the hole of the pit whence you are digged. It is an horrible pit, there are the powers of darkness at work in that pit, all that is of darkness and death.

“The wages of sin is death.” It damns the soul to everlasting unhappiness and perdition. It is a pit of blackness which is reserved for the devil and his angels, and if you have seen at any time what you have been saved from, it will make you rejoice. You will look to the hole of the pit whence you are digged, as one that has been saved by an hair’s-breadth. Job said it was by the skin of his teeth — a narrow escape. Peter says too, in his epistle, “Judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (I Peter 4:17-18) “The hole of the pit whence ye are digged.”

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Editors

GOD’S WILL AND MAN’S WILL

By Horatius Bonar, 1851

(Of all subjects of utopian idealism, the theory of man’s free will is the most senseless

experimentally. The will of man is most often frustrated in the simple matters of life in a natural way. Yet its *freedom* is extolled by almost the whole modern-day ministry as if that in fact they did not know its wild frustration and madness.)

“Cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in My hand, O house of Israel.” — Jeremiah 18:6

Much of the present controversy is concerning the *will of God*. On this point many questions have arisen. The chief one is that which touches on the connection between the will of God and the will of man. What is the relation between these? What is the order in which they stand to each other? Which is first? There is no dispute as to the existence of these two separate wills. There is a will in God, and there is also a will in man. Both of these are in continual exercise; — God willeth; and man willeth. Nothing in the universe takes place without the will of God. This is admitted. But it is asked, Is this will *first* in everything?

I answer, yes. Nothing that is good can exist which God did not will to be, and nothing that is evil can exist which God did not will to allow. The will of God goes BEFORE all other wills. It does not depend on them, but they depend on it. Its movements regulate them. The “I will” of Jehovah, is that which sets in motion everything in heaven and in earth. The “I will” of Jehovah is the spring and origin of all that is done throughout the universe, great and small, among things animate and inanimate. It was this “I will” that brought angels into being, and still sustains them. It was this “I will” that was the origin of salvation to a lost world (sic). It was this “I will” that provided a Redeemer, and accomplished redemption. It was this “I will” that begins, and carries on, and ends salvation

in each soul that is redeemed. It is this “I will” that opens the blind eye, and unstops the deaf ear. It was this “I will” that awakens the slumberer, and raises the dead. I do not mean that, merely generally speaking, God has declared His will concerning these things: but each individual conversion, nay, and each movement that forms part of it, originates in this supreme “I will”. When Jesus healed the leper, He said, “I will, be thou clean”; so when a soul is converted, there is the same distinct and special forthputting of the Divine will, “I will, be thou converted”. Everything that can be called good in man, or in the universe, originates in the “I will” of Jehovah.

I do not deny that in conversion man himself wills. In everything that he does, thinks, feels, he of necessity wills. In believing he wills; in repentings he wills; in turning from his evil ways he wills. All this is true. The opposite is both untrue and absurd. But while fully admitting this, there is another question behind it of great interest and moment. Are these movements of man’s will towards good the effects of the forthputting of God’s will? Is man willing, because he has made himself so, or because God has made him so? Does he become willing entirely by an act of his own will, or by chance, or by moral suasion, or because acted on by created causes and influences from without?

I answer unhesitatingly, he becomes willing, because another and a superior will, even that of God, has come into contact with his, altering its nature and its bent. This new bent is the result of a change produced upon it by Him who alone, of all beings, has the right, without control, to say, in regard to all events and changes, “I will”. The man’s will has followed the movement of the Divine will. God has made him willing. God’s will is *first* in the movement, not second. Even a holy and perfect will depends for guidance upon the will of God. Even when renewed it *still follows*, it does not *lead*. Much more an

unholy will, for its bent must be first changed~ and how can this be, if God is not to interpose His hand and power?

But is not this to make God the *author* of sin? No! It does not follow that because God's will originates what is *good* in man, that it must therefore *originate* what is *evil*. The existence of a holy, happy world, proves that God had created it with His own hand. The existence of an unholy, unhappy world, proves that God *allowed it to fall into that state*: — but it proves nothing more. We are told that Jesus was delivered by “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” God's will was there. God permitted that deed of darkness to be done; nay, it was the result of His “determinate counsel”. But does that prove that God was the *author* of the sin of either Judas or Herod? Had it not been for the eternal “I will” of Jehovah, Christ would not have been delivered up; but does this prove that God *compelled* either Judas to betray, or Herod to mock, or Pilate to condemn, the Lord of Glory? Still further, it is added in another place, “Of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and *people* of Israel, were gathered together *for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.*” (Just incidentally, the word *counsel* and *determinate counsel* should be interesting for one to look up in the Greek. One may be rather surprised to find it the exact same Greek word translated *predestinated* in Romans 8 and Ephesians 1 – Ed.) Is it possible to pervert this passage so as to prove that it has no reference to predestination? Does it make God the author of the deed referred to? Must God be the author of sin, because it is said that Israel and the Gentiles “were gathered together to do what His counsel had determined”? Let our opponents attempt an explanation of such a passage, and tell us how it can be made to

harmonize with their theory (of freewill).

It may be argued that God works *by means*, in changing the will. “There is no need.” it will be said, “that there should be these special and direct forthputting of His will arid strength. He has ordained the means, He has given his Word, He has proclaimed His Gospel, and by these means He effects the change. His will does not come directly into contact with ours. He leaves it to these instruments to effect the change. Well, let us see what amount of truth there may' be in this. I suppose no one will say that the Gospel *can* produce the alteration in the will so *long as the will rejects it*. No medicine, however excellent, can operate unless it be taken. The will of man then rejects the Gospel; it is set against the truth of God. How then is it made to receive it? Granting that in receiving it there is a change yet the question is, How was it so far changed already as to be willing to receive it? The worst feature of the malady is the determination *not* to touch or taste the medicine; and how is this to be overcome? Oh! It will be said, this resistance is to be overcome with arguments. Arguments! Is not the Gospel itself the great argument? and it is rejected. What arguments can you expect to prevail with a man that refuses the Gospel? Admit that there are other arguments, yet the man is set against them all. There is not one argument that can be used which he does not hate. His will resists and rejects every persuasive and motive. How then is this resistance to be overcome. — this opposition to be made to give way? How is the bent of the will to be so altered as to receive that which it rejected? Plainly by his will coming into contact with a superior one, - a will such as that which said, “Let there be light, and there was light.” The will itself must undergo a change before it can believe that which it rejected. And what *can* change it but the finger of God?

Were man's rejection of the Gospel simply

occasioned by his misunderstanding it, then I can see how, upon its being made plain, resistance would cease. But I do not believe that such is the case; for what does it amount to but just that the sinner never rejects the *truth*, it is only error which he rejects, and were his mistake rectified, he would at once embrace the truth! The unrenewed man, then, so far from having enmity to the truth, has the very opposite! So little of depravity is there in his heart, and so little perversity in his will — such instinctive love of truth and abhorrence of error is there in him, that as soon as the truth is made plain to him, he embraces it! All his previous hesitation arose from the errors which had been mingled with the truth presented! One would think that this was anything but depravity. It might be ignorance, but it could not be called enmity to the truth, it is rather enmity to error. It would thus appear that the chief feature of the sinner's heart and will is not enmity to truth, but hatred to error and love to truth!

Man's heart is enmity to God, — to *God as revealed in the Gospel*, — to God as the God of grace. What truth can there be in the assertion that all the sinner's distrust of God and darkness of spirit arise from his not seeing God as the God of grace? I grant that oftentimes this is the case. I know that it is very frequently misapprehension of God's merciful character, as seen and pledged in the death of Christ, that is the cause of darkness to the anxious soul, and that a sight of the exceeding riches of the grace of God would dispel these clouds; but that is very different from saying that such a sight, apart from the renewing energy of the Spirit upon the soul, would change man's enmity into confidence and love. For we know that the unrenewed will is set against the Gospel; it is enmity to God and His truth. The more closely and clearly truth is set before it, and pressed home upon it, its hatred swells and rises. The presentation of truth, however forcible and

clear, even though that truth were the grace of God, will only exasperate the unconverted man. It is the Gospel that He hates; and the more clearly it is set before him he hates it the more. It is God that he hates; and the more closely God approaches him, the more vividly that God is set before him, the more does his enmity awaken and augment. Surely, then, that which stirs up enmity cannot of itself remove it. Of what avail, then, are the most energetic means by themselves? The will itself must be directly operated upon by the Spirit of God: He who made it must remake it. Its making was the work of Omnipotence: its remaking must be the same. In no other way can its evil bent be rectified. God's will must come into contact with man's will, and then the work is done. Must not God's will then be first in every such movement? Man's will follows; it can not lead.

Is this a hard saying? So some in these latter days would have us to believe. Let us ask *wherein* consists its hardness. Is it hard that God's will should take the precedence of man's? Is it hard that God's will should be the leader and man's the follower in all things both great and small? Is it hard that we should be obliged to trace the origin of every movement of man towards good to the will of a sovereign Jehovah?

If it be hard, it must be that it strips man of every fragment of what is good, or of the slightest tendency to good. And this we believe to be the secret origin of the complaint against the doctrine. It is a thorough leveler and emptier of man. It makes him not only nothing, but worse than nothing, — a sinner all over, — nothing but a sinner, with a heart full of enmity to God, set against Him as the God of righteousness, and still more set against Him as the God of grace, with a will so bent away from the will of God, and so rebellious against it, as not to have one remaining inclination to what is good and holy, and spiritual. This he cannot tolerate.

Admit that a man is totally worthless and helpless, and where is the hard saying? Is it hard that God's blessed and holy will should go before our miserable and unholy wills, to lead them in the way? Is it hard that those who have nothing should be indebted to God for everything? Is it hard, seeing that every movement of my will is downwards, earthwards, that God's mighty will should come in and lift it omnipotently upwards heavenwards?

If I admit that God's will regulates the great movements of the universe I must admit that it equally regulates the small. It *must* do this, for the great depend upon the small. The minutest movement of my will is regulated by the will of God. And in this I rejoice. Woe is me if it be not so. If I shrink from so unlimited control and guidance, it is plain that I dislike the idea of being wholly at the disposal of God. I am wishing to be in part at my own disposal. I am ambitious of regulating the lesser movements of my will, while I give up the greater to His control. And thus it comes out that I wish to be a god to myself. I do not like the thought of God having *all* the disposal of my destiny. If he gets His will. I am afraid that I shall not get mine. It comes out, moreover, that the God about whose love I was so fond of speaking, is a God to whom I cannot trust myself implicitly for eternity. Yes, this is the real truth. *Man's dislike of God's sovereignty arises from his suspicion of God's heart.* And yet the men in our day, who deny this absolute sovereignty, are the very men who profess to rejoice in the love of God, — who speak of that love as if there were nothing else in God but love. The more I understand of the character of God, as revealed in Scripture, the more shall I see that He *must* be sovereign, and the more shall I rejoice from my inmost heart that He is so.

It was God's sovereign will that fixed the time of my birth. It is the same will that has fixed the day of my death. And was not the

day of my conversion fixed as certainly by the same will? Or will any but "the fool" say that God has fixed by His will the day of our birth and death, but leaves us to fix the day of our conversion by our own will; that is, leave us to decide whether we shall be converted or not, whether we shall believe or not? If the day of conversion be fixed, then it cannot be left to be determined by our own will. God determined, where and when, and how we should be born; and so He has determined where, and when, and how we shall be born again. If so, His will must go before ours in believing; and it is just because His will goes before ours that we become willing to believe. Were it not for this, we should never have believed at all. If man's will precedes God's will in everything relating to himself, then I do not see how any of God's purposes can be carried into effect. Man would be left to manage the world in his own way. God must not fix the time of his conversion, for that would be an interference with man's responsibility. Nay, He must not fix that he shall be converted at all, for *that* must be left to himself and to his own will. He must not fix how many are to be converted, for that would be making His own calling a mere mockery, and man's responsibility a pretence! He may turn a stray star into its course again by a direct forth-putting of power, and be unchallenged for interference with the laws of nature. But to stretch out His arm and arrest a human will in its devious course, so as to turn it back again to holiness, is an unwarrantable exercise of His power, and an encroachment upon man's liberty! What a world! where man gets all his own way; where God is not allowed to interfere, except in the way that *man* calls lawful! What a world! where everything turns upon man's will; — where the whole current of events in the world or in the church is regulated, shaped, impelled by man's will alone. God's will is but a secondary thing. Its part is to watch events,

and follow in the track of man's! Man wills, and God must say — Amen!

In all this opposition to the absolute will of God, we see the self-will of the last days manifesting itself. Man wanted to be a god at the first, and he continues the struggle to the last. He is resolved that his will shall take the precedence of God's. In the last Anti-christ, this self-will shall be summed up and exhibited. He is the king that is to do "according to his will". And in the freewill controversy of the day, we see the same spirit displayed. It is Antichrist that is speaking to us, and exhorting us to proud independence. Self-will is the essence of anti-christian religion. Self-will is the root of bitterness, that is springing up in the churches in these days. And it is not from above, it is from beneath. It is earthy, sensual, devilish.

THOUGHTS ON SANCTIFICATION

By W. S. Craig, 1949

Sanctification occupies a very important place in the Scriptures, for it is the end of election, a precious fruit of redemption, the primary intention of justification, the scope of adoption, and is absolutely necessary to final glorification. Its importance appears as the great design of ALL the Divine operations. It is used to signify that work of grace by which those who are called and justified are renewed after the image of God. It first means to elect, set apart and consecrate to a holy use, as well as to make holy, and is a Divine work which cannot be begun and carried on by the power of man. Justification and sanctification are both blessings of grace and closely connected; yet there is a distinction between them. Justification respects the sinner in a legal sense, is a single act of grace and terminates in a *relative* change; that is, a freedom from guilt and punishment, and gives a lawful right to life. Sanctification regards him in an

inward cleansing sense, and terminates in a *real* change. The former is effected by a righteousness without; the latter by a holiness wrought within. That precedes as a cause; this follows as a result. Justification is by Jesus Christ as a Priest, and has regard to the guilt of sin. Sanctification is by Him as a King, and refers to the dominion of sin, adoption, etc. The Lord's first step in sanctification is election, or setting apart to a holy use. The next step is to make holy and begins in regeneration as a principle of holiness implanted in the heart or spirit, and is manifested to the redeemed and called of God by a hatred of sin in their own breasts; and finally its great work will be completed in full glorification. But the flesh is not changed in this life and made holy in any degree, for it remains a sinful and corruptible body until changed in the resurrection.

This editor owes a debt of grace to the above author, Elder W. S. Craig of Cozad, Nebraska. When God first enlightened my understanding of free grace, Elder Craig graciously began sending his newspaper column in a local paper to him. Young in the faith and all alone in the earth, those clippings were a joyful bit of glad tidings. His private letters were always warm and spiritual. Whether any of his spiritual fruit remains in Cozad, I know not; but the sweet doctrine, gracious patience, and loving encouragement are still a precious heritage to me. As you can see, he was a very capable and sound writer. He passed on to be with His Lord the year I was baptized. S.C. Phillips