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SANCTIFICATION

By Peter Vanhorn, 1787

(In the November issue we offered a very brief article upon the subject of sanctification. It is a subject too long neglected. Bill Lee, editor of *The Baptist Standard Bearer* raised a very pointed question in the October-November issue which would be well to consider, i.e., "How can anyone preach the idea that people can be *justified* without being *sanctified*?" *If one considers* divine election a sweet and comforting thought, then surely they can recognize this text: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we *should be holy and without blame* before Him in Love." (Eph. 1:5) The very end of divine election is the glory of God, and in the life of the sinner thus chosen, it is sanctification which glorifies the gracious love and power of God. Hence, we offer you this selection from the Circular Letter of the Philadelphia Association of 1787, in the selfsame year our federal republic was born.- S.P.)

To the churches to which they are respectively related, greeting.

Dear Brethren,— We beg leave to introduce our circular letter by informing you, that our souls have been refreshed at this meeting, by the glorious tidings brought from different parts, of the advancement of our Redeemer's cause. We congratulate you on this joyful event, portentuous, we hope, of the speedy accomplishment of the promises made by the Father to Christ, the King of Zion. As also, on the kind interposition of Divine Providence, visible in that happy union which obtained among the members of the late federal convention, (Constitutional Convention — Ed.) to agree upon and report to the States in this Union, a form of a Federal Government; which promises on its adoption.

to rescue our dear country from that national dishonor, injustice, anarchy, confusion and bloodshed, which have already resulted from the weakness and inefficiency of the present form; and which we have the greatest reason to fear, but the beginning of sorrows, unless the people lay hold on this favorable opportunity offered to establish an efficient government, which, we hope, may, under God, secure our invaluable rights, both civil and religious; which it will be in the power of the great body of the people, if hereafter found necessary, to control and amend.

As we wish you to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we shall address you on the important subject of Sanctification. We are exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints; and as there are some who deny the work of sanctification, and too many who are little acquainted with it, we shall therefore consider the subject in the following order –

- I. We shall explain the term sanctification.
- II. Give some reasons why sanctification is necessary.
- III. The happy effects in the subjects of it.

I. In a performance of this nature, brevity must be expected; yet enough may be said to display our sentiments on the subject. By searching the Scriptures, you will find the term hath various significations.

1. It is used to signify the setting apart a person or thing to the peculiar service of God. This is the general use of the word in the Old Testament, and in this sense God is said to sanctify the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3); and to the same purpose it is applied to the first born (Exo. 13:2). Thus the temple, the priests, the altar and sacrifices, were sanctified under the law.

2. It is used for that holiness and purity of nature, which gives us a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light; and, in some respects, may be distinguished from

regeneration, though it is radically connected with it. The Apostle, speaking of our salvation, said, “It was not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus. 3:5)

By washing of regeneration, we understand that great change, which is instantaneously made in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, when we are first made alive in Christ Jesus; and from that period we are new creatures, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. The word is used in the same sense, in I Cor. 6:11, where the Apostle says, “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.” In regeneration, the divine nature is begun in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, and without this work, there can be no growth in grace. From these passages of Scripture, we see that the Holy Ghost makes a distinction between regeneration and sanctification: in regeneration we receive a new nature or principle, and sanctification is the growing of that new nature to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. The washing of regeneration is never repeated, but the renewing of the Holy Ghost is carried on through the whole life of a Christian, till he ascends to be with Jesus (Phil. 1:6). It is the Holy Ghost which begins it, and it is His work to finish it; for in the great purpose of salvation, the Holy Spirit is as firmly engaged to begin and finish this work, as the Son of God was to finish the work of redemption assigned to Him to do. The counsel of God has ordained this way to make us meet for that state of glory, to which we have a right by the adorable Redeemer’s righteousness; and therefore we are said to be “chosen unto salvation, THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit.” (II Thess. 2:13)

II. We now proceed to demonstrate the *necessity* of sanctification.

1. We premise, that the necessity of sanctification and regeneration arise from the

same cause, the fall of man. This has incapacitated us for communion with God; therefore, notwithstanding all our blessed Redeemer has done, we are represented to be in a lost state till this work is begun. As sanctification is a progressive work, the necessity of it arises from the consideration that we are at first only 'babes in Christ, and not complete in holiness; for the best men have a body of sin and death. Every renewed soul must FEEL this to be his case. The great Apostle groaned under it, and the beloved disciple said, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." (I John 1:8) The Holy Ghost is promised to dwell with us and remain in us as His temple, and ye know the temple of the Lord must be holy. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

2. Sanctification is necessary, because without it we cannot honor and glorify God. For this our blessed Lord prayed, and for this we should daily apply to the throne of grace, that we may understand the mysteries of His kingdom, and the glory of His grace; that we copy after His great example, and honor Him in every dispensation of His providence.

3. It was the great design of Christ's coming into the world; therefore His name is called Jesus, because He saved His people from the demerit and the pollution of sin; purifying a peculiar people unto Himself, zealous of good works. This great end of the Redeemer's coming shall be fully accomplished in all God's elect by the EFFECTUAL OPERATIONS OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT; whose work it is to glorify the Son of God, in applying His benefits to the heirs of glory, and give them a meetness to that inheritance that fadeth not away.

III. We shall now attempt to consider the *effects* of sanctification.

1. The effects of it appear immediately after regeneration, in a sincere and hearty DETESTATION OF SIN. The prophet having spoken of a new heart and a new spirit, adds,

"Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe (hate) yourselves in your own sight." (Ezek. 36:3 1) No man can loathe himself till he is born of God, because the new man only sees the deformity of sin. After he is turned he truly repents after a godly sort, and is humbled in dust and ashes before God; firmly believing that nothing can deliver him from guilt, but the precious blood of the dear Redeemer.

2. Another effect is, we see more clearly our divorcement from the law, by the satisfaction of Christ, as the way by which life is to be obtained by the believing soul, who, at the same time, honors the law by acknowledging that it is good, just, and holy. It is the fatal mistake of all in a state of nature, to expect acceptance with God, by the deeds of the law; but the renewed man knows that Christ is the "end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The great Apostle says, "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." What a display of infinite wisdom in the purpose of salvation! Here we see the sinner saved by grace, flowing consistent with all the perfections of God, and, at the same time, maintaining the honor of the divine law. Vain are the expectations of all who separate what God has joined together. Preserve divine truth in its own order, and it is glorious and harmonious. In the great purpose of salvation, God joined together justification by the righteousness of Christ, imputed unto us by an act of grace, by which we have a right to eternal life, and sanctification, which gives us a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. One great error in religion is, separating what God has joined together, and joining together what God has separated. Beware of all who applaud the imputed righteousness of Christ, and, at the same time, either deny the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification, or speak lightly or reproachfully of it. He,

therefore, who would either verbally or doctrinally exclude the imputed righteousness of Christ, and, at the same time, make great professions of holiness and zeal for religion, ought to be considered as an inveterate ENEMY to the blessed Redeemer and His truth.

Now, dear brethren, we take our leave of you, by entreating you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. Watch over one another in love; in humility, seek spiritual growth to glorify your heavenly Father, and appear as lights in the world. May the God of all grace sanctify you wholly, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

James Manning, Moderator
William Vanhorn, Clerk

TRUTH READ BETTER THAN ERROR

Signed, I.D., Gospel Standard, 1844

(**Note:** There is nothing which can replace the preached Gospel of free grace. Under it, God is honored, Christ exalted, and the saints edified. Yet, it is often the Lord's Providence to call a people to the glorious knowledge of the excellency of redeeming grace in the absence of a Gospel ministry. We receive numerous letters from lonely individuals who are providentially located in areas of the country where only the perverted gospel of Mystery Babylon is preached for filthy lucre. In the absence of the Gospel ministry, the following experience of an individual in a small Strict Baptist Church in England may be of edification and comfort)

My dear Friend,— That the love of Christ is unchangeably fixed upon the elect, is a truth which my judgment always assents to; and I trust I can say without presumption that I have, at times, for nearly twenty-seven years, felt it in my heart, and rejoiced in it. I feelingly know the change from “My Beloved

is mine, and I am His,” to “My Beloved has withdrawn Himself. I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer.” His first visit to my soul was in the way of rich, free, and sovereign love; and so have all His subsequent manifestations been up to this present hour; and I would not have them spring from any other cause for a thousand worlds. But there is a vast difference between knowing this in the head, and sensibly enjoying one's interest therein in the heart. I find that the older I grow, the less am I dandled upon the knees, and have the more reason to cry, “Lord, lift thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me.” I am called more to fight against my sins, corruptions, doubts, and fears; and, in spite of past experience, I am compelled to cry and groan for fresh direct tokens of His love towards me. And I wonder now, more than I used to do, how He can endure my enormities and provocations.

The Lord was pleased to call me by His grace when very young; and had He then opened the flood-gates of my iniquity to the extent He has done since, I verily believe that I should have sunk into utter despair. The Lord does not deal with all His children alike in this respect. I have much, very much to be thankful for, in His separating me from the world so early in life, and in preserving me in my unregenerate state. I know nothing of the vile, base, outward sins of Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, &c.; and am, therefore, I consider, an astonishing monument of grace, that He delivered me from the pharisaic position consequent upon a life of moral rectitude, and has condescended, in infinite mercy, to teach me what heart-sins are; that “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing;” that I have the seeds of every evil thing within me; and that nothing but His almighty power prevents them from breaking out. It is very painful to feel all this; and yet I would not be without the feeling of them; for I am confident that none but sensible sinners

can rightly prize the precious blood of Christ, which “cleanseth from all sin.”

I am sometimes favoured with a manifestation of my sonship; and O how I have been broken down when this has happened after a fit of mourning and rebellion! Then how sweet have these words been to my soul: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth we are dust!” and what shame and hating of myself have followed! I will wind up this medley by relating a recent instance, in proof.

Last Sunday morning, I went to chapel very dull and low about having to read instead of hearing preaching; my heart as dull and insensible as a rock; no disposition to crave the Lord’s blessing; the opinions of others, that reading sermons was not God’s ordinance, ringing over and over in my mind; and irritable because none of my friends were present when it was time to begin. But this was not all; for, after waiting above five minutes, and finding no one ready to go into the desk, I had the temerity, in this angry mood, to commence the service myself. I gave out and led the hymn, read the chapter, and mumbled on, after a sort, in prayer, without any perception of its getting further than just clearing my lips, and curling round and round my head like the smoke from a chimney in a foggy day. And how could it be otherwise? for it was all my own, all from the flesh. What a miserable plight to be in! But, blessed be God, toward the close, a divine breathing came; and I feelingly exclaimed, “Do, Lord, at this time show that Thou approvest of the means we use in the absence of the preached word.” This was the blessed Spirit’s prayer; and it was heard and answered; for never were read sermons more blessed in our place than those we then attended to. As I went on reading, my heart was softened; penitence ensued; and the sight which I had of my own

perverseness, and the superabounding grace and long-suffering of the Lord, is unutterable. I have not yet lost the savour of it; and these words of Hart have rung in my soul ever since:

“Pardon all my baseness, Lord;
All my weakness pity.”

You may imagine how ashamed I was of my pettishness, and how angry I was with myself for being angry with my brethren. I seemed also, in my feelings, to be just like a child under the correction of a kind Father, crying out, “I’ll never do so again; I’ll never more doubt that Thou hast blessed and wilt again bless the reading of Thy own servant’s sermons, when used in fear.” But, alas! folly is so bound up in my heart, and I am such a poor forgetful creature, and so prone to waywardness, backsliding, and self-will, that I cannot trust myself. What a mercy that salvation is not of works!

I have not related the above to any of my friends here, except Mr. B——, to whom I mentioned it in a letter I wrote on Tuesday; but I confide it to you because you are similarly placed with me, as it respects our public engagements, and perhaps have been similarly tried. If so, brother, I would say, help me to praise Him; “let us exalt His name together.”

Remember me kindly to the friends at R——. May the Lord bless you with peace among yourselves. Accept my best wishes for your own welfare.— Yours truly and affectionately, I. D.

EDITORS’ THANKS

We wish to thank all of you who have shown us kindness in helping us purchase a new printer. This issue will be printed upon it, the Lord willing. If it is not clear at first, it is due to our inexperience with it. We are encouraged that the love of the truth still abounds in our own dark day. Also, we thank each of you for the names and addresses and

gift subscriptions we are receiving.

JOHN 16:33

By Gilbert Beebe, 1854

(We understand there are copies yet unsold of The Editorials Of Gilbert Beebe from which this selection is taken; and that another volume is ready for the press. For information, write the SIGNS of The Times, P20. Box 1250, Salisbury Maryland 21801)

“In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”

The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ being dissimilar to the world in its organization, spirit and institutions, can never by any art or device of man be made to harmonize in any treaty of peace that can be made; and indeed all amalgamation is forbidden. God has chosen and called the subjects of His spiritual kingdom out of the world, and enjoined on them that they shall not be conformed to the world, nor follow its fashions. The world, by wisdom, has utterly failed to know God, and the things of the Spirit are hidden from the wise and prudent of the world, and they are foolishness to every natural man; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. God alone can reveal them to the saints by His Spirit. The spirit of the world and the Spirit of the Gospel are opposite; and hence it is that the world hateth the members of Christ, even as it has hated Him. If they were of the world, the world would love its own; but as this is not the case, we cannot, as the subjects of our King, expect the favor or friendship of the world. The more we are enabled to exhibit, in our doctrine, ordinances, walk and conversation, the image of our Saviour, the more opposition from the world we may expect; for if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus. He shall suffer persecution. Wherefore

we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.

The history of the world from the beginning shows that God's people have been chosen in a furnace of affliction, and that the depraved powers of the human family have, from the days of Abel, been brought to bear against the religion of divine revelation, and against all who are subjected to its power and principles. Much of the tribulation incidental to the children of God has been in the form of proscription and open persecution, reproach and violence, from the anti-christian powers of darkness, under various arid multiform names and organizations, but much has also arisen from the conflicting elements, flesh and spirit, of which every member of the spiritual kingdom is composed.

Not that flesh and blood can inherit the kingdom, for that cannot be; neither can corruption inherit incorruption. But those who are born of God, and are born of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God that liveth and abideth forever, are still, notwithstanding the implantation within them of the incorruptible seed, and the development of its vitality, for the present, compassed about with the infirmities and depravity of our human nature, in consequence of our being still in these bodies of flesh, in which none of us have ever been able to find any good thing. Thus in the close connection in which our carnal and our spiritual natures are placed, it is impossible to avoid such collision as will make and perpetuate a warfare between them. These are contrary one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would. Who that has been born of God, has not felt the strong current of the natural corruption of their fleshly nature in opposition to all that is holy and heavenly within them? Or who of all the spiritual family has not felt that love to, and desire for holiness as to make them loathe the corruptions of their carnal nature? This

constant conflict involves them in tribulation while in the world, for their fleshly bodies are made of that dust of the earth which is under the curse, and which is doomed to bring forth thorns and thistles, until it shall return thither.

But it is a glorious consolation to know that when they shall be finally raised up from the dead at the last day, they' shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and raised in incorruption and immortality. It is right for us to mortify (kill) the deeds of the body, and to strive against sin; to crucify it with its lusts, but we can never repair, reform or new-model it so as to fashion it after the image of Christ, or destroy its corruptions so as to bring it with us into the spiritual exercise or enjoyment of the kingdom of our Lord. God will subject it, but not yet; He will slay the enmity and deliver us from the bondage of corruption at His appointed time.

As a general thing the saints encounter their greatest opposition, and are subject to their bitterest trials and severest tribulations in this world, from the warfare which rages so incessantly within themselves. The old man, and the new man; the inner man, and the outward man, though personally identified in us here, are nevertheless distinct in nature, emanation, disposition and destiny. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Of the various tribulations which the children of God experience, we may speak of those which appear to come upon us under the immediate providence of God. These will comprise our losses, bereavements, sicknesses, pains, poverty, darkness of mind and subjection to the temptations of the wicked one. Not that we would for a moment allow that any tribulation could assail us independently of the providence of our God, but some of our afflictions in the world seem to us more clearly' and manifestly providential than others, and in this sense we speak of them. There were those among the

ancients who sighed and wept because of the abominations which prevailed in Israel, and when we who love the gates of Zion, and pray' for her prosperity, witness disorder and distress in the church of God, and a disposition to bite and devour one another, we feel ready to exclaim with the holy prophet, "O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep clay and night for the hurt of the daughter of my people." But these afflictions, grievous and painful as they may seem are only for a season. In heaven no disorders will be seen, no waxing cold of the love of the saints; no waste places of Zion will be known, for "not a wrinkle or a spot shall her beautiful form deface."

Although the kingdom of our Lord is not of this world, it is in the world, surrounded by' the world and its vanities, its bewitching allurements, and its corrupting influences, its perplexing anxieties, and its corroding cares, and like a city which is set upon a hill, it occupies an elevated and conspicuous position. "As the lily among thorns; so is she among the daughters, and as the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." She has no right to expect solid comfort or substantial peace from any other source than from Jesus her Lord. "In Me," He says, "ye shall have peace." Then may we well "Be of good cheer" even the tribulations that we endure, are for our good; and under His mighty hand they shall all be turned to our advantage; working patience and experience, and hope which maketh not ashamed. We know that they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things which are seen, which are temporal; but on the things which are not seen, which are eternal. He is our peace. He has overcome the world, and we are destined to share with Him the victory. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith; for the faith of' the

saint is the faith of Jesus Christ. He is both the author and the finisher of it; and we live by the faith of the Son of God who hath loved us, and given Himself for us. Certainly it was in His mediatorial character, as the Head over all things to His church, that He encountered the opposition of the world, and grappled with the powers of darkness. Had he failed in the conflict, hope must have fled forever from us. But be of good cheer; the world is overcome, death destroyed, sin is put away, and all things put under His feet. The conquering Saviour is exalted, and in His mediatorial glory He shall reign until the last enemy shall be destroyed.

This then is then our consolation; this is then our good cheer. The risen Saviour has gone up to heaven with a shout, and the everlasting gates have been lifted up for His triumphal entrance; the heavens have received Him, until the restitution of all things spoken by the prophets since the world began; and thence shall He also come at the end of time, to raise the dead and judge the world. This is good cheer, the very best of cheer to heaven-born children. Weak as we are, trembling and incompetent to meet and vanquish our foes alone, "Cry unto Jerusalem, that her warfare is accomplished. Jesus our Lord has taken the field, met and fulfilled all the requisitions of the law on our behalf. disarmed death of his sting and of his terrors, led captivity captive; and now in full power and majesty sits on His imperial throne; angels and principalities being subject to Him. The stormy winds are in His hand and all judgment committed to Him, and He ever lives to make intercession for his saints. What better cheer could we ask than this? What are worldly honors, wealthy' or fame, length of days, or tents of ease, compared with that the Lord has provided for the cheer of His saints? It is vanity of vanities. Therefore we are brought to the conclusion that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

THE EKKLESIAN - CHURCH LOCAL AND GENERAL

By Robert Harliss Hale

(Editor's Introduction: We have over the past several years received request for our views on the subject of the Church. Our readers often sense that we do not hold to the common view of a universal invisible catholic church composed of all so-called denominations, nor do we hold to the modern Landmark position of a local visible church as being exclusive of other sound Gospel assemblies. We view the church as being both independent and interdependent with regard to the common fellowship of the household of faith. Thus we submit the following excellent article on our views)

The Church, Local and General

No doubt many learned men, together with some who must be classified as suspect, have written in support of the local churches to the exclusion of the general church. Some were very scholarly and their credentials most impressive. But as said by the apostle to the Gentiles "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they' were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." (Gal. 2:6) Even so, those who seem to be so highly refined in worldly wisdom, who have written in support of the local churches while condemning the general church add nothing to us. For God said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (I Cor. 1:19) God did this. He has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and so will He continue to take the wise in their own craftiness.

When Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build *My church*," or as the Greek text reads, "The Ekklesian — "εκκλησια" (Matt.

16:18). He said, I will build one Ekklesian; not two, not three, but ONE. And as the Greek scholars know, or at least should know, the direct article “THE — “ in the phrase “the church” is in the singular number, the accusative case, and in the feminine gender. Therefore, Jesus then said, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against “HER — αὐτοῦ.” In the Song of Solomon, she, “The Ekklesian,” is referred to as “My dove.” It is said of her, “My undefiled is but ONE, ... she is the ONLY ONE of her mother ... she is the choice ONE of her that bare HER — αὐτοῦ.” (Song of Solomon 6:9) She is said to be the one and only wife (not wives) of the Lamb of God, “and to HER — αὐτοῦ was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white,” etc. (Rev. 19:7, 8) The singular CHURCH — EKKLESIAN in the feminine gender in Matthew 16:18 is none other than “the bride the Lamb’s wife.” (Rev. 21:9)

Paul in writing to the saints at Ephesus said, “Even as Christ also loved THE CHURCH — ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ and gave Himself for HER — αὐτοῦ ... that He might sanctify and cleanse HER — *αὐτοῦ*, ... that He might present her to Himself glorious — THE CHURCH — ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that SHE — ω ο ο should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25, 27)

In these things it is not a matter of what men believe or what they don’t believe, how we interpret or how we don’t interpret. What matters is what Christ said and taught, and so too with His apostle. His apostle has said in Ephesians 5:25-27, in reference to the general church, the same thing that Jesus said in Matthew 16:18. He uses the same case, number, and gender. 11. we abide by what is said strictly on the basis of the Greek text (and integrity is our theme and honesty prevails), then no scholar by the name, nor professor by title, would dare say that the CHURCH — EKKLESIAN does not mean or include the

CHURCHES — ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΙ. For to deny the church general, collectively or universally is to say Christ is a polygamist. To say every local church is an independent body’ of Christ categorically’ to the *exclusion* of the collective body of Christ general is to say that Christ in reality had more brides than one . . . that He had many wives, many doves, many undefiled ones that every local church is a bride, a wife, including Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and we could go on and on naming local assemblies from then until now counting the many local Ekklesiai that have existed from Jerusalem until the present time so that Christ must be the Husband and Head of more brides, wives, and bodies than Solomon’s seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

The independent churches that espouse this view, in their communion, close their doors to all other bodies; even all bodies of their own faith and order. This is consistent with their view; for if Christ be the Husband of many *brides-wives*, and the head of more bodies than one, then it is only common decency that lie have intimate union separately with only one body at a time. They do not, however, cooperate to schedule their communion at different times. Even in nature no man can have intimate union at the same time with more than one woman without involving some sort of unnatural lust. These people, in their consistency, not only dance to the music but they also pay the fiddler.

Pertaining to the body of Christ, Paul said, “There is ONE BODY — σωμα .. and ONE SPIRIT — πνευμα... ONE LORD... ONE GOD.” (Eph. 4:4.6) In the expression “one body”, we have the same expression, one spirit. If the Spirit be present in the churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira at the same time, does this mean there are four spirits instead of one, or is there one Spirit present in four different places? Christ said where two or three are gathered together

(church) in My name, there am I in the midst of them. If the situation requires that Christ be present among two or three in more places than one at the same time, does this mean there are more Christs than one? And if the body of Christ be localized in more places than one, for example: the called out assemblies at Ephesus, Corinth, Colosse, and at Rome; does this mean four separate bodies under one head, or does it mean but one individual body localized in four different places with one head? Of course the latter is true. If not, then for sure Christ is the head of a body' which is multiplex in nature, siamese in order, and multiplied many times since.

The incontrovertible answer to this question is found in Paul's letters to the following triad of churches: Rome, Ephesus, and Corinth. Paul, while at Rome (about nine hundred miles from Ephesus) writes to the saints and faithful in Christ at Ephesus wherein he said, "*THERE IS ONE BODY*". (Eph. 4:14) Then he said, "*for WE are members of His body, of his flesh, and of His bones*" (Eph. 5:30).

Paul, when at Ephesus (about three hundred and fifty miles from Corinth), writes to the church wherein lie includes "all in every place" and refers to Jesus as both theirs and ours telling them, "*THE BODY IS ONE and hath many members... ail the MEMBERS OF THAT ONE BODY being many ARE ONE BODY: so also is Christ.*" (I Cor. 12:12) "*Now are they many members yet BUT ONE BODY*" (I Cor. 12:20) *Now YE are THE body of Christ*" etc. (I Cor. 12:27).

In the last quote above, the direct article "*the*" is not found in the Greek text; neither is the indirect article "*a*" to be supplied in the absence of the direct article. To do this would in effect be saving "*a*" body at Corinth, "*a*" body at Ephesus, and "*a*" body' at Rome. This, by everyone's arithmetic, would be three bodies, not one — as the apostle stated. Even so, the apostle while AT Ephesus, as

previously stated, about three hundred and fifty miles from Corinth, writes, "*By one spirit are WE all baptized into ONE BODY*" (I Cor. 12:13 and 10:17). Together with, "*Ye are body of Christ*" (I Cor. 12:27) without the article in the Greek text. Considering the distance, the pronoun "WE" includes the writer and those to whom written, as one. The phrase, "*Ye are body*" can only mean the body of Christ in the localized sense of the word; else the personal pronoun WE will not stand as correct in these texts. As all grammarians should know, the word WE is a personal pronoun, first person plural, nominative case, a plural form of "I" with another person, or others than "I".

To look at Paul's teaching from the larger point of view, he being at Corinth writes to Rome some six hundred and fifty miles away says, "So WE being many are ONE BODY in Christ." Then at Rome he writes to Ephesus some nine hundred miles from Rome says, "For WE are members OF HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH, OF HIS BONES." And at Ephesus the apostle writes to Corinth some three hundred and fifty miles distant says, "By one spirit are WE ALL baptized unto ONE BODY."

These facts are self evident. Paul called the churches within a radius of about nineteen hundred miles ONE BODY, ONE bread, Christ's BODY, SAME BODY, HIS FLESH, and HIS BONES. It is further evident that the apostle in speaking of the body was referring to the militant assembly, both local and general, visible and invisible, including Jerusalem and all local assemblies in every generation thereafter called by Paul in Colossians 2:19 "*all the body*". All this constitutes the body of Christ — the church which is His body, of which Christ is the Head, in which all the faithful are ONE. Even Jews and Gentiles are reconciled in this one body by the cross. So we have one new man, Christ, the Head, and the church: His body.

(Col. 1:18) Of this one church, body, bride and wife, Christ said, "... - the gates of hell shall not prevail against" her. (Matthew 16:18)

These things shall stand as stated, except of course until someone proves Scripturally that Paul was a member in the church at Rome when he said "WE" (Romans 12:5); and had moved to Ephesus and was a member there when he said "WE" (Ephesians 5:3); and was a member at Corinth when he said "WE" (I Cor. 12:13). The listed conditions must be the case if one is successfully to maintain a body independent and solely to the exclusion of the general body. In my judgment, taking into full account the pronoun *we*, to see anyone advocate such a conclusion is but sheer flim-flam and foolishness. But foolishness is characteristic of men whose intents are only to prove their point in order to maintain their own doctrine.

The foolishness of men has said that there are no New Testament references to the word *church* meaning the church *unassembled*, but Paul said, "*I persecuted THE EKKLESIAN (church) of God and wasted HER — αυτος*" (Gal. 1:13) When Paul persecuted the Ekklesian of God, what did he do? Luke (afterwards Paul's companion in travel) said Paul made havoc of the church (εκκλησια) entering into every HOUSE (οικος) haling men and women, committing them to prison. (Acts 8:3) Herein we have an incontrovertible *fact* and pointed conclusion that Saul, in persecuting the church, did so when he entered their houses, dragging them from their homes and confining them to prison. Therefore, this is certainly a reference in the New Testament to the word *church* meaning saintly men and women in their houses being ravaged, dragged-out and put into prison. In fact, in every letter which Paul wrote to the churches, he was writing to the church both while in assembly and out of assembly. If not, then he could only have written to them *while*

they were assembled; otherwise, he would have written to the church when the church did not even exist in those places.

As to the etymological meaning of the word εκκλησια(church), the Scriptures are given by divine inspiration and must be rightly divided. They are not keyed to some crier in a free Greek city calling its free citizens out, summoning them to come together to transact some order of business. Indeed, no Greek city included all Greeks in their ruling assembly, ορεκκλησια . Nor is the called out assembly of the Lord to be confused with some gathering called together by a tower belfry or any' other bell. The total aggregate of saints constituting the Ekklesian of Christ are all called with a high, holy, and heavenly calling. They are called out of darkness into His marvelous light. They are children of light and, as such, they are the Ekklesian of Christ wherever they are, whether alone or with someone — and at all times both at home or away from home, asleep, awake, in the air, or in the sea, assembled or unassembled, three hundred and sixty five days a year!

But note the following statement made by a noted professor when asked to give the meaning of Ekklesia; he replied, "I do not know of any passage in classical Greek where Ekklesia is used of unassembled or un assembling persons". Now, consider that most religious folks, and indeed the local church herself, spends on an average only about six to eight days of the year in actual assembly. This would leave about three hundred and fifty eight days out of three hundred and sixty five when the Ekklesian of Christ doesn't even exist in a particular location. Christ loved the Ekklesian and gave Himself for her. (Eph. 5:25) Does this mean he only loves her six to eight days out of the year; that the gift of Himself for her only applies to six or eight days while in assembly during the year? This is exactly what you have

if the word “Ekklesian” doesn’t mean out-of-assembly as well as in-assembly.

Another quote, from an Arminian says, “We hear much of the invisible church as contradistinguished from the church visible. Of an invisible church in the world I know nothing. The word of God says nothing: nor can anything of the kind exist except in the brain of a heretic.” Well, sarcastically speaking, from one “heretic” to another “heretic”, I will say: does Christ the Head of the body exist? Is He visible or invisible? Though we have known Christ after the flesh, do we still know Him after the flesh or henceforth know we him no more? (II Cor. 5:16) Is Christ the head, the image of the *invisible* God the first born of every creature? (Col. 1:1 5) Is Christ not now the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*, the only wise God? (I Tim. 1:17) Does anything of the kind exist in the brain of a “heretic”? Yes, it does and it exists also in the hearts of ALL God’s children. Christ is the *invisible* Head of the body’ (the church) and the body (the church) goes far beyond the boundaries of the localized churches of Christ located in particular places.

As Paul said, “*I speak as to wise men judge ye what I say.*” Is it not just as reasonable, thinkable, and possible for the body to be *invisible* as it is for the Head? Of course the general body of Christ is militant in being, but there is an aspect of her which is invisible and they who say otherwise are simply blinded by too much etymology. Finally, the church has both a local and general significance denoting both the individual assembly and the general community. The church in its local aspect is independent in some matters while in other matters it coalesces with all other churches into a general dependency. It is a building of which Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone, an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. 2:20) It is the

fellowship of saints; it is the bride of Jesus Christ sanctified by Him for union with Himself. (Eph. 5:25)

The two-fold usage of the word “church” is seen everywhere in the writings of Paul, but a point to be emphasized is that no tension exists between the churches local and the church general. Each church, or congregation, is THE church in its own setting and each is a manifestation or concretion of the whole church.

As to the general church, organizationally, she is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the Head and Chief Cornerstone, foundation, chief Shepherd, and Bishop of souls. As to unity in the general church the strongest spiritual ties unite all to one Head and to each other. But the basic unity is always the local church; not in isolation or as an independent-minded body, but as a concretion of universal fellowship and having a strong sense of belonging to it. As to its form of government, it is a theocracy, not a democracy. It is not a government of the people, for the people and by the people, but a government of God with one King, head, and lawgiver governing the one body, His dove. His undefiled one, His choice one, the only one of her mother, the bride, His wife.

Christ Jesus our Lord (I repeat) is not a polygamist. His body is not siamese in nature. Christ is riot the head of a harem. He is the Head of only one —the Ekklesian general.

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PREDESTINATION By I. R. Hatcher, 1929

When we are enabled to see the Lord’s compass properly leveled, and then look backward arid forward at the unspeakable

beauties of all of God's wonderful works, it humbles us down at the dunghill, and extols the supreme God higher than the heavens!

When looking backward through the crystal glass, we hope that we see ONE Eternal God before there was a sun, moon, or stars to give light to transitly shine into the profound depth of uncreated persons, creatures, or things.

There, in this Eternal or Beginning-less space, was nothing to advise or instruct the everlasting God to do or riot to do a single thing. It is there, we hope, that we see the Father, Sort, arid Holy Spirit upon His unshakable throne, having an infinite knowledge, and omnipotent power, arid wisdom too great to tell by finite man!

It is there we see this God in his eternal majesty, having ALL things to control, form and create just as He pleased, It is wonderful to even think upon such a Being! Where is that man or set of men, that would say that God was depending on uncreated things to direct His Eternal Purposes. which were fitly arid precisely wrapped in Himself, who alone inhabiteth eternity?

Right here His compass stands, perfectly leveled by the power of the Eternal Jehovah, and right here is where the truth existed, arid where the Fountain was, and our God was, is, arid will always be the first great cause of all things, and upon it, all worlds, creatures and things must depend.

I believe that our God is Eternal, and that His purposes are the same, and that every one of them were declared in Christ ever since He has been God. Now, listen: "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out tie enemy front before thee; arid shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also His heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who

is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deut. 33:27-29)

Here we have God's everlasting arms underneath the people thus saved by the Lord, and we have the Lord's heavens above them dropping down dew. Then it is no wonder that they dwell alone in safety! Completely immersed by the heavens above and the everlasting arms beneath. What power can get them? There is none.

Without another Scripture, the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy proves that God is Eternal, and the everlasting arms are all powerful, and that his people are "Saved by the Lord." The corn and the wine represents the new covenant, in which the substance is the eating of His flesh and drinking His blood, which the world could not understand in the days of our Lord in this world.

The above Scriptures are fenced with Jehovah's "shalls," and therefore they set forth the Eternal Sovereignty of God over ALL worlds, creatures and things, even before a single thing was in actual existence. There in that eternal beyond, God "*Declared the end from the beginning,*" and from ancient times, the "*things not yet done, saying My counsel SHALL stand, and I will do ALL My pleasure.*" There is nothing to hinder Him from doing just as he pleases; for "*Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did lie in heaven, in earth, in seas, and in all deep places.*"

Now, where is the man or set of men that can enter into this dominion of the eternal Jehovah and keep Him from doing His pleasure in heaven, in earth, in seas, and in ALL deep places? I tell you, they are not to be found!

In the first verse of the Bible, certainly shows the universal reign of Almighty God over ALL worlds, creatures and things. "In the

beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” In Revelation He says: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY.”

Here is the government of our God from the beginning to the ending, with all the intervening power from first to last. (Rev. 1:8) In the 17th verse, He says, “Fear not; I am the First and the Last.”

As God has declared the “End from the beginning,” who can undeclare what God has declared? Upon this ONE question, our God has challenged the whole race of Adam, by saying, “Who among them can declare this, and show us former things?”

None of the race of Adam is able to declare the end from the beginning, neither can they declare future events; for they have not the wisdom to do so; but God is infinitely wise, and unlimited in power, that He does just what finite men can not do!

Poor, blind mortals are ready to deny God’s Government as being wholly governed by almighty power, and is ready to say that God is unjust! Why would “the vain race of flesh and blood contend with their Creator, God; when mortal man presumes to be more holy, wise or just than He?”

“Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?” Who is he that would be so vile as to reply against his Maker?

“Fear not; for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.” Again, “Every one of them that is called by My name; for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

Again, “I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour.” Again, “Yea, before the day was, I AM He; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and WHO shall let it?”

Dear Brethren, I have not time to comment on all these Scriptures; but I feel that you understand them, for they are in your own experiences. I have been led into this doctrine of God’s sinless and righteous Predestination deeper, because I have suffered so much persecution.

There was not a thing to influence Him to create and form ALL worlds, creatures and things. The Everlasting God needed nothing to dictate for Him as to how He would create all these and to inhabit the worlds; for He was “The Almighty.”

I do not believe that the Eternal God had to look down through time to see how His declarative works were going to run! This would impeach His foreknowledge, and Almighty power over His government! The only conclusion that I can form, is, that the Everlasting God is and was and always will be God, and that without consulting any thing, he determined in all eternity to create, make, and form this earth, and place people upon it, with all other creatures and things, just as it pleased Him.

He needed no wisdom but His own. He needed no power but His own. He declared it and decreed it.

“Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown
hang on His firm decree:
He sits on no precarious throne.
Nor borrows leave to be.”

I know that these are strong words; so strong that the enemy, with bitter persecutions, will nibble at our lie; but I feel willing “to suffer afflictions with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” To “limit the Holy One of Israel.” and desire to appoint boundaries for the Lord” is his desire.

The very idea that God left out some things from His divine and righteous decree to float at random upon the scale of blind chance (a name fit for nothing—the doctrine of Fate) would, if possible, upset the entire universe,

and dethrone the Everlasting God of heaven, and every thing would go into nonentity and not a thing be left to tell the sad story!

Our God says: "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?" "He declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying MY counsel SHALL stand, and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE."

Our God gives no reason why He did declare this, only it seemed good in His sight. Who is he that would subtract some things out of God's declaration? Has God made a mistake and smart men wish to correct their Maker? Who knows what things to take out of God's purposes?

Let Jew and Gentile stop their mouths, without a murmuring word, and the whole race of Adam stand guilty before the Lord. God is the Beginning, and He has been thus in all eternity. So He declared all events of time, in their precise order so minutely that nothing can be taken from it nor any thing added to it.

Let us notice the universal Government of our God. He stands alone in Eternity, and heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool. Nothing is to hinder Him from declaring His purposes!

Sec Hun as tie sits in eternity; "High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." (Isa. 57:15) See Him "As He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." (Isa. 40:22) In the 17th verse, speaking of ALL nations, says, "ALL nations before Him are nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, arid vanity."

Is it a fact that the Everlasting God is sitting on the circle of the earth, clothed in Majestic Power, beholding these less than nothings, and let these nothings tear down His Universal Government over all worlds, creatures and things? Is it a fact that our God has stretched out the heavens as a curtain, arid

spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, will allow these nothings to tear down His Universal Government? No, a thousand times, No!

See Him immersed in the stretched. out heavens, wrapped up in a curtain of His Sovereign Purposes, clothed with the power of the Universal Government, and then look back through the crystal glass of His compass and behold Him arrayed in Almighty power, before the world began; and there chose His people in His Son, and predestinated them unto the adoption of sons to reign with Him in the glorified heaven of heavens! I say: Who but an enemy would dare say to their Maker, You are unjust?

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who that created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; riot one faileth." Has our God done all these things and had no design or purpose in them? No. Such would charge God as being foolish! God's foreknowledge and perfect wisdom would not subjugate Him to guess at His unalterable purposes, thoroughly fixed in Eternity.

No wonder "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is riot heard. Their (heavens) line is gone out through all the earth, and their words (Gospel) to the end of the world. In them He set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom (Jesus) coming out of his chamber (Eternity), and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race" knowing He was strong to get the victory.

Listen: "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it," etc. Now, did the heavens declare the glory of God, and God had no purpose in them? Was all those Scriptures speaking of

blind chance?

To my mind, God either predestinated ALL things, or else He predestinated NOTHING! Those are the words of the Everlasting God, who gives no reason why He declared the end from the beginning; but He did that very thing. It is a conclusive fact that the Everlasting God is the FIRST great Cause and the LAST great End of ALL THINGS: "For by Him were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS were created BY HIM and FOR HIM; and He is before all things, and by Him ALL THINGS CONSIST." The Everlasting God, being first and last, the beginning, and the Head over all things; must have predestinated them with all things intervening between the beginning and ending of vast eternity. (Col. 1:16-17)

We evidently know that this is the doctrine that persecuted our Lord unto death, and also put many of the saints to the stake for the Name of Jesus; but we can not believe for one moment that those things were in the absence of God's absolute predestination of all things. He, in the universal reign of His dominion, "Worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will," and rules, governs, and controls them over to the good of His chosen people; and to the glory of His high and lofty name; for "Neither is there any creature that is not manifested in His sight: but ALL THINGS are naked and opened unto to the eyes of Him in whom we have to do."

The Eternal God said to Job: "Whatsoever is under the WHOLE HEAVEN is Mine." Now has it got to be a fact that the Everlasting God of the entire universe does not control all things under the whole heavens, which are his? Must we sacrifice this high and exalted truth to please the carnal mind oh these "Nothing and less than nothing and vanity," and say that there are

sortie things that God has not predestinated? No, a thousand times no!

The patient Job says of our God: "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth on nothing. He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven (church) tremble, and are astonished at His reproof. He divided the sea with his power and by this understanding He smiteth through the proud. By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent."

Has this Almighty God done all things and has no purpose in them? Are they beyond His divine control? Is there any other power or powers that can do those things outside of Himself? No, but this God rules, governs, and controls, and holds in His own grasp ALL creation from the falling of a sparrow to the dissolution of worlds, and works ALL things after the counsel of His own will, and none can stay His hand, or say unto "Jehovah", "What doest Thou?"

The inspired Paul believed in absolute predestination of God in all things; for he says: "God that made the world, and ALL THINGS therein, seeing that HE is Lord of heaven and earth. dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He NEEDED ANYTHING. seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and ALL THINGS; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth and HATH DETERMINED the times BEFORE APPOINTED, and the bounds of their habitation."

Here is the Supreme God at the helm of the entire universe holding in His grasp ALL

events of time in the chain of His divine Providence, so definitely fixed. Determined, and appointed so that neither man or devil can break a single link in this chain of events, which were so minutely and precisely determined before hand by this high and lofty King! He even determined the TIMES and SET the bounds before appointed, and the PLACE of the habitation of all nations! I tell you that the Book is full of the absolute predestination, or sovereignty of God over all things. There was nothing lost sight of in the perfect wisdom of our God. He says: "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass." But let me quote all this verse. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, SO SHALL IT COME TO PASS, and as I have PURPOSED, SO SHALL IT STAND." (Isa. 14:24) Now read the next and you find: "This is the purpose that is purposed UPON THE WHOLE EARTH; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon ALL NATIONS. For the Lord of hosts HATH PURPOSED, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

The Everlasting God has sworn to His thoughts and purposes here, and who would dare say that our God has sworn a lie? The whole earth is or was in His thoughts and in his purposes! And there are none that can change this God or turn Him from His righteous decrees; but I must pass on, and not dwell here.

The most wicked acts of men, or even devils, were subjected and controlled in the predestination of our God. When Jesus gave the sop to Judas, He said unto him: "That thou doest do quickly." And when Jesus was arrested, He was manifested to His enemies by a kiss from Judas, the traitor, according to the prophecy.

All these sinful acts of men in persecution of the Saviour were in God's purpose and determined by His Father. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel

and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23) Again: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth, against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, FOR TO DO whatsoever THY hand and THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE."

All these things are in the righteous decrees of a Sovereign God, in His thoughts, and sworn to from all eternity. They cannot be otherwise, for God HAS sworn to them, and He cannot lie! We "live in hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie promised before the world began." Again: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, BOTH SURE and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

How blessedly sweet it is that our God HATH made ALL THINGS sure, and that He sent His only begotten Son, and Holy Spirit to prepare us to reign with Him in the glorified heaven of heavens on His own right hand.

Judas was pointed out in the foreseeing of the Scriptures: "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Judas was a devil "from the beginning." The Lord said: "Whom shall I send to go up to Ramoth Gilead to entice Ahab?" And a lying spirit presented itself before the Lord, and it volunteered and said, "I will go; and the Lord said, Go," and thus the declared prophecy was fulfilled, that the dogs should lick Ahab's blood. This spirit was a "lying spirit" appointed to carry out God's purpose.

Joseph was warned of God, in a dream, to take the young child Jesus and go down into the land of Egypt to prolong the life of Christ until the "set time" for His crucifixion, and to fulfil another declared prophecy, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Many such

things could be mentioned here if time would admit.

Almost numberless sinful actions took place in long ago days, and many more yet to come to pass, and with what certainty could they come to pass, if they were not foreknown and predestinated by an all-wise God? There is no particle of reason that anything could come to pass without God's foreknowledge and predestination. Foreknowledge could not exist without predestination; neither could predestination exist without God's foreknowledge. How would the "end" have been "declared from the beginning," if it had not been foreknown of God?

Look at the numerous crimes which have been committed, from Cain and all along down the line to this present time, and no doubt will continue on and on until time shall be no more, and what consolation could we have if our God had not so nobly fixed His purposes to rule it all over for the good of His people, and to the glory of His dear Name?

It was the wicked actions of Joseph's brethren when they sold him and caused him to go down into the dark land of Egypt, and God ruled this over to save "much people alive." His brethren dipped his coat of many colors in kid's blood, and thus impressed a lie upon their father Jacob! This coat was given Joseph by his father, and this stirred up jealousy, and caused his brethren to hate him, and when Joseph dreamed a dream, "they hated him yet the more."

Joseph was a type of Christ, and when his brethren bowed to him later, according to his dreams, all jealousy was gone from them. These things humbled them so that when "Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs, and they drank and were merry with him," ALL jealousy was gone, and there was love and union. But all these things are in the experience of the children of God. How jealous we were, when we first felt we were unjustly condemned before God and

could not be saved by the law!

We could not, at that time, realize that our spiritual Joseph had borne our sins away! We felt our guilt in crucifying the Son of God! Oh, how we were caused to bow before Him! Every time we tried our own righteousness, our corn was found in our sacks, and this trouble caused us to be spoken "roughly to" by our blessed Lord, the Spiritual Joseph. Our very hope shows that all these things were for our good. They humbled us down, and brought us into a sacred nearness with our God and made us praise His holy Name. All jealousy was gone, and we feel to be less than the least of all saints.

Where would we have been if God had done none of those things for us? Is it a fact that God just did these things for us, just to try to see if His purpose would work to suit His own convenience? Was it all guess-work with our God and happened by blind chance? No, sir. If old Jacob and his twelve sons had gone through all those sad actions upon the scale of blind chance, it would have insulted the Foreknowledge and Predestination of God. His Wisdom, in the type, would have been a failure and our hope would have been blasted!

How would the virtue of Joseph have been tested, had it not been tested by Potiphar's wife, who so wickedly accused him? And how could our Spiritual Joseph have been tested, had He not been so falsely accused by His enemies? David says, "SURELY" (not by chance) "the wrath of man shall praise Thee: arid the remainder of wrath shalt THOU restrain." How excellent it is to know that our God hath appointed the boundaries of wicked men and devils so that they can not go beyond the limits of God's righteous Providence!

If Joseph had been devoured by some wild beast, as Jacob supposed, then how could he have been the type of Christ? If Herod had killed the blessed Son of God at the time that he so wickedly had all the male children

killed from two years old and under to the time of the young Child's birth, then how could vile sinners as you and I be saved?

I DO NOT BELIEVE that the sinful actions of men and devils are praiseworthy; but it is soul-cheering to realize that the all-wise God has so minutely, in precise order, arranged ALL events of time, so that He wisely "Declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things not yet done, saying, My counsel SHALL STAND and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE."

One more thing I shall discuss is the righteous judgment of our God. Like all other things, they are wrapped up in the absolute predestination of all things, or declared in the unalterable decrees of the Eternal Jehovah.

"His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out." We can only see them dimly when they are revealed to us. These judgments are as certain as the foreknowledge and predestination of our God, and are embraced in His declarative counsel before the world began.

There is no workmanship so perfect as this; for all things move on in harmony with the eternal "Will" of God, whose Will, NO court on earth can break! HE works all things to the praise of His grace, and was thus purposed in all eternity. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They ate and they did die, and God executed His judgment on them, and they did die as He said. This death was in the purpose and foreknowledge of God, and God meant it for good; for if they had not eaten thereof, how could we poor sinners have been saved? We did NOT make ourselves sinners; but the first Adam made us sinners. As it is written, "By the obedience of ONE man (first Adam) many were made sinners, even so by the obedience of ONE (second Adam) MANY WERE MADE RIGHTEOUS." Can any man or set of men tell us what the first Adam ever did for us, but make us sinners? Did he ever do one

single thing that made us better than what we were in him?

None of the race of Adam is able to change the truth of God's absolute predestination over all worlds, creatures, and things! None has ever set up a certain or perfect "plan of salvation" with the kinds of predestination, that they know nothing about. The predestination of men, in general, fails. It is hypocritical, and stands on the scale of chance. It might be this way, or that way, and thus disputes the eternal purpose of God, and denies the foreknowledge of the great and sovereign Jehovah, the Creator of all worlds, creatures and things.

In speaking of false prophets and false teachers, our God says, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." God suffers them to go the full length of HIS decree, then puts His judgments upon them according to His decrees, for you see that their evil works are fenced in with Jehovah's "shalls." "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell" (for God did it) "and delivered them in chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

All these sinful actions of angels, men, and devils, were foreknown and determined, and so were all their judgments. They were good in God's sight, and our God meant them for good, that His people be humiliated before Him, and cause them to bow at His divine control, and crown Him Lord of ALL.

The absolute predestination of ALL things works in our experience. We feel it. It reveals sin in us. It makes us feel our exceeding sinfulness, and causes us to groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, "the redemption of our bodies."

So our God has always worked according

to His own purpose, and according to His precise “Will,” and righteously punishes sin in us, and when the set time comes, that “Mystery Babylon,” with her cup full of abominations, “Drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,” then she shall fall, receiving the righteous judgment of our God. Yes, she shall receive them according to God’s sworn-to-thought in all eternity. In speaking of the beast, our God says, “And they that dwell on the earth SHALL wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.” Who wrote those names in this book of life? Did they write their own names there? No. Well then, it must have been our God who wrote them there. Oh, Listen! Did our God know the names of HIS people “from the foundation of the world”? If not, how could He have written their names in that book of life? Or, does it have to be a fact that our God had to wait to see how many that Mystery Babylon could deceive and lead away before He could enroll the names of His saints in the book? If so, then how could their names have been written there from the foundation of the world?

To settle this point, I will quote the following Scriptures: “The foundation of God standeth SURE, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.” How long did He know them? Listen: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who HATH blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN Christ: according as He hath chosen us IN Him before the foundation of the world, that we should BE HOLY and without BLAME before Him in love.” (Eph. 1:3-4)

This was BEFORE sin entered into this world! Now, is it a fact that the Supreme God did not have His people IN His foreknowledge and Eternal Decrees before the foundation of the world? Did He have to see how His purpose was going to work in order

to unalterably fix His decrees, and that just to suit the “Free Will” and “Free Moral Agency” of men — neither taught in the Scriptures?

Now, going back to Mystery Babylon it is written: “For ALL nations have drunk of the wine of the WRATH of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” etc. Then shall the voice of our Royal King roar as “The Lion of the tribe of Judah, saying. Come out of her, MY PEOPLE.” etc.

A little more than nineteen hundred years ago, our dear Lord was sent into this world by His Father. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and there was no guile found in His mouth.” “He being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding ALL THINGS by the word of HIS POWER. when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” When He was brought before the courts of this earth, he was mocked, and scourged, and spit upon by His enemies, and then Pontius Pilate uttered the “Bildad” slang at Him saying, “Knowest Thou not I have power to release Thee, and I have power to crucify Thee?” “Jesus answered, Thou couldest have NO POWER AT ALL against Me, except it were GIVEN THEE from above.” Then, if Pilate had no power AT ALL, then it must be a fact that ALL POWER was invested in Almighty God! The power that Pontius Pilate had was “given” him from “above.” Even Pilate was ignorant of God’s purpose of having His Son crucified and that the Just should suffer for the unjust!

Jesus said to Pilate, “TO THIS END was I born, and FOR THIS CAUSE came I into the world.” Here we have the “end,” which was “Declared from the beginning,” with every event of time.

Yes, everything, it matters not how small it might be, was declared of the Almighty God from the beginning. If it had not been for lice,

how could the magicians have said, “This is the finger of God”? Had there not been a spider, how would she have been in King’s palaces? Had there not been the frogs, how would Pharaoh have been plagued by frogs? I tell you that our Great God, when He created the spider, lice, and frogs, had a wise and noble purpose in them, though they be ever so small to us.

Dear brethren, I am glad that I believe in the Eternal fixedness of God’s purposes. That He declared the end from the beginning, the things not yet done, saying: “My counsel SHALL stand and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE.”

I am now old (having received a hope in 1877) and will soon be gone – will soon pass through the chilly waters of death, and while dying if I can only be made able to look, by that strong God-given faith, to the God I love and be borne away to that haven of Eternal Rest from the troubles of life, it will be a great sinner saved by grace!

I must close, hoping you will look over all my mistakes, and God bless this imperfect letter, upon an important subject, to your comfort and to all who may read the same. “Fare ye well.” (Select from *The Lone Pilgrim*, 1929)

December 12, 1982

Dear Brother Phillips,

Just had to tell you how much *The Predestinarian* has raised up Christ and lowered me to my proper place, and yet, has given me, and strengthened my hope in Jesus.

I have purchased Volume 4 of Beebe’s Editorials. I hope it is blessed to us all up here has a might instrument in His infinite wise hands!

Yours in Hope only,

John Palazzo,

(Niagara Falls, New York)

RANDOM COMMENTS

One problem we find in editing a magazine is what to do when we have extra space too short for an article, yet much too long for brief notices! Perhaps our other editors who have been in this work much longer can give us suggestions. But for the time, I will make some random comments as a general address to our readers.

1. We live in an “untoward generation,” with ungodliness filling the earth and in some cases causing grief in the church to such who love righteousness.

As a people, in general, Americans have “begged” for the wrath of God with is “revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness” and it should not be that the saints should be found complaining when He visits in righteousness and justice.

However, we are commanded to “Do good to all men, especially to them that believe.” As unemployment has increased to great proportions, we have reason here in our churches to be thankful, for at present our own members are not affected to any great degree. It may not be the case in other quarters. So, may I take this moment to remind our people to be watchful of the needs of others, and freely communicate to those in need as the saints of old did during the great draught in the days of Claudius Caesar. In this wise, one may adorn the Gospel of Redeeming Grace in deed as well as words, which is far better.

2. We have few good sound writers today and hence some very poor literature to read and pass on to our children. We recommend very highly the present releases of *The Editorials* of Gilbert Beebe by the *Signs of the Times* magazine staff. Elder Beebe was the first Old School editor, and the *Signs* has been in publication ever since 1832. The doctrinal foundation has remained “supralapsarian” from the first to the present. That is, Beebe

and those who followed him, held to the Biblical view that God chose His people IN CHRIST before the foundation of the world, and thus from all Eternity, the Church federally, or representatively, stood complete and whole in Him as her Great Heati, and she His body. Unique to this view, they, and Predestinarian Old School Baptists held that there is a Vital Union between Him and the church from eternity, anti the church was justified in an immanent way from everlasting, glorified in Him, and preserved in Him.

Beginning in 1836, another publication began called *The Primitive Baptist*. It lasted to the 1880's. (It should not be confused with the present publication by that name, which began about 1886 by Elder Cayce) This magazine became sublapsarian in doctrine. That is, it held that God foresaw the fall of Adam, and subsequently elected some to salvation, leaving the rest of the race as they were in Adam's nature. Hence, they (as James Jacobus Arminius the father of Arminianism) held that God chose His people IN ADAM before the foundation of the world.

From that early period, there have always been two kinds of "Primitive Baptists." Elder Beebe consistently upheld the historic and Biblical position of the church.

Volumes I and II were published in 1868 and 1874. These early volumes covered the period of The Great Baptist Schism (1830's — 1850), and here we see Beebe's peculiar gift in defending the ancient order and faith of

the Gospel against the "benevolent or Modern Missionary Movement and its Universal Charity" humanism.

Volumes III and IV, now in print, cover the period of 1854 — 1861. In these editorials, we find Beebe a very gifted elder in both doctrinal and experimental writings. Also beginning in Volume IV, we find the origins of the doctrinal division between the supralapsarian and sublapsarian Primitives. Wilson Thompson, the famous frontier preacher was both a friend and a contributor to the *Signs* under Beebe. But in Volume IV, we find his son J. M. Thompson charging him with various errors totally unfounded, and often repeated by the *Primitive Baptist* under Elder Temple. The son of Wilson Thompson, Gregg, referred to Beebe as a "heretic" in His debate with Throgmorton, for believing in the doctrine of Eternal Vital Union of the Elect to Christ.

Beebe seldom answered the false charges, and then only by request from the *Signs* readers. He used the pages of the magazine for better purposes, and throughout the *Editorials* set forth sound and sweet doctrine for the reader's edification.

The *Signs* has now made available Volumes III and IV, and we understand that they hope to republish Volumes I and II at a later date, as well as several volumes of later editorials in the future.

We commend the staff of the *Signs* for this costly endeavor, and encourage our readers to acquire them now. S.C.P.