

THE PREDESTINARIAN

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 8

“... 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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The Predestinarian Business Office
% Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
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Doctrinal articles for publication and correspondence should be mailed to:

The Predestinarian
Route 4, Box 157-A
Quitman, MS 39355

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
Laurel, MS 39440

Woodrow W. Hudson
208 Frederick Place
Bastrop, LA 71220

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

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THE PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

**“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not REVEALED it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon THIS ROCK I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
— Matthew 16:16 -18.**

Throughout theological history, theologians have strained at this text to justify any one of the “seven women who shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by Thy name, to take away our reproach.” (Isa. 4:1) All so-called “Christiandom” wish to have His name, yet also to eat the bread of carnal doctrines, and be clothed in the self-righteousness of freewill works. To claim this name, they all must find some means to declare themselves the “Church of Christ.” Usually, it is by this text. Thus, they either lay stress upon the word “Peter”, and claim him to be the foundation of the church; or else upon the word “rock,” and the durability of the institution. The historical position of Old School Baptists has been that the Church is founded upon the REVELATION of Jesus Christ. This revelation is not by flesh and blood, but by the teaching of God. Thus, none can “see” nor

“enter” the kingdom of God except they be first born from above. (John 3:3-6)

It is our Firm belief that the Church of Jesus Christ has been in the world since Christ set it up during His personal ministry. The gates of hell have not prevailed against it, nor ever shall. Whether the dragon sends a flood of heresies against her, thus driving her into the wilderness; or by overt persecution to try to put her to death; the gates of hell shall not triumph against her. Indeed, the forces of Hell cannot recognize her, --- “...he cannot SEE the kingdom of God ...” (John 3:3) — much less deceive her! Hence, we believe in the perpetuity of the church of Jesus Christ.

But, we do not, we cannot, believe in papal succession nor serial succession as argued by Modern Baptists. We fear “Baptist perpetuity” along the lines of papal succession as much as we fear that of Rome, for it issues forth from the anti-Christ and is intended to deceive the multitudes.

In past articles in this magazine, we have laid a foundation for this article. “Three Branches of Seceders” was presented to cause questions of perpetuity to be raised from the historical documents cited; and in the past issue the position of our English Baptists was presented for the same purpose.

Specifically, among many free grace Baptists, perpetuity is based upon “baptism by ordained ministers of the Baptist faith” throughout all ages. Our quotations from Crosby, the English Baptist historian; the “Memorial” in John Gill’s “Body of Divinity” relative to the origin of that church in London; and Isaac Backus, the American “Separate” Baptist, showed the English Baptists coming out of the Puritan Seceders. Many readers took issue with that position, yet the documents are conclusive. That is not the route of perpetuity, as we will attempt to demonstrate. Perpetuity can not be by “immersion by ordained ministers” throughout the ages. That is, baptism by immersion is NOT the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ. Before presenting the reasons, we will first quote from “The Church That Jesus Built” by Elder Roy Mason, an independent sovereign grace Missionary Baptist.

“S.H. Ford, a widely known Baptist historian says: ‘Succession among Baptists is NOT a linked chain of churches or ministers, uninterrupted and traceable at this distant day. . . The true and defensible doctrine is that BAPTIZED believers have existed in every age since John baptized in Jordan, and have met as a baptized congregation in covenant and fellowship where an OPPORTUNITY permitted.’ Again from W.A. Jarrell, D.D., author of a most convincing book on church perpetuity, I quote the following: ‘All that Baptists mean by ‘church succession’, or church perpetuity is: there has never been a day since the organization of the first New Testament church in which there was no genuine church of the New Testament existing on earth.’ Again, ‘Baptists do NOT claim

perpetuity on the basis of the NAME baptist. (Author's emphasis) They do not make the claim that churches "called by the name Baptists" have existed through all the ages." (Church That Jesus Built, Roy Mason, page 10.)

To say that there have always been (since New Testament days) congregations that baptize by immersion is not to say, necessarily, that all congregations who baptize thus are descended from them. It is far too much to claim, and also not necessary. The church at Rome baptized by immersion (Romans 6:3-5); and if that body in perpetuity still baptized accordingly, and if all other things as now embraced therein were still practiced and believed, then perpetuity could NOT be had from Rome.

In the statements quoted above, it appears that baptism by immersion is the single criterion set forth as the grounds of perpetuity of Baptists. Modern Baptists must claim that position, but Old School Baptists will not have it. PERPETUITY CANNOT BE FOUNDED UPON BAPTISM BY IMMERSION. Our reasons are as follows:

1. If this were to be so, then the various Orthodox religions, such as the Greek, Russian, Armenian, and Serbian Orthodox groups have valid claims equal to anyone today; for they have always, and yet still, baptize by immersion. If a Baptist objects, saying, "But they baptize infants, and infants are not believers, and thus not proper subjects for the ordinance," then,

2. That argument negates Modern Baptists' baptism upon the same grounds. For who among free grace believers will deny that Modern Baptists baptize wholesale any and every one whom they can, and employ any means to invite "the world" of unbelievers into Baptist churches? We all are aware that the overwhelming majority of the Modern Baptist churches are nearly filled with immersed unbelievers. Thus, if perpetuity is based upon "believers' immersion only," then Baptists, in general, have long departed from the line of perpetuity of the true church. Indeed, we believe this to be so, and therefore hold no fellowship with them.

3. If church perpetuity is based upon baptism by immersion of believers by ordained ministers, then the link of such perpetuity was broken by God's own authority in the New Testament Church.

"And Saul was consenting unto his death (Stephen's). And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was AT Jerusalem; and they were ALL scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, EXCEPT THE APOSTLES. (Acts 8:1)

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the DISCIPLES of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to DAMASCUS to the SYNAGOGUES, that if he found any of this way...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” (Acts 9:1)

Notice the following points: (a) The apostles were still at Jerusalem, (b) Damascus was in SYRIA — not in Judea — and thus Saul’s AUTHORITY was limited to the JEWISH SYNAGOGUES, (c) No “church” is mentioned there (as later in Antioch), but only “disciples.” Now read: “And there was a CERTAIN DISCIPLE at DAMASCUS, named Ananias...and immediately there fell from his (Paul’s) eyes as it had been scales: and he received his sight forthwith, and arose and WAS BAPTIZED.” (Acts 9:13, 18 and Acts 22:16) .. “And straightway he PREACHED CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUES, that He is the Son of God.” (Verse 20)

Thus, the Scriptures prove: (a) Paul was NOT baptized by an apostle, but only a “disciple”; (b) in a city without a church formed apart from the Jewish synagogues; and (c) he immediately began preaching ! What then does this do to the argument of perpetuity as argued by Lankmarkism?

4. If succession, or perpetuity, is to be had through immersion as the form of baptism (which it is), then the Christian Restoration Movement (Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Christian) the Pentacostals, Church of God, Southern Baptists, Mormons, and all other Arminians excluded from the Church have as valid a claim to perpetuity as any other. And yet, Baptists do not recognize others not called by the name “Baptists” even though they went out from them. Thus, they accept Southern “Baptists” but not Church of Christ,... both Arminian and both baptistic. And why? Because as Baptist successionists claim, these have “departed the Baptist faith.” But so have ALL ARMINIANS, Baptists or otherwise, for Arminian freewillism is NOT the “faith once delivered to the saints.” Arminianism is outside the true church of Jesus Christ, and within the anti-Christian synagogue of Satan — or “Mystery Babylon.” Thus, we conclude, that perpetuity cannot be had through baptism by immersion only.

It is certain that in the beginning the saints at Rome received the gospel as expressed in Paul’s epistle to them. Yet would any dare assert that apostate Rome is the same as the Rome to which Paul’s epistle was addressed? If perpetuity is not to be of Rome, then under what condition can it be from modern Arminian Baptists? If it is argued that Baptists’

confessions of faith are sound, and that they ONCE had New Testament church authority, can it not also be said that this WAS so of Rome?

Finally, in answer to many questions following the articles on “Three Branches of Seceders” as to how perpetuity can be had from Congregationalists and Presbyterians, the answer is: in the same manner it can be had from Arminian Baptists! In fact, it can safely be affirmed that English Baptists were of the SAME predestinarian or Calvinistic faith as the Congregationalists and Puritans; which CANNOT be said of Free Grace Baptists coming out of Free Will, or Arminian Baptists today. However, perpetuity as viewed by us is not to be had outside the truth of free grace. Of all things which might invalidate a gospel assembly, falling into freewill natural religion is the most severe, for such is the basic foundation of all Biblical departures and heresies. Certainly, disorder may from time to time be found in true gospel churches, yet they remain as churches even as “the church of God at Corinth.” Yet, surely one would not suppose that apostacy from the gospel of free grace could take place and yet gospel ordinances and a gospel church could still exist!

Brethren, if you love and rejoice in the gospel of free grace, do you not have a witness within that says freewillism is no part of that truth you love? The cardinal question, we believe, is whether freewillism or free grace is the gospel of Jesus Christ. If free grace is, then church perpetuity MUST be through the truth of the gospel, NOT through Arminian immersion or church “authority.” “Freewillism” is the best evidence a child of God can have that an institution embracing such is NOT a gospel church. Thus, an institution without the gospel cannot perpetuate the “gospel” church, nor its ordinances. Conversely, a gospel church MUST and WILL perpetuate the gospel ordinances.

The foundation of Christ’ church is upon the revelation of Christ by the Spirit to quickened and believing children of God. In a word, it is the gospel of free grace which perpetuates the true gospel church, and its ordinances. To say that an ordinance, or an institutional “authority” perpetuates the church is like saying that the tail wags the dog.

----Stanley C. Phillips

PERPETUITY IS IN THE TRUTH

The first spread of the gospel is recorded in Acts, chapter 8. In each case, the GOSPEL of free grace went before the gospel CHURCH and its ordinances. It is noteworthy that it was NOT by missionaries, nor were missions planted first as “arms” of a church. Nor was the spread of the gospel by human design or

purpose. Christ said: “But ye **SHALL** receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye **SHALL** be witnesses **UNTO** me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Now in Acts 8:1-4, we find the apostles still in Jerusalem, and the disciples scattered abroad. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” (verse 4)

“Therein (the true gospel) is the righteousness of God **REVEALED FROM FAITH TO FAITH. . .**” (Rom. 1:16) The gospel of the grace of God is the very foundation of the church of Jesus Christ, for this church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” and it is in this church “that Christ has the preeminence.” (Col. 1:18) It is in the gospel of **FREE GRACE** that the righteousness of God is revealed; and it is revealed from “faith to faith.” In the revelation of the truth of Christ’ righteousness from faith to faith throughout the world, and from generation to generation, therein is the perpetuity of the church of Jesus Christ.

A body of people in one time and place may very well agree on certain aspects of the truth as held by the Church, such as baptism by immersion or the virgin birth of Christ; yet in so far as there has not been a passing on of the revelation truth from faith to faith it is lacking in perpetuity ... all other claims notwithstanding. Yet, in the revelation of the truth from faith to faith, the gospel and its ordinances spread throughout the earth and across the vast expanse of time. The Church is one body, in that at any given moment it is found on the earth.

It is one both in heaven and in earth where all its members hold citizenship. As surely as God is the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” the God of the living and not of the dead, so He is God of both the quick and the dead in Christ Jesus.

Now, what of the means of carrying the gospel? It is shared from one faith to another, and the faith in both is the fruit of the Spirit and free gift of God. The Church at the beginning “went everywhere preaching the word.” And where and how did they go? Exactly as the Lord said they would! “... in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) We find them “scattered abroad” in Samaria, to whom Philip ministered in Acts 8. They were not “sent” by anyone, but “scattered” --- thus they were not “missionaries”; And they formed no arms or missions.

In Jerusalem alone, there were over 7,000 with no meeting house. Thus, they met “from house to house” and in the “temple” and “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” (Acts 2:46) It is evident, that much that modern Baptists hold will not answer to the pattern given. They were deemed by

the Holy Ghost as “the church at Jerusalem,” though they did not meet in one place, in one common assembly. Whatever men may say, the Holy Ghost owned them as the Lord’s church. Wherever a group of them assembled, they were “the church.” It was not exclusively “local” in the modern sense; and certainly not universal, nor invisible. It was a body, thus visible; and embraced the whole in one assembly plus all other assemblies collectively.

Wherever a group of “disciples” assembled, it was THE “Church,” and they maintained the ordinances of God’s house. It was a “disciple” at Damascus that baptized Paul; in Cornelius’ house, a church was formed, and the ordinance of baptism administered.. apparently by one of the six men who traveled with Peter, for Peter “commanded them to be baptized.” In the house of Lydia, baptism was administered; and in Antioch where they were first called “Christians” they “laid hands on Paul and Barnabas” and commended them to the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Apollos, a disciple of John, having John’s baptism was “mighty in the word of God” and a laborer in the gospel. (Acts 18:25) And Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (with no assembly present), and he went on his way “rejoicing.” The perpetuity was not in baptism, but rather in “the faith of God’s elect.”

Wherever disciples of Christ go, they carry the gospel of free grace, for they certainly cannot leave it behind. And such as are called of God and qualified for the free grace ministry are fully authorized by the church’ ordination to administer the ordinances. The disciples are fully authorized to maintain the ordinances of their church wherever their lot is cast.

To be more specific: Members of the church may by providence be scattered into different cities. They are members of the church of Jesus Christ. In each of these cities, when they meet together, they are also still “the church.” They can administer the ordinances and maintain the true worship of God in the Holy Spirit and the truth of the gospel of grace. The connection in perpetuity is, they ARE members of the church of Jesus Christ.

Historically, the Predestinarian Old School Baptists have that connection of truth through the revelation of Jesus Christ. They have never been anything else but predestinarians, or free grace believers, and have not to this day retained Arminians in their communion. It was ministers of the church of Jesus Christ that went into Virginia and North Carolina and planted our first churches in the 1750’s-1760’s. At no time in our history have all assemblies carried the same “name”. . nor do they today. In the New England states, more often they are called “Old School”; some “Regular” and some “Primitive.” And the free grace Old Order in Lancaster, PA, are popularly known as “Amish”, while the Old Order in the Mid-West are termed “Mennonite.” What do these have in common? They all hold to the truth of free and sovereign grace. They

hold to the ordinances of God's house without the modern innovations of the Age of Enlightenment.

It is true, and we freely admit this ... to do otherwise would be deceitful ... differences in manners and customs do separate the church of Christ along lines of commonality. Some do not wash the saints feet, whereas most do; the Lancasterians live in church owned communities with standards of conduct the rest do not believe Scriptural; and many have allowed associations to usurp the Headship of Christ over them. The feast of charity is practiced by some, and not by others, etc. But the common identifying ground upon which we agree is the free grace doctrines of the New Testament and the general practices and rules of gospel order found therein.

It is also true, sadly, that now as in the New Testament period, many depart the faith once delivered to the saints into will-worship. When they do, we cannot esteem them as the Lord's orderly churches, nor recognize their ordinances. As most readers know, there are Arminian groups going by every name we've mentioned above. But this in no wise destroys the Church of Jesus Christ founded upon the revelation of Christ and the doctrines of God our Saviour. Scripturally, perpetuity is broken with such departures: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth NOT in the DOCTRINES OF CHRIST, MATH NOT GOD." (II John 9) "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not OF US; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but, that they might be made MANIFEST that they were not all of us." (I John 2:18-19).

— Stanley C. Phillips

WHERE IS THE CHURCH

By Gilbert Beebe, 1845

(Note: Few Old School Baptists need an introduction to this author, but some of our subscribers may not be familiar with his name. Elder Gilbert Beebe was one of the most profound doctrinarians of his day, and of equal importance, a very spiritual writer. When the Great Baptist Separation took place at the Black Rock Meeting House in 1832, Elder Beebe became the first editor of the SIGNS of The Times magazine. It is today the oldest Baptist publication in continuous circulation, and still holds forth the same doctrines as stated in the first editorial. The magazine carried the words "The Sword of the Lord" across its cover. In all those issues during his life, the SIGNS was truly a "sword" cutting Arminianism asunder, and the "signs" clearly set forth the signs of those

times as the great apostacy began its attack against the truth of free grace. He was a man of extraordinary ability and possessed keen insight into what the modern innovations would ultimately result. His per-dictions have long been justified by the pasting years. Here is his views on the church of which he was an ardent defender.)

An inspired writer has said, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” None who are born of God and taught by His Spirit can doubt that this figure is intended to describe the condition as well as the superior excellence of the church above the daughters. She is called the “Love, Dove, and undefiled” of her Beloved. The figure of a lily not only describes the modest beauty of the church, but shows, according to the instructions of our Lord, that her exceeding glory, although surpassing that of the regal splendor of Solomon, is not the result of her own labor. She toils not to procure it, she spins nothing that would answer for warp or for woof; her life is derived from an invisible Root, and her head is bowed under the genial rays of the sun. But she is not only like the lily as that flower stands gracefully in the field, or among other beautiful flowers, but she is like the lily among thorns. How truly does the church of Christ answer to the figure in all its fullness of illustration! God has chosen her in a furnace of affliction, and she has ever, in her militant state, been among the rude briars and thorns. The earth, groaning under the curse of the righteous Creator, is destined to produce thorns and thistles, and while this world remains the temporary abode of the church, she must encounter them.

One of her most prominent sons prayed no less than three times that the thorn might be removed, but was referred to the sufficiency of the grace of God to sustain him and bear him through all the buffetings of Satan. To those who have discernment in spiritual things how admirably does the church contrast with that by which she is surrounded. All that the lily is of itself is merely grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, but God has so clothed her as to challenge comparison with the most exalted glory of the earth. All flesh is as grass, and all goodliness thereof [that is produced by human power, or the flesh, for all that is born of the flesh, whether physical or mental, is flesh] is as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away, but the Word of the Lord abideth forever. While the flower thereof, that is, the goodliness of the flesh, or grass, may adorn the meadow, but, in common with the grass with which it is connected, it cannot survive the dissolution of the flesh, or grass; but God so clothes it (the church) in the garments of salvation as to secure the glory as an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and cannot fade away.

“Defiled and loathsome as we are
He makes us white and calls us fair,

**Adorns us with that heavenly dress,
His graces, and His righteousness.”**

Consequently the church is enabled through grace to sing, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (Isa. 41:10.) She “is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold, she shall be brought unto the King in garments of fine needle-work.” (Psa. 45:13.) All human beauty and creature excellency, compared with the church of the living God, which is the ground and pillar of the truth, is but as thorns. Zion is pronounced in the language of inspiration *the perfection of beauty*; it cannot, therefore, be improved. Earth has no colors, nor has creation charms to lend which would not obscure her beauty. And although her peculiar excellency appears not to the eyes of an adulterous generation, for except a man be born again he cannot see her, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned; still all her attractions are clearly apprehended by those unto whom the Spirit of God reveals her.

To them she appears as the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven adorned as a bride for her husband. She looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Understanding these to be some of the general characteristics of the church of God, may we not inquire, Where may she be found at this day?

We cannot consistently believe that Christ has no church on earth at the present day; and if He has a church now upon earth she **MUST** bear the lineaments which are drawn from the New Testament. We cannot find her at the corners of the streets, in harlots’ attire, seeking for lovers; from her lips will not be heard the silly boast, “I have peace offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows.” (Prov. 7:14.) She cannot be recognized in any other dress than the garments of salvation which her Lord has given her. The daughters spoken of, (Isa. 3:16-26), with their haughty carriage, stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and mincing walk, making a tinkling with their feet, with their cauls, and their round-tires like the moon, their chains, and bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, and the rings, and nose jewels, changeable suits of apparel, mantles, and wimples, and crissing pins, glasses, fine linen, hoods, and veils, are **ONLY** the thorns by which the lily of the valley is surrounded. “There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number; my dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of

her that bear her.” (Cant. 5:8-9.)

In order to demonstrate the existence of the church of Christ on earth at the present day, we must find a community of saints corresponding to the primitive PATTERN, of eighteen hundred years ago — a people whose only beauty consists in the comeliness which Christ has put upon them — a people saved by the Lord who is the shield of their help and the sword of their excellency, and whose enemies are found liars unto them — (Deut. 33:29) — A people dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations, with no governmental patronage from the powers of the world — a kingdom that is not of this world, nor visible to the world, because they are the sons of God; the world knoweth them not because it knew Him not — A poor and afflicted people trusting in the name of the Lord — a persecuted people; for if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution. Their names shall be cast out of men, and they shall be hated of all men for Christ’s name sake. They are regarded as the offscouring of all things, accused and slandered in like manner as their divine Lord and Master was; for if these things were done in the green tree they shall be repeated in the dry; if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub they will also call them of His household so.

These are only some of the outlines of the church of Christ. She is also characterized by her *“one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.”* Her faith is as radically different from that of EVERY OTHER PROFESSING PEOPLE ON EARTH as are her Lord and her baptism. Of her faith, Jesus is the Author and Finisher; but that of all other religious bodies either originates with themselves or is derived from the doctrines, traditions, and instructions of men. But blessed is she, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed” these things to her, but her heavenly Father has taught her by His Holy Spirit. She is the opposite of ALL OTHER SECTS in regard to her food, her appetite, and the source from which all her supplies are received. Others can and do eat their own bread and wear their own apparel; but she must eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus. Nothing short of the true Bread which came down from heaven, that kind which Moses never gave, can satisfy her; but her neighbors, or the thorns among which she is situated, do not see why the bread that Moses gave is not good enough.

Christ’s church is a peculiar people, in ALL RESPECTS essentially different from the religionists of this world. She comprises a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation, and shows forth the praises of Him who hath called her out of darkness and translated her into the kingdom of His dear Son. The doctrine which her faith takes hold of is that which cannot possibly suit any body else under heaven. And if there be any who have not passed from death unto life, who fancy that they can understand and love the doctrine by which the church of God is distinguished they are deluded. As none knoweth the

things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him, (for the spirit of man being taken from any man, but a dead and unconscious corpse remains,) neither knoweth any man the things of the Spirit but the Spirit. And unless we be born of the Spirit, and that Spirit abide in us, we are as dead to all spiritual things, as the human body is to natural life after the animal spirit has departed. It is, therefore, quite as practicable to teach the tenants of the tombs the English grammar, or any science, as to teach the things of the Spirit of God to ungenerate men.

The church of God, if found at all, will be found in possession of doctrine which CANNOT be taught by “every” or any man “to his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord;” it cannot be taught nor learned in Sabbath Schools, or what are called “theological schools;” nor can it be derived from reading the Bible, or hearing it expounded, even if Paul himself were the expounder, for natural man cannot receive it; it is spiritually discerned. Every organized body of professors of religion who hold a doctrine which they can teach their unregenerate fellow-men is a branch of anti-Christ; and the nature and attainableness of their faith proves that they have not the faith of God’s elect, and that their faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. (See I Cor. 2:5) The primitive church acknowledged Christ as the only spiritual King, the true and only Potentate, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can attain unto. That Church cannot now be identified where Christ is not so regarded; nor is He so regarded by any church, sect, or people who hold that there is spiritual life anywhere else, or that the light in which He dwelleth can be approached. To approach is to make some advance towards the object; but this no man can do, as the MEMBERS of the church of Christ know right well. The true church now, as in her primitive days, depends on God to raise up, qualify, send forth, and sustain the ministers of the gospel. Those who heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, are not the church of Christ. To Him who ascended up on high, who led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, they look for all the gifts which the church can need, — to Him who reigns, being exalted a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins, and to Him alone they look to bring sinners to repentance and to cause the redeemed of the Lord to return with singing to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads. To Him who opened the doors of death, and rose triumphantly from the grave, who conquered sin and hell, they look for support, comfort, deliverance and victory.

Finally, the church of our Redeemer *is the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

ELECTION

By Woodrow W. Hudson

Since we attempted to prove by the Scriptures the “Total Depravity” of man on pages 1648 in the November issue, 1980, one may ask the question: Since man by nature does not seek after the Lord, why does God save any? All we can say is that it pleased the Lord to save whom He will out of the fallen race, and leave the rest to perish. “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)” (Romans 9:11) Who is going to question God as to why He has a purpose in election? If it were not for the love and mercy of Almighty God to save these, then we would all be doomed to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

The following Scriptures are a comfort to a poor helpless sinner who feels to know he is not able to do anything that would merit the favor of Almighty God: The disciples asked Jesus, “Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is IMPOSSIBLE; but with God ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.” (Matt. 19:25-26) Do you believe Jesus means that it is impossible for man to save himself?

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN you to SALVATION through sanctification of the Spirit AND belief of the truth.” (II Thes 2:13) “According as He hath CHOSEN US in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having PREDESTINATED us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the GOOD pleasure of HIS WILL.” (Eph. 1:4-5) Who is going to question the will of God? Is not this a great comfort to have this sweet hope that your names are written in heaven? “. . . but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20).

Since God has chosen His people and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, the Lord has determined and decreed that they SHOULD BE HOLY. (Ephesians 1:4-5). The children of God are MADE HOLY by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Rom. 8:29-30) Do you believe these Scriptures support the wonderful doctrine of election?

“But ye are a CHOSEN generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a

peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:" (I Peter 2:9) Does not this Scripture prove that the children of God have been chosen and called by the Lord?

The following Scripture shows that in the mind and purpose of the Lord, the children of God were saved before the foundation of the world: '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.'" (II Tim. 1:9)

God's people are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father... (I Peter 1:2).

The names of the children of God were written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the FOUNDATION of the world. (Rev. 13:8) Jesus said, "Ye have NOT CHOSEN ME, but I have CHOSEN YOU, and ordained you,..." (John 15:16) Those who feel that they are able and strong enough to HELP the Lord will not have any use for the wonderful doctrine of election of grace which is a comfort to a poor helpless sinner who begs the Lord for mercy.

Dear reader, do you know anything about the plea of the publican when he prayed to the Lord with these words? "... God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13)

**THE KINGLY OFFICE OF CHRIST
AS PROVIDENTIALLY EXECUTED FOR THE REDEEMED
By John Flavel, 1678**

On 13th February, 1688, amidst the splendor of the Banqueting House at Whitehall an epoch-making event took place. Prince William and Princess Mary of Orange, the predestinarian Dutch nobles, accepted the Crown from the estates of England. They were proclaimed as King and Queen, thus consummating the "English Revolution." On this occasion, our author, John Flavel, observed a remarkable providence. The Papal yoke had been broken in 1588 with the defeat of the Spanish Armada; now, one hundred years past, the reform had restored the English to the "Old Faith." John Flavel was a serious student of Divine Providence. We trust our readers will discover this to be so.

"And hath put ALL THINGS under His feet, and gave Him to be the HEAD over ALL THINGS to the church." — Ephesians 1:22

The foregoing verses are thankful and humble adorations of the grace of God in bringing the Ephesians to believe in Christ. This effect of His power is compared with that other glorious effect of it, the raising of Christ Himself from the dead; both are from the same efficient cause. It raised Christ from a low estate, even from the dead, to a high, a very high and glorious state, to be the head both of the world and of the church: the head of the world by way of dominion, the head of the church by way of union and special influence, ruling the world for the good of His people in it. "He gave Him to be head over all things **TO THE CHURCH.**" And here let these four things be seriously regarded:

1. The dignity and authority committed to Christ: "He hath put all things under His feet;" which implies full, ample and absolute dominion in Him, and subjection in them over whom He reigns. This power is delegated to Him by the Father: for besides the essential, native power and dominion over all, which He hath as God (Psa.22:28), there is a dispensed authority which is proper in Him as Mediator, which He received as the reward or fruit of His suffering. (Phil. 2:8)

2. The recipient of this authority is Christ, and Christ primarily and only: He is the first receptacle of all authority and power. Whatever authority any creature is clothed with is but ministerial and derivative. Christ is the only Lord (Jude 4), the fountain of all power.

3. The object of this authority is the whole creation; "ALL THINGS" are put under His feet: He rules from sea to sea, even to the utmost bounds of God's creation. "Thou hast given Him power over ALL FLESH" (John 17:2); all creatures, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, angels, devils, men, winds, seas, all obey Him.

4. And especially notice the end for which He governs and rules the universal empire; it is for the church, that is, for the advantage, comfort and salvation of those **FOR WHOM HE DIED.** He purchased the **CHURCH;** and that He might have the highest security that His blood should not be lost, God the Father has **PUT ALL THINGS INTO HIS HANDS,** to order and dispose all as **HE pleaseth.** Hence,

ALL the affairs of the kingdom of providence are ordered and determined by Jesus Christ, for the special advantage and everlasting good of His Redeemed People.

"As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life **TO AS MANY AS Thou HAST GIVEN HIM.**" (John 17:2) Hence it comes to pass that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are **THE CALLED** according to **HIS PURPOSE.**" (Rom. 8:28)

That Jesus Christ providentially controls all the affairs of this world is evident from both Scripture assertion, and from the observation of events.

The first chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme or draught of providence. There you see how all the wheels, that is, the motions and revolutions here on earth, are girded by the Spirit that is in them. And (v.26), it is all resolved into the supreme cause; there you find one like the Son of man, which is Jesus Christ, sitting upon the throne and giving forth orders for the government of all: and if it were not so, how is it that all events conspire to the fulfillment of His designs; as in Israel's deliverance out of Egypt and other innumerable instances? Certainly if ten men, from different directions, should all meet at one place and about one business without any previous arrangement, it would argue that their motions were secretly overruled by some invisible agent. How is it that such marvelous effects are produced in the world by causes apparently so feeble? (Amos 5:9; I Cor. 1:27) and that as often the most apt and likely means are rendered wholly ineffectual? (Psa 33:16) In a word, if Christ hath no such providential influence, how are His people in all ages preserved in the midst of so many millions of potent and malicious enemies, among whom they live as sheep in the midst of wolves? (Luke 10:3) How is it that the bush burns, and yet is not consumed? (Exodus 3:2)

But my business, in this discourse, is not to prove that there is a Providence, which none but atheists deny. I shall show by what acts Jesus Christ administers this kingdom and in what manner; and what use may be made of this subject.

I. He **RULES AND ORDERS** the Kingdom of Providence by supporting, permitting, restraining, limiting, protecting, punishing and rewarding those over whom He reigns providentially.

1. He **SUPPORTS** the world and all creatures in it by His power. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17) "By Him all things consist." (Col. 1:17) It is a considerable part of Christ's glory to have a whole world of creatures owing their being and hourly preservation to Him. He is "given for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth." (Isa. 49:8)

2. He **PERMITS** and suffers the worst of creation in His dominion to be and act as they do. "The deceived and the deceiver are His." (Job 12:16) Even those that fight against Christ and His people receive both power and permission from Him. Say not that it is unbecoming the Most Holy to permit such evils, which He could prevent if He pleased. For as He permits no more than He will overrule to His praise, so that very permission of His is holy and just. Christ's working is not confounded with

the creature's. Pure sunbeams are not tainted by the noisome vapors on which they shine. His holiness hath no fellowship with their iniquities; nor are their transgressions at all excused by His permission. "He is a rock, His work is perfect" but "they have corrupted themselves." (Deut. 32:4-5) And yet should He permit sinful creatures to act out all the wickedness in their heart, there would remain neither peace nor order in the world. Therefore,

3. He powerfully **RESTRAINS** creatures by the bridle of Providence, from the commission of those things to which their hearts are inclined: "The remainder of wrath Thou wilt restrain" (Psa. 76:10) allowing just so much as shall serve His holy ends, and no more. And truly this is one of the glorious mysteries of Providence, which amazes the serious and considerate soul; to see the spirit of a creature fully set to do mischief; power enough, as one would think, in his hand to do it, and a door of opportunity standing open for it; and yet the effect wonderfully hindered. The strong propensities of the will are inwardly checked, as in the case of Laban (Gen. 31:24); or a diversion is strangely cast in their way, as in the case of Sennacherib (II Kings 19:7-8) so that their hands cannot perform their enterprises. Julian had two great designs before him — one was to conquer the Persians, the other to root out the Galileans, as he, by way of contempt, called the Christians. But he would begin with the Persians, and then make a sacrifice of all the Christians to his idols. He did so, and perished in the first attempt. Oh the wisdom of divine Providence!

4. Jesus Christ **LIMITS** the creatures in their acting, assigning them their boundaries and lines of liberty to which they may, but beyond which they cannot go. "Fear none of these things that ye shall suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation ten days." (Rev. 2:10) Their enemies would have them cast into their graves, but it shall only be into prison: they would have stretched out their hands upon them all; no, but only "*some*" of them shall be exposed: they would have kept them there perpetually; no, it must be but for ten days. Four hundred and thirty years were determined upon the people of God in Egypt; and then, even in that very night God brought them forth; for then "the time of the promise was come?" (Acts 7:17)

5. The Lord Jesus providentially **PROTECTS** His people amidst a world of enemies and danger. It was Christ that appeared unto Moses in the flaming bush, and preserved it from being consumed. The bush signified the people of God in Egypt; the fire flaming in it the exquisite sufferings they there endured; the safety of the bush amidst the flames, the Lord's admirable care and protection of His poor suffering ones. None so

tenderly careful as Christ. “As birds flying, so will the Lord of host defend Jerusalem” (Isa. 31:5); that is, as they fly swiftly towards their nests, crying, when their young ones are in danger, so will the Lord preserve His. They are “preserved IN Christ Jesus” (Jude 1), as Noah and his family were in the ark. Hear how a worthy of our own expresses himself on this point: “That we are at peace in our houses, at rest in our beds; that we have any quiet in our enjoyments is from hence alone. Whose person would not be defiled or destroyed; whose habitation would not be ruined; whose blood almost would not be shed, if wicked men had power to perpetrate all their conceived sin? It may be, the ruin of some of us has been conceived a thousand times. To this Providence we owe the preservation of our lives, our families, our estates, our liberties, and whatsoever is dear to us. For may we not say sometimes with the Psalmist, ‘My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword’? (Psa. 57:4) And how is the deliverance of men from such persons contrived? God breaks their teeth in their mouths, even the great teeth of the young lions. (Psa. 58:6) He keeps this fire from burning—some He cuts off and destroys; some He cuts short in their power; some He deprives of the instruments whereby alone they can work; some He prevents from their desired opportunities; the attention of some is diverted to other objects; and oftentimes He causeth them to spend their force upon one another. We may say, therefore, with the Psalmist ‘O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; for the earth is full of Thy riches.’ (Psa. 104:24.” (John Owens, “Indwelling Sin”).

6. He PUNISHES EVIL DOERS, and repays, by His providence, into their lap, the mischiefs they intend for those that fear Him. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, both the Julians, and innumerable more, are the lasting monuments of His righteous retribution. It is true, a sinner may do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged; but oftentimes God hangs up some eminent sinners in chains as spectacles and warnings to others. Many a heavy blow hath Providence given to the enemies of God from which they were never able to recover. Christ rules, and that with a rod of iron, in the midst of His enemies. (Psa. 110:2)

7. And lastly, He REWARDS the services done to Him and His people.(SIC) Out of this treasure of PROVIDENCE (S.C.P.) God often repays those that serve Him, and that with an hundredfold reward NOW in this life (Matt. 19:29) This active, vigilant Providence hath its eye upon all the wants, straits, and troubles of creatures, but especially of His people. What volumes of experience might the people of God write upon

this subject! and what a pleasant history it would be to read the strange, constant, wonderful, and unexpected actings of Providence, for those who have committed themselves to its care!

II. We shall next inquire HOW JESUS CHRIST ADMINISTERS this providential kingdom.

Both angels and men are His instruments: the angels are “ministering spirits” sent forth by Him for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14) Luther tells us they have two offices, “to sing above and watch beneath.” These do us many invisible offices of love. They have dear and tender regard and love for the saints. To them, God, as it were~ put forth His children to nurse, and they are tenderly careful of them while they live, and bring them home in their arms to their Father when they die. And as angels, so men are the servants of Providence; yes, bad men as well as good. Cyrus, on that account, is called God’s servant. They fulfill His will, whilst they are prosecuting their own lusts. “The earth shall help the woman.” (Rev 12:16) But good men delight to serve Providence; they and the angels are fellow-servants in one house, and to one Master. (Rev. 19:10) Yea, there is not a creature in heaven, earth or hell, but Jesus Christ can providentially use to serve His ends, and to promote His designs. But whatever the instrument be which Christ uses, of this we may be certain, that His providential working is holy, wise, sovereign, profound, irresistible, harmonious, and for the peculiar good of the saints.

1. His providential work is holy. THOUGH He permits, orders, and overrules many unholy persons and actions, yet He still works like Himself, most holly and purely throughout. “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.” (Psa. 145:17) It is easier to separate light from a sunbeam, than holiness from the works of God. The best of men cannot escape sin in their most holy actions. But no sin cleaves to God in whatever He doeth.

2. Christ’s providential working is also most wise and judicious. “The wheels” are “full of eyes.” (Ezek. 1:18) They are not moved by a blind impetus, but in deep counsel and wisdom. And, indeed, the wisdom of Providence manifest itself principally in the choice of such states for the people of God and shall most effectually promote their eternal happiness. And herein it goes quite beyond our understanding and comprehension. It makes that medicinal and salutary which we judge destructive to our comfort and good. Suarez, speaking of the felicity of the other world, says, “Then the blessed shall see in God all things and circumstances pertaining to them, excellently accommodated and tempered;” then shall they see that the crossing of their desires was the saving of their souls; and that

otherwise they had perished. The most wise Providence looks beyond us. It eyes the end, and suits all things thereto, and not to our fond desires.

3. The providence of Christ is most SUPREME and sovereign. “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.” (Psa. 135:6) “He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.” (Rev. 19:16) The greatest monarchs are but the worms of the earth to Him: they all depend upon Him, “By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by ME princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.” (Prov. 8:15,16)

4. Divine Providence is PROFOUND and inscrutable. The judgments of Christ are a “great deep, and His footsteps are not known,” (Psa. 36:6) There are hard texts in the works as well as in the words of Christ. The wisest heads have been at a loss in interpreting some events (Jer. 12:1-2; Job 21:7) The angels had the hands of a man under their wings (Ezek. 1:8); that is, they wrought secretly and mysteriously.

5. Divine Providence is irresistible in its designs and motions, for all providences are but fulfillings and accomplishments of God’s immutable decrees. “He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.” (Eph. 1:11) Hence the instruments by which God executed His wrath are called “chariots” coming “from between two mountains of brass” (Zech. 6:1); that is, “the firm and immutable decrees of God.” When the Jews put Christ to death, they did only what “the hand and counsel of God had before determined to be done.” (Acts 4:28) None can oppose or resist Providence. “I will work, and who shall let it?” (Isa. 43:13)

6. The Providences of Christ are HARMONIOUS. There are secret chains and invisible connections between the works of Christ. We know not how to reconcile promises and providences together, nor yet providences one with another; but certainly they all work together (Rom. 8:28) by the influence of the first cause. He doeth not do and undo; destroy by one providence what He built by another. But just as all the seasons of the year, the nipping frosts as well as the halcyon days of summer, conspire and conduce to the harvest, so it is in providence.

7. The Providences of Christ work in a special and peculiar way for the GOOD OF THE SAINTS. His providential kingdom is subordinated to His spiritual kingdom. “He is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe.” (I Tim. 4:10) Things are so laid and ordered as that their eternal good shall be promoted and secured by all that Christ does.

Inference 1. If so, see then TO WHOM YOU ARE INDEBTED for your lives, liberty, comforts, and all that you enjoy in this world. Is it not Christ that orders all for you? He is, indeed, in heaven out of your sight;

but though you see Him not, He sees you, and takes care of all your concerns. When one was told of a plot to take away his life, he answered, "If God take no care of me, how do I live? how have I escaped hitherto?" "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." (Prov. 3:6) It is He that hath appointed the state thou art in as most proper for thee. It is Christ that doeth all for you that is done. He looks down from heaven, upon all that fear Him; He sees you when you are in danger by temptation, and interposes something, you know not how, to hinder it. He sees when you are sad, and orders reviving providences to refresh you. He sees when corruptions prevail, and orders humbling events to purge them. Whatever mercies you have received, all along the way you have gone hitherto, are the orderings of Christ for you. And you should carefully observe how the promises and providences have kept equal pace with one another, and both gone step by step with you until now.

Inference 2. Hath God committed the government of the world to Christ, and trusted Him over all? Then do you also LEAVE ALL YOUR PARTICULAR CONCERNS IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST, and know that the infinite wisdom and love which rules the world manages everything that relates to you. It is in good hands, infinitely better than if it were in YOUR OWN. I remember when Melancton was under some despondency of spirit about the situation of God's people in Germany, Luther chided him thus for it: "Let Philip cease to rule the world." It is NOT OURS to guide the course of providence, or direct its motions, but to submit quietly to God. Yet how apt are we to regret providences, as if they had no tendency at all to the glory of God, or to our good (Ex. 5:22); yea, to limit the Almighty to our way and time! Thus, the "Israelites tempted God, and limited the holy one." (Psa. 78:18, 41) How often also do we, unbelievably distrust God as though He could never accomplish what we profess to expect and believe! "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost; we are cut off." (Ezek. 37:11) So, Genesis 18:13-14; Isa. 40:17). There are few Abrahams among believers who "against hope believe in hope," "giving glory to God." (Rom. 4:20) And it is but too common for good men to repine and fret at providences when their wills are crossed: this was the great sin of Jonah. Brethren, these things ought not to be so: did you but seriously consider, either the design of these providential dealings, which is to bring about the gracious purposes of God towards you, formed before the world was (Ephesians 1:4); or that it is opposing your will to His, as if you could better order affairs; or that you have to do herein with a great and dreadful God, in whose hands you are, who may do what He will with you, and all that is yours, without giving you an account of any of His

matters (Job 33:13); I say, if such considerations as these could but have place with you in trouble and temptations, they would quickly mold your hearts into a better and more quiet frame.

Oh that I could but persuade you to resign all to Christ. He is a skilful workman (Prov. 8:25,30), and can effect what He pleaseth. It is a good rule, "let God work out all that He intends, but have patience till He hath accomplished His designs, and then find fault with it, if you can." "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." (James 5:11)

Inference 3. If Christ be Lord over the providential kingdom, and that for the good of His people, let none that are Christ's henceforth indulge a SLAVISH FEAR OF CREATURES. "It is a great consolation," says Grotius on my text, "that Christ hath so great an empire, and that HE GOVERNS it for the good of His people, as a head consulting the good of the body." Our Head and Husband is Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth; no creature can move a hand or tongue without Him: the power that any have is given them from above. (John 19:11-12) The serious consideration of this truth will make the feeblest spirit cease trembling, and cause it to shout, "For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding." (Psalm 47:7) Has He not given you abundant security in many express promises that all shall issue well for you that fear Him? "All things work together for good to them that love God." (Rom. 8:28) Verily, "it shall be well with them that fear God," even with them that fear before Him. (Eccl 8:12) And suppose He had not, yet the very understanding of our relation to such a King should, in itself, be sufficient security: for He is the universal, supreme, absolute, meek, merciful, victorious, and immortal King. He sits in glory at the Father's right hand, and His enemies are a footstool for Him. His love to His people is unspeakably tender and fervent, and He that touches them "touches the apple of His eye." (Zech. 2:8) Till this be forgotten the wrath of man is not feared; he that fears a man that shall die forgets the Lord his Maker. (Isa. 51:12-13)

Inference 4. If the government of the world be in the hands of Christ, then to acknowledge Christ and engage His blessing in all our affairs and business, is the TRUE AND READY WAY TO SUCCESS. If all depends upon His pleasure, surely it is our wisdom to attempt nothing without Him; it is no lost time that is spent in prayer wherein we ask His direction and beg His presence with us: and, rely upon it, that which is not prefaced with prayer will be followed with trouble. How easily can Jesus Christ dash all your designs, and frustrate in a moment all the purposes of

your hearts! The Turks will pray five times a day, however urgent so ever their business be. Blush, you that enterprise your affairs without God.

Inference 5. Lastly, EYE CHRIST in all the events of providence; see His hand in all that befalls you, whether it be evil or good. “The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all men that have pleasure therein.” (Psa. 111:2) How much good might we get by observation of the good or evil that befalls us throughout our course!

(1) In all THE TROUBLES AND AFFLICTIONS that befall you, eye Jesus Christ: and set your heart to the study of four things in affliction: Study His SOVEREIGNTY AND DOMINION: these afflictions rise not out of the dust, nor do they befall you casually; but HE raises them up and gives them their commission; “Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you.” (Jere. 18:11) He selects the instrument of your trouble; He makes the rod as afflictive as He pleaseth; He orders the continuance and end of your troubles; and they will NOT CEASE to be afflictive to you TILL CHRIST SAY, LEAVE OFF, IT IS ENOUGH. The centurian wisely considered this when he argued, “I have soldiers under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh” (Luke 7:8); meaning, that as his soldiers were at his command, so diseases were at Christ’s, to come and go as He ordered them.

Study the WISDOM of Christ in the contrivance of your troubles. His wisdom shines out many ways in them. It is evident in choosing such kinds of trouble for you as are best adapted to purge out the corruption that predominates in you: in the degree of your troubles, suffering them to work to such a height as to reach their end; but no higher lest they overwhelm you.

Study the TENDERNESS AND COMPASSION of Christ over His afflicted people. Oh think, If the devil had the mixing of my cup how much more bitter would he make it! There would not be one drop of mercy in it: but here is much mercy mixed with my troubles. There is mercy in this, that it is no worse. Am I afflicted? “It is of the Lord’s mercy I am not consumed” (Lam. 3:22); it might have been hell instead of this chastisement. There is mercy in His supports under it; I might have been left, as many others have been, to sink and perish under my burdens. Mercy, in deliverance out of it; this might have been everlasting darkness, that should never have had a morning. Oh the tenderness of Christ to His afflicted!

Study the LOVE OF CHRIST TO THY SOUL in affliction. “Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten.” (Rev. 3:19) This is the device of love, to

recover thee to thy God, and prevent thy ruin. Oh what an advantage would it be thus to study Christ in all the evils that befall you!

(2) Eye and study Christ in all GOOD you receive from the hand of providence. View your mercies in all their lovely circumstances.

Eye them in their SUITABLENESS: how conveniently Providence hath ordered all things for thee. Thou hast a narrow heart, and a small estate suitable to it: hadst thou more of the world it would be like a large sail to a little boat, which would quickly pull thee under the water: thou hast that which is most suitable to thee. Eye the SEASONABLENESS of thy mercies, how they are fitted to thy wants. Providence brings forth all its fruits in due season. Eye the PECULIAR NATURE of thy mercies. Others have common, thou special ones; others have but a single, thou a double sweetness in thy enjoyments, one natural from the matter of it, another spiritual from the way in which, and end for which it comes. Observe the order in which Providence sends your mercies. See how one is linked strangely to another, and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive to a thousand. And lastly, observe the CONSTANCY of them, “they are new every morning.” (Lam. 3:23) How assiduously doth God visit thy soul and body! Think with thyself, if there were but a suspension of the care of Christ for one hour, that hour would be thy ruin.

Could we thus study the providence of Christ in all the good and evil that befalls us in the world, we should be in every state content. (Phil. 4:11) Then we should never be stopped, but furthered on our way in all that occurs; then would our experiences swell to great volumes which we might carry to heaven with us; and then should we answer all Christ’s ends in every state He brings us into. Do this, and say, Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

— John Flavel in “The Fountain of Life”

NOAH

By Grady Dearman

The command to construct the Ark was simple, explicit and forceful. Noah, in the three verses cited below, did not linger in doubt: “Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.”

-----Genesis 6:14-16

Adam and his wife had been driven from the garden of Eden in the immediacy of God's just punishment for their rebellion. They had been judged guilty and had died spiritually in the very presence of God. Having been turned away from the Tree of Life, they followed the natural tendencies of flesh and reproduced themselves in the state of alienation from a Holy God.

As fallen creatures it did not require a great period of time (only a few generations) for man to underscore his natural inclination for filth: “. . . for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” God could have summarily (I speak as a man) thrust every one of the human race down to hell — He had the right and the power. Yet He did not do so.

Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the Lord. In God's eyes, Noah (a sinner by birth), was seen as righteous. The Scripture tells us that he was a JUST man, UPRIGHT in his generation, and that he WALKED with God. Would we be so bold as to state that Noah found GRACE because of something within himself? Dare we say that the man Noah was JUST, or UPRIGHT within himself? How can “two walk together except they be agreed?” Who will aver that Noah and God walked together as a consequence of Noah's own strength?

The Lord had determined to destroy man; He also determined to save Noah. The flood which carried the inhabitants of the earth to destruction carried the ark upward upon its bosom. Reprobation (and its curse) and Election (and its deliverance) can be clearly traced out in the account of Noah.

Noah (“rest” or “comfort”) is a type of Christ. Whereas Noah was a JUST man (as was Job) by God's declaration; the Lord Jesus Christ was JUST in His own right; even Pontius Pilate declared Him to be “just.” That Jesus of Nazerath was UPRIGHT in His own generation is evident, for He was without sin, having been begotten of His Father and Virgin born . . . no other man can be the only begotten Son of God. He WALKED the path of obedience and communion with God the Father as He prepared in Himself a deliverance for His people.

Noah was a type of Christ and the ark he constructed was a type of Christ. There cannot be a union of the man and the ark. The full typology is not capable of being shown only in fallible Noah, nor in the product of his hands. Certain aspects of Christ are “told out” by Noah's life while other dimensions of the Lord are revealed in the inanimate ark.

Through divine inspiration, Lamech, called his newborn son “Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.” God had decreed in His creation work that the Sabbath was a rest from labor. Man WILL labor for his six allotted days under sin — because God said that he would! Yet, at the end of his days of labor there will be no Sabbath of rest for the reprobate; for there is

no rest for the wicked.” For those whom Christ hath redeemed there “. . . remaineth a rest .. “ The Lord sent His own Spirit, the “Comforter,” the latter day “rest” to care for His Bride until she be completed. The Sabbath which “remaineth” for God’s people is the VERY Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Sabbath rest for the redeemed is not one or other of the days of an earthly week! No! Christ is our REST. Paul declared to the Galatians “Ye observe days, .. I am afraid of you lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” Let us not regard any day of the week as favored above another except in this sense: this is the day the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice therein!

Moses, who wrote the account of Noah and the ark, was versed in the knowledge of the Egyptians. He described the ark in the dimension of the cubit, which was approximately 20.6 inches. The ark, then, was about 515 feet long, about 86 feet wide and about 51 feet high. We point this out only to show that the ark was tremendous. Even today the modern world would respect its size. The dimensions which God gave to Noah were concise: 300 cubits, 50 cubits, and 30 cubits. The precise ratio of length, breadth, and height are such that volumetrically it is more than adequate for those it sheltered; geometrically it is engineered in such an ingenious way that no better naval design is possible. We have at hand a critical engineering analysis of the physical properties of the ark. . . it is satisfying to see such wisdom as resides in modern engineering stand back in awe of the wisdom of God.

We are “IN” Christ if we are His. We are not found outside our “Ark,” but sheltered within. All who were IN the ark were saved from the wrath outside. As there were “nests” in the ark so there is rest in Christ “. . . He is the end of the law for righteousness...” It is not possible for there to be another “ark”; for there is none other “name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Our Lord is of such length and breadth and height as to be an all sufficient Savior of all that come to God by Him.

Now, we come to the most sobering of all the considerations we make of the ark as typical of Christ. The ark was not a nicely “rigged” ship (as the world judges), but was rather an unsightly “black box.” It had no prow, no stern, no pilothouse, no rudder. In fact it did not even LOOK like a ship. But, then, why should it have these? It was not a ship for HIRE; it certainly was not going from one earthly port to another. But, it was going “up” as the flood rose. And it would deposit its passengers (not crew) safe on the other side of the flood.

It was built of gopher wood, and was daubed within and without with pitch or tar. In short, it was a huge, rectangular box having its outsides and insides blackened. There was “no beauty to behold” either inside or outside of the ark.

Of Christ Isaiah wrote, “. . . He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we

shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” When He hung upon the tree (wood) naked to all, He also was covered (pitched) within and without with sin, 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.” He did not look like a Savior, but Oh, He was, He is!

There was a door in the side of the ark which opened and closed the three levels. It is noteworthy that it was God Himself that “shut him in.” It pleased God “...to bruise Him.” Additionally, from Adam’s side, God took Eve; from Christ’s side there came forth blood and water; and Noah was commanded to go forth of the ark with his family.

“... as it was in the days of Noah. . .”

COMMUNICATIONS FROM JOHN LELAND TO GILBERT BEEBE

1. In the tenth century, an opinion, that the world would close with that century was set on float by the priests, and universally believed thro’ christendom. This firm belief of the people the priests worked to their own advantage. Near the close of the century, the people would give, first their money and next their lands to the priests for their prayers concluding that the prayers of the priests would be of more consequence to them than their money and land would be, which would soon be burnt up. At length, the century closed; but the world still remained — remained it is true; but a very considerable part of it was in the hands of the priests: nor is there any account that the priests ever returned the money and land which they had acquired through holy fraud.

2. Sometime afterwards “Peter” the Hermit left his cell, and taking a crucifix in his hand ran round to the princes in Europe and inflamed them to form a union — raise their armies, and take the Holy Land, (Where Christ was born, taught, wrought miracles, and died) out of the possession of infidels; or the judgment of God would fall upon them. From this the Holy War, called the Crusade, began, and continued, with some intervals, nearly 200 years — wasted the lives of a million, and effected nothing. In cases like these some great object will be held up, to raise the wonder of the multitude, and bewilder their minds from seeing the cheat, until, like Thrales, the Philosopher, who gazed at noon to see the stars in the heavens, tumbled into the ditch at his feet.

3. In the days of the Commonwealth in England a sect arose called “the fifth monarchy men,” who held that the four monarchies spoken of in the Scriptures were out and that Christ would assume His throne on earth and give the kingdom to the saints; and that all earthly monarchy would cease. Oliver Cromwell favored the views of these people; and when he assumed the

protectorship, he assured them that he did it to have it in his power to give it up to Christ the more readily. That monarchy has existed from that time to this, and still exists, is a known truth.

4. Some men among us profess to be greatly alarmed at the spread of the Roman Catholics. They say that there are six hundred thousand within the limits of the United States (1836 S.C.P.); all busy at work, like a worm under the bark of a tree, to sap our free government, and set up papal hierarchy with all the horrors of an Inquisition. This alarm has the complexion of design, to move men to advance theft money to make and send missionaries to check the religion of others: for no man who has the soul of an American and the heart of affection for our democratic institutions will either fear or wish to injure the papists. Supposing the number should be one million; what could that one million do in a country of fourteen million? Is it probable that the Catholics will, increase faster, either by births or emigration than the Protestants? If not, where is the ground of alarm? Their freedom of religion is guaranteed to them in our Constitution of Government, and no benevolent man can wish to have them oppressed as they are in Ireland In the American revolution and in the formation of the Constitution under which we live and prosper, the tocsin sounded loud, "America shall be an asylum for the distressed of every nation to flee to," and who can wish to subvert that freedom? The French Catholics were great helpers to Americans in their struggle for Independence, (Lafayette among the rest) and now to deny them the hospitalities of good friends would be base ingratitude. If any of them commit overt acts, punish them; but let them have free scope to publish their religion. If they send their missionaries among those of a different religion to make proselytes, it is doing no more than protestants do. Should they by fair persuasion (for they cannot do it by force until they become a majority) increase in numbers above all other sects collectively; in that case they must of right have the rule; for no man who has a soul of an American will deny the maxim that "The voice of a majority is the voice of the whole." The men of this generation have neither power nor right to say what laws a future generation shall be governed by. An expressed declaration of their opinion is all that belongs to them.

5. There are a great many slaves in the United States; the exact number I cannot ascertain; (say one million, be the same more or less), the condition of whom has given the patriots, philanthropists and religionists great searching of heart. The abolitionists of late have come forward and seem to demand the unconditional manumission of all of them, without prescribing any rational mode for their future subsistence. If these prophets can prove their commission, like Moses, or have any reason to believe God will feed the liberated slaves with manna, it is hoped that the slave-holders will obey and not harden their hearts;

otherwise their exertions seem calculated to alienate the slave-holding states from the others, (which it did in 1861 ... 26 years after Leland wrote this!--- S.C.P.) and make the condition of the slaves more miserable. But notwithstanding the measures of the abolitionists are reprobated by every friend to his country; yet the question "What shall we do with the slaves?" must at some time, in some shape be met and decided.

The Emancipators have effected nothing. The Liberia (a nation established in Africa by the U.S. for resettlement of freedmen — S.C.P.) exportation affords nothing very flattering; what then shall be done? It cannot be expected that a question, encumbered with so many conflicting interests and opinions, can be easily answered: The most rational solution may be fraught with serious consequences. To proclaim a Jubilee and set them all free, without house or home, tools or money, or friends to take them in, would be sacrificing them to starvation. In such a state they would wander in droves into all states, seeking supplies for the calls of nature. Would the abolitionists be pleased to have thousands of them scouring the states in which they live, and groups of them at their own doors or around their dwellings begging or stealing?

Let Congress locate a section of territory for the accommodation of as many as choose to go with the consent of their masters — let their expenses be borne and their equipage of clothing, provisions, implements of husbandry and mechanism with all that is necessary for three years; including teachers to teach them to read and write, by the treasury of the United States. So far Congress can proceed towards the liberation of the slaves. This would give relief to those slaveholders, who in heart are opposed to slavery, and would gladly set their slaves free, if they could be provided for.

If the legislatures of the slave-holding states, in behalf of their constituents, should pass laws for the gradual manumission of all the slaves — that all of them who are in existence at the time of passing those laws should be held in servitude for life; except, with the consent of their masters, they should choose to go to the land provided for them; and that those who should be born after the passing of those laws should be free at the age of 21 years; the children of whom should be free-born; it would gradually lower the price of slaves, as property; and gradually teach them to bear their liberty. It would also give time to the masters to new model their systems to live without the labor of slaves.

The United States have now territory at command and a surplus treasure of millions: can it be applied to a better use than of liberating human beings, who are deprived of their natural rights by force and not for crime? Whether Congress dispose of the surplus revenue direct, or whether they apportion it among the states in either case the presumption is that it will be applied for splendor, rather than to establish permanent funds in the states to pay the taxes,

if a part of the surplus national property is appropriated to procure a home and support for liberated slaves, and the slave-holding states do not meet the measure by corresponding laws, the proof will be conclusive that they deny to others the freedom which they claim for themselves as a natural right.

Should this plan, or one like it, take effect, in a few years the question could be decided by experimental evidence, "Whether the African Moors have intellects sufficient for self-government, or whether they are a degraded race of beings, between the human and animal departments, made to serve their betters, and do that part of drudgery which is above the capacity of beast." They are now considered in a complex character, in the United States, possessing three-fifths of humanity and two-fifths of animal property.

I have spent 15 years of my life in a slave-holding State (Virginia); my calling led me to mingle with the slaves as well as with their masters, and I believe there are as many of the slaves (in proportion to their numbers) who join Christian churches, as there are of the whites. Some of them can read — others hear and believe, and a number of them are zealous preachers and exhorters. Redemption by the blood of Christ — a gracious change of heart — and holiness of life, are their favorite topics. The slaves generally put more confidence in the preachers of their own color, than they do in the whites; from a belief that they are less likely to deceive them; of course, should they be removed into a section assigned them, there would be neither need or propriety for Government to furnish them with religious teachers.

6. In the year 1780 and a few years following, when people were rapidly removing from the old States into Kentucky and Tennessee, there were more than 30 Baptist preachers, whom I personally knew, and MANY MORE that I heard of, who emigrated with them. (Note: So many Baptists elders moved to Kentucky from Virginia in that period, that Kentucky was called by them "The graveyard of Virginia Baptist preachers.") Nothing can be more false than the idea that the Valley of the Mississippi is peopled with irreligious characters altogether, who are perishing for want of missionary preaching. The truth is that many religious people remove into the Valley and many preachers go with them. Many also are turned to the Lord in the place and a portion of them commence preaching. Elder Daniel Parker, who lives on the ground, and who has been publishing a Religious Periodical, speaks of five Baptist Associations within the limits of Illinois and Indiana, and he complains of some of the missionaries who intrude and seek to control because they are sent by the Board of Missions (Baptist Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions organized in 1814. — S.C.P.) My information is not sufficient to speak of the prevalence of any other religious society in the Valley.

— John Leland

Signs of the Times, Jan. 1, 1836

JOHN LELAND --- FOOTNOTE

The above article written in 1836, the year the Texan war for independence occurred, and twelve years before the California “Gold Rush”, while the early disputes on slavery were being discussed; and while the Modern Missionary benevolence movement was incubating, demonstrates John Leland’s views of the then current issues. For many readers we offer this introduction to Elder Leland, a native of Massachusetts.

Leland planted numerous churches in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and some in Ohio; in addition, he frequently visited most of the early frontier churches and associations in the East.

An interesting and important event in American history was recalled on October 4, 1953, when the Leland-Madison Monumental Park was dedicated near Orange, Virginia. The site of the park marks the place where Elder Leland and James Madison met to discuss their differences pertaining to the ratification of the Constitution of the United States in 1788. . .the same year as the Kehukee Baptists merger.

Leland had baptized more than 700 converts in the bounds of the Kettocton Association, and Madison needed the Baptists votes. Leland opposed Madison’s election to the Virginia Ratification Assembly because Madison’s document lacked a Bill of Rights. There, on that most important occasion, the two men reached an agreement. Madison would introduce the now famous “Bill of Rights” granting religious freedom to all Americans; and Leland would “give him the Baptists’ votes.” Both kept their agreements.

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