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AN EXAMINATION OF THE REVELATION OF FUTURE EVENTS: AN EARNEST REQUEST

The early Articles of Faith of almost all
Baptists, state, in one form or another, that
“We believe in the resurrection of the dead
and a general judgment.”

The assumption is wide-spread that this
statement is in support of an A-Mil position
relative to the doctrine of last day events. I
say, assumption, for while among the Free
Grace Missionaries, I thought this, and so did
many with whom I discussed the millennial
question. However, nowhere among the
writers of the Academicians, or “bastard
Calvinists”, as old Strict Baptists writers
called them, could one find anything valid
upon the subject expressed universally among
the Baptists in their confessions of faith.

John Gill and those early writers held to a
semi-pre-mil position, with a view that there
would be a time when Antichrist would be
overthrown, and a *spiritual reign* of Christ
would be ushered in; and later there would be
an appearing of Christ in His *personal reign*.
These writers, including Gill, set the time of
the *spiritual reign* to coincide with the time
that Papal Rome would lose her *political*
power. This, of course, occurred in 1815, and
all who held Gill’s position rushed into the
final preparation for Christ’s *spiritual reign*
on earth. Alexander Campbell’s *Harbinger*, is a
good example of this, as well as the rise of the
Baptist Board of Foreign and Domestic
Missions, which was clearly based upon the
false premise.

Later writers took Gill’s *spiritual reign*,
and transformed it into a *postmil* position;
while such men as A.J. Gordon and Scofield,
etc., developed the *pre-mil* position into what
is now termed the *historic pre-mil* position.

Since the Old School Baptists were
believed to be *anti-education*, *unlearned*,
ignorant, and *old folksy*, their position has, to
this date, never been given any serious
consideration. Thus, we call upon our Free
Grace subscribers to give consideration to the

following views, and if they wish to share their thoughts with us, we would appreciate any comments they might have. Our article of faith on this subject is as follows:

“Of The Last Judgment”

1. God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ; to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before the Tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad.

2. The end of God’s appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the eternal damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient; for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life and receive that fulness of joy and glory with everlasting reward, in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast aside into everlasting torments, and punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so will He have the day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may ever be prepared to say, ‘Come Lord Jesus; come quickly’. Amen.”

—*Old London Confession of 1689.*

Elder Beebe’s comments on the subject are as follows:

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

By Gilbert Beebe, 1841.

While preaching at the Delaware Association last May, we expressed our dissent from the popular view, that the glorified spirits which now surround the radiant throne of God, would, after the resurrection of the bodies of the saints and the dissolution of this material world, be called from their lofty mansions in the heavens, to undergo a fearful examination, in order to ascertain whether they were destined for heaven or hell; or that such as are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, will require to be put on trial, either to dissipate doubts on their own minds, or to convince their Sovereign Judge in regard to where they belong. Unable as we were at that time to express our mind fully upon the subject, we were not surprised that some of our brethren desired a more full explanation of our views. Regarding this as their right, we felt a pleasure in promising to explain what were our views, through the “Signs of the Times,” especially as what we said on that occasion was not fully understood. Our frequent absence from home since we returned from Delaware, has prevented our giving earlier attention to the subject; nor shall we do much more even now, than to open the way for a friendly discussion of this subject.

Upon all subjects involving the contemplation of time and eternity, such is the weakness of human capacity, that we are apt to confound the one with the other in inexplicable jargon, and then leave the subject as a profound mystery. By some means, either by divine revelation, (as many believe) or by tradition, (as we are rather inclined to suspect) the notion is prevalent that the final destiny of mankind will not be known until after the end of time; that prior to such knowledge, these ethereal heavens and this terrestrial globe shall be wrapped in annihilating conflagration, and cease to be numbered to attend the grand assize in one promiscuous mass; when Christ, the Judge of quick and dead,

shall robe Himself in garments of dreadful majesty, ascend the throne of final decision, and then proceed to the examination of mankind; each in his turn to be examined, and then, as his case may be, take his place at the right hand or left. If these views are correct, are we not from necessity driven to the conclusion that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the patriarchs and prophets, the thief that went with his Redeemer to paradise, the apostles, and all the primitive saints, must at that dread day vacate the sphere of their divine employment, and stand with trembling and dire anxiety before the dread Tribunal? How many of the dear lambs of the flock of Jesus have trembled at the thought of being finally unable to make a good and sufficient apology for every deed done in their bodies. That there are passages of Scripture which, in the manner we have generally heard them expounded, would go far to establish such conclusions, we are not about to deny; but whether these Scriptures have been rightly understood, and their testimony properly brought to bear upon this subject, we wish with due caution to examine.

As this article is only designed to present the outline of the investigation before us, we will notice a few things for the consideration of our brethren, and leave them to reflect until a further opportunity shall be afforded to pursue the investigation.

Subject to the correction of brethren who have clearer views on this subject than we, we shall for the present assume the position, that on the part of God, ALL HIS WORKS were known unto Him FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD; that the disclosures of time or eternity can add nothing to His certain knowledge of beings or things; that in His all wise and gracious purpose, every provision of grace was made that can possibly be requisite infallibly to secure the perfect safety of all the saints; and that He having predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself, and having made them accepted in the Beloved, has as perfect knowledge of who they are,

where they are, and to what they are destined, as He will have when all His saints shall sing the eternal anthem in the highest heavens. If this position can be established by the unerring Word of Truth, then the notion that Arminian preachers, meeting-house walls, graveyard, &c., will be called on at some future judgment day to witness in the case of each individual of mankind, is a fallacious delusion.

We apprehend no difficulty in proving to the satisfaction of all consistent Old School Baptists, that God has chosen, predestinated, and effectually secured the salvation of all that will be eventually saved; so that no possible contingency can ever add to, or diminish from the number; and that their names were enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world. And it is certainly worthy of remark, that two important events have demonstrated the utter impossibility of overturning the counsel of God upon this subject. The events to which we allude are, one, the introduction of sin into the world; the other, the powers of earth and hell combined in the tragedy of Mt. Calvary; but in both, the Lord has triumphed most gloriously. Of the first, the poet has justly said:

“Here Satan was non-pluss'd in what he had done;

The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run;

In streams of salvation that never run dry,
And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

That mighty blow aimed to prostrate all our hopes, to blast forever all well grounded expectation of immortality, was overruled by the omnipotent arm of God, to further, instead of hinder the accomplishment of Jehovah's immutable designs. In the crucifixion of our immaculate Redeemer, although it was emphatically their hour and the power of darkness, yet they could do only what God's “hand and counsel had before determined to be done.” We might also consider the violence and deadly opposition that has always been manifested towards the people of

God in all ages of the world; yet not one of the stakes of Zion has ever been removed, nor has any of her cords been broken. Still Zion stands, like the pillars of Jehovah's throne, unshaken; and from age to age defying the storms of human wrath, the rage of men and devils. The election of grace is this day precisely what it always was, and that it shall ever continue to be. Upon the other hand, thousands of men and millions of money are annually employed to swell the number of those who shall be saved; yet, although they may make many proselytes, by land and by sea, they will find it much easier at last to wash out the color of the Ethiopian, and change the spots of the fierce leopard, than to enlarge the society of the world of glory.

If it be admitted that the number of the redeemed of the Lord is immutably fixed and unalterably decreed, how can we consistently suppose that there remains any uncertainty requiring a final decision, when time shall be no more?

That the elect of God, in their connection with Adam, became involved in his transgression, and were by the law doomed to wrath and condemnation, is a truth that appears on the pages of Holy Writ; but so far as the law of God is concerned, they have been brought to judgment; all the accumulated guilt of all the family of God, from the creation of the world till the great burning day, has been weighed in the balance, and the exact amount required at the hand of our adorable Head and legal Representative; by Him the debt WAS canceled, and Sinai has ceased to thunder. This was a judgment day indeed, when Jesus bore our griefs, carried our sorrow, and the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him. But glory to God in the highest, by His stripes we are healed.

But it is contended, that Jesus Himself is appointed the Judge of quick and dead; and that the destiny of all beings and all worlds hangs on His sovereign decision. To this divine truth we most cheerfully subscribe; and we do rejoice that all power in earth and heaven is vested in His hand; that His judgment is final, decisive, and from it there

is no appeal; but does it necessarily follow that His judgment must be delayed until the heavens shall be no more? By no means. When He had satisfied all the requisitions of the law, had done and suffered all that was written of Him in the prophets and in the Psalms, when He came triumphantly forth from the tomb, having led our captivity captive, He was proclaimed the "Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords;" and having thence ascended to His Father to receive a kingdom, He was divinely recognized in that office; and He who had but so recently stood to be judged at Pilate's bar, was now proclaimed the Sovereign Judge of quick and dead. For unto the Son, God said: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." He went up with a shout, even with the sound of a trumpet. He went to receive a kingdom, leaving with the saints the kind assurance that He would come to them again; that He would associate His little flock with Him in that kingdom; for He had redeemed them, and made them kings and priests unto God, and they should reign with Him forever. Nor did He leave them comfortless; He told them it was needful for them that He should go away; but He would return before some of them should see death; and also what should be the sign of His coming; nor was that coming, nor those signs to be deferred until the end of time, as many have vainly imagined; but it should take place when He should descend with a shout, as He went up, and come to be admired by all who waited for His appearing; but to take vengeance on the Jews, to break up and forever abolish the temple worship, destroy His enemies by the Spirit of His mouth, and consume them by the brightness of His appearing.

On that terrible day of the Lord, should appear the sign of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven; and then would He send His angels (or ministers) with the great sound of a trumpet, (the Gospel) to gather together His elect; and then, having effectually abolished the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, He should sit upon His throne, and

the twelve apostles that had followed Him in the regeneration, should sit with Him on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, at that very time, should all the nations of the earth be gathered before Him; and He would separate them the one (nation) from the other (nation), as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left, and say to the former, "Come ye blessed;" and to the latter, "Depart ye cursed." [Note: We have a serious problem here with this paragraph, in that we know of no time that Christ ever said "Come ye blessed," to a whole nation, and "Cursed" to other whole nations; which Beebe has indicated is meant by the sheep and the goats. He sounds a bit too mystic, or we have no ability to understand his use of English. We say this, only to alert the reader, that we do not at this time agree, or comprehend such language. S.C.P]

This judgment day was ushered in about eighteen hundred years ago; and the division of the sheep of Christ from the goats has been progressing from time to time to the present, and will still progress, until every ransomed soul is effectually brought to occupy his place at the right hand of Jesus, and all the goats are placed with the accursed at His left hand. The very ministration of Jesus is in every expression carrying forward this work of judgment; His Gospel echoes forth the sound, "Come ye blessed;" and is drawing the line between the precious and the vile, bidding every goat depart.

If Jesus our Lord did not assume His judgment seat when He came in the execution of these long predicted judgments on Jerusalem, in what capacity did He pour out the vials of divine wrath on that important occasion? His judgment in this case was rendered, viz: that "all the blood of His servants that had been shed from the days of Abel, should be required of that generation," and that their judgment day should be more fearful than was that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

But it was foretold by prophets, that He should judge His people. In relation to them,

He judges between them and all the other kindreds of the earth. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." He putteth them forth and goeth before them, &c. In the execution of this judgment, the experience of all the saints shall witness. When God speaks life to them, they rise from the state of death in trespasses and sins, and forthwith are brought into judgment. The awful throne appears, and they are arraigned; the mountains of their guilt are set in order before them; the law of God in flaming precepts, which they have violated, bears startling testimony against them; its sentence of death and damnation is thundered forth, and they confess the judgment, and sink in deep despair. In this their experience they are brought to see the law fulfilled, justice amply satisfied, and their souls redeemed by Jesus Christ their Lord. They see that He bore their sins in His body on the tree, sank down beneath their weight in death, has risen indeed, and has ascended the throne of state, received his kingdom, presides as Judge supreme on His holy hill Zion, and from His mouth they hear the joyful decision: "Thy sins ARE forgiven." Far as the east is from the west, they are removed: the new covenant is presented; the law of Christ is written in their hearts, engraved on their minds; He will be their God and they shall be His people; He will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities He will remember no more. Now we conclude this judgment is conclusive and final, and the truth of God is pledged that their sins shall be remembered no more. Is it not inconsistent then for us to suppose we shall have to account for them all after *the general resurrection of the dead*.

That *there is a day appointed when God will raise the bodies of all His saints, we fully believe*; but not to *try* them, whether they be His or not: for they shall rise first; and their very appearing before the resurrection of the ungodly will fully determine that they are His and they shall meet Him in the air, and so shall be forever with the Lord. When they *arise from their graves* they shall come forth

arrayed in immortality and incorruption, *with bodies made like the body of their glorious Lord* — not to be judged, but to shine in the radiant glory of Christ eternally. After the resurrection of the saints the wicked shall also be raised to a resurrection of damnation; for this is the decision of their righteous Judge, pronounced on them more than eighteen hundred years ago; and their resurrection and damnation will be but the execution of their sentence, as already passed upon them; for they “are condemned already,” and “the wrath of God abideth on them,” and their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

From what we have written, the reader will understand us to believe that when Jesus calls a sinner from death to life, and gives him the assurance that his sins are forgiven, those sins shall be no more remembered; that the soul thus delivered shall no more be brought into condemnation; he is freely justified by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and this judgment is final and eternal; and in his resurrection he will only receive what is awarded in the judgment already rendered; that the wicked, dying in his sins, is already judged, and his sentence irrevocably pronounced by the sovereign Judge, so that when he ariseth *at the last day* he shall receive precisely according to the decision already made. We have not to wait until the heavens be no more, to learn our final destiny. If washed in the blood of Christ, arrayed in His righteousness, we are saved; if otherwise, we are lost, irretrievably lost, eternally lost!

We have extended this article beyond what we designed; but still there are several things connected with this subject that will require attention hereafter, among which several passages of Scripture which have been supposed to establish the popular doctrine of judgment deferred, &c. We wish not to impose our views on any brother, but having been called on, we frankly present them, and shall gladly hear from brethren on this subject. *Editorials of Gilbert Beebe, 1841.*

REPLY TO BROTHER TROTT ON THE FINAL JUDGMENT

By Gilbert Beebe, Oct., 1841

The sentiment has prevailed to almost an unlimited extent that the human family are, while in this life, if not in the full sense of the word, *probationers*, at least forming characters for the eternal world; and that no decision can with accuracy be formed as to the final issue of things, until that period arrives in which it is supposed a general judgment of all the human family takes place. Very many of the saints who profess to believe the doctrine of salvation by grace, election, predestination, effectual calling, complete justification of all for whom Jesus died, and that they are made perfect and without blame before Him in love, &c., yet have experienced much slavish fear on the subject of a judgment to come, at which all their prospects for heaven and happiness may be forever blasted. Nor has it been very uncommon for us to hear some of our ministering brethren from the pulpit declaring that they expect to be called on at the day of judgment to answer for the manner in which they have improved the opportunity, &c. Having examined the Scriptures upon this point, we are convinced in our mind that such sentiments are not only unwarranted in the Scriptures, but entirely repugnant to what God has been graciously pleased to reveal to us upon the subject.

Our object in our former article [The one printed above] upon this subject was not, as brother Trott seems to suppose, to *deny* the application of the term *judgment* to the manner in which Christ the Judge shall conduct the execution of the sentence of the law, when He shall *turn the wicked into hell*, with the nations that forget God; or whether He will or will not call up to their remembrance all the enormity of their wickedness, in order to discover to them the justice of His fiery indignation, then to be displayed in their perdition. What we had more especially in view was to show from

divine authority that the wicked *are condemned already* — the wrath of God abideth on them; that their being suffered to live and to die in their sins is positive evidence that they are not the sheep of Christ, as He said unto them; that they are uninterested in His blood and righteousness, which forms the only ground of a sinner's justification and acceptance with God. If brother Trott, and other brethren, believe that several Scriptures, speaking of a judgment to come, have reference to a judgment to take place after the resurrection of the ungodly, in which the justice of God in the damnation of His enemies shall be made manifest, and the secrets of all hearts shall be exposed, we have no objection to their view, provided they do not attach to this view those or any of those extravagant notions, by which brother Trott thinks we have done great injustice to the views of our brethren. But we cannot admit that the state or destiny of any part of the human family will remain undecided by the Judge of quick and dead until such a day of judgment shall come. This explanation of our views of the subject may obviate the objections of brother Trott, so far as relates to a judgment to come.

As brother Trott does not dissent from us in regard to the judgment of the saints, we shall not be required to enlarge upon that part of the subject. Whatever may be done at a future judgment day, in exposing the wickedness of them that perish, we have the oath and promise of our God to assure us that the sins and iniquities of His saints shall be remembered no more.

Brother Trott admits that there will be no new light called for that day by the Judge, and, if we understand him, that the decision of the Judge is already made up in His own mind, from which decision He will not deviate — that He has declared that “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Now this is what we have called *final and conclusive judgment*; and it is that from which we do not believe there can be any possible appeal; and it is that in which all the saints of God, as the

members of the mystical body of Christ the Judge, will most cordially acquiesce at that day. Does brother Trott believe that *every act of the dispensation of God's justice is so ordered as to manifest His righteousness*? So do we. To us His righteousness in the judgment of the ungodly, as already settled and recorded in the Scriptures, is quite apparent. How clearly He may make it known to the vessels of His wrath, either before or after their resurrection, is not for us to say. We have admitted, or rather contended, that the saints are brought experimentally to judgment, and the mountains of their guilt set in order before them, &c; but it does not necessarily follow that God will make the same display to such as go down to perdition. The redeemed could never so well appreciate the value of the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Christ without this thorough conviction; but we do not know that the ungodly are ever to know anything of the value of an atonement in which they are not interested. If we have blended legal enactments, investigation of charges and judgment given therein, together in the idea of judgment, it has been because the term is thus variously applied both in the Scriptures and in its common use, and not because we would, willingly produce confusion in the idea. We have contended, whatever may be hereafter, that the present is a day of judgment, that Christ is now seated upon His judgment throne, that He is now dividing His people from the world, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. If we are wrong, will brother Trott, or any other brother, tell us how the ungodly who die in their sins are consigned to *hell immediately after death, and before the resurrection of their bodies*? We were unapprized of the inference which the Universalists drew, “with so much propriety,” from our preaching at Welch Tract last May, [Welch Tract is the oldest Old School Baptist church remaining in the U.S. It is pastored by Elder James Poole, from whom you may purchase the *Editorials of Gilbert Beebe*] but if we are to be held accountable for all the inferences men may draw from our

preaching, we deserve pity; and if one so discriminating and eagle-eyed as our esteemed brother Trott was so alarmed as to indulge serious apprehensions that we were about to renounce the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, what had we a right to expect from the Universalists? [Note: Elder Trott must have noted that many, once they embrace the view of eternal vital union, and present applications of prophecy, often do slip over into heresy, and "do err, saying the resurrection is passed" too; but this the Holy Ghost corrects quickly in II Tim. 2:18. Beebe did NOT conclude such a position] We will try hereafter, in preaching and in writing, if the Lord will vouchsafe to enable us, to be more explicit, and have it understood as definitely as possible, that *we believe the hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life eternal, and some to the resurrection of damnation;* that we believe the happiness of the saints and punishment of the wicked will be alike interminable.

We cannot imagine how brother Trott makes out that Christ assumed His judgment seat while He was Himself under the law, as was the case thirty-six years before the destruction of Jerusalem, especially as he agrees with our general views on Matt. 25:31-46? That He did call out many of His people from among the Jews is admitted, and that He taught them as never man taught, that He, as their Leader, set them patterns to imitate, and that He assured them that his kingdom was at hand, and instructed them to pray that it might come, &c., is well understood; but it is also known that He told His disciples that the Pharisees occupied Moses' seat at that time, and that He directed them to do whatsoever they commanded them to do, is also as well known. And we had understood that when He was raised from the dead He was declared to be the Son of God, with power, and that when He should sit in the throne of His glory He would sit in judgment. We have understood that the nations were prejudgment, in a peculiar

manner, at the discontinuance of the temple worship, and the abolition of Jewish rites, when Jerusalem was destroyed. But if we are wrong we will gladly be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly.

In our remarks on Matt. 25:31-46, we did NOT INTEND to represent that the nations, as such, were sheep and goats to be separated, but rather that the Lord had in every nation some that were to be set on His right hand, and others that were denominated goats, which He would place upon His left, and that He would say to the former, "Come," and to the latter, "Depart;" that these two classes, called sheep and goats, are *two nations*; the one a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation;" and the other is called "the kingdom of Satan." The holy nation should, under the ministration of Christ, during this judgment day, be completely distinguished, and effectually divided from the kingdom of Satan; so brother Trott will discover we do not differ quite so widely from Peter as he had suppose.

In reference to those Scriptures brought forward by brother Trott to sustain the doctrine of final judgment *to come*, as far as relates to the wicked, we had prepared a reply; but upon more mature consideration our reply seems to be uncalled for, inasmuch as we do not deny the premises which by this array of Scriptures he designed to establish. We see nothing in these Scriptures to condemn our conclusion that the judgment of the world, of mankind, both saints and sinners, is as irrevocably fixed in the unchanging mind of God now as it will ever be; nor do we understand brother Trott to object to this view. We will therefore withhold, at least for the present, what we have written upon those passages.

In reference to our having restricted the application of those passages which we brought forward in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem, brother Trott has altogether *mistaken us*. We believe the passages *primarily* applied to that event, and in the execution of divine wrath upon that devoted city is shown *the impending storm that is*

eventually to sink Mystery Babylon like the millstone; and for ought we know, this subject may even look forward to the breaking up of the elements of nature, when time shall be no more. That Christ did come without sin unto salvation, after He had ascended up on high, after He had received His kingdom, and that He descended with a shout, or a display of power and glory that evidently demonstrated His perfect triumph and the decided defeat of the Jews, when He came in the *execution of His wrath upon them*, we do assuredly believe; but that we would *confine the application* of all those Scriptures which we referred to, or any of them, to *that event exclusively*, we disclaim.

As this article is sufficiently lengthy, as brother Klipstine is now engaged in his further prosecution of the subject, through the exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and as we may probably have occasion to write again upon this subject hereafter, for the present we shall dismiss it, with our thanks to brother Trott for his faithfulness in pointing out wherein he conceived us to be in error. We feel the necessity more and more of examining the Scriptures closely, prayerfully, and with a view to bow ourselves to what they dictate. May the Lord lead us all by His Holy Spirit in truth and holiness, for His name's sake.

Editorials, 1841.

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A LINE OF DISTINCTION

By Henry Fowler, 1808

The Gospel of Christ, described in the Scriptures, and published by every minister of the Spirit, becomes glad tidings to such, and

only such, as feel themselves condemned by the law and are made willing to be saved by sovereign grace. Until the Holy Spirit thus takes the sinner in hand, he cannot but trust to the works of the flesh for salvation, nor conceive of any better method for life than by obeying the moral law. In this state of vassalage he lives, if it can be called "life;" nor does he feel the chains which hold him fast; and he may be said to be alive without the law, unto whom the commandment never came in its killing power, spirituality, and vast extent. Hence he trusts to the letter of the law, and supposes, by virtue of his own patchwork obedience, to get safe to heaven at last. Unacquainted with the plague, barrenness, and depravity of human nature, he fancies himself a little sinner, and, of course, under no great obligation, if any, to Jesus Christ; therefore he is determined not to receive salvation upon Gospel terms, at free cost, but labour for life, that so he may share the crown.

This description is applicable, not only to the legal Pharisee, but also to the Gospel Pharisee, or to the person under a Gospel profession. Of the two characters, the latter is by far the worst, as he corrupts both law and Gospel, and so fouls the water with the feet that the heaven-bound traveller is sometimes deprived of refreshment.

We have a striking description of the latter in Acts 15:5: "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and command them to keep the law of Moses." But Peter, equipped with heavenly armour, displayed more wisdom and courage than in cutting off the high priest's servant's ear, as appears in verses 10,11: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear? But we believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they." And this home-thrust had the desired effect. From hence we learn that the most effectual way to suppress damnable errors is, to

declare, in the plainest terms the “word of the truth of the Gospel,” and give no place to those who err in judgment and stumble in vision, let their pretension be never so great to purity of motive. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” I make no doubt but a person of good natural parts may, by dint of study, attain a carnal knowledge of spiritual things; but the apostle will not allow such acquirements to be real knowledge; therefore he saith, “Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The eternal Spirit is that blessed Agent who delivers a sinner from a state of spiritual death; this will not be denied by the person translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, though it may, and no doubt will be denied, by those whose minds are blinded by the god of this world, and who are led captive by the devil at his will.

The Spirit’s power displayed in the regeneration of a sinner, forms a great part of the ministerial office; and that preacher cannot be considered a minister of the Spirit that does not insist on the necessity of the Spirit’s sovereign power, in order to a proper understanding of the law’s spirituality, the infinite evil of sin, or the Mediator’s work. But many, very many such preachers there are, who, instead of doing the work of an evangelist, casting up the way for the heavy-laden sinner, and speaking a word in season to them that are weary, are doing the devil’s work; casting stumbling-blocks in the way of God’s people, and sending the free-born citizens of Zion to Moses’s school for instruction in the “new and living way,” as though the grace that is in Christ Jesus, received of Him by the Spirit, and poured into the heart of a believer, were not sufficient to answer Zion’s every purpose. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” “The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but

the Son abideth for ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” “Being then made free from sin, he have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

It is manifest to every one blessed with a spiritual understanding of Jesus Christ, that the bulk of religious professors are utter strangers to the justifying righteousness of Immanuel, as also to the Spirit’s marvellous work in the heart; and though they speak of comfortable frames and illuminations, it is only a vision of falsehood, and not the impressions of the Spirit of grace, which always leads the happy partaker to cleave with full purpose of heart unto Christ, as his “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” This fruit is produced in every regenerated child of God, and is the consequence and proof of his union unto Christ, the true Vine; but the barren tree, planted in God’s vineyard, or the visible church, by mere profession, though he may put forth numerous branches, or make a fair show in the flesh, his “root shall be rottenness, and his blossom shall go up as dust.” His leaf shall fade, and that shall be taken away which he “seemeth to have.”

Now he may walk in the light of his own fire, and dance round the idol himself hath set up; may feed on the ashes of human applause, and drink with greediness the sweet but poisonous

doctrines of human merit and self-sufficiency; but anon, when God shall make manifest the secrets of all hearts, his covering will be but a spider’s web; with all his profession he will then be found an enemy to Christ, and treated accordingly; viz, the righteous sentence will be passed, and he will be driven into darkness.

This is the portion of those that to the end despise the blood and righteousness of Immanuel.

Selected from the *Gospel Standard*, 1849

**FREE-WILL AND MERIT FIRMLY
EXAMINED**

By Augustus Toplady, Author of *Rock Of
Ages* –
A Sermon. 1740-1778

*“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto
Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for
Thy truth’s sake.”* - Psalm 115:1.

Some expositors have supposed that this Psalm was penned by the prophet Daniel, on occasion of the miraculous deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when they came out unhurt from the burning fiery furnace, into which they had been thrown by the command of king Nebuchadnezzar. And, indeed, there are not wanting passages, in the Psalm itself, which seem to countenance this conjecture. As where we read, at the fourth verse, speaking of the idols of the heathens, and perhaps with particular reference to that golden image which Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be worshipped: “Their idols are silver and gold, the works of men’s hands; they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.”

I dare say that, in such an auditory as this, a number of Arminian (free willers) are present. I fear that all our public assemblies have too many of them. Perhaps, however, even these aters as they are, may be apt to blame, and indeed with justice, the absurdity of those who worship idols of silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. But let me ask, if it be so very absurd to worship the work of other men’s hands, what must it be to worship the work of our own hands? Perhaps, you may say, “God forbid that we should do so.” Nevertheless, let me tell you that trust, confidence, reliance, and dependence for salvation, are all acts, and very solemn ones too, of divine worship; and upon whatsoever you depend, whether in whole or in part, for your acceptance with God, and for your justification in His sight, whatsoever you may rely upon and trust in for the attainment of grace and glory; if it be anything short of God

in Christ, you are an idolater to all intents and purposes.

Very different is the idea which Scripture gives us of the ever-blessed God, from that of those false gods worshipped by the heathens; and from that degrading representation of the true God which Arminianism (freewillism) would palm upon mankind. “Our God,” says this Psalm, “is in the heavens; He hath DONE WHATSOEVER HE HATH PLEASSED.” This is not the Arminian idea of God at all! for our free-willers and our chance-mongers tell us that God does NOT DO whatsoever HE PLEASES; and that there are a great number of things which God wishes to do, and tugs and strives to do, but yet cannot bring them to pass! They tell us, as one ingeniously expresses it,

“That all mankind He fain would save,
But longs for what He cannot have;—
Industrious thus to sound abroad
A disappointed, changing God.”

How does this comport with that majestic description, “Our God is in the heavens!” He sits upon the throne weighing out arid dispensing the fates of men, holding ALL EVENTS in His own hand; and guiding every link of every chain of second causes, from the beginning to the end of time. Our God is in the heavens, possessed of ALL POWER; and, which is the natural consequence of that, “He hath done whatsoever HE HATH PLEASSED,” for as the apostle expresses it, — the words are different, but the sense is the same, — “He worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL.” Therefore it is that we both labour and suffer reproach; even because we say, — and the utmost we can say upon the subject amounts to no more than this, to wit, that “Our God is in heaven, and has done whatsoever pleased Him.” And do according to His own sovereign pleasure He will, to the end of the chapter, though all the Arminians upon earth were to endeavour to defeat the divine intention, and to clog the wheels of divine government. He that sits in heaven laughs them to scorn, and brings His own purposes to pass, sometimes, even through the means of those very incidents

which evil men endeavour to throw in His way, with a mad view to disappoint Him of His purpose. "All things," saith the psalmist, "serve Thee." They have all a direct tendency, either effectively or permissively, to carry on His unalterable designs of Providence and grace. Observe, — effectively, or permissively. For we never say, nor mean to say, that God is the worker of evil; we only maintain that for reasons unknown to us, but well known to God, He is the efficacious permitter (not the agent of, but permitter of) of whatsoever evil comes to pass. But when we talk of good, we then enlarge the term; and affirm, with the psalmist, "that all the help, i.e., all the good that is done upon earth, God does it Himself."

I remember a saying of the great Monsieur Du Moulin, in his admirable book, entitled, *Anatome Arminianismi*, "That the wicked, no less than the elect, accomplish the wise, holy, and just decrees of God; but with this difference, - God's own people, after they are converted, are led to do His will from a principle of love; whereas they who are left to the perverseness of their own hearts, these persons, who care not for God, nor is God in all their thoughts, resemble men rowing in a boat, who make toward the very place on which they turn their backs. They turn their backs on the decree of God; and yet make toward that very point without knowing it."

One great contest between the religion of Arminius and the religion of Jesus Christ is, who shall stand entitled to the praise and glory of a sinner's salvation? Conversion decides this point at once; for I think, that without any imputation of uncharitableness, I may venture to say that every truly awakened person, at least when he is under the shining of God's countenance upon his soul, will fall down upon his knees, with this hymn of praise ascending from his heart, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but TO THY NAME give the glory. I am saved, not for my righteousness, but 'for Thy mercy, and Thy truth's Sake'." This, moreover, holds true even as to the blessings of the life that now is.

[No conditionalism here!] It is God that sets up one and puts down another. Victory, for instance, when contending princes wage war, is all of God. The race is not to the swift, as swift; nor the battle to the strong as such. It is the decree, the Will, the Power, the Providence of God, which effectually, though sometimes invisibly, order and dispose of every event.

At the famous battle of Agincourt, in France, where, if I mistake not, 80,000 French were totally defeated by about 9,000 English, under the command of our King Henry V., after the great business of the day was over, and God had given that renowned prince the victory, he ordered the foregoing Psalm, that is, the 114th, and part of this Psalm whence I have read you the passage now under consideration, to be sung in the field of battle, by way of acknowledging that all success, and all blessings of what kind soever, come down from the Father of lights. Some of our historians acquaint us that, when the triumphant English came to these words which I have taken for my text, the whole victorious army fell down upon their knees, as one man, in the field of conquest, and shouted with one heart and with one voice, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake." And thus it will be when God has accomplished the number of His elect, and completely gathered in the fulness of His redeemed kingdom. What do you think your song will be when you get to heaven? "Blessed be God that He gave inc Free-will; and blessed be my own dear self, that I made good use of it?" O, no, no! Such a song as that was never heard in heaven yet, nor ever will while God is God, and heaven is heaven. Look into the book of Revelation, and there you will find the employ of the blessed, and the strains which they sing. They "cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, people and nation." There is discriminating grace for you! "Thou hast redeemed US out of every kindred," &c;

that is, from among the rest of mankind. Is not this *particular election and limited redemption*? The church below may be liable to err; and if any visible church upon earth pretends to be infallible, the very pretension itself demonstrates that she is not so. But what church is that? The church of the glorified, who shine as stars at God's right hand; and upon the infallible testimony of that infallible church, a testimony recorded in the infallible pages of inspiration, I will venture to assert that NOT ONE GRAIN OF ARMINIANISM EVER ATTENDED A SAINT INTO HEAVEN! If those of God's people who are in the bonds of that iniquity, are not explicitly converted from it while they live and converse among men; yet do they leave it all behind them in Jordan (i.e., in the river of death) when they go through. [Sic. — We cannot conceive of one being finally saved and yet were never "sanctified by the Spirit and belief of the truth." All God's elect shall be sanctified through the truth, even as the Lord prayed they would, for His Father always hears Him.] They may be compared to Paul, when he went from Jerusalem to Damascus, and the grace of God struck him down; he fell a free-willer; but he rose a free-gracer. So, however, the rust of self-righteous pride (and a cursed rust it is; may God's Spirit file it off from all our souls), however, I say, that rust may adhere to us at present, yet when we come to stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, it will be all done away, and we shall sing, in one full, everlasting chorus, with elect angels and elect men, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us." And why should we not sing that song now? Why should not we endeavour, under the influence of the Spirit, to anticipate the language of the skies, and be as heavenly as we can before we get to heaven? Why should we condemn that song upon earth which we hope ever to sing before the throne of God above? It is to me really astonishing that Protestants and Church of England men, considered merely as rational creatures, and as people of common sense, who profess to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and to acknowledge the power of

God, should have any objection to singing this song, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake." Still more wonderful and deplorable it is that some who even make profession of spiritual religion, and talk of an inward work of God upon their hearts, should so far lose sight of humility and truth as to dream either that their own arm helped the Almighty to save them, or at least that their own arm was able to have hindered Him from saving them. What can reflect deeper dishonour upon God than such an idea? And what can have a director tendency to engender and to nourish that pride of heart which deceiveth men?

It pleased God to deliver me from the Arminian snare before I was quite 18. Antecedently to that period, there was not, with the lowest self-abasement I confess it, a more haughty and violent free-willer within the compass of the four seas. One instance of my warm and bitter zeal occurs just now to my memory. About a twelvemonth before the divine goodness gave me eyes to discern and a heart to embrace the truth, I was haranguing one day in company (for I deemed myself able to cope with all the Predestinarians in the world), on the universality of grace, and the powers of human free-agency. A good old gentlemen, now with God, rose from his chair, and coming to mine, held me by one of my coat buttons, while he mildly addressed me to this effect: "My dear Sir, there are some marks of spirituality in your conversation, though tinged with an unhappy mixture of pride and self-righteousness. You have been speaking largely in favour of free-will; but from arguments let us come to experience. Do let me ask you one question. How was it with you when the Lord laid hold on you in effectual calling? Had you a hand in obtaining that grace? Nay, would you not have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you in the hand of your own counsel?" I felt the conclusiveness of these simple, but forcible interrogations, more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge. But, blessed be God, I have since been able to acknowledge the

freeness and omnipotence of His grace times without number; and to sing, what I trust will be my continual song when time shall be no more, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy name, give all the glory.

We never know so much of heaven in our own souls, nor stand so high upon the mount of communion with God, as when His Spirit, breathing on our hearts, makes us lie low at the footstool of sovereign grace, and inspires us with this cry, "O God, be mine the comfort of salvation, but Thine the entire praise of it!"

Let us briefly apply the rule and compass of Gods Word to the several parts of which salvation is composed; and we shall soon perceive that the whole building is made up of grace, and of grace alone. Do you ask, in what sense I take the word "grace?" I mean by that important term, the voluntary, sovereign, and gratuitous bounty of God; quite unconditional by, and quite irrespective of. all and every shadow of human worthiness, whether antecedent, concomitant, or subsequent. This is precisely the Scriptural idea of grace; to wit, that "it," salvation in ALL its branches, "is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, who showeth mercy." (Rom. 9:16) Thus it is that grace reigneth, unto the eternal life of sinners, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

1. In canvassing this momentous truth, let us begin where God Himself began, namely, with election. To whom are we indebted for that first of all spiritual blessings? Pride says, "To me." Self-righteousness says, "To me." Man's unconverted will says, "To me." But faith joins with God's Word in saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name, be the whole glory of Thy electing love ascribed; Thou didst not choose us on supposition of our first choosing Thee; but through the victorious operation of Thy mighty Spirit, we choose Thee for our portion and our God, in consequence of Thy having first and freely chosen us to be Thy people." Hear the testimony of that apostle who received the finishings of his spiritual education in the

third heavens. "There is a remnant," says he, "according to the *election of grace*. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it (the election) be of works, then is it no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work." (Romans 11:5,6) Let us sift this reasoning, and we shall find it invincible. There is a "remnant," i.e., some of fallen mankind, who shall be everlastingly saved through Christ. This remnant is according to election. God's own will and choice are the determinate rule by which the saved remnant is measured and numbered. This election is an election of "grace," or the free, sovereign, and unmerited act of God. The apostle would not leave out the word "grace," lest people should imagine that God elected them on account of something He saw in them above others.

"Well, but," some may say, "admitting election to be by grace, might not our foreseen good works have a little hand in the matter? Might not God have some small regard to our future good behaviour?" "No," answers the apostle, none at all." If election be by grace, of mere mercy and sovereign love, "then it is no more of works," whether directly or indirectly, in whole, or in part; "otherwise, grace is no more grace." Could anything human, though ever so little, be mixed with grace, as a motive with God for showing favour to Peter, for instance, above Judas; grace would all evaporate and be annihilated from that moment. For, as Austin observes, *Gratia non est gratia, nisi sit ominino gratuita*: "Grace ceases to be grace, unless it be totally and absolutely irrespective of anything and of everything, whether good or bad, in the objects of it." So that, as the apostle adds, was it possible for election to be "of works," then would it be "no more" an act of grace;" but a payment instead of a gift; "otherwise work were no more work." On one hand, "work" ceases to be considered as influential on election, if election is the daughter of "grace;" and on the other hand "grace" has nothing at all to do in election, if "works" have any concern in it. Grace and

conditionality are two *incompatible opposites*; the one *totally destroys the other*; and they can no more subsist together than two particles of matter can occupy the same individual portion of space at the same point of time. Which, therefore, of these contrary songs do you sing? (for all the art and labour of mankind, united, can never throw the two songs into one). Are you for burning incense to yourselves, saying, "Our righteousness, and the might of our own arm, have gotten us this spiritual wealth?" Or, with the angels and saints in light, do you lay down your brightest honours at the footstool of God's throne, with, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give the glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake?"

Certainly, election is the act, not of man, but of God; founded merely upon the sovereign and gracious pleasure of His own Will. "It is not of works lest any man should boast;" but solely of Him who has said, "I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Romans 9:15) God merits of us, not we of Him; and it was His free-will, not ours, which drew the impassible line between the elect and the pretermitted.

2. God's covenant love to us in Christ is another stream, flowing from the fountain of unmingled grace; and here, as in the preceding instance, every truly awakened person disclaims all title to praise; puts it away with both hands; and not only with his hands, but with his heart also; while his lips acknowledge, "Not unto us, O Thou divine and co-eternal Three, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory!"

How is it possible that either God's purposes, or that His covenant concerning us, can be in any respect whatsoever suspended on the will or the works of men; seeing both His purposes and His covenant were framed, fixed, and agreed upon, by the Persons in the Trinity; not only before men existed, but before angels themselves were created, or time itself was born? All was vast eternity, and had been eternally, when grace was

federally given us in Christ ere the world began. Well, therefore, might the apostle, in the very text where he makes the above assertion, observe that the holy calling with 'which God effectually converts and sanctifies His people, in time, is bestowed upon us, according to God's own free purposes and eternal destination. (II Tim. 1:9)

Repentance and faith, new obedience, and perseverance, are *not conditions of interest* in the covenant of grace, for then it would have been a covenant of works; but they are consequences and tokens of covenant interest: "For the children *being not yet born*, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election (which is the standard of covenant mercy), might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth. It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Romans 9:13) Now, whether you consider this passage as referring to the posterity of Jacob and Esau, or to Jacob and Esau themselves; or, which is evidently the apostle's meaning, as referring to both, the argument will still come to the same point at last; namely, that the divine counsels and determinations, in whatever view you take them, are absolutely irrespective of works, because God's immanent decrees and covenant-transactions took place before the objects of them had done either good or evil. Of course, all the good that is wrought IN men comes from God, as the gracious effect, not as the cause of His favour; and all the evil which God permits (such are His wisdom and His power) is subservient to promote, instead of interfering to obstruct, the accomplishments of His most holy will. I mention God's permission of evil only incidentally in this place; for properly it belongs to another argument. My present business is to show that the good and the graces which God works, not permissively, but effectively in the hearts of His covenant people, are the fruit, not the root of the love He bears to them.

3. To whom are we indebted for the atonement of Christ, and for the redemption

through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins? Here likewise, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!" It was God who "found a ransom." It was God who provided His own justice with a Lamb for a burnt offering. It was God who accepted the atonement at our Surety's hand, instead of ours. It is God who freely imparts the blessings of that completely finished redemption, to the comfort and everlasting restoration of all those who are enabled to trust and to glory in the cross of Christ. Against such persons divine justice has nothing to allege; and on them it has no penalty to inflict. The sword of vengeance having been already sheathed in the sinless human nature of Jehovah's Equal, becomes to them that are enabled to believe, a curtana, a sword of mercy, a sword without point. Thanks to the reconciling mercy of God the Father, and to the bleeding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Human free-will and merit had *nothing to do with the matter from first to last!*

4. As pardon exempts us from punishment, so justification, i.e., God's acceptance of us as perfect fulfillers of the whole law, entitles us to the possession of the kingdom of heaven.

Now, the great inquiry is, whether God be indeed entitled to the whole praise of His unspeakable gift? Whether we should, as justified persons, sing to the praise and glory of ourselves, or to the praise and glory of God alone. The Bible will determine this question in a

moment; and show us that Father, Son, and Spirit are the sole Authors, and consequently should receive the entire glory of our justification.

(1) It is God the Father who justifieth; i.e., who accepts us unto eternal life; and that freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ, and through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without works — without being moved to it by any consideration of the good works, and without being restrained from it by any consideration of the evil works, wrought by the person or

persons to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed, and who are pronounced just in consequence of that imputed righteousness.

(2) Justification is also the act of God the Son, in concurrence with His Father. Paul expressly declares that he sought to be justified by Christ. The Second Person in the Godhead joins, as such, in accepting His people through that transferred merit which, as Man, He wrought for this very end. Now let me ask you, did you assist Christ in paying the price of your redemption, and in accomplishing a series of perfect obedience for your justification? If you did, you are entitled to a proportionable part of the praise; but if Christ both obeyed, and died, and rose again, without your assistance, it invincibly follows that you have no manner of claim to the least particle of that praise which results from the benefits acquired and secured by His obedience, death, and resurrection. The benefits themselves are all your own, if He give you faith to embrace them; but the honour, the glory, and the thanks, you cannot arrogate to yourself, without the utmost impiety and sacrilege.

(3) God the Holy Ghost unites in justifying the redeemed of the Lord. We are declaratively and evidentially justified by the Spirit of our God; whose condescending and endearing office it is to reveal a once-broken-hearted Saviour in the broken heart of a self-emptied sinner; and to shed abroad the justifying Love of God in the believer's soul. Herein the adorable Spirit neither needs nor receives any assistance from the sinners He visits. His gracious influence is sovereign, free, and independent. We can no more command or forbid it than that of the shining of the sun. [Ed. note: Often in Calvinistic writings, we find some setting forth Gospel regeneration. It is one measure of a heart-religion, or vital religion, to find the Holy Spirit set forth in one's affection, as here, as sovereign and free; even as the Father and Son.]

The conclusion of the whole is, that not our goodness, but God's mercy; not our obedience, but Christ's righteousness; not our

towardliness, but the Holy Spirit's beneficence; are to be thanked for the whole of our justification. But it is no easy lesson to say from the heart, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!" Self-righteousness cleaves to us as naturally and as closely as our skins. Nor can any power, but that of an Almighty hand, flay us of it. I remember an instance full to the point; and which I give on the authority of a minister, now living, and eminent above many for his labours and usefulness. This worthy person assured me, a year or two since, that he once visited a criminal who was under sentence of death for a capital offence. My friend endeavoured to set before him the evil he had done; and to convince him that he was lost and mined, unless Christ saved him by His blood, righteousness, and grace. "I am not much concerned about that," answered the self-righteous malefactor. "I have riot, to be sure, led so good a life as some have; but I am certain that many have gone to Tyburn who were much worse men than myself." So, you see, a murderer may go to the gallows trusting in his own righteousness! And you and I should have gone to hell, trusting in our own righteousness, if Christ had not stopped us by the way. I dare believe that the above mentioned criminal, had the subject been started, would also have valued himself upon his free-agency! Free-agency, so-called, he had; and he was left to the power of it; and ruined himself accordingly! Free-will has carried many a man to Tyburn [an execution prison]; and, it is to be feared, from Tyburn to hell; but it NEVER yet earned a single soul to holiness and heaven. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Free-will can do that for us; "But in me," says God, "is thy help." His free grace must be our refuge and shelter from our own free-will, or it were good for the best of us that we had never been born.

In one word, all the glory of our pardon and justification belongs to the Trinity, and not to man. It is one of God's crown jewels, unalienable from Himself; and which He will never resign to, nor share with, any other being. It is impossible, in the very nature of

things, that He ever should; for how can any of depraved mankind be justified by works — and without being so justified we can come into no part of the praise — how, I say, can any of us be justified by our own doings, seeing we are utterly unable even to think a good thought until God Himself breathes it into our hearts? Suffer me to observe one thing more under this article, viz., that if God's Spirit has stripped you of your own righteousness, He has not stripped you in order to leave you naked, but will clothe you with change of raiment. He will give you a robe for your rags, the righteousness of God for the rotten righteousness of man; rotten indeed we shall find it, if we make it a pillar of confidence. I will say of it, as Dr. Young says of the world, "lean not upon it;" lean not on thy own righteousness; if leaned upon:

"It will pierce thee to the heart;
At best a broken reed, but oft a spear.
On its sharp point peace bleeds
and hope expires."

Self-reliance is the very bond of unbelief. It is essential infidelity, and one of its most deadly branches. You are an infidel if you trust in your own righteousness. You a Christian? You a believer? No! you have, in the sight of God, neither part nor lot in the matter. You are spiritually dead, while you pretend to live. Until you are endued with faith in Christ's righteousness, your body, as a great man expresses it, is no better than "the living coffin of a dead soul." A Christian is a believer; not in himself, but in Christ. And what is the language of a believer? "Lord, I am, in myself, a poor, ruined, undone sinner. Through the hand of Thy good Spirit upon me, I throw myself at the foot of Thy cross; and look to Thee for blood to wash me, for righteousness to justify me, for grace to make me holy, for comfort to make me happy, and for strength to keep me in Thy ways."

5. For holiness, the inward principle of good works; and for good works themselves, the outward evidences of inward holiness, we are obliged to the alone grace and power of God most High. We do not make Him a

debtor to us, neither in time or eternity, by loving and performing His commandments; but we become additionally debtors to Him for crowning His other grace, by vouchsafing to work IN US that which is well-pleasing in His sight. Say not, "Upon this plan sanctification is kicked out of doors, and good works are turned adrift." Nothing can be more palpably and flagrantly untrue! Newness of heart and of life is so essential to, and constitutes so vast a part of, the evangelical scheme of salvation, that were it possible for holiness and its moral fruits really to be struck out of the account, the chain would at once dissolve, and the whole fabric become a house of sand.

The Arminians (free-willers) have of late made a huge cry about "Antinomians! Antinomians!" From the abundance of experience the mouth is apt to speak! The modern Arminians see so much real Antinomianism among themselves, and in their own tents, that Antinomianism [The term literally means, "against law"; and it was charged by Free-willers that those who believe in salvation through Christ and His righteousness alone, without the works of the law for justifying righteousness, were lawless-living individuals. The fact is, however, that free grace believers live far more righteously in their conduct than any Free-willers; and those who are Freewillers, are the true "anti-law" people. But, they preferred to lay this false charge against the saints, rather than admit it themselves. — Ed.] is become the predominant idea, and the favourite watchword of that party. Because they have got the plague, they think everybody else has. Because the leprosy is in their walls, they imagine no horse is without. Thus, "All looks infected, and th' infected spy; As all seems yellow to his jaundiced eye." It is cunning, I must confess, in these people, to raise a dust for their own defence; and, like some pick-pockets, when closely pursued, to aim at slipping the stolen goods into the pocket of an innocent by-stander, that the real sharper may elude the rod of justice. But, unhappily for

themselves, the Arminians are not complete masters of this art. [They are now! S.C.P.] The dust they raise forms too thin a cloud to conceal them; and their bungling attempts to shift off the charge of Antinomianism upon others rivets the charge but more firmly on themselves, its true proprietors. The avowed effrontery with which they openly trample on a certain commandment that says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," may stand as a sample of the little regard they pay to the other nine. Pretty people these, to look for justification from the "merit" of their own work, and to value themselves on their perfect love to God arid man!

With regard to sanctification and obedience, truly so called, it can only flow and cannot but flow from a new heart; which new heart is of God's own making, and of God's own giving. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh;" (Ezek. 36:26) a soft, repenting, believing heart; "and I will CAUSE you to walk in My statutes, and ye SHALL keep My judgments and do them." Now God accomplishes this promise by the effectual working of His blessed Spirit; by the mystic fire of whose Agency, having melted our hearts into penitential faith, He then applies to them the seal of His own holiness; from which time we begin to bear the image and superscription of God upon our tempers, words, and actions. This is our "licentious" doctrine, namely, a doctrine which, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, conforms the soul more and more to God; carefully referring, at the same time, ALL THE PRAISE of this active and passive conformity to God Himself, whose GIFT IT IS; singing with the saints of old, "Thou, Lord, hast wrought ALL our works IN US; and for all the work so wrought, — for the will to please Thee, for the ability to please Thee, and for every act whereby we do please Thee - "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name, give glory." For, indeed, was not this the truth of the case, i.e., if conversion, sanctification, and good works were not God's gifts, and of His operation, men would have, not only

somewhat, but much, even very much, to boast of; for they would then be their own converters, sanctifiers, and saviours. Directly contrary to the plain letter of Scripture, which asks, "Who maketh thee to differ from another; and what hast thou that thou didst not receive from above? Nor less contrary to the Scriptural direction: "He that glorieth, let him glory IN THE LORD."

6. Once more. Whom are we to thank for perseverance in holiness and good works to the end? "Oh!" says an old Pharisee perhaps; "the thanks are due to my own watchfulness, my own faithfulness, my own industry, and my own improvements." Your supposed watchfulness answers a very bad purpose, if you make a merit of it. The enemy of souls cares not the turning of a straw whether you perish by open licentiousness, or by a delusive confidence in your own imaginary righteousness. It is all one to him, whether you go to hell in a black coat or a white one. Nay, the whitest you can weave will be found black, and a mere *san benito* to equip you for the flames, if God does not array you in the imputed righteousness of His Blessed Son.

But, for the present, leaving Pharisees and legalists to the hands of him who alone is able, and has a right, to save or to destroy, let me address myself to the true believer in Christ. You were called to the knowledge of God, it may be ten or twenty years ago, or longer, and you still are found dwelling under the droppings of the sanctuary, and walking in Him you have received; following on to know more of the Lord; sometimes faint, yet always wishing to pursue; tossed, but not lost; occasionally "cast down, but not destroyed." How comes all this? How is it that many flaming professors, who blazed out for a while, like luminaries of the first lustre, are quenched, extinguished, vanished, while your smoking flax, and feeble spark of grace, continue to survive, and sometimes afford both light and heat? While more than a few who, perhaps, once seemed to be rooted as rocks and stable as pillars in the house of God, are become as water that runneth apace; why are you standing, though in yourself as

weak — if not weaker — than they? A child of God can soon answer this question; and he will answer it thus: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day; not by my own might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts." And He that KEPT YOU until this day will keep you ALL your days. His Spirit which HE freely gives to His people is a well of water springing up, not for a year, not for a lifetime, only; but into eternal life. God's faithfulness to you is the source of your cleaving to Him. Christ intercedes for you; and therefore He keeps you watching unto prayer. He preserves you from falling; or when fallen, He restores your soul, and leads you forth again in the "paths of righteousness, for His name's sake." He has decreed and covenanted, and promised and sworn, to give you a crown of life; and, in order to that, He has no less solemnly engaged and irrevocably bound Himself to make you faithful unto death.

"Well, then," says an Arminian, "if these things are so, I am safe at all events. I may fold up my arms, and even lay me down to sleep; or, if I chose to rise and be active, I may live just as I list." Satan was the coiner of this reasoning; and he offered it as current and sterling coin to the Messiah; but Christ rejected it as false money: "If Thou be the Son of God," said the enemy, "If Thou be indeed that Messiah whom God upholds, and His Elect in whom His soul delighteth, cast Thyself headlong; it is impossible Thou shouldst perish do what Thou wilt — no fall can hurt Thee; and Thy Father has absolutely promised that His 'angels shall keep Thee in all Thy ways;' jump. therefore, boldly from the battlements, and fear no evil." The devil's argumentation was equally insolent and absurd, in every point of view. He reasoned not like a serpent in his wits; but like a serpent whose head was bruised, and who had no more of understanding than of modesty. Christ silenced this battery of straw with a single sentence: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." So said the Messiah; and so say we. And this is answer enough to a cavil

whose palpable irrationality would cut its own throat, without the help of any answer at all. God's children would be very glad if they could "live as they list." How so? Because it is the will, the desire, and the wish of a renewed soul; that is, of a new man, or the believer's regenerate part; for old Adam was never a saint yet, nor ever will be; it is, then, I say, the will and the wish of a renewed soul, to please God in all things, and never sin on any occasion, or in any degree. This is the state in which our pantings aspire; and in which (would the imperfection of human nature admit of such happiness below) we "list" to walk. For every truly regenerated person can sincerely join the apostle Paul in saying, "With my mind, I myself serve the law of God, and wish I could keep it better." God's preservation is the good man's perseverance. "He will keep the feet of His saints." Arminianism represents God's Spirit as if He acted like the guard of a stage coach, who sees the passengers safe out of town for a few miles; and then making his bow, turns back, and leaves them to pursue the rest of the journey themselves. But divine grace does not thus deal by God's travellers. It accompanies them to their journey's end, and without end. So that the meanest pilgrim to Zion may shout, with David, in full certainty of faith, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Therefore, for perserving grace, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

7. After God has led His people through the wilderness of life, and brought them to the edge of that river which lies between them and the heavenly Canaan, will He intermit His care of them, in that article of deepest, need? No, blessed be His name! On the contrary, He (always safely, and generally comfortably) escorts them over to the other side; to that good land which "is very far off," to that "goodly mountain, and Lebanon." I know there are some flaming Arminians who tell us that "a man may persevere until he comes to die, and yet perish in the very article of

death;" and they illustrate this wretched, God-dishonouring and soul-shocking doctrine, by the simile of "a ship foundering in the harbour's mouth!" It is very true that some wooden vessels have, so perished. But it is not less true that all God's *chosen vessels* are infallibly safe from so perishing. For, through His goodness, every one of them is insured by Him whom the winds and seas, both literal and metaphorical, obey. Since their insurance runs thus: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:" "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." So they are far from foundering within sight of land. Even an earthly parent is particularly careful and tender of a dying child; and surely, when God's children are in that situation, He will, speaking after the manner of men, be doubly gracious to His helpless offspring, who are His by election (Eph. 1:4), by adoption (Eph. 1:5), by covenant (Heb. 13:20), by redemption (Col. 1:14), by regeneration (John 3:3, Titus 3:5), and by a thousand other indissoluble ties. There are no marks of shipwrecks, no remnants of lost vessels floating upon that sea which flows between God's Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem which is above. The excellent Dr. William Gouge has an observation full to the present point. "If a man," says he, "were cast into the river, we should look upon him as safe, while he was able to keep his head above water. The church, Christ's mystical body, is east into the sea of the world, and afterwards into the sea of death; and Christ, her Head, keeps Himself aloft, even in heaven." Is there, then, any fear or possibility of drowning a member of this body? If any should be drowned, then either Christ Himself must be drowned first, or else that member must be pulled from Christ; both which are impossible. By virtue, therefore, of this union, we see that on Christ's safety ours depends. If He is safe, so are we. If His children perish, so must He. Well, therefore, may dying believers sing, "Not unto us, O Lord, but to Thy name give glory!" Thy

loving mercy carries us when we cannot go; and, “for Thy truth’s sake,” Thou wilt save us to the utmost, without the loss of one.

8. When the emancipated soul is actually arrived in glory, what song will he sing then? The purport of the text will still be the language of the skies:

“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory.” Whilst we are upon earth, we have need of that remarkable caution which Moses gave to the children of Israel: “Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hast cast them out from before thee, saying, ‘for my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.’ Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people.” Now, if the earthly Canaan, which was only a transitory inheritance, was unattainable by human merit; if even worldly possessions are not given us FOR our own righteousness’ sake; who shall dare to say that heaven itself is the purchase of our own righteousness or obedience? If our works cannot merit even the vanquishing conveniences and supplies of time, how is it possible that we should be able to merit the endless riches of eternity? We shall need no cautions against self-righteousness when we get safe to that better country. The language of our hearts and voices will be — and angels will join the concert — and all the elect, both angels and men, will, for ever and ever, strike their harps to this key: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and Thy truth’s sake.”

O, may a sense of that loving mercy and truth be warmly and transformingly experienced in our hearts. For, indeed, my dear brethren, it is experience, or the *felt power of God upon the soul*, which makes the Gospel “a savour of life unto life.” Notwithstanding that God’s purpose is steadfast as His throne; notwithstanding that the whole of Christ’s righteousness and redemption is finished, and as complete as a Divine Power and Almighty Agent could

make it; notwithstanding that I am convinced that God will always be faithful to every soul whom He has called out of darkness into His marvellous light; and notwithstanding that none can pluck the people of Christ from His hands; still, I am no less satisfied that it must be *the feeling sense* of all this, i.e., a perception *wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, that will give you and me the comfort of the Father’s gracious decrees, and of the Messiah’s finished work. I know it is growing very fashionable to talk against *spiritual feelings*; but I dare not join the cry. On the contrary, I adopt the apostle’s prayer, that our love to God, and the manifestation of His love to us, “may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,” or feeling. It is no enthusiastic wish, in behalf of you and of myself, that we may be of the number of those “godly persons” who, as our church justly expresses it, *feel in themselves* the workings of the Spirit, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things. Indeed, the great business of God’s Spirit is to draw up and to bring down: to draw up our affections to Christ, and to bring down the unsearchable riches of grace into our hearts. The knowledge of which, and the earnest desire for it, are all the feelings I plead for. And for these feelings I wish ever to plead; satisfied as I am, that, without some experience and enjoyments of them, we cannot be happy, living or dying.

Let me ask you, as it were, one by one, Has the Holy Spirit begun to reveal these deep things of God in your soul? If so, give Him the glory of it. And as you prize communion with Him, as you value the comforts of the Holy Ghost, may He help you to endeavour to be found in God’s way, even the highway of humble faith and obedient love; sitting at the feet of Christ, and desirous to imbibe those sweet, ravishing, sanctifying communications of grace, which are at once an earnest of, and a preparation for, complete heaven when you come to die. God forbid that we should ever think lightly of religious feelings! For, if we do not in some degree feel ourselves sinners, and feel that Christ is precious, I doubt if the

Spirit of God has ever been savingly at work upon our souls. Nay, so far from being at “a stand in this,” our desires after the feeling of God’s presence within, will enlarge continually the nearer we draw to the end of our earthly pilgrimage; and resemble the progressive expansion of a river, which, however narrow and straitened when it first begins to flow, never fails to widen and increase in proportion as it approaches the ocean into which it falls.

God give us a gracious spring-tide of His Spirit to replenish our thirsty channels, to swell our scanty stream, and to quicken our languid course! If this is not our cry, it is a sign either that the work of grace is not yet begun in us or that it is indeed at low water and discoloured with those dregs which tend to dishonour God, to eclipse the glory of the Gospel, and to spread clouds and darkness upon our souls. Some Christians are like decayed mile-stones, which stand, it is true, in the right road, and bears some traces of the proper impression; but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced that they who go by can hardly read or know what to make of them. May the blessed Spirit of God cause all our hearts, as we travel, to undergo a fresh impression; and indulge us with a new edition of our evidences for heaven! O, may showers of blessings descend upon you from above! May you see that Christ and the grace of God in Him, are all in all! While you are upon earth, may you ever ascribe the whole glory to Him! For sure I am that, when you come to heaven, you will never ascribe it to any other.

LM

Christ’s Eternal Love to His Church

Who can the distant period trace,
When God, to glorify His grace
And magnify His love to man,
Drew forth redemption’s wondrous plan.

Jesus was Head Elect proclaimed,
With all His mystic members named;

One glorious Head, one body there,
Who should at last one glory share.

To Jesus thus, the Father spake,
“If this Thy bride my statutes break;
Wilt Thou engage the debt to pay,
And bear her load of sins away?”

“Yea,” said the Son, “with her I’ll go,
Thro’ all the depths of sin and woe;
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pains of death to bear.”

In God’s decree, her form He viewed,
All beauteous in His eyes she stood,
Presented by the eternal name,
Betrothed in love, and free from blame.

Not as she stood in Adam’s fall,
When guilt and ruin covered all;
But as she’ll stand another day,
Fairer than sun’s meridian ray.

Then justice on sweet mercy smiled,
And truth with peace was reconciled;
The scene so vast, each one amazed,
They kissed and, lost in wonder, gazed.

O glorious grace, mysterious plan,
Too great for angel mind to scan!
Our thoughts are lost, our numbers fail,
All hail, redeeming love! All hail!

Augustus Toplady.

Selected from *Gospel Standard*, 1882.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

We again express our appreciation to our readers for all the help we received from them toward the publication of this magazine.

Deep within our souls, we feel that, for reasons unknown to us, the Gospel light seems to grow dim, or flicker out. Thus, we find so very few writers today who can experimentally set forth the truth of free grace. Very much like the ministers, the

messages are pretty shallow. The ministers are either out-right Arminians — vile heretics of the greatest magnitude; letter Calvinists, those who present the truth, but unable to address it to living, feeling, hearts; or, as so much the case in our “camp”, silly dreamers, who, to get a subject for the morning service need only physically work themselves to exhaustion the day before — in that way, they are most likely to sleep shallow and dream some good dreams.

Surely, there are exceptions to the above. I only comment upon the general condition in this manner to make a point. That point is, our God has preserved in the earth, through His divine Providence, the greatest and richest source of spiritual, and Biblical, messages in the writings of the past. Years ago, while in college, and also seeking the church of Christ on earth, this editor collected a good amount of free grace materials. The present editors have helped — along with many of you — in providing our library with the richest collection possible to date. Thus, our magazine is designed to share with you hard-to-find, antique, free grace materials. We hope you enjoy our selections.