

# **THE PREDESTINARIAN**

## **VOLUME 1: ISSUE 1**

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**“... to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us ... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”** **Luke 1:1-4.**

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**EDITORIALS**

## WHY THE PREDESTINARIAN?

The editors have various reasons for introducing this magazine to a general audience. Each of the editors, as so many of the elders in the Mississippi Valley, have come to the Predestinarian Baptists from other groups which had become Arminian. We experienced a desire for Biblical “Christianity”, not only as a forum for our ministry, but also for fellowship with such who believe and love the truth of sovereign grace.

Generally speaking, few, if any of us had heard there were groups of Old School Baptists who still maintained New Testament doctrines, faith, and practices. Finding a fullness of the Spirit’s presence among these simple churches endeared the Predestinarians to our hearts.

Today, throughout the United States, the Holy Spirit is calling many to a love of free and sovereign grace. Such have a desire for fellowship in gospel-believing and practicing churches. Our chief motive in this publication is to ascribe all glory to God, and articulate the precious doctrines of Christ as held by the Church.

Many of the issues faced anew by these sovereign grace believers have long been resolved among the Predestinarian Baptists. This can be shared to the mutual benefit of those who seek to follow the strict standard of the gospel of grace. The questions on the millennial reign of Christ; the doctrine of the Church and the interrelationship between churches; New Testament discipline and practices; methods of evangelism; and the supralapsarian views on predestination have all been settled among the churches. In these points, the various groups of sovereign grace ministers are divided among themselves according to different schools of thought. Much of the confusion in these issues is due to the views advocated by theologians who had departed the former teachings of the Lord’s Church.

Every group of people have Biblical issues upon which they differ. It is the will of God that churches be composed of men, and as such are subject to varying degrees of imperfection. This is equally true of Predestinarian Baptists. In general, they are united on the basic doctrines of Christ, church practices and forms, and methods of New Testament evangelism. In other points there are diversities which create serious problems, in the interrelationships between churches. These problems create divisions which dishonor the name of our Lord and grieve the brotherhood.

Some of these issues are fruits of abuses found in associational traditions.

**These tares of tradition have grown steadily, due in part to their ultra-conservatism, and the divisions are now extensive. The carnal tendencies of men to lay aside the commandments of God that they may hold to the traditions of the elders are very evident, and therefore the ever-changing trend is to “wax worse and worse”. These are very real issues which must invariably be faced.**

**Our purpose in this area is to call for unity and peace among sound Predestinarian Baptists. To do so, it will be more helpful to advocate practical manners of resolving the problems without creating new divisions or gathering a following to us as a standard. Speaking against them is not sufficient, for all our people know they exist and grieve over them. Therefore we will advocate how unity may be enhanced by following New Testament doctrines and examples. To do this, it seems appropriate to go back to our historical origins as a people who were greatly motivated to seek union with those of like precious faith. It is our historical heritage to seek such, for we are a product of the mergers between the Welsh and English Baptists; Separates and Regular Baptists; and in the West, between Old School and Anti-Means Primitive Baptists. Thus, we have both a Biblical and historical precedence for seeking the peace and unity of gospel churches.**

**To lay a foundation for unity and peace among Predestinarian Old School Baptists, we feel it necessary to explore again the Doctrine of the Church. Is it an organization, or a fellowship of baptized believers? Is it a denomination, or one body of Christ? What are the bounds of its fellowship? What are its internal affairs? To accomplish unity there must be a foundation in that “common salvation” we have all experienced, if so be we are in Christ Jesus.**

**The doctrinal foundation in the sovereignty of God and the work and accomplishment of Christ is well established. In other points there is much room for reexamination. We will advocate purity in doctrine, purity in practice, and purity in moral deportment of church members. Impurities in these cardinal areas are the marks of apostasy. Godly individuals cannot fellowship heresy, lax discipline, nor immorality. They are sanctified by the Spirit and belief of the Truth which give them a conscience which withdraws from such. No union or peace can be purchased by compromises in Biblical precepts; That is an illusion.**

**It is our desire that all predestinarians give more earnest heed to the things most surely believed among us; to be ready to give an answer to every man that ask of our faith and practice; hold fast to the faith with a pure conscience based upon a “Thus saith the Lord” rather than opinion or tradition; and adorn the gospel of free grace in a manner which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. These things, brethren, we are committed to out of love and adoration to our Holy God.**

**Today, many seem to have their conscience seared as with a hot iron. Far**

too many are willing to allow gospel infractions with which they are offended, rather than stand for what the Spirit teaches them. Lax discipline and departures from the holy precepts of the New Testament are leading churches into an order alien to our history, conscience, and Biblical teachings. Yet, we still print in our minutes that the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is the word of God and the ONLY rule of faith and PRACTICE. If sovereign grace believers truly believe that, it is time to spend more effort in the Scriptures and less before a T.V. set, for it appears that far too many are ignorant of Scriptures. Only by submission to God's word can needed reform be made by its standard.

We were called out of false religion, if we were ever called. We left only when compelled to "come out of her, 0 my people". We cannot go back for we have no desire for the fashionable superficial worship in modern religions. We must stand upon the ground the Lord has brought us to this day.

Brethren, if any desire to aid us in the task before us, send us names and addresses of any you know who love the TRUTH of free and sovereign grace. Send any willing contributions to our Laurel, MS address.

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### 20 OR 30 PIECES OF SILVER

*"...And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them at Dothan And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him." Genesis 37:17-18.*

The account of Joseph's life fills the last portion of Genesis; and through the account there is a thinly veiled and overflowing typology of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nearly all that Joseph was, said, and experienced was an inspired echoing of the "golden bells"; which, moving with the high priest, sang of the glory of God. Yet, among the many parallels which tie Joseph and Christ together as type and anti-type, there stands an apparent inconsistency

*"...and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt."*

Why, if Joseph, more than any other individual typifies Christ, does the type fail at this crucial juncture? In our natural logic we should expect that had Joseph been bartered for twenty pieces of silver, so also should the Lord have been sold for twenty pieces; but, such was not the case. A thoughtful reading of Genesis 37 discovers how many dozens of correspondencies are revealed by the holy Spirit in contrasting Joseph and the Lord; and then ponder the jarring discrepancy between "twenty" pieces of silver and "thirty" pieces for which Jesus was sold. Is there an error in the narrative? Did a careless or over-worked scribe copy the wrong word?

No! Rather, God is accentuating a difference so that Christ might be magnified; and that the Church might be shown again how unbounded is His love for her. Gold, silver, and brass are the three metals most commonly used and written about in Scriptures; each has a spiritual signification which differs according to its intrinsic value and nature: gold reveals gleams of God's glory; silver witnesses of His redemptive love; while brass burns with His judgment for sin. The declining value of the three metals points first to God's glory; secondly, to the redemption of the elect; and finally, to the judgment of their sins. We are now dealing with the second of these metals, silver; and we remark, in passing, that as gold is first, so also is God's glory. Silver is lesser in value to gold, as our salvation stands in awe of the pre-eminent glory of God.

Precious silver was cast into one-hundred sockets which ringed the base of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The gold-sheathed boards of the walls of the tent were set by their tenons into the massive silver sockets; thus tying the entire framework of the tabernacle together. The silver sockets supported the shimmering splendor of the golden boards; as Christ's redemptive work and Person reveal the glory of God to His Church. See John 14: 8-9. So also, when Moses made the two silver trumpets of one piece, do we see that "... *calling of the assembly, ...*" our calling, is founded upon the redemption we have in Christ; and that the sounding of the trumpets for the "*journeying of the camps.*" confirms to us that redemption is certain through this life and into eternity

Joseph's brethren stripped him of his coat of many colors, but the Lord laid aside His glory when He came into the world to seek His brethren. Jesus had a body of sacrifice prepared for Him; and whereas Joseph's coat was dipped in the blood of "*a kid of the goats*", to make it appear he had been slain; Jesus was slain and the blood of His body of sacrifice testifies of better things than does the blood of sheep or goats, or even the blood of Abel, "*for He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*". II Cor. 5:21.

Joseph found his brethren in the *field* and there was sold into bondage for twenty pieces of silver. Jesus found His brethren in *the world* and there was delivered for thirty pieces of silver. In both instances the will of God was perfectly accomplished. On the one hand, Joseph's brethren "... *thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*" Genesis 50:20. And on the other hand, Jesus "...*being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*". Acts 2:23. By His one sacrifice Jesus redeemed "...*them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*" Galatians 4:5.

When Judas approached the chief priest with his wicked proposition, he

was to strike a bargain with men who had an intimate knowledge of the letter of the law and Scriptures. They were well aware that the twenty pieces of silver paid for Joseph could not be the price of Jesus (for reasons we shall soon see); and that they could not give (for their hatred of Him) His fair price. Instead, “... *they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them.*” Zechariah 11:12-13.

To the chief priests, the ultimate insult to Jesus was to value Him at *thirty* pieces of silver; but the Lord turned the wrath of the priests into His praise for He called the thirty pieces of silver “.. . *a goodly price. . .*”. And the following Scriptures shed light on the *goodly price*: “*And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singlar vow, the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation. And thy estimation shall be of the MALE from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be FIFTY shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. And if it be a FEMALE, then thy estimation shall be THIRTY shekels. And if it be from five years old even unto TWENTY years old, then thy estimation shall be of the MALE. TWENTY shekels.*” Leviticus 27: 1-5.

Had the Lord received His FAIR price (as the priests saw it) He would have been delivered for FIFTY shekels of silver. Joseph, at the time of his being sold into bondage was seventeen years old; which explains the twenty shekels of silver as his fair price; but further, even in betrayal, Christ has the pre-eminence, for He was delivered for a greater price in silver, although it was the price of another.

It was not a *fair* price, but it was owned by Christ as a *goodly* price; the price of a mature FEMALE Israelite --- His Bride, His Church! A final word: For His Bride He endured the shame, suffered the death, and was raised in power. He was valued at the price of our redemption. All these transactions using silver are symbolic means revealing to us the marvels and complexities of the salvation of the Lord. “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you...*”. --- G.E.D.

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## EXPERIENCE OF GRACE

By Obadiah Holmes

1607-1682

(Editor’s Note: Obadiah Holmes is one of three earliest Baptists ministers in the American colonies. He was contemporary and fellow minister with Elders

**John Clarke and Roger Williams. He, Clarke, and Williams were the first of our people to suffer for the Cause and God and Truth in this country. Since it is a practice among us for candidates for baptism to relate their experience of grace, we thought it well that this first one in the U.S. be reprinted for comparison.)**

## **ON MY LIFE**

**The twentieth day of the tenth month (December, old calendar) in the year 1675, Obadiah Holmes now comes to the Testimony of the day. Being sixty-nine years old or thereabouts and wishing to give some account of my estate and condition— what it is, what it was, and what my hopes are that it shall be hereafter, I write now unto my friends and relations whether in Old England or New. I have had so many requests and desires from brethren and friends to that end and purposes, and I know not but it may be some occasion to provoke others to try their evidences themselves and not to take all on trust as I fear many are apt to do. Even the apostle says: Try, prove, examine your own selves; know you not that Christ dwells in you except you are reprobate. And this has been my great work this fifty years, and yet remains my greatest work.**

**First, I must remember my honored parents who were faithful in their generation and of good report among men and brought up their children tenderly and honorably. Three sons they brought up at the University of Oxford, but the most of their care was to inform them and instruct them in the fear of the Lord and, to that end, to give them much such counsel, carrying them often before the Lord by earnest prayer. But I, the most rebellious of all, did hearken neither to counsel nor to any instruction. For, from a child, I minded nothing but folly and vanity. And, as years did grow on, wisdom should have taken place; but the wisdom I had was wise to do evil, but to do well I had no knowledge.**

**As days and strength increased, even so did my transgressions. I became hardened to sin, not only to be drawn into it by others, but was so forward as to draw others into evil as my fellows. Being come to the height of wickedness, I did think it best that I could do the most wickedness. I began to think it was but a foolish thing to talk of a God that should bring man to judgment; therefore, the best thing or me was to take pleasure in whatever the flesh could content itself, in whatever my heart could desire. Yea, and I had all things concerning and agreeing to that end, accomplishing such wicked desires — and that in strength of body and vanity with all things suitable. Still, my corrupt, vain heart was not yet satisfied. It so ranged abroad that, had I not been prevented, I had thought to have compounded and contracted with the devil for more powerful ways and means to assure such evil ends as I propounded to myself.**

**Continuing in such a course for four or five years, I begun to bethink me**

what counsel my dear parents and my dear mother had given me: many a call, many a time, with tears and prayers. My rebellion to my honored parents then looked me in the open face. And dear Mother, being sick, it struck me that my disobedient acts caused her death, which forced me to confess the same to her — my evil ways. After this time, I began to go hear the word preached, but every word that was spoken was against me and left me without hopes of any mercy. Sometimes, passing over a field called Twenty Acres, I stood still and said: “Oh! that I might lie in hell so many years as here are grass! — it would have an end!” And, at other times looking on the stars of heaven in the night, I said: “Oh! that I might lie in hell but so many years as there are stars! — it would have an end!” That word was ever before me: the wicked shall be turned to hell, there to be tormented with the devil and his angels forever, where the worm dieth not, nor the fire ever goeth out.

Yet at this time Satan told me: It is best for thee to put such things out of your mind and take pleasure while thou are here and return to thy merry companions. I did for a time, but the worm in the conscience did still gnaw. I went to hear the most noted men I could, but found it still against me. Yet I often heard them say that I must repent and be humble and pray and *then* thee should find mercy. Thee must confess thy sins and forsake them, and *then* thee shall find mercy. This brought me to a resolution in the most public way and company I could find so to do. And done it, through ignorance, had not a friend advised me to the contrary — and that upon good ground. He also put me upon *prayer and duties*, but found no rest or quiet in my soul. Then Satan let fly at me as an adversary and told me it was too late to return, for there was no hope for me. I answered him and did instance several of my wicked companions that God had shown mercy to but little before. He answered: Remember, thou scorned and mocked and derided them, yea and cursed them, saying the devil was in them and they were all mad. Withal, He told me that I had read and heard that there was a sin which never should be forgiven in this life nor that which is to come — which sin I had committed!

With this, even this assault he fooled me a long time, even so that my life was a burden to me. Oh! the knives, ropes, trees, coal pits can witness the many escapades of one in a most undone and desperate condition, as one appointed to eternal destruction here and hereafter. The perplexity of mind brought me to great weakness in body; yet, for ease and comfort, I turned over every stone, hearkened to all my acquaintances and friends as to leaving of my old ways and all my old companions — which thing I had done before with hatred toward their and my own ways. But all this while I never considered sin according to the true nature of it as huge and loathsome to the Lord, but only as bringing judgment upon me as one man. Yet was I fearful to sin and began to read the

Scriptures and be frequent in prayer and other duties, and took delight among professors that were of the strictest sort. Easily the gross evil of the formal ministers and that conformity (Anglican Communion-ed) was a superstition, a name.

For all that, I had no rest in the soul, though I was in the manner strict as any. As I was enlarged in sorrow for sin and deep in humiliation, enlarged in prayer or filled with tears, my comfort came in and increased; but, as I failed in them, so my sorrow was renewed, And when I looked over my best performances and found them full of sin — Oh! then the fear and doubts and questions concerning my own estate. I judged that it was all done in hypocrisy, which sin my soul did abhor. Even in this sad and doubtful state, I continued very long, yea, many years, and although I could speak comfort to others, yet was I often disquieted in my soul — and so was my comforts according to my enlargements.

Not long after this, there was in me a great love to the Lord, but alas, I was deceived by my own heart. And the ministers who told me that there must be such and such love to Him as to keep to Him *in duty* and to part with all for Him still left me short of understanding HIM as I should. My selfish heart was willing to love Him and to part with all for Him; yea, with my dear honored father, brethren and friends, house and land, and my own native country for time. I determined to avoid the popish relics of the bishops and that filthy, hellish rabble, and to separate from them and all those that mention them and were fully known in my own country. I set adventure the dangers of the seas to come to New England where I tried all things in several churches. For a time, I thought I had *made a good choice* or change, but in truth it little differed from former times. My spirit was like a wave, tossed up and down — not yet come to *dig so deep* as I should, or to consider the ONLY ground of a well-grounded hope.

God at last brought me to consider that hope, which was His own love to poor lost man. (This was) in *His own secret counsel and purpose before man ever was*, and was revealed to man in his times; that there is *no preparation necessary to obtain Christ*, nor anything to deserve that love so as to merit the same. Nothing could stay (stop) or satisfy when he imputed or laid sin and transgression upon the Lord and upon Him alone. God looked at me as a rebel, an enemy, yea, *dead* in sin and trespasses, yea in my blood. He then said: LIVE through the blood of Christ, be cleansed and in Him be loved. For His own (does He say this) to poor man and the election may obtain it, for He knows who are His. His good will is manifested before men *have done either good or evil*, so that neither good foreseen nor evil original nor actual shall hinder — so that free grace may have its free course. (This love) is manifested when one gives faith: to

believe the promise of the Father in giving a full discharge to the soul, by taking full satisfaction from His only Son who became sin for us and knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him. And so remission and a free pardon is granted forth, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life; and all those that so come to Him He will no ways cast away.

When God had given me to see in any measure this love of His, then and not until then could I give over *working for life and to live in working*. At last He caused me to say *from life I must work*; then, all my former turnings and returnings must come to nought. Yea, all my righteousness is as filthy rags, and to account all as dung so I might obtain Christ, or rather that I might be *accepted by Him* and so remove from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace — even that New Covenant of life alone by Himself who paid so dear a price as to lay down His own blood to wash, cleanse and purify the soul and to redeem by God both soul and body to serve the Lord. That is now the life I live by the faith of the Son of God. This faith *causes works of faith* or, rather, fruit that flows from that root so that now LOVE hath constrained me to yield up myself to live, as to a king, to rule me by His holy laws and commandments; and, as to a prophet, to teach me and to instruct me both to know and to do His holy will; and, as to my only chief Priest, to offer a sacrifice for me which He did even for all, where by power my imperfect prayers and all other services become accepted of the Father.

This love, shed abroad in my heart, brought in me a restless desire to know His will that I might show forth the praises and glory of Him that had called me by His grace. And though His commandments to the flesh were grievous, they were to my spirit light and ease; yea, and whatever falls in my way heavenward I am content with it. So that in my measure I can say that I have learned to be abased and to abound, to go through good or evil report, to have liberty or restraint, peace or, trouble, yea, to live or die is gain. This faith in the Son of God causes me with readiness to yield myself to be obedient to the will of my Lord who has wrought in me *both to will and to do His good will and pleasure*, and to improve that small talent He gave me for His own use and the profit of those that He called me unto; not only for the good of the church at home, but for others abroad and for that ever-rested one, my own heart, since He called me forth even to pity poor sinners that they might be informed of the glad tidings from heaven: That God out of His pity and great love sent His Son to save sinners — yea, consider on no other terms but as sinners. That which first moved me to entreat and beseech them to be reconciled to God was the consideration of God's mercy showed to my poor soul, who was going headlong to the pit of destruction, had not mercy only prevented and free grace only been

extended to me. Oh, therefore, I travel in heart day and night in my spirit until Christ be formed in Man; I labor by prayers both day and night that the elect may be called and that God would send laborers into the harvest. For the harvest is great but the laborers few that are found diligent, careful and faithful in the work and service of the Lord.

Many there be in New England that serve themselves and their own backs and bellies, but starve the people. Yet, let my careful duty of love be never so great and rewarded with never so much respect or dishonor (refused or received it is all one to me, for I am but a servant), but the honor alone belongs only to the Lord and their ownselves. It is therefore the Lord alone who *must teach men to preach*. I must tell you that it has been a most hard and difficult lesson to learn: to know my own heart. It has been so deceitful that I could not find it out until the Lord brought me to understand that I must receive eye salve only from Him who alone was the discoverer of secrets. The trouble of the inward parts and what He only wrought that was good was wrought by His Holy Spirit. I have learned that if I want anything good, it was from and by Him. That led down my proud flesh, to only glory in the Lord. In truth, when I had the most incomings of God in prayer or speaking as often I met with, even then it was my time to be upon the watch lest the glory had been given to another. I have found that I never could fully quiet my spirit in the most excellent performance, though the matter and form of them were according to the revealed will of God. In the good that I propounded (which I say proceeds from me as a corrupt and dirty channel), I must disown and pray for forgiveness of sin in them. Then, I look up to Christ to sweeten, that is to say, that the Lord might look down upon me to remember He had taken satisfaction in His own son whom He did offer up: that one sacrifice forever to perfect them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Were it not for that, much and very much discouragement would rest upon me. And I am constrained, though I be in the practice and profession of ordinances according to the revealed will of God, yet to look through them and above them only to the Lord, the Author and Appointer of them to Himself and to find my profession to be in Him and not in them. For I look at every ordinance of His to be but as means of His own appointment to convey and communicate Himself through those who are but mere men that can not see the face of God amid live. Wherefore, remove me from all the curse of the law and from all righteousness of man to trust only in the Lord. When I began once to look unto or trust my own righteousness, alas I found it was dangerous and it greatly took away even that glory that was due to the Lord. For if I did anything worthy of taking notice of, it was but my duty and due debt. So now I am come to see plainly that I nothing and can do nothing, for in me dwells no good thing. For when I would do good, evil was present with me: and yet I know it is no

more I but sin that dwells in my flesh, finding a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind — which has caused me to cry out : *“Oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from this body of this death?”* But in hope and good assurance, I can say: *“I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, that I myself in my mind serve the law of God, but in my flesh the law of sin.”* I have also learned by the Scriptures and experience to see the emptiness and vanity in all things, both men and creatures which I sometimes too much trusted unto. In former days, these have deceived me, so nothing in the world below besides the Lord will stand the soul in good stead in a needful time. Though I desire to esteem and account of men according to what of God I find in them and to own that to His praise. I have seen that it is an evil to make men the strength of counsel or help: and taking men’s words in order to a spiritual way of direction is not safe. For the way is to try the spirits, for every spirit is not of God, and he who speaks not according to the Holy Scriptures does so because he has no light in them. Whereupon, I have only them and them alone for my rule and direction, beseeching the Lord to give me understanding of them by this Holy Spirit which is the only revealer of secrets to my soul. (He) speaks peace to my conscience and that makes me bold, not much mattering what men speak to me, whether good or evil — knowing man who is many times partial in judgment and weak in sight, sometimes calling evil good and good evil, and so passes wrong judgment.

And as I find emptiness in man, so emptiness and want in all creatures. As for honor among men, that vanity is high. Dignities, vain things, riches are vain — taking their wings, and they are gone. Strength and beauty are vain, long-life burdensome: creature comforts are empty stubble: nothing here below but doth admit of trouble and vexation of spirit. My desire is neither to covet one thing or another to serve as my rest or comfort or thereon to trust. But as a staff in my weak hand for present help, and that no farther than the Lord shall make any creature for my present use: and so to possess as if not, and to judge as not judging anything, for my life and living is the Fountain of Life— the LORD JESUS CHRIST. For the Lord has given me His Son: how shall He not with Him give me all things that He sees needful for me, so that I need not to say what shall I eat or wherewith shall I be clothed, or he in doubtful despair, for He is my all and has said that He is all sufficient. And even when my soul is troubled desiring such and such a temptation to be removed, even then He as it were answers me that His grace is sufficient for me. And I have found it made good to me; altering, proving, removing or delivering out according to His good pleasure. So that I have ever found Him as good as His word, and promises never fail me in any difficult time. When I was beset either with Satan or with his instruments in my suffering condition, (His) rod and staff did comfort me

and did refresh my soul. At times when men wrote or spoke hard things against me, He then spoke peace and upheld a weak body to bear what men could lay upon it — and that with ease and comfort. I never was in a strait but the Lord was my present help in any difficult time; and though I have passed through many trials the word of the Lord was my stay, through the help of the Holy Spirit from which I have received sweet consolation. And though my heart and affections and judgment and practice is to ordinances, as they are God's own appointment and commandment in obedience to the Lord — I use them, but yet my soul's consolation and rest is not in them, but in the Lord Himself and His own conveyance of Himself through them. For they are no more profitable to my soul than as conveyances of Himself to me, and that in them I have possession of Him who is my life.

If I may give you an account of a secret (though to many it is not a secret), it is this. When I have been in the most enjoyment of ordinances and most affected and enlarged in any performance, I have been even then in the most danger of a great evil if not the worst sin: namely, to take away that glory from God and take the honor to myself, or at best to rest quiet as if that should have been my only support. Therefore, the Lord knows what strugglings and strivings and examining of my own heart have I had after my nearest approaches; and, when I was gotten in any esteem among men and upon these tongues of prayer, then was a time for me to be upon watch and truly then was I most thrown down in myself, and have thought really that I was the least of sinners, but truly the chief of sinners.

Nothing in the world lay more upon my spirit than sin. Often, yea very often, I desired the Lord to give forth to my spiritual understanding the power and virtue and benefit of the blood of Christ to cleanse and wash me from all my sin. I more and more to find the good effect of that significant ordinance of baptism which I own and have respect unto, but not therein to trust, but yet good in its place as other appointments of the Lord. None of them (is) to be neglected or slighted by any that find the Lord and love Him in sincerity and truth. It is my desire that while I am in the land of the living I may use them in obedience and love to my Lord and in a careful, earnest waiting for His own Spirit in and through them. As for the Spirit of the Lord, it is the only Comforter, and gives the only true and certain ( ? ) to my soul in order with my peace to God and union and fellowship with Him and in that eternal and everlasting glory.

Oh, that He has laid down His life and did undergo that death, even the death upon the cross, to free me from sin and so bring me to glory! The first cause of this was the *purpose of God in His decree and counsel before the foundation of the world*. Even then He found a way whereby mercy and justice

might meet, truth and peace might kiss each other. And while I am in this conflict and spiritual battle I might have *hope* for my salvation as first appointed in that decree of God's; second, it was by means of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, in the third place, witnessed to me by the Spirit and through faith in Jesus and declared to man by word and deed in life and conversation to the comfort of others who were partakers of the same grace.

Now, to the Lord alone be all honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.

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## THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Five basic confessions of faith in early American colonial religions were: (1) the Belgic Confession of the Reformed Church, chiefly located in New Amsterdam or New York; (2) the Savoy Confession of the Congregational Puritans in New England; (3) the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians in the Middle Colonies; (4) the London Baptist Confession adopted by the Philadelphia Six-Principle Baptists in New England, the Ketocton of Virginian, and the Kehukee Baptists of North Carolina; and (5) the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Communion (Episcopalians) in the Southern colonies.

Even a partial examination of these expressions of religious sentiments, or doctrines, will quickly reveal the uniformity and consistency of the historic Christian faith and expose the glaring apostasy of the cheap sentimental and carnal confession of modern religionists.

Three of these confessions — the Savoy, Westminster, and Baptist — express a beautiful balance in the doctrine of election: “God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God *neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein*, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears His wisdom in *disposing all things*, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.” London Baptist, Chapter III, Para..) The Westminster and Savoy state the same with but little difference in wording.

The Belgic Confession states the same in this form: “We believe that the same God, after He had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without His appointment; nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed. For His power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that He orders and executes His work in the most excellent and just manner, even then, when devils and wicked men act unjustly.” (Chapter

### XIII, “Of Divine Providence”).

The main points in the above statements are briefly: The continual Sovereignty of God over all things, which are decreed by Him; God is not the author of sin; and God does not approve of sin. This is a good statement of Predestinarian Baptists doctrine.

The first objection which a Pelagian (absolute freewiller) snaps back at a sovereign grace believer is: “If I believed in election I’d go out and sin all I wanted to”. For some strange reason carnal minded men draw this conclusion as easily as a mathematician concludes that two plus two equals four. Yet, the same freewiller when confronted by the strict discipline of predestinarian churches will immediately call them “puritanical”! It is a fact that all bodies of religion that hold to the absolute sovereignty of God insist upon Godly deportment for members in their communion, despise hypocrisy, and oppose all carnal self-seeking satisfaction for the lust of the flesh. Believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit, have always been, now are; and will continue to be opposed to sin and iniquity to an infinitely greater degree than the worldly opposers of free grace.

None can deny that the fundamental belief of early Protestants in America was in absolute predestination; yet the word “absolute” affixed to “predestination” has been so equated with the false charge that sovereign grace believers preach that “God is the Author of sin”, that many abhor the very thought that God’s decree of election and predestination is as broad as our forefathers’ confession of faith state that it is.

If we are to preach, believe, and practice the *whole counsel of God*, then we must tenaciously cleave to the “faith of God’s elect”. As we believe, so we preach. We are given no choice otherwise. Thus, we affirm the three positions in the context of our confessions, i.e.:

1. The absolute sovereignty of God in creation, providence, and grace.
2. God is *not* the Author of sin — sin is not a created thing; and,
3. God does *not* approve of sin, but rather abhors it and the wicked alike!

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

When Jehovah God revealed His determinate counsel to bring destruction upon wicked Babylon, He reminded Israel, saying: “*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*” Isa. 46:9-11.

Before the destruction of Babylon, God taught Nebuchadnezzar the fundamental doctrine of the Sovereignty of Jehovah, God of Israel. The king's confession states: *"I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"* Dan.4:34-35. That is SOVEREIGNTY!

In that reasoned doctrinal presentation by Paul in Ephesians, he not only demonstrated clearly that God had predestinated the elect to an inheritance, but, this decree of predestination was the PURPOSE of God who is fully able to bring it to pass; for, wrote Paul: *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one ALL THINGS in Christ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who WORKETH ALL THINGS after the counsel of His will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ."* Ephesians 1:10-12.

The most evident display of God's sovereignty over all details is the prophetic fulfillment to every jot and tittle of the birth, time and place of birth, and every detail of the Son of God's life, work of active and passive obedience, finished salvation, death, the seventy-two hours in the "heart of the earth", resurrection, ascension, and glorification... the full and complete redemption of the whole family of God on earth.

Time will not permit examination of such an exhaustive study, but every child of grace believes fully in His Sovereignty. Psalm 109 fully described Judas possessed of Satan, and even the eternal damnation and curse upon him, his wife, his fathers, and his children. All sinful acts of wicked men redounded to the glory of the *"determinate counsel of God"* in bringing us to this so great salvation. Sovereignty is *the* crowning attribute of our God.

The first gospel sermon preached upon the first baptism, of the Holy Spirit declares: *"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). Peter's defense is that of the Church throughout all - ages: *"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"*; and then he declared this precious truth: *"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, for to DO whatsoever THY hand and COUNSEL determined BEFORE TO BE DONE"*. (Acts 4:27-28).

As Jonathan Edwards avowed; "Sovereignty I love to ascribe to my God,

but formerly it was not so”.

### **GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF SIN**

*Sin is not* a created thing. Rather, sin is the transgression of the law of God. Hence, while Scriptures fully prove that God reigns sovereignly over sin so that “the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain”, yet sin is the *act* of the creature in total violation of the holy commandments of God our Saviour. James best shows the balance by issuing a solemn warning and discussion of sin: “Let no man say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted of God’: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away **OF HIS OWN LUST**, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.” (James 1:13-16).

To say that God is sovereign over sin, is not at all saying that He motivates one to commit it. It does mean that God withholds His preventing grace so that it is not subdued. For the child of grace, it is used to bring about chastening and instruction as a father would do for his child. ”My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” Hebrews 12:5-8. We must conclude that our heavenly Father does not chasten us without cause. Thus, unrestrained sin leads to chastening, which in turn leads to godly sorrow which works repentance and a manifestation of our Father’s love and our sonship.

In the life of the wicked, we see sin stringently bounded by the sovereignty of God. Recall when Abraham told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister? Abimelech took Sarah to be his wife. “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, ‘Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife’. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? And she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I **ALSO WITHHELD THEE FROM SINNING** against me: therefore suffered I thee **NOT TO TOUCH HER**”. Genesis 20:3-6.

Finally, recall that touching event in the life of Joseph when Jacob died and his brethren feared he might avenge himself upon them for having sold him into bondage? They fell down before Joseph (fulfilling his dream as a child) and

**gave themselves to him as servants, or slaves, but he refused them saying: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day *to save much people alive*”.(Gen.50:20). Ah, dear reader, how often has it been your lot to see evil accomplish good for you? Can you dare say that your God had nothing to do with it, on the one hand; or on the other, that God was the author of such an obnoxious act?**

## **GOD DOES NOT APPROVE OF SIN**

**The first assumption a true child of grace can make relative to this heading is that it is so self-evident one needs not discuss it. Yet, the modernists’ conception of morality is so universally held that almost the entire fabric of American morality is weighed in the balance and found wanting. Once Freewillism was deified, it led directly to the so-called “Social Gospel” This resulted in a widely accepted “liberalism” that is best expressed in the high-sounding slogan “The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man”. Its hypothesis is that God loves everyone. He is all love and can hate no one. He is all merciful, therefore does not deal in justice or adversely with man.**

**The most practical effect is a total disregard for righteousness and morality among church goers. Everyone, almost, are viewed as “*poor little disobedient children of God*” — so the theory goes. The most amazing contradictions can be found in the logic of Arminians. Invariably they accuse predestinarians of “making God the author of sin”; yet they are unable to see that their view in which all the ungodly are disobedient but, safe, children of God sets the highest premium on the approval of sin. To them, God merely winks at it as a no-no, but secretly enjoys watching them in an X-rated view from heaven**

**The doctrinal standards of all the early churches in America stood in opposition to sin. Those influenced by the churches’ standard established social taboos against all manner of unrighteousness. Elected congressmen passed these strict standards into law, thus laying a foundation for morality within our legal system. Freewillism, however, has destroyed the legal, social, and moral foundation our forefathers.**

**God does not approve of sin. “*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*”. (I John 1:6) God does not approve of the “disobedient”. Sin is transgression, or disobedience of the law of God. The reprobate are classified by the Holy Spirit as “*the children of disobedience*”—Eph.2:2. Paul warns: “*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the WRATH of God upon the CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE*”—Ephesians 5:6. When the works of the flesh are listed, Paul again states: “*For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the CHILDREN***

**OF DISOBEDIENCE**". Colossians 3:6. To those that are defiled and unbelieving, "*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and DISOBEDIENT, and unto every good work REPROBATE*". Titus 1:16.

Of these reprobates, it is recorded "*But unto them which be DISOBEDIENT, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being DISOBEDIENT: whereunto also they WERE APPOINTED.*"— I Peter 2:7-8. If one reads verses 6-10 of the above passage, one will clearly see that these are non-elect, or reprobate persons.

Balanced interpretation of Biblical doctrines is mandatory if we are to believe the whole counsel of God; the Church will not yield to the temptation of being eased into compromise by Satan so as to destroy the Church's confidence in the Holy doctrines of God our Saviour. The Church "rightly divides the word of truth".

God is indeed sovereign over all things, for they are fixed in His immutable determinate counsel and decreed in His infinite wisdom and power. He is not the author of sin, nor does He approve of or have pleasure in sin or unrighteousness; something which natural man cannot believe! As surely as there are the elect righteous in Christ Jesus, just that surely there are the reprobate wicked that do not know the way of life; "*By their fruit ye shall know them*".

All the elect, when quickened by the Holy Spirit to life, are taught that God hates sin; that they are sinners, yea, the chiefest of sinners; and that their God is a Sovereign God — King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Grace and peace to the household of faith who believe in His Word —  
S.C.P.

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## PREVENIENT GRACE

By Jarrel E. Huffman

Romans 5:20 declares, ". . . where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Sin has affected every offspring of Adam. Adam's transgression was the transgression of the race (Romans 5:12; I Cor.15:22). Sin has inundated the world, and if left to itself would long ago have engulfed and destroyed every vestige of life on this planet. *But abounding lawlessness has not overcome abounding grace!*

Grace has rightly been defined as "God's unmerited favor to fallen, sinful, undeserving men". Grace, however, has many facets or aspects. For instance, there is *predestinating grace* — the grace that charts the course of God's purpose to save His elect. There is *electing grace* — grace that chooses the

objects of His favor — those whom He will save. And there is also *prevenient grace* — grace that lays hold upon the elect and brings them to actual salvation.

What does the word “prevenient” mean? Webster defines the word thusly: “Antecedent; anticipatory.” Theologically, “prevenient grace” is “that grace which goes before or precedes; that which acts upon and in behalf of God’s elect preceding their salvation.” Prevenient grace, therefore, is the special dispensation of mercy toward the elect of God. It is the grace that preserves and keeps the elect from destruction before God’s appointed time to draw and save His people. (Matt. 1:21).

Prevenient grace is closely akin to “Divine Providence.” In fact, “prevenient grace” is a special part of Divine Providence which is directed toward the elect of God.

Many Scriptures allude to “prevenient grace”. Two are here mentioned. II Timothy 1:9 declares, “*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*” Note the order laid down in Holy Writ — *saving* and *calling*. Effectual calling naturally *precedes* salvation, but here the order is reversed. Thus, Paul uses the word “saved” in this verse in the sense of “preservation”. Hence, he alludes to “prevenient grace”. God saves or preserves His elect from destruction or death prior to salvation. That is, none of the elect of God will fail to be saved. He preserves them, effectually calls them, and saves them in His own good time.

Jude 1 declares, “*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.*” Again, note the divine order — *sanctification, preservation, calling*. Both “sanctification” and the “preservation” here allude to “prevenient grace.” Those sanctified and preserved by God in His all-wise Providence are in time called from darkness to light (I Peter 2:9).

Grace reigns in God’s eternal purpose. If so, none of God’s elect can be kept from the day of salvation. (II Cor. 6:2). As surely as there is a time to be born and a time to die, there is also time to be saved. (Ecc. 3:2). The only alternative to this is “chance” or “luck”. And since God is a God of purpose and design, all things -- including the preserving of His elect to the day of salvation -- come under this all-embracing scheme (Rom. 8:28).

The Arminian has a “god who cannot save” (Isa. 45:20). To the Arminian one is elect only after he chooses God. And some Arminians believe that these who have chosen God can also “unchoose” God at any time between regeneration and death.

The Bible-believer, however, acknowledges that God has His elect ones to save, and that this choice was made in eternity (II Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:4). This

choice, contrary to the Arminian scheme of “foreseen faith”, was based solely on God’s good pleasure (Eph. 1:5). God “foreknew” His people (Rom. 8:29), everyone of them, intimately personally — before time began. Foreknowledge is more than God’s omniscience or prescience. *God knew His people before time!*

God having chosen His own before the foundation of the world, also predestinated them “... unto the adoption of children” (Eph. 1:4). Those foreknown and predestinated (Rom. 8:28) are saved in time through the work of the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ — their Substitute and Surety. God graciously calls these out in time, quickens them, and saves them by His grace — through His appointed means (II Thess. 2:14). Not only are these elected ones foreordained to be saved in time, but they are also appointed to glory (Rom.8:30).

How, then, could any of the elect fail to obtain God’s appointed end? The Arminian declares that man’s choice (free will) is the all-important thing. These boldly assert that “God has done all that He can do; Christ has done all that He can do; and the Holy Spirit has done all that He can do.” Then the Arminian lays salvation squarely on “free will” by declaring, “Now you (the sinner) must decide for God.” By this assertion, the Arminian places the *meriting cause* of salvation, not on the merits of Christ’s blood, but on the will or decision of the creature. The Bible clearly and decidedly rejects such claims (John 1:13). Until God draws the sinner effectually, makes him willing to come by changing his will and disposition, no sinner *wants* to come to Christ (John 5:40), nor can (John 6:44) come savingly to the Lord.

The Arminian scheme of salvation is based upon “free will” instead of “free grace” Hence, to the Arminian the elect can at any point *fail* to come to God’s appointed end. To them the elect may die before they are born, die in an unsaved state after birth, or worse — die lost after having been saved!

The Bible teaches that grace reigns in God’s eternal purpose concerning His elect. It reigns in *election* — in God choosing His people (Rom. 9:11-13). Grace reigned in the *eternal covenant* between the Persons of the Godhead (Heb. 13:20; John 7:1 -6). It reigned in the *birth, life, and death of Christ* at Calvary in His dying for those given Him by the Father. Grace reigns in the *effectual call* of the Holy Spirit to the elect of God. They are spiritually quickened (Eph. 2:1), brought savingly to Christ, and saved (John 6:37-45). Grace reigns in the *perseverance* of those elected ones (Phil. 2:12-13). Grace will reign in *glory* as all of the elect will be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Psa. 17:15; Rom. 8:29-30).

Prevenient grace is that aspect of grace which concerns the elect from election to salvation. Those elected in eternity are preserved safe through conception, birth, and life to the day when God calls them by His grace. That is,

none of the elect can fail to realize glorification. Those foreknown are the same number and group as those glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). One link is as strong or weak as the other four. This being true, God through providential care puts a “hedge” about His chosen ones. All of these come to the actual day of salvation. And no more — they are preserved and made to persevere to the end (I Pet.1:5; Phil 2:12-13).

The doctrines of grace are known in the theological world by the word “Calvinism”. This word, however, does not relate to the teachings of John Calvin, though it bears his name. Rather, “Calvinism” refers to that system which makes salvation altogether by the grace of God (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8-9; I Cor. 15:10).

The doctrines of grace are also known by the acrostic — T-U-L-I-P:

1. T — total hereditary depravity
2. U — unconditional election
3. L — limited atonement (particular redemption)
4. I — irresistible grace (effectual calling)
5. P — perseverance of the saints

These doctrines form one complete system. Some claim to believe one, two, three, four points of this system. This in itself is inconsistent. Those who believe such are usually called “modified Calvinists” The truth is that all five points must be believed to form the system. One necessitates the other four. If man is totally depraved, election must be unconditional; if depravity and unconditional election are true, the atonement made by Christ at Calvary was particular and definite — for those given Him by the Father (John 6:37; 17:1-6); if total depravity, unconditional election, and limited atonement are true, God’s grace is irresistible and efficacious to the elected ones; and if these precious four are true, the saints will persevere in grace, being preserved by the power of God (I Pet.1:5).

Robert Haldane, great Baptist of old, notes in his book on *Romans*: Many call themselves Moderate Calvinists, a denomination to which it is not easy to affix a precise idea. To the system called Calvinism, there may be nearer or more distant approaches, but those who deny any of the peculiar doctrines of that system, cannot in any sense, be called Calvinists. To affix the term Calvinism to any system, from which the doctrine of predestination is excluded, or in which it is even modified, is entirely a misnomer... What is called moderate Calvinism is in reality refined Arminianism. It is impossible to modify the former without sliding into the latter. If the doctrine of God’s sovereignty and unconditional election be denied, regeneration and redemption must undergo a corresponding modification, and all the doctrines of grace will be more or less

affected. While it is admitted that many of the people of God, through imperfect views of Divine truth, falter on the subject of election, it is a truth essential to the plan of salvation,(sic), and a truth most explicitly revealed. No truth of Scriptures is more easily defended. The reason why many find it difficult to defend this doctrine is that they suppose it necessary to account for it by human wisdom, and to justify the conduct of God. We have had nothing to do with Divine procedure, we have to do only with divine testimony . . . There are many who in words fully admit the doctrine of predestination, and at the same time neutralize it by dwelling exclusively upon God’s love, and laying the blame of the whole world not being saved on the sloth of Christians. —P. 489.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom.5:20). And God’s marvelous grace does indeed reign — from eternity to eternity. And as none of God’s elect will, *after* salvation, fail to obtain glory, so none of them will fail to come to salvation.

*This is Preventive Grace.*

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***FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK***  
**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**  
S.C. Phillips

Beginning in this first issue, we begin a series on the historical rise, growth, and development of Predestinarian Baptists. In so far that this involves the last great period in the Protestant Reformation known as “Puritanism” in England and America, many non-Baptists may also find it of special interest.

To initiate the series, it seems best to place our outline into the secular history of the period of our rise as an unmixed collection of anti-paedobaptists. This issue presents the secular backdrop of events during the earliest origins of our churches in the English colonies.

In our native England, Puritanism was the last step in the great church-reform movement of the Protestant Reformation which swept over Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the American colonies, the Great Awakening was the last until the present Sovereign Grace Movement. The first step had been Henry VIII’s creation of the Church of England, also known as the Anglican or Episcopal Church; which refused to recognize the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope, but which sought only slight changes in the ritual of

the Church itself. Following Henry VIII, the Anglican Church had a predestinarian Creed, a Roman ritual, and an Arminian ministry, thus appealing to wide-range Babylonianism.

The Puritans wanted radical changes, such as the elimination of vestments, processions, chanting, kneeling before bishop and priests, organ music, and the burning of incense — all of which they felt, contributed to the spiritual emptiness and superficiality of Anglican worship. Even John Milton, the greatest writer of the period, whose views were much less radical than those of most Puritans, described the Anglican clergy as “blind mouths” to whom congregations, like “hungry sheep, look up and are not fed”.

Initially, the Puritans were serious and industrious people; possessed with a holy straining for Biblical perfection which invariably brings about great improvement in the world, but which presents problems for the reprobate and the greater portion of worldly inhabitants. Macaulay, the nineteenth-century writer, left the world the false stereotype of all Puritans; when he claimed they held in contempt all human learning and amusement, possessed gloomy minds and habits, and were fanatically intolerant of other religions (the latter did eventually develop). But their active stand against the greatest sources of tyranny in their day: the king and church alliance, led Macaulay to pronounce the Puritans as “a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.” He recognized that, politically, they helped to destroy the feudalistic system of Church and State to bring in a new world political concept of freedom.

On the Anglican side of the struggle were the Stuarts and their fellows: who, because they resembled the courtiers of the king’s cavalry, were called “Cavaliers”. It was these who planted the deep south colonies in America. They were elegant gallants dressed in satins and velvets, lace collars, and hats with great flowing plumes. Their bright finery and long curly locks stood out in marked contrast to the somber, practical dress of the Puritans; whose habit of wearing their hair short earned them the nickname “Roundheads”. This contrasting element in colonial North Carolina was at the heart of the issue between our Separates of the Great Awakening and the Regular Baptists in the next century.

Both James I and his son Charles I were dogmatic Anglicans who sought to correct the “errors” and the “treason” of the Puritans by force of arms. One man, for instance, who had written a book attacking ungodly plays and actors, was deprived of his degree from Oxford University; barred from his profession in law, made to stand in the pillory (stocks), subjected to having both ears cut off, fined five thousand pounds, and imprisoned for life. That was for condemning actors! — Worse was in store for religious dissenters! “I will make them conform,” said James I as he left the conference that authorized the

translation of the King James Bible: “or I will harry them out of the land!” This answers in part as to why our first Baptist ministers and early Puritan ministers refused the King James Bible; and held to the Great Geneva Bible until it could not be had. And harry them the king did! In 1620 a band of Puritans with a few Baptists took flight on the *Mayflower* to New England Within twenty years of that historic and fearful journey into the unknown wilderness, more than twenty thousand Puritans and Baptists had set sail for the American wilderness. Before the end of the first decade of that exodus to these shores, the first Predestinarian or Particular Baptist Church in the British Empire had been formed in London in 1633; and the second decade closed with the second Baptist Church in the Empire being planted in Providence, Rhode Island by Roger Williams (1639 ?), with the third being organized the same year in England! This is the genesis of the Predestinarian Baptists in America, born in blood, persecution, and prisons for the faith of the New Testament doctrines, practices, and gospel order; and the absolute sovereignty of God.

James I and Charles I were just as blunt in matters of politics. They claimed that the king was God’s representative on earth, in lieu of the Pope, and therefore the highest authority in the land. Parliament objected, and demonstrated by cutting off their revenues! By August of 1642 all hope of cooperation had vanished; and Puritans and Parliamentarians ranged themselves against Anglicans and Royalists on the field of battle — The English Civil War had begun. In the midst of this conflict, the second Baptists Church, Predestinarian and Old School in form and doctrine, was formed in Newport under Dr. John Clarke in 1644; and the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony passed their first law making Anabaptism a crime, stating “since the first arising of the Anabaptists about one-hundred years since, they have been the incendiaries of the commonwealths; and the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, and troublers of the churches in all places where they have been”. This was written into law while the Puritans themselves waged open revolution and war against King and Parliament for political power Under this law, John Clarke and Obediah Holmes (see “Experience”) will suffer whippings and imprisonment.

At first the Cavaliers, with their superior training in horsemanship and the use of arms, were the victors. But then there arose from the Puritan ranks a military genius by the name of Oliver Cromwell; who fanned his troops into such an intense flame of religious fervor that the Cavaliers were doomed. “God made them stubble to our swords,” were his words at the bloody battle of Marston Moor in 1644. At Naseby in 1645, Charles I watched in anguish as Cromwell’s terrifying Ironside Army drove all before it. On the afternoon of January 30, 1649, one year before the arrest of Elder Obadiah Holmes (the

Baptist minister of New Port Church), King Charles mounted the scaffold and helped the axe-man arrange his hair under a cap. Upon his own signal the ax fell. The Anglicans were thrown out, and the Puritan Presbyterians were in power. Moderating adjustments now had to be made: reformation hung in the balance.

Finding himself swept into power by the Puritan military he had created, Oliver Cromwell tried to assemble parliaments that would cooperate with him in the task of governing the new Commonwealth of England. His efforts failed; and he found himself ruling England just as absolutely as any Stuart king. By modern analogy, his task would be like getting all Millennialists to agree to work together. The continued welfare of the country was almost Cromwell's chief contribution: colonization increased, the British Empire was established worldwide, the Dutch and Spanish forces defeated, and the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam annexed and renamed New York in 1650.

Not only were theaters and alehouses shut down and betting games suppressed, but "swearing was an offense punishable by graduated fines according to the social class the offender represented." One man was fined for saying "God is my witness", and another for saying "Upon my life". Christmas festivities were considered irreligious and on Christmas Day soldiers were ordered to seize the meat cooking in the kitchens of private houses. During this time, the Cavaliers fled to the Carolinas where they entrenched themselves as the ruling gentry. England's common population had had enough of mandatory religion: and a new parliament politely invited Charles II to return from exile and rule the nation.

With the installment of Charles II as king on May 29, 1660, Englishmen settled down to enjoy life in flagrant violation of all things dear to the Puritans. The lot of godly ministers, however, was one of suffering. The period is often referred to as the Great Ejection, for sound and godly ministers were ejected from their churches and Episcopal priests installed over their flocks. The Baptist elder, John Bunyon, would spend twelve years in Bedford prison for preaching the gospel of Christ, and Baptists would crowd the sea lanes for America; as would the Congregational and Presbyterian Puritans during the Second Great Puritan Migration.

The Presbyterians who had dominated Cromwell's parliaments now were the objects of oppression; and large numbers swarmed into the colonies. English Puritans of the Congregational form of church government reinforced the Massachusetts Bay Colony, while Baptists laid the foundation of Rhode Island Colony. The zeal of these new arrivals made the lot of Baptists more harsh, yet aided them in evangelism.

Then, national judgment was meted out. In 1665 there came the ferocious

outbreak of the bubonic plague, or Black Death, which killed a quarter of the population of London; driving the King and Parliament from the city. A touching Baptist story had its setting here. John Bunyon's blind daughter, Mary, searched the city in the Plague seeking the King to plead for her father's release. Found by a deacon of the Baptist Church, she was given shelter. She won the heart of his son and later married him.

“Whole streets,” said Daniel Defoe, “seemed to be desolate; and not to be shut up only, but to be emptied of their inhabitants; doors were left open, and windows stood shattering with the wind in empty houses for want of people to shut them”. But persecution still blazed as the followers of Christ were evicted from their congregations to languish in the Tower of London. And as if this were not enough, the Great Fire of London, September 6, 1666, practically leveled what the Plague had left. Thirteen thousand perished in the fire. Again, England had enough.

The supralapsarian predestinarian hero of the Dutch Revolution, Prince William, mounted the throne with his modest wife; for the joint reign of William and Mary in 1688. Immediately the prison doors opened. John Bunyon, with thousands of predestinarians of all sorts, was truly free. The Parliament was found moderate in religious matters, and passed the Act of Toleration. Under this act, Presbyterians submitted their Westminster Confession to prove their orthodoxy as required by the Act. The Baptists submitted “The Things Most Surely Believed Among Us” now known as the Old London Baptist Confession of 1689, and gained religious toleration; the Congregationalist Puritans submitted their Savoy Confession which likewise was approved; and of course, the new ruling party...Episcopal Anglicans (Church of England), submitted their Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Communion. In spite of differences, this was a time of accord. Every Confession approved was *Absolute Predestinarian* . . . And no wonder. . . so were the new King and Queen of the Dutch Reform Church! Predestinarianism triumphed and the gospel of free and sovereign grace was now preached in power. The direct result was the “bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles” . . . the main body of the election of grace.

Politically, thenceforth, these two powerful contestants — free will versus free grace — would fight it out not on the field of battle, but in Parliaments and courts; one going by the name of Whig, the other by the name of Tory. The American Revolution would decide the issues temporarily on another day not too far distant. By that time the Predestinarian Baptists would be well on their way to a place in American life and culture.

With this back-drop of secular history, we will, the Lord Willing, discuss the rise of the first Predestinarian, or Particular Baptists churches in America in the next issue. This will include the first Baptist church in London (Spilsbury's),

## HOW MANY STILL “WAIT”

By H. H. Lefferts (deceased)

The tendency today seems to be to side-step points of doctrine, to tone them down, rather than to give offense to those who cannot receive the truth. If there are those among us who are weak in doctrine, never can they be established therein by a faithless ministry which shuns to preach that which the Scriptures teach is truth, I heard not long ago of a brother who said he would be glad when the time would come when we could preach the whole counsel of God without feeling hampered or hedged in when we go into the pulpit. Now when does this brother think such a time will come? Did Paul wait until opposition had ceased before he preached all the counsel of God? I fear some of us want to preach the gospel only insofar as it can be unanimously received, if that be so, it will be an emasculated gospel and not the true gospel at all. A truly called minister of God must surely find that “the offense of the gospel” has not ceased, no matter in what generation his lot may be cast. To try to preach a gospel that is not offensive to the natural man, even to the believer’s natural mind, is to preach another gospel that is not the gospel at all.

Wherever the discriminating gospel of the distinguishing grace of God is preached, it will always separate the “precious from the vile.” In the very first of Genesis, it is written, “And God divided.” Yet, in spite of this, it is declared that God unites. That He does Himself by His Spirit unite the elect children in the truth is blessedly true; but just as truly He does not combine or unite error and truth. No! He divides truth from error, and He will invariably cut off those who believe and teach error from those who abide in the truth. It is not faithful preaching of the doctrine in all its points, which causes division. The promulgation of error causes all trouble.

We are not to give account to men, neither are we to seek to please men. To our own Master we either stand or fall, and to Him must - we eventually give account of our stewardship. Preaching is becoming a more serious matter, the older I get. It is not a matter of pleasing the congregation and having our brethren agree with us and come to us saying, “That was a good sermon.” No, that is a small matter! The question with me is, Am I really preaching the truth? Is it the truth in the sight of God? Does my preaching bear the support of the Holy Scriptures? Am I really showing myself “approved to God”? If one’s preaching never meets with opposition, what evidence have I that my preaching contains the essential offense of the cross?

O brethren, these are serious matters, not to be trifled with! If ever there

was needed the clear, unwavering, fearless, faithful exposition of the Scriptures in perfect accord with all the counsel of God,— it is now! In this time of apostasy when many are falling away from the true doctrine and when so many need establishing in the faith once delivered to the saints, may the Lord be pleased to give us men after His own heart to faithfully “sound the alarm.” From all human confederacies for the professed purpose of furthering the kingdom of God on earth, may the Lord deliver us!

Yours in gospel bonds, Elder H. H. Lefferts.

Submitted by Elder Woodrow W. Hudson, selected from the Old Faith Contender.

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### A LITTLE SERMON

By Elder John Leland

*Text:—Schools, Academies and Colleges, are the inexhaustible fountains of true piety, morality and literature.*

The text, in substance, occurs as frequently in the constitutions, laws, usages, governors’ speeches, and election sermons of Massachusetts, as the phrase, “And the Lord spake unto Moses,” does in the Pentateuch. But I am as hard put to it, to find anything like it in the New Testament, as I am to find out who Cain’s wife was, or where Tubal Cain got his first hammer to work with. If I do not believe it, I shall be called a Deist; and, if I do believe it, as far as I have yet seen, I must believe without evidence. Instead, therefore, of dividing my text into propositions, I shall, in the first place, examine its divinity. The authenticity of the text is questioned on the following grounds:

*First.* It is contrary to evident fact. The absolute precepts of Jehovah have varied with the times and dispensations in which men have lived, but the *essentials* of piety have always been the same. A dedication of the heart to God, and obedience to His voice, have been, now are, and ever will be, the quintessence of piety. That righteous Abel possessed this true piety, is certain; and who can imagine that schools, academies and colleges, were in existence in the days of Abel? Yet, according to the text, they must have been the fountain whence the stream of piety flowed to the first martyr.

But further, when Christianity was introduced among men, John was the harbinger — Jesus the King, and the apostles were heralds and ambassadors. John was brought up in the wilderness — Jesus, (as the Jews said), was not learned — the apostles, for the most part, were ignorant Galileans. And was there no true piety in them? No morality in the system which they taught? The questions answer themselves.

The primitive Christians were not only without the aid of law and the assistance of the schools, but had to combat both, for about three hundred years; during which period, more true piety and morality was seen among them, than has ever been at any period since, which could not have been the case, if the text is true.

*Second.* True piety proceeds from a fountain, distinct from schools of learning. That true piety in the heart *is the gift of God*, all confess, who possess it; and every good and perfect gift is *front above*, and cometh *down from the Father of Lights*. “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, whereby ye know all things.” “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh”, etc. Who can read such passages, (which abound in the Scriptures,) and believe them, and at the same time believe that schools of learning are the *fountains of true piety*?

*Third.* The text, with its usual comments, defeats itself. Individuals, associations, and legislatures, are said to found such schools from pious views. Now, if the founders have true piety in their hearts before the academies or colleges are founded, how can such schools be the fountain of *all true piety*? Piety before schools, and schools before piety. Strange logic.

*Fourth.* That seminaries of learning are preservatives and improvements of literature, is true; but to call them the fountain of it, is not proper, without there was to instruct the preceptor who established the first seminary, which would not have been possible. But why should true piety and literature be classed in the same grade, when they are radically different in their natures? The greatest scholar, is often at the greatest distance from true piety; and the most pious saint as far from the embellishments of literature. Science informs the mind in things of this life — piety gives knowledge of, and prepares the soul for the life to come. And as well may cold iron and hot be welded together, as piety and literature. It is true, a man may possess both; but if he does, he knows they proceed from different fountains — have a different tendency to different ends.

...*Conclusion.* My text contains *six* prominent words, viz:

*Schools, Academies, Colleges, True Piety, Morality, Literature.*

On which I have made *six* strictures, and *six* articles of improvement; which, added together horizontally, make the number *six hundred and sixty-six*. Here is wisdom—here is understanding—the number of the beast is counted, and it is the number of man. I will NOT say that my text is the beast, of which so much is said in the Revelations: but I do not hesitate to pronounce it one of his claws. Some divines, by the beast, understand Louis XIV. Others find his name in the Pope; a third class believe that Napoleon is the beast; while others believe it to be the

transformation of the Christian church into a tyrannical body, in the year six-hundred and sixty-six. All of them have to divide, multiply, subtract, and add perpendicularly and horizontally too, as well as myself, to make out their beast. If these divines, who differ so much in opinion, can obtain the degree of Doctor of Divinity, it is to be hoped that the exposition here given, will not prevent the author from the same diploma, provided he can get money and friends enough. Should that ever be the case, then with *little thought and copious extracts*, he could form a body of divinity, to adorn the shelves of libraries and eternize his own name. Amen.

Writing of John Leland, Pages 408 — 412.

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