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THE ATONEMENT

By Gilbert Beebe, Aug. 28, 1833

Perhaps among all the rich displays of the adorable Godhead which shine forth with resplendent brightness in the works of creation, providence and grace, none can be found to out-shine in splendor, or outweigh in importance, that which develops the purpose and grace of God in causing His sword to awake against the Man that is His Fellow, and which sets forth the atonement made by our Lord Jesus Christ for His people. No human talent can express, nor human wisdom comprehend, the fulness of this delightful doctrine; in the contemplation of which, the rich association of considerations flowing into the mind of the saints, are such as to absorb the mind in wonder and admiration. In our feeble efforts to declare what we have been taught by the word and Spirit of God on this subject, we know not where to begin, how to pursue, or where to leave off. The atonement has God for its author, Jesus Christ for its victim, or sacrifice, the salvation of the elect of God for its object, eternal truth for its security, and almighty power for its execution. In the atonement all the attributes of Deity are displayed glowing with inexpressible beauty and grandeur.

In the eleventh number of this volume (see last months issue - Ed.), we gave a summary view of the doctrine of the total depravity and just condemnation of fallen man, in which we traced his history from his primeval rectitude and innocence, through his unhappy fall, and by an application of divine truth showed that he, in his fallen state, is "*dead in trespasses and sins*," justly condemned by the righteous and inflexible law of God, and under its tremendous curse; without an eye to pity, or an arm to administer relief. There we left Him, promising that in the present article we would treat upon the only possible way of salvation, brought to light through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we promised to prove by the Scriptures to be special and particular.

Notwithstanding the frequent occurrence

of the word atonement in the Old Testament, we find it used but once in the New Testament, viz., Romans 5, where it is brought forward by the apostle as the ground of the justification of the church of God, and of reconciliation to God. “*But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*” In the light of this Scripture we clearly discover that the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ was *definite*. Definite first, in reference to the purpose of God. The specific objects ascribed to God by the apostle are the commendation of His love toward those who are with Himself included in the pronoun *us*, and in connection with this divine exhibition, their justification by His blood, and ultimate salvation through Him. Second, the characters for whom the atonement was made are definitely pointed out, viz., they are those who do eventually rejoice in God, through Christ Jesus, and by Him receive the atonement.

Third, the vicarious nature of the atonement is definitely expressed in the connection, “*Who was delivered for our justification.*” For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended His love, &c., in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Here we discover that the people for whom Christ was made an offering were sinners without strength, &c., and as sinners they were condemned and under sentence of death by the law. “*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*” the irrevocable decree has passed! Heaven and earth should pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law should fail until it should be

completely fulfilled. But while this was our deplorable situation, “*in due time Christ died for us.*” But how for us? Most certainly in our room. For if He had not borne the curse for us, we certainly must have borne it, and sunk down forever under its weight. We cannot conceive how this substitution can destroy the relation which Christ as a spiritual Head bears to His church, but rather, in our views of the subject, it opens the way to make a fair display of that unity and oneness which as ever existed between them in a spiritual sense. “*And He is the head of the body, the church, &c., and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*” “*And you, that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.*” (Col. I: 18-21).

When in the contemplation of the atonement and redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, the “man in Christ” is caught up to the third heaven, and is there made acquainted with those divine mysteries which cannot be expressed by human tongues; and amidst the glorious scenery of that bright world, his eye is fixed on One who was a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” he is led to enquire, “Wherefore art thou red in thine, apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat?” “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa. 53)

The design of the atonement was that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself “a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14)

The extent of the atonement is to all the elect. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is

he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;” &c. (Rom. 8:33, 34) “I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11) To all the seed of the Lord. “When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isa. 53: 10-12).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself,” &c. (Eph. 5:24-27)

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.” (I Peter 2:24) “This is my blood in the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.” (Matt. 26:28) “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20) By the above, together with many other portions of the word of God, it is evident that God had a specific object in view in the pouring out of the soul of His Son unto death, which special object was the redemption and ultimate salvation of His elect.

The efficacy of the atonement. “By one offering He has forever perfected them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14) “Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall (not may) return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and

mourning shall flee away.” (Isa. 51:11; 35:10) “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their head; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” And the voice of the Father is heard in Zion proclaiming, “As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” (Zech. 9:11) “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) “By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquity.” (Isa. 53:11) “By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb. 9:12) “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:14) “Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28) “Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of (‘very kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.’) (Rev. 5:9)

We have not room here to meet and rebut the arguments generally adduced in favor of a general or universal atonement: we shall however resume the subject at our earliest leisure. We intend in our next number to present our views on the doctrine embraced in the sixth item of our prospectus, viz: the sovereign, irresistible, and in all eases effectual work of the Holy Ghost, in quickening the elect of God.

Taken from Vol. 1, *EDITORIALS*.

PLATE OF PURE GOLD - “HOLINESS TO THE LORD”.

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, the engravings of a signet.

'Holiness To The Lord.' And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron MAY BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE HOLY THINGS, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that THEY MAY BE ACCEPTED BEFORE THE LORD."— Exodus 28: 36-38

How exceedingly gracious is our God in his merciful provisions of grace for those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Poor feeble and ignorant believers are so often plagued by sin mixed with all their offerings to the God that they love arid adore. As the hymn writer so well stated it:

If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mixed with all I do;
You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it thus with you?

Hearts of ardent love deeply desire to present nothing base or carnal to Him who loved His people with so great a love as to sacrifice Himself for all their iniquities, transgressions, and sins. Yet, they feelingly know their unworthiness and native corruptions which lie dormant within their old natures even as they attempt to sing, or pray, or worship the God of redeeming love. How can such impure worship be accepted of Him who is holy, spotless, undefiled, and separate from sinners?

There has never been a natural congregation of worshippers which did not need reform. None has existed perfectly fashioned, lacking impurity, able to fit the perfect pattern given in the New Testament. None have existed with full knowledge and perfect consistency with the revelation of God.

In addition, the children of God are snatched as "fire-brands plucked from the burnings." Many are called out of Mystery

Babylon's Arminian will-worship, from carnal profession, or legalistic Calvinism to serve God in the Spirit. They never come mature and perfected in time knowledge of spiritual things. Rather, they "grow in grace and knowledge" throughout their spiritual sojourn.

How often, then, do they mourn over things they believed and practiced in their earlier experiences? How often have they believed themselves to be so correct, only to find they still had much to learn? How many errors, sins, and failures have been predicated upon their spiritual immaturity; even when they verily believed such to have been to the glory of God? Of greater importance —how could God have accepted blind and misguided zeal or folly in one's spiritual devotions?

Here, in our text, we see the answer, and discover grace abounding toward His precious people in ways which most do not see, except when His grace is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

The Priesthood of Christ is symbolically presented by the priesthood of Aaron. The garments of Aaron, seven in number, were made for "glory and for beauty" and each points to the heavenly work of our great high Priest — Christ Jesus, the Lord. Surely, we dare not speak of one garment of His as greater than another. The breastplate with the twelve stones representing the children of Israel (and hence the whole family of God's elect in Christ) near Aaron's heart is exceedingly precious; the heavenly robe of Christ's imputed righteousness; the girdle of Christ's service; the mitre of the covering of His people; the ephod of gold, blue, purple and scarlet which speaks of the glorious, heavenly, and royal sacrifice for sin; the embroidered coat of fine linen of the righteousness of the saints in Him — all these are equally precious to a child of electing and redeeming love.

But the Plate of Pure Gold! That covers

the infirmities of our worship! That makes us “accepted in the Beloved” when we worship Him in our imperfections. It is made of pure gold which speaks of the shining glory of God. God is glorified in His saints and they are glorified in Christ. The engravings are eternally etched in this golden glory — nothing can ever prevent their sacrifices and gifts from being ‘Holiness to the Lord.’ It is placed upon a blue lace demonstrating that the glory is a heavenly, rather than earthy, glory which has its origins and accomplishments in the eternal counsel of Almighty God. It is upon the mitre of covering which declares all the mixtures of errors, ignorances, and carnality to be hidden from the face of Holiness and Judgment. And Aaron is to wear it upon his forehead as he goes before his people in service, receiving their gifts and sacrifices unto the Lord. The grand and glorious purpose of the Plate of Pure Gold is *“that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts... that they may be accepted before the Lord.”* This, we believe, reveals somewhat of the work of our Great High Priest, now in the heavenlies, as He sits on the right-hand of the Father making intercession for us.

Christ’s redemptive work was pronounced *‘finished’* as He gave up the ghost on Calvary’s tree and by the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God having obtained eternal redemption for all whose sins He bore. In this Office, He acted as the sacrificial Lamb of God; as the scapegoat, carrying their sins into the land of forgetfulness; and representatively as the ashes of the red heifer for the purification of His elect and blood-bought people.

But, upon His ascension, He took upon Himself the Office of Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate for His redeemed people before His Father’s face. Only through Jesus does one have access to the Father. The real

question (often felt within by the spiritual child) is “But, what of my feeble prayers, my coldness of heart, my inability to feast upon the Gospel — How can God be pleased with such sinful devotion? When bitterness arises in my bosom toward fellow saints and satan has advantage of me to harm the peace of the church — how can anything I do in worship be pleasing to the God of peace and love?”

Christ, the Lord, *“Knows what is in man, and needeth not that any man should tell him.”* He made us, and made us subject to vanity. He endured the shame of the cross that He might be the perfect captain of our salvation: and He is our Advocate with the Father. Before Him, symbolically, hangs the Plate of Pure Gold in the blazing light of his own glory as a memorial — a reminder — that *He alone* is able to bear the *iniquity* of our holy things. The gifts and sacrifices of His people are not offered to the Father in a mixture of sin, ignorance, holiness and devotions. They are purified, being offered through our High Priest, in His Person and sacrifice. For He it was who bore *all* these various sins in his own body on the tree. It is through Him that these holy gifts are presented to the Father, and in whom they are *“accepted before the Lord.”*

A nominal believer, then, may reason that “If this be so, then why be concerned about good order in the church?” Or, “Then, errors in our worship are a light thing.” But, not so to the real believer! His desire is to “worship God in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeketh to worship Him.” This is his desire. But, alas, as with Paul, so is his confession: *“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”* And again, *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* (Romans 7:18-20)

How often are the poor saints made to feel a great void in their prayers and supplications before God? How often they find themselves trapped in legalistic worship and blind zeal without knowledge! Many times they yearn for a pure worship with the felt-presence of the holy Spirit, only to find a coldness within. Surely, all the saints desire to worship God exactly as commanded by Him. The functioning Office of Christ in the heavenlies in no wise dampens their holy desire to run after Him; to walk in His ways; and worship Him according to the pattern shown in His word. On the contrary, the living, indwelling Spirit of God gently moves them towards this very end, ever drawing them by cords of love, light, and revelation to receive the fulness of Christ's intercession in their devotions.

Nevertheless, in their sojourn and growth in the grace and knowledge of God, our God has been pleased to provide acceptance of their worship in the Person of Christ. And so long as they dwell in tabernacles of clay, sin will be mixed with all their holy things. And just that long, they have a Great High Priest with the memorial upon His brow, declaring their worship to be — "*Holiness to the Lord.*" — **S.C.P.**

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Predestinarian editors would like for the magazine to keep a balance between old and new writers. We have a large collection of excellent old articles for reprint, but a shortage of current writings. We invite our readers to submit articles on Biblical subject for publication. We need your help this way.

GOOD WORKS VS. CONDITIONAL BLESSINGS

Chicago Heights, Ill.

Dear Brother Phillips,

Would you please explain to me the difference between time salvation and eternal salvation; also absolute predestination and conditional salvation; or please write an article in the Predestinarian Magazine. That is the most wonderful book I have ever subscribed to.

Thank you, M.W. (*signed*)

I will oblige an answer at my earliest convenience, the Lord willing, and deal with these four issues in one article. At present, however, we will print two articles written in past years. The first, written by J.W. Gilliam in defense of our doctrine in 1932, is printed annually in the minutes of the Upper Country Line Association. It is a concise and well articulated abstract. The second, written by one of our editors, W. W. Hudson, is taken from the 1967 SIGNS. If space permits, we will include a third on the subject by Gilbert Beebe, from the newly released Volume 3, *EDITORIALS*, and used by permission of the publisher.

EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE

An exposition of the Doctrine relating to God's Decree, His Purpose, Predestination, Providence, Good Works, and Obedience, as approved by a majority of our Churches in the Upper Country Line Association in their Church Conferences in 1932, and now authorized, forms or constitutes a part of the Articles of Faith of this Association, as follows, to-wit:

Our position and contention on certain controversial questions of doctrine disturbing many of our people at this time is as follows: *London Confession*, Chapter Three, Of God's

Decrees, Sec. One: "God hath (Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15,18) decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God **NEITHER THE AUTHOR OF SIN**, (James 1:15,17; I John 1:5) 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 (Acts 4:27,28; John 19:11) established, in which appears His Wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness (Numbers 23:19; Eph. 1:3-5) in accomplishing His decree; [Sec.2] "Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all (Acts 15:18) supposed conditions, yet hath He not decreed anything (Rom. 9:11, 13,16,18) because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions," Chapter Five, Of Divine Providence, Sec. One: "God the Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, doth (Heb. 1:3; Job 38:11; Isa. 46:10-11; Psa. 13:5-6) uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the (Matt. 10:26,30,31) least, by His most holy providence, to the end for which they were created, according unto His infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of His (Eph. 1:11) own will; to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy;" second, "Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the First Cause, all things come to pass (Acts 2:28) immutably and infallibly, so that there is not anything befalls any (Prov. 16:23) by chance or without His providence; yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either (Gen. 8:22) necessarily, freely or contingently;" thirdly, "God in His ordinary providence (Acts 27:31,44; Isa. 55:10, 11) maketh use of

means; yet is free (Hosca 1:7) to work without (Rom. 4:19,21), above and (Dan. 3:27) against them at His pleasure," fourthly, "The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that His determinate counsel (Rom. 11:32-34; II Sam. 24:1; I Chron. 2:11) extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men (arid that not by a bare permission); which also He most wisely and powerfully (II Kings 19:28; Psa. 76:10) boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to His most holy (Gen. 1:20; Isa. 10:6,7,12) ends; yet so as the sinfulness of their acts **PROCEEDETH ONLY FROM THE CREATURES, AND NOT FROM GOD**, who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or (Psa. 1:21; John 2:16) approver of sin,"*** Of Good Works, Chapter 16, Sec. One: "Good works are only such as God hath (Micah 6:8; Heb. 13:21) commanded in His holy word, and not such as without the warrant thereof arc devised by man, out of blind zeal (Matt. 15:9; Isa. 19:13), or upon any pretense of good intentions."

N.B. "We believe that God has wrought all the works of His children in them (Isa. 26:12)), and they are His workmanship, are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them (Eph. 2:10), and that their ability to do good works is not of themselves, but wholly of the Spirit, and according as God works in them both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), and that as the branches are in the vine, so are his children in Him, and have their fruits unto holiness and the end everlasting life (Rom. 6:22), and that it is of God that His children are in Christ, who, of God is made unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, arid redemption, and hence God not only puts them in this way, which is

Christ, but they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Peter 1:5), and “that the preservation of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of (Rom. 8:30;9:11,16) election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:9,19; John 14:19) and union with Him, the (Heb. 6:17,18) oath of God, the abiding of His Spirit and the (I John 3:9) seed of God within them, and the nature of the (Icr. 22:40) covenant of grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof,”

And in conclusion, join with Elder Hassell in saying that, “While the sinner has destroyed himself, all his salvation, from first to last, is of the pure, unmerited, almighty grace of God.” —H. History, page 942.

Now, upon the subject of obedience, our faith lays hold on Christ Jesus, the Saviour of sinners — the obedient One, for strength and every necessary help in time of need, confessing that of myself I can do nothing, but all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. When God works the will, he also works the strength, and obedience always follows. David said unto the Lord, “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee. Thy face, Lord will I seek,” (Psa.27:8), and again, Paul declares, having received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations (Romans 1:5), his obedience, saying, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also (Rom. 1:15), and we believe, as God has said, “My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it” (Isa. 55:11); and when Jesus was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, we hear His words, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;

nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt (Matt. 26:39); hence, concerning His people (the children of obedience) He says, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Psa. 110:3), and all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us (II Cor. 1:20). All obedience is based on love — God’s love toward us, which causes our love toward Him, and with His mind in us, His will and pleasure becomes our will and pleasure —acquiescence — obedience.

J. W. Gilliam, 1932

ARE OUR BLESSINGS CONDITIONAL?

By W.W. Hudson

As the Lord blesses us, let us talk about an error that Satan has introduced in some churches, and by carefully examining the matter, see that the motive is to rob God of the honor, praise, and glory due unto His Holy Name.

“Conditional Time Salvation”: According to this theory, man has the ability through his own merits to perform good works, and by doing so, he will enjoy a peace of mind and obtain blessings which God has promised to them who take advantage of the opportunity offered. In other words, the advocates of this theory teach that God has laid out the blessings before the children of God, and that they may enjoy the benefits of them (here in time) IF they take advantage of the opportunity offered them. If they do not perform certain conditions, then they will miss the blessing offered.

Such a doctrine as this is erroneous. It does not ascribe to God the praise for the blessings we enjoy. It exalts man, because man is responsible for obtaining the blessing, since he took advantage of the opportunity to perform the conditions. According to that doctrine, man is the author of Time Salvation!

This is similar to the condition of the Galatians. Notice the expression of Paul: "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3) And, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 4:9)

This error is to puff man up. It is to give man the credit for the blessings he receives. In other words, man deserves the praise because he took advantage of the blessings offered, and by performing certain conditions, (like Dr. Pavlov's dog in "classical conditioning" — S.C.P.) God was obligated to bless him. Or, since man did perform these conditions, God was obligated to bless him. Therefore, man controls his spiritual seasons, according to this theory. By man's own ability, he could always enjoy seasons of basking in the sunshine of God's mercy.

But this is an error. All praise, honor, and glory belong unto the Lord. We cannot control the natural seasons, and we cannot control our spiritual seasons. If it is midnight with our souls, we cannot drive out the darkness, and we cannot hasten the coining of morning.

Let us remember that God takes care of His people. Satan uses error such as the conditional-time-salvation theory to attempt to rob God of His glory in the gracious disposal of His blessings, and to puff up man's carnal flesh; but God brings it down. "*Though thou shalt exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.*" (Obad. 1:4).

Though we do not believe this theory, we believe that Satan still tempts us in our experiences with the *principles* of it. It is still too often with us. And, Oh. how cunning Satan is! In Genesis 3:1, we read, "*The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field...*

For an example: Let us assume that we perform good deeds or works, such as visiting the sick and afflicted, and helping our needy brethren, etc. Now, this is good on the surface, for "*Pure religion and undefiled before the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" (James 1:27) In the epistles of John, we notice that he admonishes the ones who have this world's goods to help the ones in need.

On the surface, these deeds are indeed good; but what about the motive involved? "*Men looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh upon the heart.*" (I Sam. 16:7) '*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.*' (Matt. 6:1-4).

Now, are we doing these deeds because we feel impressed by the Spirit to do so? If so, then the motive is good. On the other hand, are we doing these deeds in order to be seen of men, and to receive their praise? Are we doing these deeds for the **PURPOSE** of gaining the favor of God, and to receive or merit a blessing from Him? If so, then a selfish motive prompts us to perform them.

But, Satan does not give up. Let us assume that we are impressed by God to perform certain Scriptural deeds. After it is performed, Satan may slip thoughts as this in our minds: "My, you surely are a good person to do this. There are not many people like you. You should be proud of yourself, etc." Thoughts as this tend to puff one up.

Let us remember that Satan does not have a set pattern. He may set thoughts as this in your mind to attempt to drive you to despair. "You really think you are somebody, don't you? Those people you visited think you are a little saint. But they just do not know you. The reason you visited them was for selfish reasons- You wanted their praise and admiration, and wanted them to think You are a good person, etc." Accusations as these tend to drive us to despair, except the Lord intervenes and speaks sweet peace to our poor souls.

Let us briefly state another selfish motive in performing good deeds. Doing a good deed for the motive of expecting a favor in return is base. The motive of helping our brethren with the expectation of receiving a favor in return is not prompted by love. It is just a selfish motive. The Lord's commandments are based upon His own principles of free grace. As He said: "*And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil.*" (Luke 6:34-35)

In closing out our thoughts concerning the error of conditional time salvation, we quote from JC. Philpot:

"But the Lord has attached — I will not call it a condition, (it is a word I abhor), but a **DECLARATION**; which declaration is linked on with a promise. The Lord has **APPOINTED** a certain path, wherein the soul is to walk. The walking in that path is a necessary step, to obtain the blessing that lies at the end of the path. It is *no condition to be performed by the creature*; it is nothing that springs out of, or depends upon, human will or human merit; but it hangs upon the Lord's appointment. God has vomited **CERTAIN PROMISES** with **CERTAIN**

APPOINTMENTS; He has connected **CERTAIN DELIVERANCES** with **CERTAIN TRIALS**; He has connected **CERTAIN BLESSINGS** with **CERTAIN STATES** and positions of the soul. The text states that the Lord has declared a certain path; He has made a positive declaration: and to this appointment He has graciously annexed a certain promise. "*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him.*" Thus it is no matter of free will, it is no matter of man's righteousness or man's wisdom, whether he shall "call upon God;" It is **APPOINTED** he should call upon Hun. God has said in positive terms — (and His "I will," and His "he shall," never can be broken) — "*He shall call upon me.*" It therefore does not rest with the creature, whether he will call upon Him or not; its not a matter poised in the balances of the creature, whether he shall pray or not; God has not left it to man, whether he shall take up prayer or lay aside prayer; but He has made it a part of His own **SOVEREIGN APPOINTMENTS**, of His own **ETERNAL DECREES**, which can no more be frustrated, than salvation itself. Therefore this soul, that "dwells in the secret place of the Most High" — "*he shall call upon God.*" It is not left to him, whether he will call or not; but it stands in a way of eternal decree, in a way of sovereign good pleasure. He must call upon God, because God says he shall." *Selected Sermons*, by J.C. Philpot, pg. 105-106.

From: *Signs of the Times*, June, 1967.

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

By Gilbert Beebe, Feb. 1, 1854

Mr. Beebe:— In a former letter I requested your views on the absolute predestination of all things. I asked for information, and for nothing else; but I will excuse you for not answering me, for I know that I am not worthy of notice, but I am a poor unworthy worm of the dust.

Your unworthy friend. R.S.

Reply.— We assure our friend R.S. that our apparent neglect of this request was not owing to any want of respect for him, nor to any unwillingness to give him such views as we have on the important subject of his inquiry. Those who truly feel sensible that they are poor unworthy worms of the dust, and yet have a desire to be informed in regard to the universal government of the supreme God, of His prescience and irrevocable decrees, are the very persons above all others, whom we desire to serve to the full extent of the ability God may be pleased to give us.

Predestination, as a highly esteemed writer in the *SIGNS* once remarked, does not require to be qualified by prefixing to it the word *absolute*, as the predestination of God must of necessity be absolute in every particular. Jehovah is an absolute God, and all that He purposes or performs must be absolute. There can be no fiction nor anything merely nominal with Him. Predestination is destination beforehand, and as nothing can be before hand, or subsequent with Him, the term as it is used in the Scriptures is used in reference to our finite state, as creatures of time; or rather as creatures of God, but for the present, in the time state of existence. God inhabits eternity, and all things are present with Him. The progression of time and development of events can add nothing to His stock of knowledge. We, His creatures, may and we certainly do, live and learn. He has Himself called our attention to the fact that He "has declared the end from the beginning, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure." This declaration of the end from the beginning proves His pre-science, so conclusively, that but few are so hardened in infidelity (in Beebe's day — S.C.P.) as to openly and in so many words, deny His foreknowledge of all events; for if He were deficient in knowledge He could not with unerring certainty declare the end from the

beginning and from ancient times, the things which are yet to transpire. But there are those who while they admit what is called the foreknowledge of God, deny that His knowledge is based upon His own purpose and determinate counsel. They urge the following objections to predestination: It is *fatalism*, it destroys man's *free-agency*, and his *accountability*, and makes God the *author of sin*; and some there are who go still farther and say if the doctrine of predestination be true, God in predestinating the events of time, etc., has transcended His right and is *unjust*. Our friend R.S., we think, will agree with us, that it very illy becomes poor sinful dying mortals thus irreverently, not to say blasphemously, to question the eternal right of God to do what seemeth to Him good, in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, or to set up *their* standards of justice and denounce their Creator if He does not abide by *their* decisions. Let all such first meet the searching interrogative of the inspired apostle, "*Hath not the potter power over the clay, to form one vessel to honor*" etc.? The holy prophet Jeremiah, by inspiration, has informed us that God is the Potter, and we are the clay. Hence we must acknowledge His right to dispose of all things, all events, and of all worlds according to His own pleasure. Let this be admitted and all murmuring against His predestination will cease. It is not our purpose to meet the objections urged by men to the doctrine of Divine revelation, and by logical argument to put them to silence; nor do we design to attempt to make the doctrine palatable to the natural mind of man which is "enmity against God," for all such attempts are without the least prospects of success. The enmity of the carnal mind is fully demonstrated in the objections which they bring, but we design rather to search out and call attention of our inquiring friend to what God has revealed in the Scriptures on the subject, and this we will

do, if God permit, whether men will hear, or whether they forbear.

The term *predestination*, as we have intimated, has reference to the order and succession of events in time, by which the eternal designs of God are brought to pass. And, so far as God's *providence* is concerned in bringing His designs to pass, predestination simply signifies that God had purposed, decreed, ordained, or destined the accomplishment of those things before they were, in order of time brought to pass. Hence to us, it is predestination, with God it is destination, because His infinity connects and comprehends the end with the beginning, for He is Himself the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending.

Having, as clearly as we are able, defined predestination, we pass to enquire whether it be a Bible doctrine. If it be a Bible doctrine, we must admit it, or reject the Bible as a record of infallible and eternal truth, and take the open ground of infidelity. And who can trace the sacred pages of the holy Book and say that it contains no testimony in support of the doctrine? In the absence of predestination how was it that the prophets of Jehovah foretold the events of ages, thousands of years before those events were actually fulfilled? Who, or what directed the prophetic vision of holy men of old, to look down the vista of intervening centuries, and in the name of the Lord Jehovah predict the things that should come to pass down to the end of time, and even the resurrection of the slumbering dead, and the judgment of the last day. If these things were not before determined of God, how were they known, and if they were unknown to God and man how were they foretold? And if they were foreknown of God, and He inspired holy men to foretell them, that knowledge and decision of God was what the Bible calls *predestination*. But we have no need of *ifs* in this investigation. The

Scriptures do most clearly and emphatically declare that "*Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*"; that God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and also that the spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, did testify **BEFOREHAND** of His sufferings and of the glory that should follow. This was and is predestination. God spake by the prophets, saying, "it shall come to pass." Do not these words imply a decree when uttered by Him who speaks the word, and it *stands fast*, who commands, and it is done? How harmoniously do both testaments agree in this fundamental doctrine. Throughout the first, or Old Testament, God, by His prophets, declared the things that *should come to pass*. Apostles and inspired evangelists in the New Testament respond, saying, "*And it came to pass*". But perhaps some may demand, What came to pass? We reply, all that God by the prophets said should come to pass. First, in reference to the advent of the blessed Saviour, for He Himself declared that all that was written of Him in the law, and in the prophets and in the psalms must be fulfilled, and when dying on the cross of Calvary He exclaimed, "*It is finished!*" and in awful confirmation the retiring sun, prevailing darkness, the quaking earth, rending rocks, opening graves, rising dead, and rending vail gave ample demonstration. Daniel, in harmony with all the other prophets of the Lord, had predicted that at a specific time the God of heaven should set up a kingdom that should never be destroyed, that the Messiah should come, should be cut off, should make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness. The whole New Testament is a record of the faithful fulfillment of these predictions. Long had the prophet slumbered with his fathers, before the accomplishment of his seventy weeks, but the word of our God could not die, it liveth and abideth forever.

The predestination of our God also embraces all the heirs of immortality. "For

whom He did foreknow, them 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, arid whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified." This predestinated people is blessed with "All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as He (God) 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, according to the good pleasure of His will. In whom we have received an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things (or according to) the counsel of His own will." (Romans 8:28, Ephesians 1:2-11)

There are those who admit the doctrine of predestination, so far as it applies to the coming of the Saviour, the work which He was to perform, the sufferings which He was to endure, and the glory which was to follow; and also in relation to the good works which God before ordained that His people should walk in; but reject the idea that His purpose and foreknowledge extends to the wicked acts of men and devils. But for ourself, it is our firm conviction that if a single event could possibly transpire from the creation of the world to the end of time, from the rise and fall of empires, to the falling of a sparrow, or a hair of our head to the ground, that such unforeseen and consequently unprovided for events would unavoidably endanger and render uncertain the execution of what is admitted to be ordained and decreed of God. How could it be otherwise? Can we consistently believe that it was predestinated that Christ should suffer on Calvary to redeem sinners, and yet that He did not foreknow that there would be any sinners to save? Did He decree that His dear Son should be delivered into the hands of wicked men; and yet not

contemplate in that decree, either the existence of wicked men, or what they should do in condemning and crucifying Him? But aside from all human reasoning, or vain speculation on the subject, God has informed us, by His inspired apostles, that Jesus was delivered by His determinate counsel, and foreknowledge, and put to death by wicked hands. And again, the inspired apostles break forth in praise to God, in devout acknowledgement both of the decree and of its accomplishment, that, "And when they had heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of the servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined **BEFORE TO BE DONE.**" (Acts 4:24-28) Here let it be observed the holy apostles of the Lamb did **NOT** start back with horror, and exclaim, fatalism! This makes God the author of sin! or this destroys the accountability of man! They saw nothing in all this reflecting unfavorably on the character or purity of the supreme God.

But they saw such harmony in the purpose, decrees, and actual accomplishment of the designs of God, as led them simultaneously and with one accord to lift up their voice in devout adoration and praise to the Most High God, whose providential government was so clearly manifested in controlling all events. The things which they now saw brought to pass were distinctly spoken of by David in his day, and pointed out by the slaughtered lamb which Abel, by faith, offered to God some four thousand

years before any of the actors in the crucifixion of Christ were born. God had not only decreed what they should do, but He had also decreed what they should *not do*. "The enemy should not exact upon Him, nor the son of wickedness afflict Him." "A bone of Him should not be broken." "He should not be holden of the pains of death." His soul should not be left in hell, nor should His flesh see corruption. Neither death nor hell could go beyond the purpose and decree of God. None but Judas could betray Him (see Psa. 109:1-20), without involving a contradiction of the purpose and decree which was recorded in the Scriptures; the pieces of silver for which He was betrayed were numbered and recorded in the decree of God, as published by the prophet hundreds of years before Judas was born. The parting of His raiment, and casting lots for His garments, was all a matter of ancient record, together with all the minute circumstances which occurred; all of which we are informed were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled. The murder of the infants by Herod, brought to pass the decree published by the prophets six hundred years before. "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children because they were not." (Jer. 31; Matt. 2:18) The case also of Joseph and his brethren is a very clear and striking illustration of the overruling government of God, as embracing all events. And who shall dare to charge God with unrighteousness, because He retains in His own hand a supreme control of all beings and of all events; because He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will? Who has a right to infer that God is the fountain of sin or unholiness; when we are informed that men *with wicked hands*, do whatsoever His hand and counsel before determined should be done? Paul when declaring what God had said of Pharaoh, that for this purpose He had

raised him up to make His power known in him, etc., anticipated the blasphemous outbreaks of the human mind in opposition to the predestination of God. "Thou wilt surely say unto me, Why doth He yet find fault," or hold man as a responsible being, "for who has resisted His will?" But the apostle did not forbear to declare this doctrine because men resisted and blasphemed it; but says the apostle, "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? etc." When the enmity of the human heart is subdued by the quickening power and grace of God in regeneration, then the heaven-born child is reconciled to God, and loves to contemplate the power and glory of Jehovah. Then is he prepared, with the inspired psalmist, to rejoice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that all power in heaven and earth is vested in the blessed Saviour. But if left to doubt His all-prevailing power and providence- for a moment, now sinks his spirit at the fearful thought that some wheel in the vast, and apparently complicated machinery of nature might be allowed to revolve unbound by the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. If one of the wheels could work without the power and providence of God, its effects might be to ungear the whole system of Divine government, and worlds on worlds be dashed in irretrievable ruin. When the enlightened mind of God's dear children contemplates the glory of this subject, they fall down before God in admiration, and with the four beasts, arid four and twenty elders, cry' "Holy, Holy, Holy, God, Almighty." They are filled with the most profound reverence for, and confidence in the God of their salvation.

One reason we have thought why some of the children of God have seemed to be unreconciled to this doctrine is that they have failed to discriminate between the *overruling power and providence* of God and the *effusions* of His Spirit. "*Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God; for*

God cannot be tempted, neither tempeth He any man. “ When men are tempted to sin they are tempted *of their own lusts, and by the devil.* But how hopeless and desperate would be the condition of all who are tempted, if God had not the power and providence to *control* the temptation, and *overrule its effect* according to his eternal purpose and pleasure for the good of His tried and tempted children, and for the glory of His own great Name. Our every temptation, though they flow not from God, are directed, and restricted and made serviceable to his saints, by Him, is absolutely certain. Hence Paul assured the saints that God would control this matter. “He will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that which ye are able; but will also with the temptation make a way for your escape.” (I Cor. 10:13; See also II Peter 2:9) That glorious High Priest which becometh us, was Himself tempted in all points as His children are, and knows how to succour them that are tempted. Soon after He was baptized He was led up by the Spirit, unto the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was not led there by the devil; but by the Holy Spirit of the Lord God which was upon Him. Neither was He tempted of the Spirit of God which led Him into the wilderness; but He was tempted of the devil. The devil could neither afflict poor old Job, nor even drown the herd of swine, until he received permission of the Lord, and it is hard for us to think that any of the saints, however shy they may seem to be of the doctrine of predestination, really would wish or be willing that God should have less, or that sin or Satan should have more power. It is a blessed reflection to us that

“Death and hell can do no more
Than what our Father please.”

Volumes have been written upon this subject, and volumes may still be written: it is too rich and boundless ever to be exhausted,

but after all that we can say, it is the Spirit of the Lord alone who can present it in its beauty to the sons of men. He, the Spirit of the Truth, whom the world cannot receive, can slay the enmity of our carnal mind, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. May that Spirit in all His quickening power and grace be with our friend R.S. and all others who earnestly desire a knowledge of the true God and eternal life. - Used by permission of the SIGNS, & taken from the new release of Vol.3.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

By Stanley C. Phillips

The following article was written twenty-four years ago. Even as it was being published, the church was then being torn asunder with a violence characteristic of carnal worldlings. Today, the effects of this latter apostasy are much more clearly seen.

The total fabric of the American society has been shattered, and perhaps forever destroyed. We now live in a world far removed from that which then existed. Immorality and violence have been institutionalized by all the primary institutions in our society, from the courts to the so-called churches. Even assassins of national leaders are declared “innocent” by reason of humanistic sentimentality. In February of this year, the published statistics on births and abortions showed that 25 % of all infants conceived in 1981 were murdered by their parents *legally* — making this the greatest holocaust in modern times; and the statistics on American families show that 21% of all families today are single-unit families, he., one parent with the children, or “head of household” *legal* units.

I riced not dwell on such known conditions. But far worse, the Gospel light has

all but flickered out. Dreams and visions of the carnal mind and absolute freewillism have effectually replaced the Gospel of Christ in all but few places. And in spite of this decline, there is more wealth, pomp and show to will-worship than at any time in our history. Indeed, if we publish one word about the present condition, we are the troublers in Israel! As it was with Israel under the prophets, so it has come to be our heritage today: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the **TIME TO COME FOR EVER AND EVER**: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: Which say to the seers, **SEE NOT**; and to the prophets, **PROPHESY NOT** unto us right things, speak unto us **SMOOTH THINGS**, prophesy deceits: Get you **OUT OF THE PATH**, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isa. 30:8-11)

Thus is this same condition being fulfilled also among the Gentiles according to the lineage of the flesh.

It is not our purpose to make this magazine an organ of negativism, but rather keep a balance of articles as we are enabled. We do hope the readers will find and profit by this balance. We hope there will alway be articles to edify the trembling and afflicted saints and build them up in the faith once delivered to the saints. But, too, we feel a need for articles which stir the complacent soul to press faithfully on, and articles to assault the wickedness of the ungodly reprobates who creep into the fold.

We have no heart to allow negative letters to cause us to compromise our position. We believe and hope we are set to the defense of the Gospel of Christ. We cannot safely, nor in good conscience turn back to the leeks and onions of Egyptian bondage. We've been there already, and do not prefer leeks and onion soup to that heavenly manna upon which we have often

feasted in our pilgrimage thus far. The Lord has burned our castles, and we have rejoiced in the ashes of our own works of self-righteousness.

The whole question of modern Israel's return to Palestine is beyond our scope of speculation. But we are very much convinced that we see the end of the "time of the Gentiles."

"THOU SHALT ALSO BE CUT OFF"

Editorial, *Old Faith Contender*,
By Elder W.J. Berry, Aug., 1958

"Thou shalt also be cut off." - Romans 11:22
(Prophesied over 1900 years ago.)

"At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched; as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. - -Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed." - Numbers 9:19-23.

Our God is not only a God of purpose, but He is fulfilling those purposes continually. They "ripen fast, unfolding every hour." Man prides himself in his activity and boast of his conquests and traveling ability, but he is, by nature, a stagnate creature. He "can neither fly nor go;" he is unable to descend into hell, or to ascend into heaven. God only can move; He only can move worlds, times and events, — and He is moving them today as ever — with precision and certainty.

God does not wait for history — he makes history. He does not wait for man and events to take place in order to fulfill His

purposes. He in His sovereign and unfathomable providence moves men and events to fulfill those divine purposes. As to what all those purposes are, “who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?” (Rom.11: 34). He has indeed graciously revealed to mortals a few of His divine purposes and “parts of His ways, but the thunder of His power, who has known?” (Job 26:14).

Instead of searching and watching for God’s hand moving in the earth, man is prone to settle down in his tent to “fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” In his depraved ego, he imagines everything turns around self; he even thinks and acts as though God is waiting to see what move he will make next. Thus he is finally established in his own doings and purposes in life to such a degree that he becomes unaware that it is not **HE** but **GOD** who moves; he is blind to the fact that God has moved on and left him sitting in his little tent.

After speaking the universe into existence by the mere breath of His mouth, through the brief period of six thousand years, God created a beautiful earth, formed man and woman to replenish it, sent a flood to destroy the wicked inhabitants, called Abraham, chose a people to worship Him, and “in these last days” sent His Son to redeem His elect, received Him into heaven, and is now about to send Him back again to accomplish “the restitution of all things,” and to complete His purpose in the earth, “which God hath spoken by the mouth of **ALL** His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:20,21).

According to His prophesied purpose God was manifest in the flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth — a despised Jew. He came to His own people — the Jews after the flesh, who received Him not, but put Him to death. Peter and the other apostles preached to them Jesus, but they believed not. According to His

purpose, as He had warned, God cut them off as His witnesses and “scattered them into all nations.” At the same time they were cut off from His mercy, God manifested that mercy to “all the world”— that is, to the Gentiles — “to take out of them a people for His name ---known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world.” (Acts 15:14-17).

The mercy and goodness of God was shown to the Gentiles which they have enjoyed now for over nineteen hundred years. He warned them by the mouth of Paul to be not wise in their conceits, and high-minded, and to continue in His goodness, lest they also be cut off (Rom. 11:22). They have not heeded this warning. They have fallen into the same sin of their Jewish brethren, becoming hard-cried in heart, high-minded and wise in their own conceits, nor have they continued in His goodness for all the great mercies and blessings bestowed, - **THEREFORE** - according to the warning and purpose of God, He has cut them off and removed their candlestick. He has left them settled in their tent and has moved on to the next scene. He is already bringing to pass His mighty act to bring back His people Israel from the nations whither He scattered them nineteen hundred years ago; and He is soon to fulfill His other purpose and mighty acts promised, namely, that the mocking heathen, and all nations should know that He is still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ezek. 11:17; Micah 7:20; Zeph 3:8-20, etc.).

Now what does all this mean to **US**? Whoever we are — if we are in a church organization among the Gentile nations of the earth — according to the revealed purposes of God, and the actual fulfillment of it, our condition is obvious. It means the cloud has moved on — the presence of the Lord in unction, power, and wisdom has been withdrawn; the candlestick, as a public witness, is removed. It does not mean that God has forsaken His elect, nor that He will

fail to call the last one “from among the Gentiles,” but it does mean that this work is nearly completed.

In any generation we are prone to imagine that all things will continue as we have them, but it is not so. We nourish the false idea that tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more so, but it shall not be. We fondly dream that our natural blessings are attended with God’s smiles when they may be for our undoing, as the quails that choked the Israelites, or Achan’s golden wedge that worked the death of both him and his entire family.

Remember that it was above seventy years after the birth of Christ before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the daily sacrifice taken away. The cutting off process did not take place in one day, or in one year. Likewise with the professed churches among the Gentiles — Ichabod

— **THE GLORY IS DEPARTED** —was not written over every church door in all the world in one night. The falling away began over one hundred years ago; and the rate of declension is now rapidly increasing with each passing month.

If you should be one of those who still do not understand how this can be, and who may be deceived by the great show of religion today — the numbers, the fine buildings, the “good times,” etc., just remember such things are not to be considered. The Jews had all these things when the Master said, “Your house is left to you desolate.” They boasted of receiving the law by Moses and had Abraham as their father; but they were unaware of the fact that the GOD of Abraham had already moved out; that His purpose with that generation was already fulfilled. God is not with us today as a people or as a nation. We have forsaken Him the Fount of living waters to hew our own ‘broken cisterns that can hold no water.’ We have become the “cage of every unclean bird,” **THEREFORE** He has

forsaken us and has left us to our own ways.

As a people we have ceased to live a separated life — standing for righteous principles and suffering the consequence from an ungodly, graceless world. We have become proud of things we ought to be ashamed of, and ashamed of things we ought to rejoice in. In short, our salt has become dirty, and has lost its savor.

Of His ancient people, it is said, “My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17) “I will go and return to My place **TILL THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR OFFENCE** and seek My face in their affliction they will seek Me early.” (Hosea 5:15) Turn and read all the words of the Lord to His people and then remember that Paul says, “All these things happened unto them for en-samples; and they are written for **OUR** admonition **UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME**. Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall.” (II Cor. 10:11,12)

We come now to a personal application of this amazing working out of God’s purposes in the earth. In the early part of our ministry, we “spiritualized” too much. When we came to such words as *Israel*, *Zion*, etc., and their related prophecy, we automatically thought of “church.” Thus by tradition and not doing our own thinking we “made the word of God of none effect” and were thereby robbed of its true significance. But for the past fifteen years we have been under an increasing burden to “know” the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, to have better evidence of our own calling and standing in the covenant of grace, to have a true understanding of God’s purposes in the earth concerning the church, His body, and the final consummation of all things. We have been unable — as most professors seem to be —to take our religion for granted, or to be at ease and satisfied with

the present barren form of religious profession. Believing in the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty, and believing **IN GOD**, instead of His decrees merely settling us on our lees — it has rather worked in us a burning desire to learn more of what those decrees are **CONCERNING US**.

Have we made this much clear? If so, you can understand our desire — and we pray that all of the Lord's people will cease from their own worldly ways — cut loose from their idols, and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, with that first love and zeal. Behold, the Judge is at the door!

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceit; that blindness **IN PART** is happened to Israel **UNTIL** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in --- As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, **BUT AS TOUCHING THE ELECTION, THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE FATHER'S SAKE.**" (Romans 11:25-28)

When the whole matter is considered there is no possible way to spiritualize these Scriptures — they mean exactly what they say. They are self-explanatory.

This great truth is very important to **US**, as individuals and churches, because it pertains to **OUR FUTURE** and "blessed hope," — if it sink down deep in our souls it will change the present fouled, confused and worldly atmosphere in our present-day church life.

THE WRATH OF MAN SHALL PRAISE THEE

By Robert Leighton, approx. 1650 Submitted
by Elder Maon Jones

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." - Psalm 76:10.

What man is this, (said the passengers in the ship) that even the winds and the sea obey Him? Christ suddenly turns a great tempest into a greater cairn. (Matt. 8:27) Surely those are no ordinary words of command, that swelling waves and boisterous winds, in the midst of their rage, are forced to hear, and taught to understand and obey Him. Therefore the holding of the seas in the hollow of His hand, the bridling of the wind, and riding upon the wings of it, we find peculiarly attributed to the Almighty. But no less, if not more wonderful, is another of His prerogatives, to-wit, *His sovereignty over all mankind*, over the divers and strange motions of the heart of man. Admirable is it to govern those, both in respect of their multitude and irregularity - Consider we what millions of men dwell at once upon the face of the earth; and again, what troops of several imaginations will pass through the fancy of any *one* man, within the compass of one day. It is much to keep eye upon them, and to behold them *all at once*, but far more to command and control them all; yet if they were all loyal and willingly obedient, were they tractable and easily curbed, it were more easy for us to conceive how they might be governed. But to bound and over-rule the unruly hearts of men, the most of whom continually are either plotting or acting rebellion against their Lord, to make them all concur and meet at last in one end, cannot be done but by a power and a wisdom that are both infinite. That God, whose name we often mention, but seldom think on His excellency, is alone the absolute Monarch of men's hearts, and the ruler of all their motions. He hath them limited while they *seem most free*, and works His own glory out of their attempts, while they strive most to dishonor Him. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain."

The words contain clearly two

propositions, both of them concerning the wrath of man. The former hath the event of it, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee;" the latter, the limitation of it, "The remainder of wrath Thou shalt restrain."

That the virtues and graces of men do praise the Lord, all men easily understand, for they flow from Him, His image arid superscription is upon them, and therefore no wonder if of them He has from them a tribute of glory. Who knows not that faith praises Him? Abraham believed, and gave glory to God. Good works, *the fruits* of faith, praise Hun too. herein is your heavenly Father glorified, (says our Saviour), that ye bring forth much fruit. But that the inordinate wrath of man shall praise Him, may seem somewhat strange. Were it God's own wrath, (as wrath is attributed to Him in Scripture), that might praise Him, for it is always most just; or were it a due and moderate anger of man, upon just cause, that were fit for praising Him too. But that wicked and disordered wrath, (which is undoubtedly here meant), that the wrath of men that is both uncomely arid dishonorable for themselves, (though they think otherwise), that even such a wrath should honor God, and praise Him, argues well that he hath good right to praises, when every thing, even things that seem contrary to His nature, as well as to His law, do pay them to Him: and, that He hath great power and wisdom who obtains what is due to Him, even from those persons and things that of themselves are most unwilling and unfit to pay it. This is the excellent skill of His wisdom, to draw that which shall go into the making up of the precious composition of His praise out of this poison, for so the word, here used for wrathful heat, doth sometimes signify. And this wrath often proves so, a deadly poison both to those it is incensed against, and to the very breast that breeds it, and wherein it is kindled.

But for the clearer understanding of this, I conceive it will be requisite to consider more

distinctly, (1) What this wrath of man in. (2) How it can praise God. And lastly, The infallibility of this event: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee."

In the 148th Psalm, where David summons the creatures to meet in that song of praise, to keep that full concert, he calls not only the heavens, and the inhabitants of it, angels and lights, but those of the lower world, to bear their part in it; and not only men, beasts, cattle, creeping things, and the flying fowl, but those creatures that do most resemble this wrath here spoken of, fire, stormy tempest, and dragons, &c. The tenor of the Psalm doth shew, that by the wrath of man is to be understood "the undue rage of evil and ungodly men against those whom God owns for His people." The word here used signifies a hot or inflaming wrath; and indeed such is the feverish, distempered anger of the church's enemies. And as too much heat is an enemy to solid reason, this hot wrath of theirs makes them incapable of wise deliberation in themselves, and inflexible to the good advice of others. It is true, they take counsel how to execute their wrath, as we shall hear anon, but they take no counsel that may cool it. Anger described by its material cause, is called a boiling of the blood about the heart; but this ariseth from the apprehension of something offensive, kindling a desire of revenge. Now it is a wonder what the powers of the world find in Christ and His harmless flock that can incense them. James says of the tongue, that it is set on fire of hell. The same is the original of this wrath. "Why doth the heathen rage?" saith the Psalmist. That is, not only to what purpose? intimating that it is a fruitless rage, and void of success, in regard to God's power. But why? that is, Upon what occasion? Checking the rage as groundless and without cause, in regard of Christ and His church's innocence. The cause is only within themselves, to-wit, that unhappy antipathy of the serpent's seed against the seed of the

woman. Thus, this wrath of man is the causeless, malicious enmity of the wicked against the church of God. And under the name of this passion I take to be here comprised likewise all the attendants of it, all their crafty complots and devices for the acting of their wrath. As there is mention of the nations' rage against Christ, in the 2d Psalm, so likewise of the consultation of those that are of quality fit for it; "The rulers take counsel together." Further, this wrath is not barely their inward fire, but the vent of it flames into cruel and outrageous practices, including likewise all the instruments they make use of. And of all these it is true that God shall gain glory by them; "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee."

"The wrath of man" says the apostle "accomplisheth not the righteousness of God" — how then can it accomplish His? And this is the second thing propounded.

Are grapes gathered of thorns, or figs of thistles? Surely not; therefore I called this praise, not the fruit or proper effect of man's wrath, but the even of divine providence. The wrath of man shall praise Thee. "the use which thou wilt make of it shall tend to their praise. Thou wilt produce such effect from it, both in the church and upon thine enemies, when Thou sufferest Thy wrath to break forth, as shall furnish more matter of Thy praises than if Thou hadst altogether restrained it." To instance this in some few particulars.

It is the fury of the church's enemies that has made known to the world the invincible courage and patience of the saints. Those ages that have been most monstrous in persecution, have most of all graced Christianity. Had there been no persecuting emperors, who should have heard of those primitive martyrs that triumphed over the cruelty of their torments? Were there no persecution, nor peril, nor sword, against believers, we should not have heard the apostle say immediately after the mention of

those, "In all these we are more than conquerors." They could not have been so much conquerors, had there been no conflict.

Again, as the wrath of man praises God in the invincible patience of the saints, so likewise in the immovable stability of the church. Is it not wonderful how so small and weak a company, as the church hath often been reduced to, yea, hath always been, in respect of the world, could escape the mouth of so many lions, so many enraged enemies that were ready to devour it? And, that we may see that this tends solely to the praise of her great Protector, look at the church's song, penned by the royal prophet, in Psalm 124: "If it had not been the Lord that was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick." The great monarchies and kingdoms of the world that have risen with so much splendor have had their periods, and been buried in the dust. That golden-headed and silver-bodied image degenerated into worse metal as it went lower, and the brittle feet was the cause of the fall and breaking of all the rest. (In reference to Daniel's vision) But the kingdom of Jesus Christ, though despicable in the world, and exposed to the wrath of the world in all ages, stands firm, and cannot be removed. There is a common emblem of the winds blowing from all quarters; and upon the globe of the earth, being in the middle of them, is written "Immobilis." This fitly resembles the church. Why? It seems to be the sport of all the winds, but is indeed so established that all of them, yea, the very gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Now the more the church's enemies labor and moil themselves to undo her, the more do their weakness and the power of her Lord appear; so that thus the wrath of man doth praise Him....

Further: Man's wrath tends to God's praise in this: "That God, giving way to it, does so manage it by His sublime providence, that it often directly crosses their own ends,

and conduces manifestly to His." Pharaoh thought that his dealing more cruelly with the Jews in their tasks and burdens was wisdom: "Let us work wisely," says he. But whereas their ordinary servility was become familiar to them, and they were tamed to it, that same accession of new tyranny did prepare and dispose the Israelites for a desire of departure, and their departure made way for Pharaoh's destruction. Surely, then, the wrath of man commends the wisdom of God, when He makes him by that contrive and afford the means of his downfall. (Job. 28:7) "The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall east him down," says Bildad. And that is a sad fall; as that eagle that was shot with an arrow trimmed with her own feathers.

Hut to close the point. It is out of all question, that the deserved punishment of man's unjust wrath, doth always glorify the justice of God, and the more He give way to their wrath, the more notable shall be both their punishment and the justice of it. And though God seems neglective of His people and of His praise, while man's wrath prevails, yet the truth is, He never comes too late to vindicate His care of both; and when He defers longest, the enemy pays dear interest for the time of forbearance. In His eternal decree, He resolved to permit the course of man's wrath for His own glory, and when the period which He hath fixed is come, He stops man's wrath, and gives course unto the justice of His own. Nor is there then any possibility of escaping; He will right Himself, and be known by executing judgment. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee." And that is the third thing propounded, the infallibility of the event.

The Author of nature governs **ALL** His creatures, each in a suitable way to the nature lie hath given them. He maintains in some things a natural necessity of working, contingency in others, and in others liberty.

But all of them are subject to this necessity of effecting inevitably His eternal purposes; and this necessity is no way repugnant to the due liberty of man's natural will. Some entertain and maintain the truth; some plot, others act and execute against it; some please themselves in a wise neutrality, and will appear so indifferent, that it would seem they might be accepted of all sides for judges of controversies. And all these find no less liberty to wind and turn themselves whither they please, than if no higher hand had the winding of them. Shall not only the zeal of the godly, but even the wrath of the enemy, and the cold discretion of the neutral, **ALL** tend to **HIS** praise whose supreme **WILL HATH A SECRET**, but a **SURE** and infallible sway in **ALL** their actions. Whilst some passengers sit, some walk one way, some another, some have their faces towards their journey's end, some their back turned upon it, this Wise Pilot does most skillfully guide the ship to arrive' with them all, at **HIS OWN GLORY**. Happy they that propound and intend His glory as He Himself does; for **IN THEM** shall the riches of His mercy be glorified. They that oppose Him lose this happiness, but He is **SURE NOT TO LOSE HIS GLORY** for all that; to-wit, the glory' of His justice. His right hand shall find out all His enemies; "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee.*"

NOTICE

We will begin with this issue following the suggestion of Elder W.J. Berry in printing an Index to the volumes. Beginning with the next issue, Volume 3, we will number the pages consecutively through this volume to make it more convenient for our subscribers to have them bound in book form and referencing with the Index.

Needless to say, we greatly appreciate his

suggestions and help, as well as all the help so readily given us by many of you. Many of you will be receiving sample copies of this issue, and we encourage you to communicate with us.