

THE PREDESTINARIAN is published monthly by  
New Home Predestinarian Baptist Church of Christ of  
the primitive faith and order.

ADDRESS: The Predestinarian 206 Opal Drive  
Laurel, MS 39440

SUBSCRIPTION RATE:

POSTMASTER:  
Second Class Postage Paid at Meridian, MS, 39301.  
Please forward change of address orders on Form 3579  
to Grady Dearman, 206 Opal Dr Laurel, MS 39440  
ISSN 0274 - 8029

SUBSCRIBERS: Please send all subscriptions,  
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## ROMANS 8: 38.39 Eternal Vital Union and Its Blessings

By Gilbert Beebe, 1858

[The union of Christ with His people is a theme which covers the whole of the New Testament, yet it is neglected almost entirely today among modern Christians — even including our own people. This union is effectual and essential in regeneration, sanctification, justification, pardon, and the resurrection from the dead. It joins together in one both Christ and all His members— the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. All of our eternal and timely blessings, in one way or another, are related to this blessed union.

We offer this selection from the new reprint of the *Editorials of Gilbert Beebe* Volume 4, page 149 in hope that it will give each of our readers many pleasant thoughts to contemplate through the days to come. — Ed.]

*“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is IN Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Rom. 8.*

This chapter begins with a declaration that there is no condemnation to them who are IN Christ Jesus, and concludes with the assurance of our text, that there can be no separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. This was not only the firm conviction of the mind of the apostle, but the inspired truth of the Holy Ghost. This blessed security from condemnation, and assurance of the immutable love of God, belongs to them who are in Christ Jesus, and to none other. As we are deeply interested in the subject, it becomes us to inquire earnestly, and to search

diligently whether we are in Christ Jesus, and numbered with those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. If we are not in Him, we certainly have no part or lot in these great and precious declarations. If we are in Him, we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, according to Ephesians 1:4, for Christ Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb. 8:8) The exceeding greatness of the mighty power of God is exemplified in him; all things are put under His feet, and God has given Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph.1:19,23) Consequently if there ever was a period in time or eternity when any of the members of His church were NOT IN HIM, then there has been a period when His body was not full. But to imagine the existence of a Head without a body, or a body without a Head, or a perfect and complete Head, and an imperfect and deficient body, does not suit our understanding of the declaration that it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell. (Col. 1:19) Again, it is written, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye [the saints and faithful brethren in Christ,] are complete in Him which is the Head of all principalities and powers." (Col. 2:9,10) All the members of Christ are IN HIM, even as the eternal Father is in Him. He is the dwelling place (not of one-third part of the Godhead, as some seem to understand it,) but of ALL the fullness of the Godhead. "That they all may be one, as thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one IN US." "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect IN ONE," &c. (John 17:21-23).

If the church is in Christ as the eternal Father is in Him, must they not have been in Him from everlasting? Would Christ be complete if the Father were not in Him, or if all the fullness of the Godhead were not in Him? Or could the fulness of the Godhead

dwell in Him bodily, if any part of the Godhead did not dwell in Him? Certainly not. Equally certain is it then as the church is in Him as the Father is in Him, and they are His body and the fullness of Him, that all the members required to make His mystical body perfect and complete, must have been IN HIM as well before the world began, as they will be when this world shall be no more.

We are not contending that our earthly, corrupt and depraved natures were in Him, and were a part of His fullness before the world began; for they were not even in the earthly Adam until after the world began, nor did Christ Himself come in the flesh until He was made of a woman; until His advent. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Christ] also Himself likewise [or in like manner I took part of the same." (Heb. 2:14) His children partaking of flesh and blood, shows that their relationship to God as *children* was perfect before they partook of flesh and blood; and that participation of flesh and blood no more constituted them children, than Christ's coming into the world, and "also Himself likewise partaking of the same," constituted Him the Son of God, or the Head of Immortality to His body, the church. "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Romans 9:8) If that earthly life which was given us in the earthly Adam could be distinctly identified so as to involve us in the guilt of Adam's transgression, almost six thousand years before we were born of the flesh, is it hard to understand in the antitype Adam, that our spiritual, immortal and eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested, (I John 1:2) and which was given to us in the unspeakable gift of God's dear Son, according to the record borne by the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, (I John 5:7,11) should so fully identify us in Christ,

that it could of truth be said of us that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world? (Ephesians 1:4) Or as still more expressly stated, (Eph. 2:18): “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” This term *created* has reference to the new or spiritual creation. It is not like the creation of the natural world, the creation of something out of nothing; but it is the giving of the members of Christ a place, a standing in, and identity with Him who personifies their immortality, or their eternal life. This life instead of being called into existence after the manner of the old creation of the natural world, is the manifestation of a life which is eternal, which always was hid with Christ in God. For it was, as we have proven by I John 1:2: (“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that *eternal life which was with the Father*, and was manifested unto us.”) “And we know that the Son of God,” (in Whom the record of Father, Word, and Holy Ghost declares that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son,) “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and *we are IN HIM* that is true; even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” (I John 5:19,20). Thus to be IN Jesus Christ seminally, as the spiritual embodiment and progenitor of “a seed that shall serve Him, and be counted to the Lord for a generation,” according to Psalms 22:30; Isaiah 53:10-12; I Peter 2:9, involves the Bible doctrine of eternal Union. A union of life, love and immortality. One with Christ even as Christ is one with the Father.

But to be IN HIM manifestatively by a new and spiritual birth, implies that we are, or must be born again; not of a corruptible seed, but of that Seed which was in Christ our spiritual progenitor, from everlasting. By the

Word of God which liveth and abideth forever; not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (I Peter 1:23; John 1:13) A birth is not the *creation* or origination of life, but the manifestation of life by what is called pro-creation. Our earthly nature which in Christians is called the *old*, or *outward* man, was created in Adam, but pro-created by natural generation. But that immortality which is in the Christian, and which is denominated the *new*, or the *inward* man, was given us in Jesus Christ, and is manifested by spiritual generation when born of God. As we are, and were strangers in our earthly character, to this spiritual life which is hid with Christ in God, until He who is our life appears, or is revealed in us, so when that revelation is made, we are no more strangers, we are brought forth bearing the image of the heavenly progenitor, as we have in our flesh borne the image of the earthly Adam. Hence, if any man be IN Christ Jesus, manifestatively and experimentally, he is a new creature, a subject of the new or spiritual creation, and as an evidence of this, old things have passed away, and all things have become new. His old element, which was sin, darkness and death, is passed away, he is quickened by eternal life implanted, the light of life shines in his heart to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, the love of God is shed abroad in him, he is delivered from wrath, he is taken up out of a horrible pit, his going is established, and a new song is in his mouth. All these things are entirely new to him, for they are NOT the productions of his flesh, but they are the fruits of the Spirit of which he is now born. He is delivered from the power of darkness in which he was before held, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

As the love of God, from which the members of Christ cannot be separated, is in Christ Jesus, we have dwelt the more

particularly on the unity of Christ and His members; for if the love of God is in Christ Jesus, and we are not IN Him also, then there is no connection between us and the love of God which is in Him; and it would be preposterous to talk of the impossibility of being separated from that with which we are not and never were connected.

We think it will be admitted even by those brethren who dispute the doctrine of eternal Union, that God loved His people *even when they were dead in sins*. (Eph. 2:4,5) That He even loved them as He loved our Lord Jesus Christ, whom He loved before the foundation of the world. (see John 17:23,24). Admitting then the testimony of our text that this love is and eternally was in Christ Jesus, must not the objects of it also have been in Him as anciently as they have been loved of God in Him? So we confess it looks to us, and for this blessed assurance we are more than willing to bear all the reproach, slander, abuse and persecution to which we have been subjected for trying to set it forth.

From the foregoing considerations it strikes us that so long as God Himself maintains His eternal immutability, there can be no separation of the saints from His love which is in Christ Jesus. Paul was persuaded that death could not effect a separation. Death's boasted power is impotent and weak compared with the love of God in Christ. Our death in trespasses and sins could not abate the love of God, since it is written that. "God, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins," & c. Death could enfold our earthly nature in its cold embrace, but all the dark floods of death could not quench its eternal flame. Again, death and the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, met in dreadful conflict on Mount Calvary, but death was vanquished, and immortality was brought to light in the sequel of the contest, and God commended His love, in that when we were yet sinners, in due time

Christ died for us.

"He saw us ruined in the fall,  
Yet loved us notwithstanding all."

Neither shall death in his last assault upon these *mortal bodies*, tend to separate us; but instead of alienating that love, it shall only remove the intervening curtain, that we may realize its eternal fulness in unclouded glory forever. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, and then, "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken *our mortal bodies* by His Spirit which is in *us*." (Romans 8:11)

*Nor life*. Young Christians in their early experience of this love, desire to die, to depart and be with Jesus, not only from the powerful attractions they feel drawing them to Him, but from fear that their life in the flesh may bring some reproach upon the blessed cause, and that they may by some waywardness on their part lose the sweet and heavenly enjoyment of that love. But although the children of God do not always while here in the flesh enjoy the vivid evidences of the love of God, yet in Christ, where it is treasured up for them, it is immutable, and can never abate. It is among the "All spiritual blessings with which God has blessed them, according as He hath chosen them in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:3,4) He has established our goings; and He controls all things, and causes all things to work together for the good of them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

*Nor angels*. Holy angels have neither the disposition nor the power, for unto the angels He hath not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak. (Heb. 2:5) Wicked angels have tried all their power, but never have, never can possibly produce an abatement of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

*Nor principalities*. Should all the governments of earth combine their forces, as many of them have, they may indeed be

permitted to annoy and harass the saints, they may, if permitted, torture these frail, dying bodies, chain them to the stake, and consume the earthly tabernacle with fire, but the love of God is in Christ Jesus, and therefore out of their reach.

*Nor powers.* Of whatever sort or kind, for all power both in heaven and earth, is vested in Him in whom this love of God is secured, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him. There is no power but that is of God, and perfectly subject to the orders of His throne. The power of sin, the power of darkness, the power of the law, cannot effect an alienation, for Christ has redeemed His people from all these; nor are there any powers in existence that are or shall be able to succeed.

*Nor things present.* Although for the present, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, though clouds may obscure our skies, tempests may beat, and thunders shake the world, there is nothing in the present tense that can lessen the love of God to His saints in Christ.

*Nor things to come.* The coast is clear. O, Christian, look ahead! Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith; there is nothing in the impenetrable future to fear.

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread,  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
With blessings on your head.”

Should the mountains be uprooted and hurled into the midst of the sea, should the waves thereof swell and roar, should death sweep over the earth, the sun forget to shine, the moon turn into blood, and the pillars of the universe totter to their fall, there is nothing in all that can come to pass that can separate you from the love of your God and Saviour.

*Nor height.* Look upwards then, and trace the fearful omens of the heavens. See blazing comets approach with sevenfold

speed of lightning; if your God commands them so they may come in contact with this little dwelling-place of worms and dash this world to atoms. Pestilence, like winged warriors, may come on ever wind, thunders may shake the earth, lightnings may bear the bolts of almighty vengeance far and scatter death abroad, but no heights, with their infinity of space, can possibly deprive you of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, treasured up for you.

*Nor depth.* No hidden fires in secret caverns burn beneath your feet, nor volcanic terrors which may tear the earth, can change the love of God towards you; and could your eyes unbar the doors of death, gaze into the gloomy chambers of the grave, and sepulchres of the mighty, or could you even penetrate the deep confines of hell, and scan the horrors of the damned, still undismayed let faith lay hold upon the infallible assurance, it cannot separate you from the love of God.

*Nor any other creature.* Death and life, angels and principalities, powers, and things present and things to come, and heights and depths, are all the creatures of God. He has created them not in vain, they shall accomplish His purpose and do His pleasure. Neither these nor any other creature is to be regarded by the saints as having power to dispossess them of what God has given them in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If then there is nothing in death nor life, nor in principalities nor powers, nothing high or low, nothing present nor to come, that can remove the saints from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, may the Lord pity the graceless wretch who dares aver that the children of God may fall from grace, lose their interest in the love of God, and sink to hell at last.

Selected from: *Signs of the Times, 1858.*

**PARTICULAR ELECTION  
and  
FINAL PERSEVERANCE**

By Isaac Backus, 1789

[The following article was written by Elder Backus in reply to John Wesley's attack upon the doctrine of Absolute Predestination. Backus, in the American colonies, and John Gill, in England, both answered this charge. Mr. Wesley, it appears, had designed his Arminian masterpiece in an attempt to stamp out the Calvinists in his movement and in this succeeded very well. Many of the Calvinist Methodists embraced the principles of the Strict Baptists in England, and Separate Baptists in the colonies.

As a movement, Methodism splintered off from the Puritan Episcopal, or Anglicans, many of whom were very devote free grace ministers. As can be expected, a "little leaven leaveth the whole lump" and in time this branch of anti-Christ was made manifest.

We present the following for historical preservation, as well as an article of interest in the preservation of truth.]

Controversy is generally complained of and peace is earnestly sought, but often in a way which denies to all others the liberties we claim for ourselves. The revealed will of God is the only perfect law of liberty, but how little is it believed and obeyed by mankind. Both the Hebrew and Christian churches were to be wholly governed by it, and when the first king of Israel presumed to violate a plain command of God, and then thought to atone for it by acts of worship, he was guilty of *rebellion*, which is as the sin of *witchcraft*, (I Sam. 15:23) And in like way Mystery Babylon by her *sorceries has deceived all nations*, and in her was found the *blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth*. (Rev. 18:23,24) Yet these extensive terms are so limited by carnal reasoners that

none of them, in any nation, will allow themselves to be of that bloody city. And at the same time they are for extending general words of grace beyond any limits and are ready to accuse us with making God deceitful if we hold that He did not design the merits of His Son equally for all mankind. If we inquire then, why all are not saved? the general answer is that they would not receive that salvation, or if they did for awhile, and then turned away from it, God rejects and destroys them therefore. We readily grant that God always rewards the righteous and never destroys any for anything but sin and iniquity, but this cannot content many without we will allow that grace hath put power into the wills of all mankind to become righteous and to obtain salvation when they shall be pleased to set about it in earnest. The fruit of which is that men *neglect the great salvation because they love darkness rather than light. Yea, everyone that doeth evil hateth the light*. (Heb. 2:3; John 3:19,20) And when any are *brought* to obey the truth and so come to the light, every art is made use of to get them into darkness again if possible!

This has been remarkably the case in the southern parts of America. Many of their teachers [Anglican clergy, then] were so dark as to swear profanely, drink to excess, and follow gaming and at the same time to preach up *do and live, work and be blessed*, to their people. But the light of the pure Gospel produced some reformation among them about forty years ago, and it has greatly increased since 1768, as I was well informed when I was called to travel and preach in Virginia and North Carolina last winter. [Backus refers to the rise of the Separates, and then the United Baptists during the Great Awakening.] But after this reformation had spread extensively, the followers of Mr. John Wesley introduced his writings against particular election and final perseverance and thereby greatly obstructed the work of truth. I

was therefore requested to publish a brief answer thereto. His first piece on that subject was published above fifty years ago under the title of *Free Grace*, and it was closed with a hymn called "*Universal Redemption*," and therein he says,

“Thine eye surveyed the fallen race,  
When sunk in sin they lay,  
Their misery called for all Thy grace,  
But justice stopped the way.  
Mercy the fatal bar removed,  
Thy only Son it gave,  
To save a world so dearly loved,  
A sinful world to save.  
For every man He tasted death,  
He suffered once for all,  
He calls as many souls as breathe,  
And all *may* hear the call.  
A power to choose, a will t’ obey,  
Freely His grace *restores*;  
We all may find the living way,  
And call the Savior ours.”

He denied that man had any *natural* liberty of will left after the fall until it was *restored* by grace. This he more explicitly did in a pamphlet on *Predestination, Election, and Reprobation* published in 1776; and said upon it, “We believe, that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left; but that God, when of His own free grace He gave the promise of a Savior to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation.” (page 16) But if the fall took all *natural liberty of choice* from man until grace restored it, then the fall released him from the authority of the law of God as it was first given to him, and he never hath been under it since, but under grace. The beasts are not under that law because they never had the powers of thinking and choice as rational creatures have, and if men are not under the law, what are they better than beasts? Yea, do they not corrupt themselves more than brute beasts that know and obey their owners?

(Jude 10; Isa. 1:2-4) And if all freedom of the will is *from grace*, then it is only by grace that any have the will or power to sin against God, as none can sin against Him who have no natural liberty of will! This opinion of Mr. Wesley’s is most plainly confuted by the case of the fallen angels who never had any grace revealed to them. Yet the Devil *sinneth from the beginning*, and all wilful sinners are *children of the Devil* in opposition to all those who are *born of God*. (John 3: 8-10) In the same book Mr. Wesley says, “1. God’s love was the cause of His sending His Son to die for sinners. 2. Christ’s dying for sinners is the cause of the Gospel’s being preach (sic). 3. The preaching of the Gospel is the cause, or means, of our believing (sic). 4. Our believing is the cause or condition of our justification (sic). 5. The knowing ourselves justified through His blood is the cause of our love to Christ (sic). 6. Our love to Christ is the cause of our obedience to Him (sic). 7. Our obedience to Christ is the cause of His becoming the author of eternal salvation to us (SIC!!!!).” Page 8.

And is not this going about to establish *our own righteousness*? For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, *That the man who doth those things, shall live by them*. This is a *zeal of God but not according to knowledge*. (Rom. 10:2-5) Mr. Wesley goes on to say, “I shall now briefly show the dreadful absurdities that follow from saying *Christ died only for the elect*. If Christ died not for all, then unbelief is no sin in them that finally perish, seeing there is not anything for those men to believe *unto salvation* for whom Christ died not. 2. If Christ died not for all men then it would be a sin in the greatest part of mankind to believe He died for them, seeing it would be to believe a lie. 3. If Christ died not for those that are damned, then they are not damned for unbelief, otherwise you say, that they are damned for not believing a lie. [Ed. note: We agree with his argument in

numbers 1,2,3, for we ourselves do not believe that it is required for all men, in particular the reprobate part, to believe *unto salvation*. They are required only to believe what God has commanded them to believe; and He has never commanded them to believe they are IN HIM if it not be the true case with them. Reprobates are not IN Him, have never been IN Him from the beginning of the foundation of the world, shall never be IN Him, nor can natural, or nominal faith put them in Him. If they were not chosen IN HIM then they are not IN HIM. P-E-R-I-O-D. S.C.P.) 4. If Christ died not for all, then those who obey Christ by going and preaching the Gospel to every creature as glad tidings of grace and peace, of great joy to all people, do sin thereby, in that they go to most people with a lie in their mouth. [This is true of all Arminians, for they preach He died for all, when in fact He said He laid down His life *for the sheep*. *Of course, Arminians do not preach the Gospel* — they don't know it, haven't experienced it, and can't preach it. Ed.] 5. If Christ died not for all men, then God is not in earnest in *calling all men everywhere to repent*, for what good could repentance do those for whom Christ died not? [The same as it did the ancient with Jonas' preaching. Ed.] 6. If Christ died not for all, then why does He say, He is not willing that any should perish? Surely He is willing, yea, resolved that most men should perish, else He would have died for them also. 7. How shall God judge the world by the man Christ Jesus if Christ did not die for the world or how shall He judge them according to the Gospel when there was never any Gospel or mercy for them? (Page 4)

**ANSWER:** If Christ died with a design to save all men, why are not all saved? Can the Devil cheat Him of a great part of His purchase? Or, can men defeat His merciful designs? No, say many, He died for all, and He will finally save all (Universalists). Others

go farther and conclude that a God of infinite goodness could not give existence to any creature that shall be miserable without end, but that He will finally deliver every child of Adam from Hell (Hell Redemptionists), though many of them will be tormented therein for *ages of ages*. But how is their deceit here discovered? Fallen angels were as really the creatures of God as fallen men, yet no salvation was ever revealed for them, but they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And this is a clear evidence against ungodly men who "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." (Jude 4,6) God was so far from ever proclaiming atonement to all men, without any exception, that He said, "The soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord and that soul shall be cut off from among His people." And for such presumption, Korah and his company perished most terribly. (Num. 15: 30; 16:1-3; 3 1-34) And teachers who privily brought damnable heresies into the Christian Church were *presumptuous and self-willed* under the name of liberty. They *despised government and perished in the gainsaying of Core*. (II Pet. 2:1,10, 19; Jude 11) For if the inability of men, as the Scriptures testify, or if as debtors and criminals could release them from the authority of the laws, until rulers would give them power to bring the government to their own terms, how would all *dominion be despised!* These *filthy dreamers* have now filled the world with Babylonian confusion. (Jude 8) The Jews called it *heresy* in Paul to believe in and obey Jesus as a lawgiver above Moses. (Acts 24:14) And this is the first place where the word heresy is used in the Bible, and if we observe what is said in the last chapter in it of every man who shall add to or take from its words, must we not conclude that all men who do so and violently impose their inventions upon others are guilty of heresy? The head of the church of Rome

assumed God's place in that assembly, and exalted himself above God, who never could violate His *promise* or His *oath* or *entice* any into sin, and how justly are all those given up to strong delusion who practice either of these evils? (II Thess. 2:3-12; Heb. 6:18; James 1:13-15) And how happy should we soon be if these iniquities were excluded from our land.

True believers are so far from presuming upon the secret designs of God that when the same are revealed, they dare not make His designs, but His laws the rule of their conduct. Though His design of removing Saul and making David king over Israel was clearly revealed, yet David refused to kill Saul when no greatly provoked thereto because he had no direction to do it. Neither did David assume the regal power over Israel until each tribe freely received him as their king by a solemn covenant. But the envious Jews no sooner had it declared to them that Jesus was to die for that nation than from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death. (John 11:53) Hereby we may see the plain difference between true believers and reprobates. For unto the pure all things are pure but unto the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient and unto every good work *reprobate*. (Titus 1:15,16) In this way, teachers who turn grace into lasciviousness deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4) But many are deceived by them because in words they profess to know Him. Since Christ was exalted to the right hand of the Father His only priests upon the earth are *the elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the

Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. These are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. (I Pet. 1:2,23; 2:5,9)

But Mr. Wesley, in his piece of predestination, election, and reprobation, says. "They were chosen through belief of the truth and called to believe it by the Gospel; therefore they were not chosen before they believed, much less before they had a being.." (Page 5) And in a his sermon from Romans 8:29,30 he says. "God looking on all ages from the creation to the consummation as a moment and seeing at once whatever is in the hearts of all the children of men knows every one that does or does not believe in every age or nation. Yet what He knows, whether faith or unbelief, is no wise caused by His foreknowledge. Men are as *free* in believing or not believing, as if He did not know it at all." (Page 6.)

I readily grant that His knowledge does not cause any sin, which is altogether in and of the creature. The angels who fell *kept not the first estate but left their own habitation*. (Jude 6) And those who stood were *elect angels*. (1 Tim. 5:21) And sin came into human nature by violating a known command. And Adam was a *figure* of Jesus Christ, and therefore death reigned over all his posterity, many of whom never committed any actual transgressions as he did. And the was *as*, so often used in this affair, cannot be true in any sense if both Adam and Christ were not heads and representatives of all the seed of each. It is certain that Adam was not a figure of Christ, as he conveyed death and ruin to his posterity by a *just sentence of law*; for Christ conveys life and salvation to souls by a *free gift of grace*. Neither could Adam be a figure of Christ in the great things that he did by *one offence*, for Christ atoned for *many offences*; therefore *where sin abounded, grace did*

*much more abound.*” (Rom. 5:12,21) I say the word *as* cannot be true in all these places unless those two men acted for ALL THEIR SEED. Many would have it, that this word cannot be true unless Christ atoned for as many as fell in Adam, but certain death came upon all Adam’s race while multitudes hold that salvation by Christ is *uncertain* and depends upon the natural wills of individuals. In this view they would make Christ vastly inferior to Adam whose doings were efficacious, and the doings of Christ exceeding precarious, upon their plan. And they who hold that Christ will finally save all the race of Adam from hell yet imagine that the creature’s suffering must save them and not the efficacy of the death and grace of Christ. Or if they hold that He will save all from future sufferings, they hold also that He hath now saved them from the authority of the law of God, which Adam never did. By the sentence of it every child of Adam returns to the dust, the righteous as well as the wicked, so that if the doings of Christ are not efficacious for the final salvation of His seed, it cannot truly be said that *as* in Adam all die, *even so in Christ* shall all be made alive.

Adam was made *upright*, but Solomon could not tell how many inventions his children would seek out. (Eccl. 7:29) A darling one in our day is that a man cannot be worthy of reward or punishment unless he hath power in his will to become righteous when he pleaseth! And if so, then faith would be of himself and not the *gift of God, directly against the* truth of His Word. (Eph. 2:8) [Today, one-hundred and ninety-five years later, almost the whole religious world believes that every man has faith, which he must exercise in order to “accept” Christ. They no longer have sufficient understanding to know that one who has faith is already born of God]. Boasting could not be excluded in such a case, as it is by the *law of faith*. (Romans 3:27) So that this controversy in not

with poor worms but with the eternal God. His WILL was as really exercised in raising up Pharaoh and others and suffering them to go far in their rebellion and in oppressing the saints, as it was in finally destroying the former and saving the latter. But the objection against this doctrine of absolute predestination was and is, *Why doth He yet find fault? for who hath ever resisted His will?* This was the language of those who followed after the law of righteousness but did not attain to it because they sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law. (Rom. 9:16-32) Yea, and those who do so are exceeding *partial* in the law.

Mr. Wesley in his book called *Predestination Calmly Considered* says, “I believe election to be *conditional*, as well as the reprobation opposite thereto. I believe the eternal decree concerning both is expressed in those words, “He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned.” And this decree without doubt God will not change, and man cannot resist.” (Page 10) But where did he make any such decree? In the Gospel commission, He says, “*he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*” (Mark 16:16) But men have presumed to alter that “decree” ever since the third century, before which no man hath proved that infant sprinkling (rantsism) was ever named in the world. By baptism believers *put on Christ*. (Gal. 3:27) Which no one can do for another any more than one can be saved or damned for another in eternity. Christ is the only lawgiver to His Church, and when kings shall become nursing fathers to her they will bow down to His authority therein. (Isa. 49:23) And how great is the difference betwixt a nurse and a whoremaster. The good tidings to Zion is, “Thy God reigneth.” And “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Isa. 3:7; Rom. 10:10,15). And none will be owned by Him in the last day who are

now ashamed to confess Him before men. (Matt. 10: 32,33) And if God looked on all ages as a moment, how could He elect persons and then reject them again in that manner as Mr. Wesley teaches. Mr. Wesley says, "One who is a true believer or, in other words, one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God Himself, may nevertheless finally fall from grace." (Page 49)

His first argument to prove this assertion is taken from God's saying. When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, in his trespass that he hath trespassed and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. (Ezek. 18:24) From whence Wesley says, "One who is righteous in the judgment of God Himself may finally fall from grace." (Page 51) Answer. God never promised to support any one in an unrighteous way, neither will He destroy any true penitent for his own sins or for the iniquity of his fathers. And if God cannot speak of these things in a conditional way to the Jews without having the final event uncertain in His own infinite mind until the creature decides it, then this argument may stand, and not else. And if the creature could disappoint the Creator, then we should fear man more than God. A horrible evil! A second argument is drawn from I Tim. 1:18,19, from whence it is said. "Observe, 1. These men had once the faith that produceth a good conscience, which they had or they could not have put it away. 2. They made shipwreck of the faith, which necessarily implies the total and final loss of it." (Page 51.) But in the same chapter it is said, "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some have swerved, having turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." And if men cannot be greatly enlightened and reformed by the Spirit

of truth in a natural way and yet afterwards swerve from it and put it away, without ever being born again, then this argument may stand and not otherwise. His third argument is framed from Romans 11:17, etc. Upon which he says, "Those who are grafted into the spiritual, invisible church may nevertheless finally fail." (Page 53) To which I reply that the unbelieving Jews failed from the visible church, and saving faith was necessary to graft the Gentiles into it, who ought not to be high-minded but fear, as is very evident from this passage, and God says, "I will put My fear into their hearts that they SHALL NOT depart from Me." (Jere. 32:40) And who will dare to contradict Him! Mr. Wesley takes his fourth argument from John 15:1-6, from whence he infers, "That true believers, who are branches of the true vine, may nevertheless finally fail." (Page 55) But as Christ is the only Head of the true Church, many may be visible branches in Him and yet be cast into the fire for their unfruitfulness while living branches are purged and made more fruitful. And to such Christ said in the same chapter, "Ye have not *chosen* Me, but *I have chosen you*, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and your fruit should remain. Afterwards He said to the Father, "Of them which *Thou gavest Me* have I lost NONE." (John 18:9) Yet, fifthly, Mr. Wesley brings II Peter 2:20,21, to attempt to prove that "Those who by the inward knowledge of Christ have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions and perish everlastingly." (Page 56) But all ought to know that the dog who returns to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed from her wallowing in the mire, never had their natures changed, though their temporary behavior was so for awhile. Therefore we are warned against giving the holy things of the Church to dogs, swine, or wolves as far as we can discover them by their fruits. (Matt. 7:6,15) His sixth argument is

taken from Hebrews 6:4-8. (Page 56) But we may see that the persons here spoken of are like ground which beareth thorns and briars and are entirely distinct from souls who receive the seed into good ground. (Matt. 13:23) Our author takes his seventh argument from Hebrews 10:38, which he says, if rightly translated, is, "If the just man that lives by faith draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Page 58) But we ought to know that living by faith and drawing back are two opposite things, and the first is here urged as an effectual guard against the last. Eighthly, our opponent brings Hebrews 10:26-29, to prove "That those who are sanctified by the blood of the new covenant may yet perish everlastingly." (Page 62) But though persons who sin *willfully* against the laws, blood, and Spirit of Christ will have a much sorer punishment than they who died without mercy under the law of Moses, yet this cannot prove that any such person was ever truly regenerated. However, after quoting many more Scripture warnings against disobedience and apostasy, Mr. Wesley lets us know that he would not have us consider this doctrine of his by itself, "but as it stands in connection with unconditional reprobation, that millstone which hangs about the neck of your whole hypothesis." (Page 65)

From whence we may see that the plain language of revelation is of no avail with him against his horrid ideas of reprobation. When any try to put that terrible word out of their minds, he says, "To think about a *certain number* of souls, whom *alone* God hath decreed to save, in that very thought reprobation lurks; [It surely does too!!! — Ed.] it entered your heart the moment that entered; it stays as long as that stays, and you cannot speak that thought, without speaking of reprobation. True, it is covered with fig leaves so that a heedless eye may not observe it to be there. But if you narrowly observe, unconditional election cannot appear without

the cloven foot of reprobation." (Page 9)

Answer. We well know that the doctrine of particular election implies that the rest of mankind are left to perish in their sins as God might justly have dealt with us all. But this idea is rejected by Mr. Wesley. And when it was said, "You know in your own conscience that God might justly have passed by you," he said, "I deny it. That God *might justly*, for my unfaithfulness to His grace, have *given me up long ago*, I grant, but this concession supposes me to have had that grace which you say a reprobate never had." (Page 18) Answer. We are far from believing that all the *natural* liberty of men is by grace, as he hath asserted, for God says, "In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such men turn away. These resist the truth; *reprobate* concerning the faith." (II Tim. 3:1-8) This is a most exact description of the reprobates of our day. But I am far from thinking that grace gave them a power to love themselves above God and their neighbors and to run into all this wickedness under a form of godliness, while they deny the power thereof. Yea, do not all those deny the power of it who deny particular election and final perseverance? Mr. Wesley says, "I have heard that God the Father made a covenant with His Son before the world began wherein the Son agreed to suffer such and such things and the Father to give Him such and such souls for a recompense; that in consequence of this those souls must be saved, and those only, so that all others must be damned." This idea of the covenant he rejects and says, "The tenor of it is this, Whosoever believeth unto

the end, so as to show his faith by his works, I the Lord will reward that soul eternally. But whosoever will not believe, and consequently dieth in his sins, I will punish him with everlasting destruction.” (Pages 44,45) [Mr. Wesley apparently can make up his own “eternal covenant”! — Ed.] And what a difference is there between this and saying, “The man that doth them shall live in them?” They who turn the Gospel into this sense are *bewitched*. (Gal. 3:1,12) As to the covenant, Jesus, not Wesley, said, “I lay down My life for the sheep. Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them ETERNAL life, and they SHALL NEVER perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. Jesus lifted up His eyes to Heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh that He should give ETERNAL life to AS MANY AS Thou hast GIVEN Him.’” (John 10:15, 26-29; 17:1,2.) If particular election and final perseverance are not contained in these passages, I know not what can be intended therein. And as Mr. Wesley and his followers are so vehement against that doctrine and tell of showing their faith by their works, it is needful to examine their works in America...

God calls His covenant with Abraham the “covenant of circumcision.” And Abraham had no right to circumcise any stranger until he had bought him as a servant with money. (Acts 7:8; Gen. 17:13) But the Gospel says to Zion, “Ye shall be redeemed WITHOUT money. Thy God reigneth.” (Isa. 52: 3, 7; Rom. 10:15) He purchased the Church with His own blood. (Acts 20:28) And after He had done it He said, “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision

is nothing but the keeping of the commandments of God. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.” (I Cor. 5:2; 7:19,23) “Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them.” (Eph. 5:6,7,11) “Every tree is known by his own fruit, for of thorns men do not gather figs nor of bramblebush gather the grapes. A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil, for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. And why call ye Me Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:43-46) When the blade sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. Let both grow together until the harvest. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one.” (Matt. 8:26,30,38)

In these plain Scriptures, the covenant of circumcision is repealed by the name which God gave to it, and the Church and world are clearly distinguished as two different judicatories, the one to exclude all who appear by their fruits to be fornicators, covetous, railers, drunkards, or extortioners, from their fellowship, the other to let them grow together with the children of the kingdom, in the world. until the end of it, only punishing such as work ill to their neighbors. (Rom. 13:1-10) And fighting and oaths are allowed of in this latter government. (John 18:36; Heb. 6:16) And wars will not fully come to an end until the nations shall freely receive the law from

Zion and guile shall be banished from the Church. A loud cry will then be heard, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." (Rev. 14:1-8) The covenant of circumcision will no more be called the covenant of grace nor men be bewitched, as the Galatians were, with the practice of confounding works and grace together. God never injured Cain in giving saving faith to Abel, nor the Midianites, who were of the seed of Abraham, in electing Israel for His church in the wilderness, neither did He injure Korah, or the children of Reuben, Jacob's first born, in electing Aaron and his lawful seed for priests. And He never injured any man in uniting the priestly and kingly offices in Jesus Christ and in souls who are born again, who are only the kings and priests in the Gospel-Church. (Heb. 5:4-6; Rev. 1:5,6; 5:10) And no others have any right to be members therein, and they all ought ever to be like little children instead of striving who should be the greatest. (Matt. 18:3,4) None can have a right in the kingdom of God who do not receive it as a little child. (Mark 10:15) Such are glad of GIFTS. But Mr. Wesley has flatly denied that God could justly have passed him by and not have given him power in his will to believe, which is his notion of grace! Wages can be recovered by law, but a GIFT is bestowed on whom, and in what manner the GIVER PLEASETH. Therefore God says. "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first last, for many are called but FEW CHOSEN. (Matt. 20:15,16)

This is the true idea of ELECTION which men have an amazing quarrel against. For if it depends entirely upon the WILL OF GOD whether He will save any of us or not, then we can have no encouragement to set up our wills against Him. If we do so, He can blast all our schemes as He pleaseth, and when we come to die He may then choose whether He will hear our cries for mercy or not. Yea, He hath

already assured us that He will not hear our cries then if we now "delight in scorning and hate knowledge." (Prov. 1:20-29) Giving diligence in the believing pursuit of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity is the only way to "make our calling and election sure" while heretics are self-willed, under the name of "liberty". (II Peter 1:5-11; 2:1,10,19) Our Lord hath set before us an example of "great faith" which may encourage us in this pursuit. (Luke 7:1.9) Here observe: 1. That this Roman centurion took all his encouragement from God as He revealed Himself in His Son and none of it from any imaginary worthiness in the creature. "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee." Yet he believed that Jesus, of His own infinite mercy would grant relief. 2. He was careful to seek it in a lawful way, and before the death of Christ it was unlawful for a member of that church to keep company with other nations. (Acts 10:28) Therefore he would not violate the law of God, even to save his life. 3. He believed that Jesus could do it when absent as well as if He were present. "Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." Herein his faith was much greater than the faith of Martha, Mary, or of Thomas the apostle. (John 11:21, 32; 20:29) He clearly acted by faith and not by sight. 4. He made good use of his reason to strengthen his faith, and not to weaken or destroy it, as is the case with multitudes. He said, "I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it" And if an unworthy sinner with a commission from a heathen power could be thus obeyed, what can be too hard for the Captain of our salvation! He does as He willeth.

He took not on Him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham, that through death

He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Every discovery of sin and want should speed our flight to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For He is ABLE TO SAVE them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Heb. 2:14-18; 4:16; 7:25) His only temple here below is IN them who are "poor and of a contrite spirit and tremble at His word." And if their brethren pretend to regard to the glory of God in hating of them and casting them out, yet He says, "I shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. 66: 1-5) The first Christian martyr sealed this testimony with his blood. (Acts 7:48-51) And others overcame the great accuser by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. And when their souls shall be raised, the Devil will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit out of which the beast came who killed the two witnesses. (Rev. 11:7; 12:11; 20:1-4) The Word of God, both by Moses and the Lamb, is as clear as glass and as powerful as fire; and they who obtain the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name stand and act joyfully upon the sea of glass mingled with fire. (II Cor. 3:18; Jere. 23:29; Rev. 25:2,3) Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5) And to destroy idolatry Elijah said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him, and if Baal, then follow Him," which point was decided by "fire from heaven." (I Kings 18:21,39) And the way for the first coming of our Lord was prepared by a man who came in the spirit and power of Elijah. And the way for His second coming will be prepared by the raising of the souls of the martyrs which I think means the resurrection of their spirit and power in the

churches. For God gave them not the spirit of fear but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. (II Tim. 1:7) Even such love as to sacrifice their lives before they would violate any rule of truth or equity.

All the world have now seen that love is a vastly more powerful principle of action than fear. For as long as the Americans were afraid of destruction or slavery their union and activity defeated all the attempts of their enemies, but no sooner was that fear removed than the love of riches, honors and pleasures prevailed over contracts and oaths and filled the land with discord, treachery. and infidelity. By the love of money vast numbers have erred from the truth and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. And our only remedy is not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That we do good, that we be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come that we may lay hold on eternal life. (I Tim. 6:9-19)

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Surely one's interest in his soul is worth as much time as pleasure.

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With sadness we note the passing of Mr. John Chapman, Editor of the *Zion's Witness*, the past thirty-six years. We feel sure that our English brethren will miss him and his services to the cause of God and the Truth of Free Grace, as well as many of his readers here in the States. He was 86 years old.

The *Zion's Witness* was established in about 1858, and has remained a free grace publication under the ministry of faithful ministers. Those who wish to address any communications to the *Zion's Witness* should

direct such to his son-in-law:  
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We do not want to miss sending the magazine to any and all who desire it, so we will clean the list in the July mailing with the beginning of Volume 5, Issue 1.

Please check your address label. If there is a circle drawn around it, or if there is a colored label stuck on the first page above the Table of Contents, your subscription is due or past due.

We desire a response on another question: Do you wish to see the magazine's size increased from 24 pages to 28? Our composing skills have increased sufficient to be able to expand the pages without too much added time. While other magazines are cutting back, our finances have been holding up very steadily. The subscription rate seems of little importance since it does not nearly cover the cost of each magazine. The gifts and contributions really maintain the magazine's support.

We would like to see it expanded so as to give us more variety of articles. Many excellent articles are a bit too long to go into an issue as it is now, but if larger, we would have more flexibility.

We still must beg of you to send us names and addresses of those you know who

love the truth of free grace. Only in this manner can we reach out to others. Personally, none of our editors travel very extensively outside our set bounds, and we do not know many people. ED.

### IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT

By: W.W. Hudson

*"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." — I Cor. 2:4*

The Lord blesses His ministers to preach by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The different gifts are measured out as it pleases the Lord. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Eph. 4:7)

The Lord blessed Paul with the liberty of speech or liberty of thought or door of utterance when he went to Troas to preach. "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord." (II Cor. 2:12)

One may quote much Scripture and preach a good "legal" or "letter" sermon, but it will not have any effect unless the Lord blesses both the speaker and the hearer to meditate upon spiritual things.

Two listeners may sit side by side (both believers) and one rejoices in the preaching while another cannot get interested in the sermon. Why? "Blessed is that man that heareth me..." (Prov. 8:34) The Lord blesses the ministers to preach and blesses the hearers to hear and the praise belongs to the Lord. What does man have to boast about?

Do not you believe that God gives a spiritual appetite to His people? The Lord causes you to hunger and thirst after righteousness and He feeds you. "Blessed are

they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) Please notice the truth of that Scripture. The Lord blesses His people to both hunger and to thirst after righteousness. All men in this world are *not* covered by that blessing.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isa. 55:10-11) What does it mean? Do you believe that those who are blessed to hear a good sermon are also blessed to render praises unto the Lord? “This people I have formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise.” (Isa 43:21) The Lord gives His people the desire to praise Him. Have you experienced this good feeling of praising the Lord? Does it cause you to speak to yourselves in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord?” “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.” (Psalm 113:3)

## THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US

By: H. H. Lefferts

*“But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” – Romans 8:11.*

This passage of the inspired Word declares that if the same Spirit which raised Christ from *the dead* dwells in us who believe, that this same Spirit shall raise our *mortal bodies* in the future resurrection to

take place when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, as is promised in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter four, verses 16 and 17. According to our Lord’s words in John 5:29, there will be two resurrections. The one unto the resurrection of life, the other unto the resurrection of damnation. The first of these shall be that of the redeemed unto glory, the second shall be that of the finally impenitent reprobate wicked, unto eternal punishment. Paul, by inspiration, in Romans 8:11, announces to the Lord’s people that the assurance that they are to be raised in the first resurrection which shall be unto life and immortality, is that the Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead already dwells in the elect here in this present life which we now live in this present evil world. This indwelling Spirit is proof, or pledge, that the mortal, bodies of the saints shall in due time be quickened and changed into conformity with the glorious body of Christ which He Himself now wears in Heaven. Our body is now mortal, but then it shall be immortal; now it is corruptible, then it shall be incorruptible. This word “mortal” means being in subjection to death; not simply being liable to die, but definitely subject to death; and when dead, being in subjection to death. Unless we who are now living on the earth are among those to be alive and remaining on the earth when our Lord comes, death shall one day take these bodies or ours. However, if the Lord is to come during our lifetime, we shall not die, but shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Should our Lord tarry, then we shall die as have the past generations of all who have truly believed in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Yet death shall not be able to forever in-chain in the grave these bodies of ours. They are a part of the purchased possession whose redemption is promised in Ephesians 1:4. It is for this adoption, which is the redemption or

resurrection of the body, that we wait and hope. These bodies now mortal, shall be quickened. The Holy Spirit in the Word tells us by what means it is to be accomplished. The “same Spirit” which raised up Christ from the dead when He arose, is the same Spirit by which the children of God are brought to believe savingly in Christ. Ephesians 1:19-20 so declare. And this same Spirit which indwells the believing child of God is the abiding earnest, or pledge, that our mortal bodies shall also be quickened by means of this very Spirit, when the time set by God to do so, shall arrive. The word, “shall” is important. The Scripture does not declare that this Spirit “IS” quickening our mortal bodies, but that it “SHALL” do so. It is yet future, it is not something experienced by us while in this present earthly life. It is not the same thing as regeneration, but is resurrection. The notion that there is such a thing as the quickening of the mortal body now in our present experience, is not in accord with Scripture teaching. The theory that this quickening of the mortal body is in our present experience of God’s grace, is not in accord with Paul’s experience as set forth by him in Romans 7. In the Spirit’s work of regeneration, the sinner comes into possession of a divine nature imparted within him and planted within him. The old human nature is not rooted up and cast out, neither is it quickened or a whit changed from what it was prior to regeneration. It is still the Old Man. The body remains the same: “dead because of sin.” (Rom. 8:10) So long as the child of God stays here in this world, he carries with him this “body of death.” The stench of it intrudes into all his best endeavors, its impurities stain his prayers and meditation and spoils his efforts to obedience. There is no quickening of the “body” this side of the “first resurrection.” (It is the flesh, the “old man, and remains only earthy and mortal as it is). The essence of that for which we now hope, is

the coming of the Lord from heaven to *change our vile bodies* and fashion them like unto the body of His own glory. “Looking for that blessed hope, the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Then, and not until then, we shall awake in Christ’s likeness and be satisfied forever.

What evidence have you or I, or any one, that we are to have a place and part in the “first resurrection”? That is, the future coming forth of the complete and whole redeemed church in body and in soul and in spirit from among the dead? The evidence we have is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our mortal bodies now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.(I Cor. 3:19). Likewise, it is declared that our *bodies* are the members of Christ. Being the members of Christ, can they be lost forever in death? To say so would be to say that part of the body of Christ can remain forever dead. It cannot be! Death shall be swallowed up in victory, the grave itself shall be led captive for having so long held captive the bodies of the saints. When the Lord Himself shall be revealed from heaven bringing with Him the spirits of all them that sleep in Him, to unite them to their resurrected bodies, then the “creature itself shall be delivered from the *bondage of corruption* into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” This is the divine fulfillment of our salvation in Christ for which we wait in hope. This present earth and heavens in which we are now being reserved unto fire and unto the day of judgment of ungodly men, in which the elements being on fire shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burned up. Is not this the lake of the fire of the second death which is to engulf in eternal torment all of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked?

This “second death” shall have nothing to do with those having part in the “first resurrection” which is the coming forth from among the dead all the elect of God in Christ.

We who hope in Christ who look for His appearing in glory to bring us into that glory with Himself, and so to be with Him and be like Him, are not looking for the “fire” nor into the “fire”, but we look for the new heavens and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Even now, we are citizens of that new creation by reason of that blessed Holy Spirit which now abides in the children of God. Though we are in the world, we are not of it.

This is a grand theme and I glory in it. I wish I had the ability to set it forth in some measure of the beauty and grandeur in which I have been made to believe in it. I have but scanned it, just hinted at it. I have a blessed hope, unworthy though I am in myself, that I shall one day see Jesus face to face and be like Him. To be like Him will necessitate our having a body like His. This He has promised us. That body which we shall then wear, which body is to be like His, shall be this present mortal body then quickened, changed, made immortal and incorruptible. This the Scriptures teach, and thus am I blessed to believe it.

The former article was submitted by Elder Hudson, and selected from the *Old Faith Contender*, July-Sept., 1975.

## CHURCHES AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*“That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God” - I Timothy 3:15.*

Churches of God are sacred things; and church membership is a solemn matter. We fear these are truths too little considered, and therefore too much lost sight of. Persons often enter into churches without due reverence and anxiety, and then conduct themselves in a way

quite unbecoming the position they have assumed.

We will try and write, then, a few things upon this subject, in order to bring it before the minds of our readers, and thus, if the Lord’s will, stir them up to thought, reflection, and a proper diligence.

We need hardly remind our spiritual readers that *a union subsisted* between all the elect of God *from all eternity*, as in the mind, will, and purpose of God. They were all *viewed as one body* in Christ, and chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:1-11)

This *union* was further effected, so far as the removal of obstacles to its manifestation and enjoyment goes, by the personal work of Christ when upon earth; as in Eph. 2. This union is further manifested and brought into experience by the work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of the elect family of God. By this the members of *Christ’s mystical body* are made known to themselves and declared to others to be such; and by this they are brought into an experimental *union one with another*.

But it is plain from Scripture that it is the will of God that this union should be *openly displayed* by the living God-taught members of Christ being united together in a *visible church fellowship*; or, in other words, that the saints of God should be gathered together into such bodies as churches (assemblies).

These churches, then, are properly the *outward* manifestation and expression of an eternal and *spiritual union* existing amongst the members. Where such union exists not, church fellowship is an acted falsehood, the expression of that which has no actual existence. What a view of the sacredness of church fellowship we get immediately from the simple consideration of these things! Churches are properly the true, holy, and indeed heavenly places of God upon earth, into which are gathered together, according to

His Will and by His Spirit, the true saints or holy ones of God in Christ.

Now look again. What is the design of God, what the end to be answered, by this *visible church union*? We must again take our readers back into a past eternity, if such an expression is lawful. We have reason to believe that God's design in respect to the church was twofold. Primarily, that the elect, as one body in Christ, should be to the eternal declaration of His glory; that they should as one body show forth His praise, and be to all eternity to the setting forth of the riches of His grace. Secondarily, and subordinately to this, that they should all be united in one body to the mutual advantage and blessedness of the whole. Thus Paul writes: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in ONE BODY; and be ye thankful." Here then, are two great ends to be attained by this counsel of God: The manifestation of His own glory; and that which in His Wisdom and love He has inseparably bound up with it, — the blessedness of the elect of God.

Well, then, to descend from these heights, we can at once see in the light of such truths what must be the great end of church fellowship as upon earth, or what the institution of churches exists for; — the collective and united declaration of the glory of God; and the mutual edification of the members. We use the words *collective* and *united* because we want to show that not only is each individual Christian called to show forth God's praise, but churches *as bodies* are formed that the *members in union* and as united together for this end, should be to the glory of God.

Here, then, again we see the dignity, glory, and sacredness of church membership. Sanctification, we know, is the separation of a thing to the service and glory of God. Saints are thus separated; but not only as so many individuals. No! They are in God's design

separated from an ungodly world, and collected, not only into one great body upon earth, but into *particular bodies* as well; and as such bodies, set apart and consecrated to the service and glory of God.

Here, then, we have a most instructive view of the churches of God. They, properly considered, are bodies of persons separated unto God, and ordained to show forth His praise; the members of which are also called to mutually edify one another.

Those thoughts seem to throw a particular light upon the words of the Lord Jesus addressed to each of the seven churches: "I know thy works." We do not understand this expression here to refer merely or principally to the individual acts of saints; but their collective conduct as churches of God. Of course, the eyes of the Lord are upon His people as individuals. He knows our downsittings and uprisings, and understandeth our thought afar off. "His eyes are upon the ways of men, and He pondereth all their goings." But something more is meant when Christ says, "I know thy works." He refers to the churches as wholes; He considers how we are acting and conducting *ourselves as churches*. Are we as such answerable to God's ordinance? The church of Ephesus, we know, was in a declining state in this respect; the church of Sardis sadly defective; and Laodicea was in such a miserable condition, whilst boasting of her prosperity (!), that Christ says, "I will spew thee out of My mouth."

Who knows how many once flourishing churches have been unchurched, as we may say, because ceasing to answer the ends of church fellowship; or how many churches may at this instant be on the verge of such a condition, whilst very possibly boasting of prosperity and orthodoxy of sentiment? [Serious things for Old Baptists today to again consider! In some localities, we can find, not an "elephant graveyard", but a "graveyard of

Old Baptist churches;” and many more are in a state of entropy — death.]

But now let us look for a few moments a little closer into this matter, and see some at any rate of the things comprehended under these two great headings: — The showing forth of God’s glory; the mutual edification of the saints; or, in other words — In what ways does a church, as such, in its collective capacity, show forth the glory of God, and edify itself in love, and thus answer its very ends as a church? The question seems one of vital consequence to the churches of God as such.

We suggest the following things in reply to the question:

I. The first great thing which a church should attend to is *the ministry of the word*. This is of vital importance. If a church neglects this, and degenerates in respect to the ministry of the word in its midst, it is indeed degenerating. Now four things should be carefully maintained in the preaching of the word.

1. *Truth in its purity*. That which is spoken should be in harmony with the Word of God: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” The churches should diligently endeavour and pray and strive earnestly that *no admixture of error may be introduced*; for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Both the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira seemed to have failed here; the former allowing an Antinomian, the latter an Arminian, leaven to be brought in. (Both had a lax attitude toward the seriousness of receiving and fellowship ping fornicators; Rev. 2:14,20) Ephesus, on the other hand, is greatly commended for the vigilant opposition to error in its various forms. They detested the false legalistic apostles; they also detested and abhorred the licentious leaven of the Nicolaitanes.

2. *Grace in its freeness*. As Hart says:  
“God’s grace is free

To Paul, to Magdalene, and me.”

If the bestowments of God in Christ are made ultimately to depend upon anything but the good pleasure of His own eternal will and everlasting love to the elect, grace ceases to be grace, and is spoiled. All really depends upon the eternal counsel of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As the following lines express:

“But as for man’s merit, ‘tis hateful to me;

The Gospel, I love it, ‘tis perfectly free.”

The gifts of God in Christ do not depend upon any goodness, merits, or self-preparations for receiving them in the elect. Necessity is the only fitness for receiving, and this necessity, as to the sense of it, is itself the beginning of the receiving. To feel our need is God’s gift, as well as it is of God’s free goodness that the necessity is supplied out of Christ’s fulness. The needy man is the one welcome to Jesus. He loves the poor. Therefore, to make anything of man’s wisdom, strength, goodness, righteousness, or to put any stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of the needy, is to spoil the doctrine of grace. All is of God. Whosoever truly wills is welcome. Grace is free, or it is no longer in existence.

3. *Truth in its fulness*. There is a rich variety in the Word of God. We read of the “manifold wisdom of God.” Truth should be preached in its rich fulness and variety. There are truths which are to be *believed*; doctrinal truths for establishing the judgment in the things of God. There are truths to be *practiced*; or preceptive words indicating what is a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ. There are precious promises, precious warnings, precious reproofs, precious counsels, precious drawings, precious exhortations, precious histories with their lessons of divine wisdom, precious prophecies with their sweet unfoldings of the future, as well as warning voices. Now, all these branches of truth, in which the riches and fulness of the grace of God are set forth, should be noticed in the ministry. “All

Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

4. *Truth in its power.* The Lord’s people have an experience of the truth of God. It has a mighty, because a divine, influence through the Spirit of God upon their hearts. The grand experience is the experience of the proper effects of the truth of God upon us. To find the law working wrath, a sense of our liability to the wrath of God; to find the Gospel working hope, and a fleeing to the Lord Jesus; and then a blessed consolation, as through it we learn what Christ is, and are brought by grace to call Him ours; — this is experience. We fear some so-called experiences fall sadly short of this. They are not Word-produced experiences. They are not experiences of what the truth of God produces in the hearts and lives of the elect and living children of God. Well, then, genuine experience must be preached, or truth as to the power and practical effects insisted upon. The “grace of God which bringeth salvation” must be declared as teaching the saved to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. Of course, much might be added; but we pass on.

II. A church should see that *the ordinances are properly and duly administered.* These are the laws of Christ’s house. Having abolished in His church with a Kingly authority the old observances of the legal dispensation, He has given to His churches the two great institutions of believers’ baptism and the Lord’s supper. These are designed, the first to show forth the believer’s standing in Christ, as dead, buried, and risen again in Him; the second, as Paul states, to “show forth the Lord’s death till He come.” The ordinances are, then, to be carefully observed, in obedience to the

command of the King of Zion in His church, and are to be performed in a proper manner, answerable to the meaning of each institution, and

in accordance with the mind of Him who ordained them. We study brevity, and therefore do not go into particulars here. We merely insist upon the importance of a church attending diligently to these things.

III. There should be *frequent assemblies of the saints together in public.* This Paul particularly enjoins: “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.” And the Lord Jesus points to the same thing when He says, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” This appears principally to refer to the public or collective assemblies of the saints, as the context indicates. Now, these assemblies may be of three kinds, all of which should be attended to, and also attended diligently, by church members:

1. Meetings in which the Word is preached.

2. Meetings more specifically, such as for prayer, praise, or fellowship.

3. Church meetings, or conferences, in which, of course, only members of the church are present. These are meetings for the carrying on of church affairs. They are public meetings of the saints, so far as being open to all the members; but not meetings in public as open to all the world. Consequently, things done in church meetings should be kept private among church members, and not by gossiping tongues be made known to everybody. We cannot think it at all answerable to the Word of God that such public meetings should be confined to the Lord’s day, nor do we think that such a state of things would answer to the necessities of the case. Surely it is desirable, then, to have frequent meetings that the spouse may often have the opportunity of feeding her kids, as is said in the Song of Solomon. Selected.