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THE PURPOSE OF GOD

By Donald Smith

Dear Brother

When I consider the work of God, it is too great for me, for I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For when I would do good evil is present with me.

You asked me what I mean when I say “purpose” or God’s purpose. I might reply to you with a question of much more import and depth, “What do you mean when you say God?” However, seeing it is too great and immense a question for the carnal mind, I will not ask it. My purpose in saying the above is this, we cannot speak of God without speaking of His purpose, for just as certainly as He speaks to us, “Be still and know that I am God,” it reveals to us a purposeful Being, whose purpose it was to reveal Himself to us. Now one of His purposes of revealing Himself to us was that we will know that He is God. Going further, (and I do believe it goes to the uttermost infinity of eternity), surely He has other purposes in revealing to us that He is God. This is where I am at a loss — lost in the infinite wisdom of God as to His purposes.

Concerning the “purpose of God according to election” I must submit to the will of God and say first in the words of Jesus Christ the Lord, “Even so Father: for it seemed good in Thy sight” This His elect see the everlasting love of God in this revelation of Himself and gladly acknowledge with the apostle Paul in Galatians 1:15,16, “It pleased God,” “to reveal His Son in me.” So I can see another purpose is, “that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory.” This “afore” brings in the everlasting purpose of God in the salvation of His people. The only way I can understand this everlasting purpose is to bow in humble adoration to the pleasure of God in His eternal choice of His people in Christ before the world was (II Tim. 1:9) This election is described in many ways in the Scriptures and one predominant way is the

love of God. Then as God most surely loves some, does not He do it purposely? The answer is self-evident: He does it according to His purpose. "For His great love wherewith He loved us." (Eph. 2:4)

Now as we consider God's purpose in the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, we see Exodus 9:16, "And in very deed for this cause I raised thee up, for to show My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth." (See Romans 9:17-18) Since God has mercy "on whom He will have mercy and "whom He will He hardeneth," does He do it purposely or does He do it according to some good or evil He finds in the vessels? The 11th verse of Romans 9 answers this question: He does it "that the purpose of God according to election might stand," and verse 23, "to make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy" in regard to His elect. Then in verse 22, "to show His wrath and to make His power known" in regard to those "fitted to destruction." These sacred truths humble the children of God and certainly do not make them boastful as if they deserved this mercy, for they realize, as Ephesians 2:3 50 clearly sets forth, that "by nature they were the children of wrath even as others" and those "others" are "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." "So it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Rom. 9:16) Just as God's purpose stand, or remains immovable, as to the vessels of mercy, it also stands as to the vessels of wrath. And should anyone have questions as if this be unjust, or as if no one would be subject to guilt if these things be true, these were answered most clearly and emphatically by the blessed apostle in Romans 9:19-21.

Getting to the heart of your question, as if we have not already reached it: What seems to really bother you the most is the evil inventions of man, his devises, his connivings, his lies, his murders, his hatred, his wrath, his thefts, etc., in other words his disobedience to the revealed will of God; that I say that God has a purpose in all these

things. This really bothers you for you have a zeal to defend God. First, let me say from my own heartfelt experience, God does not need our defense even though in our extreme pride we thought we could or should defend Him. In the book of Job we find Job's three miserable comforters assaying to do this. In pleading their cause before Job they spoke many singular truths of God and His wonderful works. Yet God told them in chapter 42:7&8, "ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath." Have you ever considered what it was they said of God to Job that made the whole of what they said not right? This is what I find when I am blessed to see it; that is, that each one of his three friends had a spirit of free will in them and at the same time desired to defend God for they told Job time and again to seek the Lord, and time and again that the cause or purpose of his trouble was in him or in his heart and verily tried their best to convince him of this. But thanks be unto God, through His mercy, Job was not let go into the abyss of freewillism and the idea of fearing God in order to be blessed with timely substance and health. This was the very core of the question from Satan: "Doth Job fear God for nought?" And Satan thought that he could prove that Job only feared God because of the good God had blessed him with. Hear the answer of Job to his wife, "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And blessed be the name of the Lord we find the sacred answer also in Job 13:15-16, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him:" "He also shall be my salvation." So I can most certainly see that Job's deliverance as well as his trouble was entirely of the Lord and where do we find Job after the Lord had spoken and revealed Himself to him? "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee;" (Chapter 42:1,2) then verse 6, "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." And that is the way it is today: the more we see and understand of the work of God, the more we

abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes! So I ask you, dear brother, has the fear of the Lord changed today? What if some few today believe that salvation in every respect is of the Lord? Do you think that Job believed some of it was in his hands?

Concerning wickedness, so we find anywhere that Joseph's brethren were glad they sold him to the Ishmeelites? Even though Joseph's being in Egypt was in God's purpose "to save much people alive." (Gen 50:20). So that I can see that, even as man thinks evil unto the Lord's children, God means it for their good! I don't at all times see that as clearly as at other times, and I truly know it is only by God's tender mercy I see it at all. I am also made to realize, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, they were sad and burdened for the evil they had done unto Joseph, so is the case with God's children today. They do not do evil and then rejoice that they have done the evil. In the Spirit they are always in sorrow for their sins and would to God they could cease from all the works of the flesh. Quite the contrary to rejoicing in evil, they bless them that curse them, do good to them that despitefully use them, pray for their very enemies, forgive all those who trespass against them, render not evil for evil, or railing for railing but contrariwise blessing. So Joseph told his brethren to fear not, "I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

Now let us go a little further into the purposes of God and visit David to see if he was justified in sin! Go to 2nd Samuel 11, and read of the terrible sin of David, then go to chapter 12 and read of his conviction of sin by the Lord through the parable of Nathan, then pay attention to verse 11, about the evil the Lord would raise against him, then go to chapter 16, verse 22, and see the fulfillment of this word of the Lord. Now go to the 51st Psalm and see how David begged God for mercy. Notice verse 4, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." When we harm or do evil to any one creature of God, it is against God we have

sinned! This is what makes offenses that Christ spoke of that must come to be so offensive: but "Woe unto that man by whom it cometh." Instead of establishing a licentious desire in the children of God to do evil, (as we are slanderously accused), it establishes a reverence in them for God that they would do good unto all men. (See Matt. 5:3848) So Stephen when he was stoned to death, "Kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And fell asleep."

So as I am blessed to see the purpose of God in all things, I am made in love to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things; then I have no desire to explain away by my carnal mind any of the promises of God, for they are all sure and Yea and Amen to the glory of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. I readily admit that the knowledge and work of God is too wonderful for me. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things:

to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

11/29/84 Rt.2, Centreville,Al. 35042

THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING

By R.W. Rhodes

Editor's Note: The late Elder R.W. Rhodes served churches in the South Ouachita Association (Ark.& La.) over fifty years. He preached his first sermon at Liberty Hill Church near Farmersville, La. in October 1914 using the 1st chapter of Psalms as a text.

He traveled to many states in this nation and Canada and was well received. The Lord blessed him to be sound in the doctrine and he

was known as a "Peace-Maker."

Submitted by W. W. Hudson.

"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare My name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." Heb. 2:10-12

I am well aware that this, as well as all other of God's holy inspired word, is a very great text, and I know that I am not in any sense of the word capacitated to understand this great and glorious subject without the divine light of God's Holy Spirit. I desire that the Giver of every good and perfect gift will enable me to see, understand, and write of some of the glorious doctrinal and experimental phases that are taught in this Scripture.

First, I will say that the stern, inflexible sovereignty of God is taught, and there is no mincing of words in it for He says, For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things." The pronoun "Him" is applicable to the Father, God, Creator. The word "became," means becoming to Him in His glorious and perfect character, so it was becoming to God to have all things as they are, to properly and perfectly bring out and reveal His glory, and not only so, but it also was becoming to make the Captain of these many sons's salvation perfect through sufferings. So with all that is connected with, and that caused and brought forth His great sufferings, there can be no doubt that it was becoming to the revelation of His glory to have it this way.

However, I feel sure that no one would think for a moment that I am trying to justify the wicked and heinous crimes committed by the betrayers and murderers that killed the Prince of Life as is set forth in the Acts of

Apostles 3:15. Jesus also said, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born," and there are other numerous Scriptural witnesses to these things. The prophet also said, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" so it must have been becoming of God to have it that way, or it would not have pleased Him to bruise Him. When the blessed Savior fell upon His meek and lowly face in that humble petition of sweat and tears and said, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," do you not feel that it would have passed, had it not become Him for Jesus to suffer as the perfect Captain of their salvation? Then it was becoming to God for Him to suffer.

There are so many things relative to this subject that it is impossible to mention all of them for the lack of time and space. What was the cause of His sufferings? Would we not most assuredly have to say from a Bible standpoint that it was for sin that He suffered? Then had there been no sin there would have been no suffering and no need for salvation; no need for that great Captain of salvation, but it became Him that it be this way because He plainly and emphatically said SO in this text. Some would say, well it was becoming to God that sin enter into the world, and death by sin. I am quite sure had it not been there would not have been any sin in this world. Let me ask the question, if it was not becoming for it to enter for reasons known only to God. then does it glorify God to contend that it would have been better for it not to have entered? It seems to me that this would place God in the position that He was helpless against sin's entrance into the world. Do you think, dear reader, it would become the glorious character of God to show Him helpless in any thing. *even* the entrance of sin into the world? Would it become God in His perfection and glory to have to say he could not have permitted sin's entrance? You might as well join the Arminian and say, God "wants" every one to be saved, but He is

helpless to do it. It would be no different to say that God was helpless in the beginning of this world than to say He is helpless now.

In order to prove that there was a purpose for the entrance of sin into this world we hate only to refer you to Paul's language in Horn. 5:20 "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." Whose purpose was it for the offence to abound? I am sure YOU will admit that it was God's purpose, for He was the Giver of the law to Moses as well as to Adam and Eve in the garden. In Revelation 5:6 it reads, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne an(1 of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain and in chapter 13. verse 8 it says, "All that dwell upon the earth shalt worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. These two passages prove that Jesus actually stood in the mind and purpose of God, as He had already been slain even from the foundation of the world. What for? For sin that was to enter in through the transgression of Adam. God's holy purpose in it did NOT cause Adam's sin in the immediate sense of the word, but the serpent and his beguiling influence, and the appetizing influence of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was the MOVING cause of it. The desire of Eve to be as wise as. or equal to God was a moving cause (Gen. 3:4-6; Isa. 40:25; 1 Tim. 2:14) and Adam and Eve and all their posterity here and are held accountable for it, because they are and were guilty and will ever be except through the sufferings of the blessed Savior of sinners, the Captain of their salvation. Certainly you could not say there would have been anything if there had been no God. But because of this fact there's no room to say that God is the Author of sin. We know who is the author of sin if we will read Rom. 5:12. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." The disobedience of one man, not by one God! Let us riot run off into Arminianism and deny the

truth concerning God's sovereignty in order not to be accused by them of believing that God is the author of sin. We do not believe it, neither do we teach it, but that does not keep us from being accused of it. neither did it keep the apostle Paul from being accused of it. You will note in Romans 3:8, it reads. "And not rather. (as we be slanderously reported. and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."

I am sure that no one would accuse us of believing that God's purpose was the immediate cause of Judas Iscariot's betrayal of the Savior, but all can readily see the thirty pieces of silver as the cause, and no wonder Jesus said, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." It was SIN to betray the Savior and Judas was under its penalty even though it became God to have it that way as He said in this text. I am sure it was wrong and wicked on the part of Ahab's prophets to wickedly deceive Ahab by their falsehoods and lies as they prophesied victory and prosperity and caused Ahab to go into battle. (Read I Kings 22:23) It must have become God to have it that way because it reads, "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee!" The Lord told the lying spirit to go forth and do this wickedness. Had it not been becoming to the revelation of God's glory to command and use this lying spirit in this manner I am sure it would not have occurred as you will see by reading His holy inspired word. This is the doctrine that is taught and that is and has been believed by our people all the way down, and even the ancient confessions of faith show this very clearly. I ask the reader to read the London, Fulton, and Philadelphia confessions, as well as the Bible, and let us not vary to the right nor the left from the doctrine in all its phases, the Lord willing. I do not want any one of God's dear children to be offended at me, but I feel that I must contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

Pharaoh, King of Egypt, was very wicked and oppressive to the children of Israel, bitterly bound them in slavery, evilly and cruelly treated them, murdered them and destroyed their young through their midwives. In all this, if we believe God's holy word and teachings we must assuredly believe that it was becoming in God to have it this way. He says in Romans 9:17, "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this SAME PURPOSE have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout the earth." If it was not becoming in God to have it this way why did God command Moses to say, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let My people go," (Exodus 5:1), yet He hardened his heart so that he should not let them go. "And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said. And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go." (Exodus 7: 13-14) If it was not becoming to God to have Pharaoh's heart hardened, why did God harden it? Certainly no one would say that it was unbecoming to God to do this, except those that will say that He is unjust, or that He is the author of sin if He does these things. Let us not charge God with either being unjust or the author of sin; but let us not deny His holy word in order to keep from being accused of these things.

Joseph's brethren sold him wickedly into Egypt, deceived their father, making him think his son was dead, and the evil and wicked lie of Potiphar's wife caused him to be so unjustly and wickedly cast into prison. Were not these things according to the purpose of God, and if so, was it not becoming to God to have it this way? "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." (Gen. 45:7) Do you think it was becoming to God for Him to use such wicked things as these to fulfill His purpose and to save and preserve their lives in Joseph's wicked and heinous abuses by his brethren, and Potiphar's wife's lies and all the wickedness that was done? The Bible says

these things were done and said. Were they becoming to God or were they unbecoming? God forbid that I should say they were unbecoming! Rather, it was a most glorious and blessed token of God's power, wisdom, righteousness and also of His sweet mercy, His justice, and the preservation and deliverance of His people by His miraculous power.

Everything that God has ever done in all His holy purposes is most certainly becoming to God, and He is righteous and just in manifesting His purposes either in wrath and justice, or in righteousness and mercy. Each attribute must shine in the revelation of His holy nature and character in all things, and it is all becoming to Him in every detail as is shown in Romans 9:22 where Paul asks the question on this very subject: "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." As hard as this does seem, God is perfectly righteous, and it is most certainly becoming for Him to have it this way. Who would rebel and say this thing is unbecoming to God in His righteous character? Those who have never known Him in all His goodness and mercy; those who are not born truly of God, and have been made to see their just condemnation before God. How dare they make any plea except that He is altogether righteous and if He in justice should send their soul to hell, His righteous law approves it well. Then all things are appointed, purposed or predestinated of God, and they are becoming to Him.

On the other hand I desire to call your attention to the truth as I see it. Sin is NEVER BECOMING to any one from the standpoint that it is right! Certainly not. It is the transgression of God's holy law, and it would still be wrong even though there was no law. Could any one doubt that the crucifixion of the Savior was purposed, predestinated, appointed, ordained or ordered of God? From a Scriptural standpoint I cannot see how any one could deny this as it is said, "Awake, O

sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones.” (Zech. 13:7).

This sword was commanded to a-wake and it did awake, and it did smite that great Shepherd of the sheep. David tells us who that sword is. It is the wicked, the men of the world. Was it becoming on their part to crucify the Lord? No, in no wise! it was sin in the very deepest dye. They desired to do this wicked thing, their hearts were hardened by the brightness and glory of God made manifest in the ministry and miracles of the blessed Lord and they selfishly hated Him without a cause. They wanted to do away with Him be-cause He righteously rebuked them in their wickedness, and because God gave Him the Spirit without measure and they could not resist His words and doctrine. They lay in wait to deceive on every hand; they were selling sheep, oxen, doves and pigeons, and had in their employ the money changers. Jesus had made a whip of small cords and drove them out of the temple and their deepest wrath was stirred. They did not know Him is cited as the reason they crucified Him, or rather, it is stated that had they known Him they would not have crucified Him. All this wickedness and sin was very treacherous and wicked on their part, and it was very unbecoming in them who did it. But I think it was all righteous, just, and holy on the part of God in the righteous revelation of His wrath on such wickedness, and such sin and treachery as they carried on in His crucifixion and death. Certainly it is not unbecoming for Him to use wicked men to do what wicked men love to do. It was sin without justification on their part because they all knew that it was wrong to do these wicked things as it was the very essence of their law that they professed to know and keep, as it is said, “Thou shalt not kill.” Exo. 20:13

It was unbecoming that Judas betray the Savior for thirty pieces of silver, but God had previously said by inspiration that he would do it, and had even said it would be thirty

pieces of silver that he would get! It also showed that Judas would hang himself and what the thirty pieces of silver would be used for. Was it not becoming to God’s glory that He suffered Judas to do this wicked thing after God had showed it beforehand? Who could say that it was becoming and right on the part of Judas? Also who could say that it was unbecoming on God’s part when the text we are writing from says, “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” That was what the wicked act of Judas and the crucifiers of Jesus were doing, they were bringing His sufferings that God had purposed, and God was rendering His righteous judgment upon them for their own wickedness.

The sufferings of Christ were for every sin that His people has or will ever commit. God’s goodness and mercy was manifest towards the vessels of mercy, was being extended through His sufferings and on the other hand His wrath was being displayed upon them who were wicked, treacherous in physically wallowing their hands in the precious blood of the Savior. No wonder Paul said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

Then all things are for God and all things exist by Him. There is no way around it. No matter what kind of a so-called theologian you might be, or think you are, but because all things are for Him and by Him, in some respect, as this text says, that should be no encouragement to any God-fearing, God-loving child to sin — no, a thousand times no! My experience is that I have sinned so long and so much I would give everything under the shining heavens, if it were mine, if I could know that I would never sin any more. Oh, that I could know I have that new covenant in my heart; the stipulations of which are, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” Dear and precious brethren and sisters, it is so

wonderful and glorious just to hope to reach that righteous and peaceful shore where sin and all of its horrible consequences are no more, and to be like Jesus, the great Captain of our salvation to see Him as He is and to be at His precious feet: to feel His blessed and glorious presence in that bright and eternal home where all the saints of all ages will be around that great white throne of God: and where the eternal anthems of His worthy praise shall engulf all the redeemed before God and the Lamb. What a wonderful hope is this for a poor sinner to have. All this is brought about through the sufferings of Christ, and it was becoming to God's glory to have it this way.

Another comment that I would like to make concerning this text is on the words "bringing many sons unto glory." It is very comforting and assuring to the hope of God's children to notice the significance of this language. It does not in any way signify failure or uncertainty. Neither are we left to think that the sons have anything to do within and of themselves in going to glory, but this language says what God does in bringing them to glory. Then according to this language, God is bringing many sons unto glory. Not that He is TRYING to bring them, neither is it in any way intimated that He is HELPING to bring them, nor that He DESIRES to bring them; but that He IS BRINGING THEM and will bring them unto glory. No help nor partnership in the matter, no agency or organization is depended upon; just what God Himself does in bringing them.

Another thing is that they are not brought just "half way" unto glory, but all the way unto glory, and God is the only one known in their bringing. No room here for that doctrine and commandment of men and devils that God just helps so far and then we are dependent upon conditions the rest of the way.

I feel there is not a more comforting phrase implied in this text than where it is acknowledged that ALL THINGS are God's or that they are FOR HIM. Then if everything is for Him, for Him in bringing many sons

unto glory, there is nothing that is against that bringing them unto glory. No wonder Paul said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). Because all things are becoming to God in bringing the many sons unto glory Paul said again, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" God is for bringing these many sons unto glory and He is for them and nothing can be against them, but all is for their good, and all things are becoming to the glory, majesty, and dominion of the God who is all powerful, eternal, all wise and who never sleeps or slumbers, but who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph. 1:11). Then is it not most wonderful indeed to contemplate the glorious consequences that are expressed in these wonderful things?

Dear child of God, truly that Scripture is correct where it says, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord." (Deut. 33:29) They are saved by Him alone, and all things are for Him and by Him in bringing them unto glory. Then, dear child of God, fear not, all things are in His hands and He will do all His pleasure "in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:11) All things are for Him in bringing many sons to glory, and all things work together for the good of these many sons. Oh that I could have that blessed assurance that I am one of those many sons that are under consideration! If I but knew then would I know that all things are for my good.

One might say, but I am such a sinner, so am I truly as Paul said, "O wretched man that I am!" but that is why Jesus, the Captain of our salvation suffered on Calvary's cross, that poor sinners be free and that they be brought unto glory. This is the only hope that I have of entering that peaceful home of everlasting bliss and felicity. It was becoming to the glory, mercy, and peace of Almighty God that Christ Jesus suffer for His people, that He cleanse them with his precious blood, that He

wash them and redeem them from all iniquity. Oh, the ravishing thought and hope of being as though we had never sinned! Oh, the precious anticipation that we be like the precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that the Father spoke from heaven and declared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." I am so tired of myself in my sins. I long to be free from them. I long to see His blessed face in peace. I long for that blessed abode where no sorrow can come, no pain, sickness, or death, but where that blessed love of God will swallow us up, where we will ever sing His eternal and worthy praise forever and ever around that eternal throne with all His saints of all ages. Amen.

True love to the saints is spiritual, for it is the love to the image of God that is stamped upon the soul. "Epaphras hath declared to us your love in the Spirit." (Col. 1:8) A soul that truly loves, loves the Father for His own sake, and the children for the Father's sake. Many there are that love Christians for their *goods*, not for their *good*; they love them for the money that is in their purses, but not for the grace that is in their hearts. Love to the saints for the image of God stamped in them, is a flower that grows not in the nature's garden. No man can love grace in another man's heart, but he that hath grace in his own. Men do not more naturally love their parents, and love their children and love themselves, than they do naturally hate the image of God upon His people, and their way. — **Thomas Brooks.**

TO OUR YOUTHFUL READERS

In some of our congregations there are several young couples and youths who are interested in their relationship with the gracious Lord, and who search for understanding in the glorious Gospel of free and sovereign grace. At times, we are justly criticized for having too many articles "too deep" for many of our readers.

From an educational standpoint, doctrinal subjects well written and to the point are very instructive. But they are far too often purely "dry dead orthodoxy" and do the heart little good. We would rather present the cardinal doctrine in a living, breathing manner. For this reason, the following two articles are presented, taken from the early *Gospel Standard Magazine* in England (1847) upon the doctrines of "election" by the sweet writer, Jabez, and on "Redemption" by his contemporary equal, Gad. We hope the reader will find them profitable. — Ed.

ELECTION

"Even so, then, at this time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." - Romans 11:5.

Election of God is a truth so distinctly and positively declared in the Scriptures, that nothing but human ignorance, legal prejudice, pride, self-love, or enmity against God and His revealed will, can dispute or deny it.

The Scriptures declare, first, the election of Christ as the Elect Head of His church; "Set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (Proverbs 8:23) And when He should appear upon earth it is thus declared of Him: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth." (Isaiah 42:1) God the Father delighted in Christ as the chosen Redeemer of His people, to save and glorify them.

Secondly, "Elect angels" are spoken of. (I Timothy 5:21) By God's election they kept their first estate with Him, and did not fall with the apostate angels. Electing and *preserving grace* will, therefore, be the theme of their song.

Thirdly, the seed of Abraham after the flesh — the natural offspring — were elected of God to be a peculiar nation, distinct and different in character from all other nations of the earth; "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

(Deuteronomy 7:6)

Fourthly, the Scriptures clearly reveal the election of God's redeemed church and people: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Ephesians 1:4). "There is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Romans 11:5). "The election hath obtained it, AND THE REST were blinded" (Romans 11:7). This election, or choice, is an act of distinguishing love and of sovereignty, irrespective of any goodness whatever in the creature; for there is none in him. "There is none righteous, no not one." It is eternal, personal, absolute, immutable (unchangeable), unconditional, and in Christ. But the glories of election consist not only in the act of God's free grace and immutable love, but in what it elects unto. It elects unto grace and glory, — all needful grace here in time, and eternal glory hereafter. All spiritual blessings and eternal life are, therefore, secure to the elected ones by the act of election. Election not only elects their persons, but elects them unto all grace-blessings in this life, and eternal glory in the life to come. The Lord, therefore, "gives grace and glory," (Psalms 84:11) because He has elected the partakers of them thereto. How impossible, then, for one of the elect to come short of that grace and glory! For we must bear in mind that election is THE ACT, not of man, but of God, who cannot lie, err, nor change. Election once passed must remain immutable.

But let us notice a few things unto which the elect are elected.

1. They are elected unto divine *calling*: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy *calling*, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (II Timothy 1:9). "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are *the called* according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). From this we learn that effectual calling is the fruit of eternal election, and the work of God the Spirit.

According to this electing purpose, at the set time, Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, is suddenly *called* to be Paul the Apostle; and the Philippian jailor called to be a saint. And every elect sinner at God's set time is called with a holy calling out of darkness into light, and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. Some are called sooner, and some later, as John and Jeremiah from the womb, and the thief on the cross an hour before his death; but not one of the elect shall fail in due time to be called, because they are elected thereto.

2. They are elected unto *conformity to the image of Christ*. "He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son,!" to suffer with Him that they may be glorified with Him, for it is given "to them" by electing love "to suffer for His sake." "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to *suffer* for His sake." (Philippians 1:29). To suffer the persecution of enemies and endure the blows of both real and professed friends; to suffer tribulation of mind; to suffer Satanic temptations and fiery trials of faith; to suffer the motions of sins, and the carnal mind working in the flesh; to suffer soul-barrenness and divine desertion, coldness, and deadness; to suffer bodily affliction and temporal adversity. To suffer all these in a variety of ways and in different degrees, but all sent or permitted in loving-kindness for the good, is a paradox which the world can neither understand nor believe; but electing love has predestinated every vessel of mercy unto these things for their good and God's glory.

3. They are elected unto an experimental enjoyment of the *blood* of Jesus Christ: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:2). Thus they are elected to experience, by the sanctification of the Spirit, Christ and His atoning blood.

4. They are elected to the *adoption of sons*: "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:5).

5. They are elected unto good works, and to a righteous life and conversation, not as works of merit or of justification, but as fruits of the Spirit, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10). "I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." (John 15:16). The saints being elected unto good works, do, notwithstanding all their failings, and the sensible feeling of their utter unworthiness in self, compared with the world lying in wickedness, live a holy and righteous life, and spend the time of their so journeying here in fear. They are, therefore, called the "righteous nation which keepeth the truth," and shall enter into glory at last.

6. They are elected *unto salvation*: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13). "For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thessalonians 5:9).

7. They are elected to *eternal life*: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48).

8. Christ elected from among His disciples twelve apostles, and the evangelists to write His Gospel, and all the true preachers He sent forth to preach it. He also elected Wickliffe to commence the Reformation in England against freewill Popery; and Luther for Germany, Calvin for Geneva, Knox for Scotland, the reformers for England, Bunyon for Bedford, Huntington for London, and Gadsby for Manchester, etc.

Thus we see the gracious acts of God's election infallibly secures all grace-blessings in this life, and salvation and eternal life in the life to come. Now, if election had not secured these glorious blessings, they would all have been conditional, and might (would — S.C.P.) all have been lost, and the possession of them too. But God's gracious election hath

eternally secured all the blessings and the blessed.

Now, God's election is not only believed in by the children of God, but when the Spirit blesses the soul with a little hope of interest in it, and shines upon the doctrine of it with light and unction, it is received into the heart and affections as a precious and solemn truth; and it will humble the heart, and cause praise and thanksgiving to God for revealing His electing love. But Pharasaism, universal charity, and self-love, hate it, and Hart gives the reason:

"Why so offensive in their eyes
Doth God's election seem?"

Because they think themselves so wise
That they have chosen Him."

Preston, Mar. 1847 – Jabez.

REDEMPTION

I have felt the power of those blessed truths in my soul of which you have written from time to time in the *Gospel Standard*, particularly the short scrap last month on "Election." O! that blessed truth has been and still is dearer to me than life; and the way and manner of its revelation and application to my soul in deep bondage and distress, has been marvelous indeed.

"Though God's election is a truth,
Small comfort there I see,
Till I am told by God's own mouth,
That He has chosen *me*."

I trust I can say that He has chosen me; for when I was under the law crying to the dear Lord for mercy, He spoke these words to my soul: "I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine."

This precious election is made known in redemption, so that we have electing love and redeeming blood. Peter calls the Lord's family, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (I Peter 1:2). Hence, then, it is certain that election is known only by the Spirit, who brings the soul

into a justified state before God in Christ, where there is no condemnation. (Romans 8:1). Then follows the ratification of this solemn matter in the blood of sprinkling, which the Holy Ghost so blessedly reveals through the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 9: “When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you.” (Hebrews 9:19,20).

Redemption appears to follow clogs after election, and therefore must lie four square with that precious stone.

The ransom and the testification of it are to the elect only, and that always in “due time.” (I Timothy 2:6). So that there is no such thing as being too late in these eternal matters.

Now, as to the Redeemer, He is altogether fitted for the great work, as He must needs be, for His people had sold themselves for nought, (Isaiah 52:3, Romans 7:14) and could not by any means redeem their souls or give to God a ransom. (Psalm 49:7). No, nor all the angels in heaven; none but God could redeem to God; therefore God’s eternal Son undertook to accomplish this great work. (Isaiah 63:1.6). [We will here point out that one can only redeem that which is already his. To redeem a check or money order, etc., it is first required to identify yourself as the rightful owner. If you are, then you can redeem it. So, too, Christ as a Redeemer redeems that which is His first by divine election. As the angelic messenger said, “She shall bear a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save *His people* from their sins.” (Matt. 1:23 — Ed.) He came out of the bosom of the Father, who sent Him into the world. (John 1:18). He is in image of the invisible God, (Colossians 1:15) and the brightness of His glory, upholding ALL THINGS by the word of His power; who purged our sin before He sat down at the right hand of the Father. (Hebrews 1:3). He is the “Child born unto us,” and the “Son given,” for

this very purpose, (Isaiah 9:6) whose name is to be called Immanuel, “God with us.” (Matt. 1:23). Hence we behold Him in our nature, born of woman, made under the law to redeem us therefrom; and yet at the same time He is the “mighty God,” the “everlasting Father,” and the “Prince of Peace.” He is the most high God, and yet was made lower than the angels! (Heb. 2:9). He, the mighty, the strong, (Proverbs 23:11), and yet He was crucified through weakness! (2 Corinthians 13:4) He is indeed the near Kinsman, in whom is the right to redeem, (Ruth 3:13,) — so near that He is the Head of the body, (Ephesians 5:23,) the Husband of the church, (Isaiah 54:5,) and the Brother born for adversity. (Pro. 17:17). And bless His dear name, He is not ashamed to call His people brethren, (Hebrews 2:11) for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. (Ephesians 5:30). And this near Kinsman has redeemed us.

1. He has redeemed us *out of the hands of Justice*, by laying down His life for us. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) That is, for His sheep, (John 10:11,) whom He redeemed from under the law and the curse, by being made a curse for them. (Galatians 3:13; 4:5).

2. He redeemed us also *from the house of bondage*, that awful place in which we were by nature, symbolized by Israel’s being in bondage in Egypt, whence the Lord redeemed them, (Exodus 13:3,) and called them to remember that redemption. (Deuteronomy 24:18)

3. He redeemed us *from the grave and the prison-house*. “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.” (Psalm 49:15.) “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.)

4. He redeemed us *from the power of darkness*. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” (Colossians 1:13).

5. We are redeemed *from the hand of*

the terrible. “And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.” (Jeremiah 15:21.) “I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!” (Hosea 13:14)

6. We are also redeemed *from all iniquity.* “He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” (Psalms 130:8.) “Who gave Himself for US, (not — them), that He might redeem US from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14.)

And lastly, we are redeemed *from all evil,* as was our father Jacob of old. “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;” “Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8:21,23.)

Observe also the *price* of our redemption, and how that endears the Person of the Redeemer when it is made known by the power of the Holy Spirit. It was in His love and in His pity He redeemed us, (Isaiah 63:9,) and that “not with corruptible things,” as silver or gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ,” (I Peter 1:18,19,) “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Ephesians 1:7.) And so the four and twenty elders sang a new song, saying, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed US to God by Thy blood.” (Revelations 5:9.)

Once more, as to the *extent* of this atonement. It reaches to the “ends of the earth,” (Isaiah 45:22,) to “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Revelation 5:9.) It reached Jonah in the belly of hell, (Jonah 2:2,) Mary Magdalene in all her filth, David in his twofold iniquity, Paul in his bloody persecutions of the saints, and the thief on the cross in the last hour of his life. In a word, it extends TO ALL THE ELECT, all the adopted, all the sheep, all the effectually called; and so wonderful is its efficacy that it washes them, purges them, pardons them, brings them nigh; makes peace; covers, blots

out, and for ever puts away all the sins, fifth, transgression, and impurity of all the predestinated family of the Prince of Peace.

Yours truly,

May, 1847.

GAD

Selected: *Gospel Standard*, 1847.

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL: THE ELECTION OF GRACE

By Mr. P. Brunker

“Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance.” — Psalm 106:4,5.

If the verses which we have read applied only literally to the Lord’s chosen national people, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, we should have no hope; we should not be interested in them. It is according to our fallen nature to fight against the sovereignty of God. It would be a mercy if we are ever humbled to enquire whether we are the spiritual seed, whether we are the Lord’s chosen: “O ye seed of Abraham His servant, ye children of Jacob His chosen.”

This Psalm and those which follow apply essentially to the election of grace. (Romans 11:5.) They did not apply in an essential way to the Lord’s national people, but they did apply to them figuratively and are fulfilled fully and completely to that spiritual Israel of whom the apostle Paul writes: “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Romans 2:28,29.)

These are wonderful verses; I hope I have felt it. Psalm 105 records the wonderful mercy of God in choosing a people, in setting them apart as distinguishing them from all other

people, in choosing them, not because they were anything great in themselves, not because they were many. They were a poor people. Israel came into Egypt because the Lord purposed sending a famine; He purposed to bring His chosen into poverty. "Moreover He called for a famine upon the land: He brake the whole staff of bread." You will notice that the statement immediately follows verse 15: "Touch not mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." He rebuked kings in the days of Abraham and Isaac, showing His concern for the welfare of His people. When God Himself called for a famine it seemed as though this poor little flock, this poor little chosen people, must perish even in the promised land. But they were constrained by a divine, merciful providence to go into Egypt. There they were greatly increased and were in due time brought out. "He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant." How sacred is this expression 'His holy promise'. That promise was holy because it concerned Christ; it concerned His seed, His chosen, the objects of His love and what and by what means He would make His beloved people: "This people I have formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise." It is holy because this people would be a sanctified people. "The people shall dwell alone." "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." This is the holy promise, the oath. "Because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." So this holy promise embraces Isaac, Jacob, and all the chosen people, not according to the flesh but the seed of promise. And lest we should mistake the meaning, the apostle Paul was inspired to tell us what that seed was: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to Thy Seed, which is Christ." — Christ Himself! Are we the seed of Christ? Are we in this holy promise? This will exercise a child of God! It exercised David: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O

visit me with Thy salvation."

I want to bring your minds back to that general point which we made at the beginning. David was inside the promise according to the flesh, but he did not presume upon the Scripture. He saw by precious faith that there was a chosen people and he did not presume it of himself. Though anointed king, though raised up to lead his people, though chosen captain of the Lord's typical chosen people and himself typically and prophetically the fore-runner of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, still David said, "Remember me with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation."

"Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore." The Lord's people are brought to seek as described in the early part of Psalm 105. There will be a harmony between Psalm 106:4 and Psalm 105:4. David had such a glimpse of this "holy promise," of its beauty, its sovereignty, its freeness, and the blessedness of those who seek the Lord, who seek the mercy of being feelingly interested in this holy promise. What a mercy if we are found seeking Him, calling upon His name, which is the name of Christ, the name of Jesus. This is the mercy of God towards His chosen people. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save HIS PEOPLE from their sins." His people are sinners; that is their characteristic. Psalm 106 opens this up in a special way. Having laid a foundation in Psalm 105 of the wonderful mercy of the Lord towards His chosen people, we have in Psalm 106 an insight into the humbling effect of these truths upon the psalmist. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all His praise?"

"Living tongues are dumb at best.

We must die to speak of Christ."

Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? To see a little preciousness in a dear Redeemer, in His condescension, His humiliation, His choice of a beloved people; to feel a desire to be among them — these are some of His "mighty acts." Then David expresses his own longing desire in verse 5, "That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the

gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance.” Why did he make these petitions? Because he was graciously taught, and no other reason. The light shone into David’s heart concerning the way in which the Lord had dealt with this people since they were first made manifest in the calling of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and as the divine purpose of God toward His people not yet born was made known in vision to Abraham. The Lord faithfully fulfilled every jot and tittle of that holy promise. So David could see in all the subsequent chastening, the fear, the deliverances, the adversaries, the helps which the people of God experienced in the promised land, a wise, divine, gracious hand controlling all. His faith led him beyond this lower world, beyond the physical things of time, and perceived that within this manifest choice of the nation the Lord had a chosen people, a “remnant.” “Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.”

“That I may see...” His heart’s desire was to come to Mount Zion, to see the exalted Lamb of God, to behold Him in redemption, to behold Him in remission, to “see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation.” He desired to feel an interest in that better covenant, that holy promise, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” So the 106th Psalm, having opened with David’s own desire, the fruit of what had been revealed to him concerning God’s unalterable purposes of mercy, continues, as the Spirit opens it up to him, with the confession of verse 6. “We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.” This he feels to be his own case. In these Psalms, 105 through 107, David opens up his own feelings concerning his own backsliding and sin. Then the Spirit leads him back again to the behaviour of the children of Israel in the wilderness, how rebellious they were and how they provoked the Lord, despite His holy promise, despite His faithfulness in bringing His chosen national people out of Egypt and

making them a separate people. So he records in Psalm 106 all the transgressions of the Lord’s people and ends with a prayer, “Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen.” He takes us forward to the captivity which ultimately took place. “He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. Save us, O Lord our God.” I would have you to ponder that these are the words of holy David. If anyone had reason to be confident he had, but he saw the spirituality of these truths, the necessity of an interest in the holy covenant, the holy promise. “Gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise.”

Then, having brought us to the end of Israel’s experience in the wilderness, in Psalm 107 he shows the over-ruling, immutable wisdom of God over all our sins and all our backslidings, over every step that we take. We may call them ‘right steps’ or ‘wrong steps,’ but we take no right steps of our own except by the Lord’s enabling. That same enabling power that keeps us from going wrong is the power that we need to restore us when we go astray. This truth is freely and wonderfully repeated again and again through 107 together with the Lord’s chastening of His chosen people. “Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law.” (Psalm 94:12.) “Blessed is the man who Thou chooseth, and causet to approach unto Thee.” (Psalm 65:4.) In Psalm 107 you can see that blessing again and again. “Then they cried...” What blessed people! They were caused to approach unto their God. On what grounds? Obedience, righteousness, faithfulness — not their own! but God’s, “For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant.” “Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.” (Psalm 106:3.)

May these remarks lead us to an understanding of that blessedness and we shall see how free, how spiritual it is. There is nothing legal in this “doing righteousness,”

but a looking wholly to the covenant of mercy, to a faithful God. "Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and His strength: seek His face evermore. Remember His marvellous works that He hath done; His wonders and the judgments of His mouth." Amen.

Address at "Ebenezer" Clapham, in England, on 25th June, 1983.

IN DEFENSE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

By Augustus Toplady, 1794

[The following is the *Preface* to the translation of Jerome Zanchy's *Absolute Predestination* by Augustus Toplady as a defense of the truth of free grace against the trashy venomous attacks against Predestination by the vile heretic, John Wesley. Toplady was the author of *Rock of Ages*, and died at age 38.]

WHEN I consider the absolute independency of God, and the necessity, total dependence of all created things on Him their First Cause; I cannot help standing astonished at the pride of impotent, degenerate man, who is so prone to consider himself as a being possessed of sovereign freedom, and invested with a power of self-salvation: able, he imagines, to counteract the designs even of Infinite Wisdom, and to defeat the Agency of Omnipotence itself! "Ye shall be as gods," said the tempter to Eve in Paradise: and "ye are gods," says the same tempter now to her apostate sons. One would be apt to think that a suggestion so demonstrably false and flattering, a suggestion the very reverse of what we feel to be our state; a suggestion, alike contrary to both Scripture and reason, to fact and experience; could never meet with the smallest degree of credit. And yet, because it so exactly coincides with the natural haughtiness of the human heart; men not only

admit, but even relish the deception! and fondly incline to believe that the father of lies does, in this instance at least, speak truth.

The Scripture-doctrine, of predetermination, lays the axe to the very root of this potent delusion. It assures us that all things are OF GOD. That all our times, and all events, are in His hand. Consequently, that man's business below is to fill up the departments and to discharge the several offices assigned him in God's purpose from everlasting; and that, having lived his appointed time, and finished his allotted course of action and suffering; he, that moment, quits the stage of terrestrial life and removes to the invisible state.

The late deservedly celebrated Dr. Young, though he affected great opposition to some of the doctrines called Calvinistic, was compelled by the force of truth to acknowledge that "there is not a fly, but has had infinite wisdom concerned, not only in its structure, but in its destination." (*Centaur Letter 2*) Nor did the late learned and excellent bishop Hopkins go one jot too far, in asserting as follows:

"A sparrow, whose price is but mean, two of them valued at a farthing (which some make to be the 10th part of a Roman penny, and was certainly one of their least coins), and whose life, therefore, is but contemptible, and whose flight seems giddy and at random; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights anywhere, without your Father. His all-wise Providence hath before appointed what bough it shall pitch on; what grains it shall pick up; where it shall lodge, and where it shall build; on what it shall live, and when it shall die. Our Saviour adds, "the very hairs of you head are all numbered." God keep an account, even of that stringy excrescence. Do you see a thousand little motes and atoms wandering up and down in a sunbeam? It is God that so peoples it; and He guides their innumerable and irregular strayings. Not a dust particle flies in a beaten road, but God raiseth it, conducts it's uncertain motion and by His particular care conveys it to the certain place He had before appointed for it; nor shall the

most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any further. Nothing comes to pass, but God hath His ends in it, and will certainly make His own ends out of it. Though the world seem to run at random, and affairs to be huddled together in blind confusion and rude disorder; yet God sees and knows the concatenation [to link together in a series or chain — interstitial. Ed.] of all causes and effects, and so governs them, that He makes a perfect harmony out of all those seeming jarring and discords. — In respect of God, there is nothing casual, nor contingent, in the world. If a master should send a servant to a certain place, and command him to stay there, till such a time; and presently after, should send another servant to the same place; the meeting of these two servants is wholly casual, in respects to themselves; but ordained and foreseen by the master who sent them. So it is in all “fortuitous” events here below. They fall out unexpectedly as to us; but not so as to God. He foresees, and He appointed, all the vicissitudes of things. (Sermon upon Providence: Matt. 10:29)

To illustrate this momentous doctrine, especially so far as God’s sovereign distribution of grace and glory is concerned, was the chief motive that determined me to the present publication. [Toplady refers to his translation from the Latin, and consequent publication of, Zanchy’s *Absolute Predestination*.] In perusing the works of that most learned and evangelical divine, one of whose performances now appears in an English dress (translation), I was particularly taken with that part of his Confession of Faith (presented A. D. 1562, to the senate of Strasburgh), which relates to Predestination. It is, from beginning to end, a regular chain of solid argument: deduced from the unerring word of divine revelation, and confirmed by the coincident testimonies of some of the greatest lights that ever shone in the Christian Church: such were Austin, Luther, Bucer. Names, that will be precious and venerable, as long as true religion has a friend remaining upon earth.

The Arminians [those who believe that man has a freewill], I know not whether

through ignorance or to serve a turn, affect at present to give out that Martin Luther and John Calvin were not agreed in the article of predestination. A more palpable mistake was never advanced. So far is it from being true, that Martin Luther went as heartily into that doctrine as Calvin himself. He even asserted it with much more warmth, and proceeded to much harsher lengths in defending it than Calvin ever did, or any other writer I have met with of that age. In the following translation, I have, for the most part carefully retained Zanchy’s quotations from Luther; that the reader, from the sample there given might form a just idea of Luther’s real sentiments concerning the points in question.

Never was a publication of this kind more seasonable than at present. Arminianism is the grand religious evil of this age and country. It has, more or less, infected every Protestant denomination amongst us; and bids fair for leaving us, in a short time, not so much as the very profession of godliness. [Ed. Note: Mr. Toplady’s observation was correct. Wherever Arminianism, or freewillism, has gained the heart and soul of a population, vital godliness becomes near extinct. Certainly that evil doctrine of anti-Christ has pretty much destroyed true religion in this nation. I The power of Christianity has, for the most part, taken its flight, long ago; and even the form of it seems to be on the point of bidding us farewell. Time has been, when the Calvinistic doctrines were considered, and defended, as the palladium of our established Church by her bishops and ministers; by the universities and the whole body of the church. It was during the reigns of Edward VI, queen Elizabeth I, James I, and the greater part of Charles I, as difficult to meet with a minister who did not preach the doctrines of predestination; as it is now to find one who does. We have generally forsaken the principles of the Reformation; and Icabod, or “thy glory is departed,” has been written on most of our pulpits and church-doors ever since.

“Thou, O God, hast brought a vine out of Egypt; Thou hast cast out the heathen and

planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root; and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs to the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast Thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they, who pass by the way, do pluck her? The boar, out of the wood, doth waste it; and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of Host! Look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine; and the vineyard, which Thy right-hand hath planted; and the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself! So will we not go back from Thee: quicken us, and we shall call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of host! cause Thy face to shine, and we will yet be saved.” (Psalm 80.)

Never was a description more strikingly expressive of the state our national Church is, at present, in! Never was supplication more pertinently adapted to the lips of her genuine sons!

In vain do we lament the progress of Popery; in vain do we shut up a few private mass-houses; while our presses teem, and our pulpits ring, with the Romish doctrines of merit and freewill: doctrines, whose native and inevitable tendency is to smooth the passage for our fuller coalition with Antichrist. If we are really desirous to shun committing spiritual adultery with the mother of harlots and abominations, we must withdraw our feet from the way that leadeth to her house.

Blessed be God, the doctrines of free grace are again beginning to lift up their heads amongst us: a sign, it is to be hoped, that the Holy Spirit has not quite forsaken us; and that our redemption from the prevailing errors of the day draweth near. Now, if ever, is the time, for all who love our Church and nation in sincerity, to lend a helping hand to the ark; and contribute, though ever so little, to its return.

The grand objection, usually made to that important truth of predestination, which is the main subject of these pages, proceeds on a

supposition of partiality in God, should the Calvinistic doctrine be admitted. If this consequence did really follow, I see not how it would authorize man to arraign the conduct of God. Should an earthly friend make me a present of 10,000 pounds would it not be unreasonable, ungrateful, and presumptuous in me, to refuse the gift, and revile the giver, only because it might not be his pleasure to confer the same favour on my next-door neighbour? In other cases, the value of a privilege, or of a rare possession, is enhanced by its scarceness. A virtuoso [an art collector in this context – Ed.] sets but little esteem on a medal, a statue, or a vase, so common that every man who pleases may have one of the same kind. He prizes that alone as a rarity which really is such; and which is not only intricately valuable, but which lies in few hands. Were all men here upon earth qualified and enabled to appear as kings, the crown, the scepter, the robe of state, and other ensigns of majesty would presently sink into things hardly noticeable. The distinguishing grandeurs of royalty, by ceasing to be uncommon, would quickly cease to be august and striking. Upon this principle it was, that Henry IV of France, said, on his birthday: “I was born as on this day; and, no doubt, taking the world through, thousands were born on the same day with me: yet, out of all those thousands, I am, perhaps, the only one whom God hath made a king. How signally am I indebted to the peculiar bounty of His providence!” – Similar are the reflections, and the acknowledgements, of such persons, as are favoured with the sense of their election in Christ to holiness and heaven.

“But what becomes of the non-elect?” You have nothing to do with such a question, if you find yourself embarrassed and distressed by the consideration of it. Bless God for His electing love; and leave Him to act as He pleases by them that are without. Simply acquiesce in the plain and clear Scripture account; and wish to see no farther than revelation holds the lamp. It is enough for you to know that the Judge of the whole

earth will do right. Yet will you reap much improvement from the view of predestination, in its full extent, if your eyes are able steadfastly to look at all which God hath made know concerning it. But if your spiritual sight is weak, forego the enquiry, so far as reprobation is concerned; and be content to know but in part, till death transmits you to that perfect state, where you shall know but in part, till death transmits you to that perfect state, where you shall know even as you are know. Say not, therefore, as the opposers of these doctrines of truth did in Paul's days: "Why doth God find fault with the wicked? For who hath resisted His will? If He who only can convert them refrains from doing it, what room is there for blaming them that perish, seeing it is impossible to resist the will of the Almighty?" Be satisfied with Paul's answer: "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" The apostle hinges the matter entirely on God's absolute sovereignty. There he rests it; and there we ought to leave it.

Were the whole of mankind equally loved of God, and promiscuously redeemed by Christ; the song which believers are directed to sing would hardly run in these admired strains: "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God." Etc. (Rev. 1:5,6) An hymn of praise, like this, seems evidently to proceed on the hypothesis of peculiar election on the part of God; and of a limited redemption on the part of Christ: which we find still more explicitly declared in Revelation 5:9 where we have a transcript of that song which the spirits of just men made perfect are now singing, before the throne, and before the Lamb: "Thou was slain, and hast REDEEMED US unto God, by Thy blood, OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Whence the elect are said to have been redeemed from AMONG men. (Rev. 14:4.)

In short, there is no such thing, as casualty, or accident, even in things of temporal concern: much less, in matters

spiritual and everlasting. If the universe had a Maker, it must have a Governor: and if it has a Governor, His will and providence must extend to all things without exception. For my own part, I can discern no medium between absolute predestination and black atheism. [And neither can we! Ed.]

Mr. Rollin, has a fine passage which says: "Providence delights to conceal its wonders under the veil of human operations." (Rollins's *Arts and Science of the Ancients*, Vol.3:p.480.) Mr. Hervey has likewise a most beautiful and judicious paragraph; where speaking of what is commonly termed "accidental death," asks: "Was it then a random stroke? doubtless, the blow came from an aiming, though invisible hand. God presides over the army of heaven. God ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth. And God conducteth what men call "chance." Nothing, nothing comes to pass, through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen, they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels of eternal wisdom. The Lord, with whom are the issues of death, signs the warrant, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster is only the agent, or instrument, appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the king of Israel was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot. A certain man drew a bow at a venture, (I Kings 22:34). At a venture, as he thought. But his hand was strengthened by an Omnipotent aid; and the shift leveled, by an unerring eye. So that what we term "casual" is really Providence; accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition. How comforting this reflection! Admirably adapted to soothe the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! Excellently suited to dissipate the fears of godly survivors; and create a calm intrepidity, even amidst innumerable perils!" (Hervey's *Meditations*, Vol. I. p. 27,28.)

Which wisdom of conduct, and gentleness of operation (not less efficacious, because gentle and invisible), instead of

exciting the admiration they deserve; have, on the contrary, given occasion to the setting up of that unreal idol of the brain, called *chance*. Whereas, to use the lovely lines of our moral poet:

“All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance. direction which thou canst not
see.”

Words are only so far valuable as they are the vehicles of meaning. And meaning, or ideas, derive their whole value from their having some foundation in reason, reality, and fact. Was I, therefore, to be concerned in drawing up an expurgatory index of language, I would, without mercy, cashier and proscribe such words as “chance,” “fortune,” “luck,” “casualty,” “contingency,” and “mishap.” Nor unjustly. For they are *voces & praeterea nihil* — mere terms without ideas. Absolute expletives which import nothing! Unmeaning cyphers, either proudly invented to hide man’s ignorance of real causes, or sacrilegiously designed to rob God of the honour due to His wisdom, providence, and power.

Reason and revelation are perfect unisons in assuring us that God is the Supreme, independent first Cause: of whom, all secondary and inferior causes are no more the effects. Else proper originality and absolute wisdom, unlimited supremacy and almighty power, cease to be attributes of God. — I remember to have heard an interesting anecdote of king William and bishop Burnet. The Arminian prelate affected to wonder, “How a person of his majesty’s piety and good sense could so rootedly believe the doctrine of absolute predestination.” The royal Calvinist replied: “Did I not believe absolute predestination, I could not believe a Providence. For it would be most absurd, to suppose, that a Being of infinite wisdom would act without a plan: for which plan, predestination is only another name.”

What, indeed, is *predestination*, but God’s determinate plan of action? and what is *providence*, but the execution of that plan? In his decree, God resolved within Himself what He would do and what He would permit to be done: by His Providence, this effective and

permissive will passes into external act, and has its positive accomplishment. [Ed. note: It seems to us, that the word ‘permissive’ is only an anthropomorphic expression; i.e., man’s attempt to express an incomprehensible concept. We do not like to use the word in reference to God’s holy will, for He says He “is of one mind.” Nevertheless, it does express a thought in a short-cut way of speaking.] So that the purpose of God, as it were, draws the outlines; and Providence lays on the colours. What that designed, this completes: what that ordained, this executes. Predestination is analogous to the mind and intention; Providence to the hand and agency of the artificer. Hence, we are told, that God worketh (there is His Providence) all things after the counsel of His own will (there’s His decree), Ephesians 1:11. And again, “He doth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand (i.e. His will, and the execution of it, are irresistible), nor say unto Him, What dost Thou?” i.e. His purpose and providence are *sovereign*, and for which He will not be accountable to His creatures. Daniel 4:35.

According, therefore, to the Scripture representation, Providence neither acts vaguely and at random, like a blind archer who shoots uncertainly in the dark as well as he can; nor yet *pro re nata*, or as the unforeseen exigence of affairs may require: like some blundering statesman, who plunges his country and himself into difficulties, and then is forced to unravel his cobweb and reverse his plan of operations, as the best remedy for those disasters, which the court-spider had not the wisdom to foresee. But shall we say this of God as the Arminians do? It were blasphemy! He that dwelleth in heaven, laugheth all these miserable after-thoughts to scorn. God, who can neither be over-reached, nor over-powered, has all these wretched post-expedients in derision! He is incapable of mistakes. He knows no levity of will. He cannot be surprised with any unforeseen inconveniencies. His throne is in

heaven, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Whatever, therefore, comes to pass, comes to pass as a part of the original plan: and is the offspring of that prolific series of causes and effects, which owes its birth to the ordaining and directing will of Him in whom we all live and are moved and have our being. Even as Grotius himself is forced to own, "Even the crimes which God permits the perpetration of, are not without their good consequences." A bold saying, this! But the sayer was an Arminian: and, therefore, we hear no outcry on the occasion! Providence, in time, is the hand that delivers God's purpose, of those beings and events with which that purpose was pregnant from everlasting. The doctrine of equivocal generation is not more absurd, in philosophy, than the doctrine of un-predestinated events is in theology.

Thus, the long train of things is, though "A mighty maze, yet not without a plan." God's sovereign will is the first link; His unalterable decree is the second; and his all-active Providence time third; in the great chain of causes. What His Will determined, that His Decree established, and His Providence, either mediately or immediately, effects. His Will was the adorable spring of all: His Decree marked out the channel: and His Providence directs the stream.

"If so," it may be objected, "it will follow, that whatever is, is right." Consequences cannot be helped. No doubt, God, who does nothing in vain; who cannot do any thing to no purpose, and still less to a bad one; who both acts and permits (sic), with design; and who weighs the paths of men; has in the unfathomable abyss of His counsel very important reasons for permitting the first entrance of moral evil, and for allowing both moral and natural evil still to reign over so great a part of the creation. Unsearchable are His judgments (decrees) and His ways (the methods and dispensations of His Providence) past finding out. Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? For, of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. (Romans 2:33,34,36). As to

myself, I can, through grace, most heartily adopt the maxim of Bengelius: "I neither wish to know more than God has revealed; nor to remain ignorant of what He has revealed." I desire to advance, and to halt, just when and where the pillar of God's written word stays, or goes forward. I am content, that the impenetrable veil, divinely interposed between His purposes and my comprehension, be not drawn aside until faith is lost in sight, and my spirit return to Him who gave it. But of this I am assured, that echo does not reverberate sound, so punctually, as the actual disposal of things answers to God's predetermination concerning them. This cannot be denied without dethroning Providence, as far as in us lies, and setting up "fortune" in its room. There is no alternative. I defy all the sophistry of man to strike out a middle way! He that made all things either directs all things He has made, or has consigned them over to "chance." But, what is "Chance?" a name for nothing! Arminianism, or freewillism, therefore is atheism.

I grant that the twin doctrines of predestination and providence are not without their difficulties. But the denial of them is attended with ten thousand times more and greater difficulties. The difficulties, on one side, are but as dust upon the balance: those on the other, as mountains in the scale. To imagine that a Being of boundless wisdom, power and goodness, would create the universe and not sit at the helm afterwards, but turn us adrift to shift for ourselves like an huge vessel without a pilot, is a supposition that subverts every notion of Deity, gives the lie to every page in the Bible, contradicts our daily experience, and insults the common reason of mankind!

"Say'st thou, the course of nature governs all?"

The course of nature is the art of God."

The whole creation, from the seraph down to the indivisible atom, ministers to the Supreme Will, and is under the special observation, government, and direction of the Omnipotent Mind: who sees all, Himself unseen; who upholds all, Himself unsustained; who guides all, Himself guided

by none; and who changes all, Himself unchanged.

“But does not this doctrine tend to the establishment of fatality?” Supposing it even did, were it not better to be a Christian fatalist, than to avow a set of loose Arminian principles [sic: the Arminians have no principles: Ed.], which, if pushed to their natural extent, inevitably terminate in the rankest atheism? For without predestination, there can be no providence; and without providence, no God!

After all, what do you mean by “Fate?” If you mean a regular succession of determined events, from the beginning to the end of time; an uninterrupted chain without a single chasm; all depending on the eternal Will and continued influence of the great First Cause: if this is “fate,” it must be owned that it and the Scripture predestination are, at most, very thinly divided; or rather, entirely coalesce. But if, by “Fate,” is meant either a constitution of things antecedent to the Will of God; by which He Himself was bound, *ab origine*; and which goes on, of itself, to multiply causes and effects, to the exclusion of the all-pervading power and unintermitting agency of an intelligent, perpetual, and particular providence: neither reason nor Christianity allows of any such Fate as this. Fate, thus considered, is just such an extreme, on one hand, as Chance is, on the other. Both are, alike, unexistable.

It having been not unusual, with the Arminian writers to tax us with adopting the fate of the ancient Stoics [Roman philosophers who believed all things were fixed and determined by chance, which even the gods were helpless before, — SC P.] I thought it might not be unacceptable to the English reader to subjoin a brief view of what those philosophers generally held (for they were not, all, exactly of a mind) as to this particular. It will appear to every competent reader, from what is there given, how far the doctrine of Fate, as believed and taught by the Stoics, may be ad-miffed upon Christian principles. Having large materials by me for such a work, it would have been very easy for

me to have annexed a dissertation of my own upon the subject: but I chose to confine myself to a small extract from the citations and remarks of the learned Lipsius; who seems, in his *Physiologia Stoicorum*, to have almost exhausted the substance of the argument, with a penetration and precision, which leave little room either for addition or amendment. In a cause, therefore, where the interest of truth is so eminently concerned, I would rather retain the ablest counsel, when it can be had, than venture to be, myself, her sole advocate.

For my own particular part, I frankly confess, that, as far as the coincidence of the Stoical Fate, with the Bible-Predestination, holds good; I see no reason why we should be ashamed to acknowledge it. Austin, and many other great and excellent men, have not scrupled to admit both the word “fate,” and the thing, properly understood. I am quite of Lipsius’s mind: “I have no objection to being called a Stoic, so you but prefix the word “Christian” to it.”

Here ended the first lesson: i.e., here ended the *preface* to the former edition of this tract. A tract whose publication has raised the indignant quills of more than one Arminian porcupine.

Among those enraged porcupines, none has, hitherto, bristled up so fiercely, as the high and mighty Mr. John Wesley. He even dipt his quills in the ink of *forgery*, on the occasion; as Indians tinge the point of their arrows with poison, in hope of their doing more effectual execution. The quills, however, have reverberated, and with ample interest, on poor Mr. John’s own pate. He felt the unexpected pain, and he has squeaked accordingly. I will not, here, add to the well-deserved chastisement he has received: which, from more than one quarter, has been such, as will, probably, keep him sore, while his surname begins with “W.” Let him, for his own sake, learn, as becomes a very sore man, to lie still. Rest may do him good: motion will but add to his fever, by irritating his humours already too peccant. Predestination is a stone, by rashly falling on which, he has, more than

once, been lamentably broken. I wish him to take heed, in due season, lest that stone, at length, fall on him. For, notwithstanding all his delinquencies, I would still have him avoid, if possible, the catastrophe of being ground to powder.

Note: The above is the *Preface* to Mr. Toplady's translation of Zanchy's *Absolute Predestination*. The article in the current issue of the *SIGNS* is by Zanchy — not Toplady — and immediately follow the next chapter on the "Account of the Life of Jerome Zanchius." The Zanchy article is a classic masterpiece. We commend the *SIGNS* for its republication in its pages too. SCP.