

PREDESTINATION
By Jonas C. Sikes,
Being his first article on this subject,
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I think it is hurtful and wrong to make a hobby of any one point of doctrine (even though it is the truth) to the exclusion of all others, yet I think we should preach a full gospel and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. But I think it is the best, yea, the wisest and only Scriptural course, when speaking on this or any other subject (and especially when we know that some of the dear saints differ from us), to be kind and gentle and meekly instruct them. It has been said, "good words do more than hard speeches." The warm sunshine on a Spring morning will make the farmer pull off his overcoat, while all the blustering winds of Winter will only make him draw it closer to him. If we would do as Solomon, we would seek to find out acceptable words, yet we should not go so far in that direction as to forsake the truth. He says, "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which is written is upright, even words of truth." I think this would be a wise course for all of God's ministers, and I desire to follow it.

With this much said, I now desire to say something on the subject of predestination. I desire that after my departure my friends may have my views on this all-important subject. I think that the statement in the London Confession of Faith with reference to this subject is highly correct, i.e., that "this high mystery of predestination should be handled with special prudence-and care." How well I shall be able to succeed in doing this will be left for the readers to judge.

Predestination means a previous purpose or a previous determination; Webster defines it as the "purpose of God from eternity respecting all events." I accept this as its true meaning. Yet Webster was only a man and must not be considered as infallible in divine things. This doctrine can never be understood as long as we try to measure it by anything short of God Himself. The nearer we come to an understanding of Him, what He is, and the nature of His divine attributes, the nearer we will come to a full and complete understanding of this doctrine.

1st. God is eternal. Hence, His purposes or determinations must also be eternal, if He is eternally perfect in all His attributes. I shall not claim that His purpose is an attribute, but it is the outgrowth (to say the least of it) of

wisdom, which is an attribute. And here I would note that when I say "wisdom," that I do not mean knowledge. Wisdom is one thing and knowledge is another, as you will find by consulting the 11th chapter of Romans. Wisdom in man is that natural attribute by which he is enabled to study or investigate and find out things that he would not otherwise know. Hence, when he gets to the limit of his wisdom or intellectual powers in an investigation he can go no further; he has found out all he can know about it. But if his wisdom had been perfect, he would have seen through the whole thing at a glance the first time it was presented to his mind. Hence, his knowledge of it would have been perfect. God being eternally perfect in wisdom has known all things. I shall not claim as to the order of time that God's wisdom is older than His knowledge, for then I would set up for a time a God of wisdom without any knowledge. But I will say that in the order of thought, wisdom is the real basis or foundation of all knowledge. Wisdom is the basic attribute of the Godhead, by which He is governed in all His other attributes. Without wisdom, power would be misused, love would be without a true guide, justice and judgment could not exist, mercy would be a misnomer; in fact, chaos would reign supreme, and "God" would be a name for nothing. So then, wisdom being the foundation of all that is right, I desire upon this foundation to build my structure.

It has been suggested by some, that if we could prove that the first transgression was predestinated, then the predestination of all things could be established. So to this end I shall first direct my attention. In the first place, I would ask, did not God know that if He made Adam as He did and placed him where he would be subjected to the evil influence of the Serpent, that he would transgress? If not, where is the perfection of His wisdom? If He did, why did He make him and place him thus? Was it because He was not able to make a perfect man; one that would not yield to temptation? one that could not be corrupted? If so, where is the perfection of His power? If He did not have the power then, and has never, nor will never increase in power, will He ever be able to take a poor, fallen wretch and make a perfect and incorruptible man out of him? I suppose, however, that all who claim to be Old School or Primitive Baptists will admit that He had both the wisdom and the power to have had it different, if He had willed it different, but this would be an admission that He did not will it different, which would be to say that He willed it to come to pass as it did. These are self-evident facts. If God willed it to be different from the way it came to pass, is it not remarkably strange that He arranged things so that He knew that it would not work out as He intended it, when He could only have thought how He would have it to be, and said, "Let it be so," and it would have been so? It is a self-evident

fact that needs no argument to prove it, that either the introduction of sin into the world was according to God's purpose, or else the whole covenant plan of redemption, the advent of Christ into the world, all of His righteous life, all His suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension are not the result of God's free and independent purpose, for it was to redeem man from the consequences of this act and its outgrowth that all the above took place. Hence, if the transgression was not a part of God's eternal purpose, then it follows that the covenant of redemption owes its existence (not to the free and independent purpose of God outside of an extraneous influence, but) to the act of a man by which it was made necessary and a way opened up for it to enter. So in order of thought it would stand thus: First, God determined to make a man. Second, He saw that man would transgress. Third, He devised a plan of redemption. This order cuts God's purpose in two, and sets them thus: First, God's free and independent purpose was to create man. Second, God's knowledge of man's independent act in transgression; and Third, God's necessitated purpose to redeem man was influenced by what He foresaw. If we follow this stream to its logical end, where will it empty? If God had rather sin had not entered the world, then it follows that there has never been a single act, or creature, or thing, in this universe that has been as God originally would rather have had it; because every act, creature, or thing, has been in some way affected by sin, which (according to that view) had rather had never existed. Even the earth, with which every living thing has to do, was cursed because of transgression, which God would rather have had different. Not even one act of the holy Son of God was as God would rather have had it, for His acts were to redeem sinners, when God had rather there had been no sinners to redeem. Nor throughout all eternity can anything be as it would have pleased God to have had it, for it will be one eternal song and shouts from the redeemed sinners praising Him for their redemption, when God had rather that man had never sinned. If this were so, then there would have been no redemption from sin and no shouting of praises by redeemed sinners. I shall trace this stream no farther at present, for I see from its course that it empties into the broad ocean of infidelity. But all of the above is true and much more that might be said, if God did not purpose that sin should enter the world.

It is said that God foreknew that man would sin and He therefore made arrangements to meet it. But stop, my brother, this "therefore" is what I object to. It says that the foreseen act of man was the cause of God making the covenant, so you see at once that if this act of man was not embraced in God's purpose then the origin of the covenant is owing partly (to say the least of it) to something outside of God, or His purpose. This branch empties into

the stream that we have just left, so we will quit it. You say that God foreknew that man would sin, so say I. But I would ask upon whom did this foreseen act of man then depend? Man was not yet created, and his existence depended yet wholly upon God and the fulfillment of His purpose, and surely none can think that man's act could ever have been, had there been no man to act. So then, this foreseen act of man could not have been any less dependent upon the fulfillment of God's purpose for existence than was the man by whom it was to come.

Having thus far confined myself to what seems to be self-evident facts and irresistible conclusions I will not notice some Scripture on the subject.

I will first call attention to Genesis 1:28: "And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." Now, the word, "replenish" means to "fill up." From this it will be seen that instead of God meaning for them to remain in the garden, He meant for them to fill up and inhabit the entire earth. To this we will add the 29th verse : "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, it shall be to you for meat " In the first place, we see from this, that man was intended to inhabit the entire earth, from the fact that the fruits that grow on all the face of the earth were to be meat, or food, for him. And in the second place, we see that the fruit of every tree on earth that bore seed was to be to them for meat. Some questions might arise in our minds right here. Was there any such tree in all the earth that yielded fruit as the tree of knowledge of good and evil? If so, was it to be for them for meat? If not, what does the above language mean? But I will pass this for the present.

We next call attention to Acts 17: 24-26: "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with man's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the Lace (the earth and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." It is clearly seen from this as well as from Genesis that God's purpose was (not that man should remain in the garden, but) that he should dwell on all the face of the earth. This is what Paul says that He made them for. Much might be said right here, but this article is going to grow lengthy, so I pass on.

I will now call your attention to Genesis 2:5: "And there was not a man to till

the ground.” The next verse tells us of God watering the earth and making man. Now, what would we reasonably conclude from the above Scripture, was God's purpose for making man? I think all reasonable men would say, "to till the ground." The other passages referred to show that God purposed that man should dwell on all the face of the earth and all of the fruits of the various trees thereof should be to them for meat; while this one shows that God purposed that man should till the ground. Some say, "O, yes, this is all true, but it is because God foresaw that man would transgress that He purposed to scatter them on all the face of the earth and have them till the earth." But then we would be forced to admit one of two things, i.e. , that this foreseen transgression was a part of God's original purpose, or else the cause of this purpose to scatter them on all the face of the earth and that they should till the ground was outside of both God and His original purpose to make man. This again resolves itself into the absurd position that we have already noticed: First, That God freely and independently purposed to make man. Second, That He foresaw that man would not do as He willed for him to do. Third, That God was governed in all of His other purposes concerning man, both for time and eternity, by the foreseen act of man rather than His own sovereign and independent will and choice. But I must quit this part of the subject and notice for a while the reason why God created all things.

It is said by Solomon that, "The Lord has made all things for Himself yea even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverb 16:4). From this we learn that God made all things for Himself It is said in Revelation that "Thou hast made all things for Thyself and for Thy pleasure they are (now exist) and were created" (Revelation 4:11). From this we find that they were all created for His pleasure, and they are still existing for the same purpose. In Colossians, it is said, "All things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16). This is enough to prove that God had a use for all that He created. Now it is admitted by all that some men come into the world sinners, they live in sin and they die in sin and go to eternal perdition. Will someone please tell me whether or not God's purpose in creating them is or will be fulfilled in them?

God's purpose in time and all created things is, I think, for the manifestation of His own glory. In other words, to manifest Himself in all of His divine perfections and manifestly glorify Himself in all of His attributes. Now, we read of His own eternal purpose, His immutable counsel, the counsel of His will, etc., so in order of thought we say that God "held a council" in eternity. He was guided by wisdom, and consulted His own will. In this council was considered all things that He now "works after the counsel of His own will." As a result of that council the world was created and all things therein. Now

look at this creation as it fell from the plastic hand of the Creator. Is it not wonderful? Yea, marvelous! But how many of the attributes of the Godhead do you see manifested in this wonderful work? Only two: wisdom and power. Wisdom to contrive this wonderful plan and power to perform it. Wisdom and power are here manifested as being infinitely great, but love, mercy, justice, wrath, and His immortal purity are yet unknown to man and must remain so as long as man remains in his state of innocence. God can love man just the same in his upright as in his fallen state, but love cannot be manifested in its fullness so as to glorify God in this attribute. "If ye love them that Love you what reward have ye: do not even the Publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46,47). So God's love could not be manifested in its fullness on them that loved Him. "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die," so if Christ had died for a good man it would have manifested no more love than perhaps some men would have done, so then it must be true that for God's love to be manifested in its fullness man must fall from his "good" and upright state. Man fell, and it is said that "God commendeth His love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), also, that "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:1-5). Here we have His great love most gloriously manifested on fallen man.

Next we come to mercy. The above text says, "But God, who is rich in mercy. . ." Yes, He is rich in mercy, but how can mercy be bestowed on one who is not a sinner? How could the great richness of God's mercy ever have been manifested without a transgressor? But man transgressed and now God can "make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23). Yet notwithstanding the greatness of God's love, and the richness of His mercy, they must have been forever unknown and unappreciated if man had not become a sinner.

These two most glorious attributes, however, could not reach the case of, nor benefit, a sinner at the expense, or exclusion, of justice. Justice, in its greatness could not be manifested in a world of sinless, upright beings, but when man transgressed, she laid her iron hand upon him; love nor mercy can reach him only through justice. Behold what unrelenting justice! Before she will swerve one jot or one tittle, she will take the heir of heaven, the only Son of the Supreme Judge Himself, who sits upon the great white throne, and slay Him for the crimes committed.

Love and mercy, guided by wisdom, offers Him as a ransom. Justice, guided

by wisdom, accepts Him in behalf of all for whom He became a Surety. But God continues to show His wrath and make His power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Through all of this we can see God in His true character. His attributes are most gloriously manifested in the creation of the world and His dealings with sinners, and I feel sure that this course has been no second choice with Him!

Man may determine to do a thing and seeing that it will not work out as he desired it should, make some subsequent arrangements to meet and rectify in measure this foreseen, yet undesirable event. But the all-glorious eternal "I Am" has never been so hard-pressed as that! But this is exactly the light He must be held in by all who hold that He did not purpose that sin should exist. They must divide His purposes into two sets, anterior and posterior.

His anterior purpose being His purpose to create all things, which purposes would be absolutely free from, and independent of, and in no way influenced, or hampered by, any unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of His purpose. His posterior purposes being all such as relate to man as a sinner. The covenant of redemption and the punishment of sin go together. In fact, all of His dealings with man as a sinner from the morn of transgression to the eve of eternity would come under the head of His posterior purposes, being made as the result of, and to meet and deal with, an unpleasant foreseen event, which was coming up outside of, and in no way attributable to, His purpose.

Such a petty god may do to speculate upon, but it is not the God before whom the "four and twenty elders" fell down in wonder and admiration, and cast their glittering crowns before His throne, shouting, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" The man who believes that the transgression was a foreseen event not embraced in God's eternal purpose, and that the covenant was made to meet this exterior foreseen event, must admit that God has anterior and posterior purposes. He must admit that His anterior purposes are based on an interior cause (the counsel of His will), and His posterior purposes are based on an exterior cause (an unpurposed foreseen event). We are all bound to admit that in the order of thought God's knowledge of man's transgression was based on His determination to make man, for had there been no such determination to make man, there would have been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress. If there had been no knowledge that there would be a man to transgress, there would have been no covenant made to redeem man for transgression. So we are forced to

either take the position that it was all from start to finish embraced in God's eternal and unchangeable purpose, or that He has anterior purposes based upon interior causes, and also posterior purposes based upon exterior causes. The latter is Arminianism straight, so you can see at a glance that I believe in the predestination of all things. I shall not try to add to the strength of this doctrine by the use of the term "absolute," nor diminish its force by the use of the term "permissive."

I have neither time nor inclination at present to enlarge upon this subject, for my article has grown too lengthy already. But I will say this much more: if the logic contained herein is true with reference to the first transgression, it is also true with reference to every other event of time. This is my first, and may be my last, upon this subject, but I desired to record my views upon it before I go hence. With me it is either an Almighty God who works all things after the counsel of His will, or no God at all. I fail to find any standing room between this and atheism.

If this scribble should help any poor, halting child to a better understanding of this profoundly deep and mysterious subject, I would be glad to hear from them. With love to all the household of faith, I remain a poor, unworthy sinner, saved by grace if saved at all.

GOD'S WORK IS STRANGE, WONDERFUL, AND EXCELLENT
By Jonas C. Sikes, 1911

"For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do HIS WORK, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth" (Isaiah 28:21). "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (verse 29).

The prophet Isaiah was a strong believer in God's determinate counsel extending to all events; this is clearly seen in all of his writings. In this text, the Lord rising up and being wroth was in order "that" He might do His work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act. It was that He might do this Himself. "That" as it is used here, is in place of the preposition "for" and is used to signify purpose, or in other words, it introduces a clause expressing purpose; it means that God rose up and was wroth for the purpose expressed

in the text.

This purpose, as more fully explained in the next verse, is a consumption even determined upon the whole earth. This text necessarily leads us to consider the nature and character of God and His eternal purpose as embraced in His determinate counsel. A wrong conception of the nature and character of God will necessarily lead us into a wrong conception of the nature and character of His purposes. The doctrine that a man preaches is a correct measuring rod with which one can correctly determine the length and breadth, height and depths of the perfection or imperfection of the God of his conception. If he conceives of God as being eternal, immutable and absolutely and eternally perfect in wisdom and in power, his doctrine will always conform to that thought, and thus will his conception of God be reflected in his every doctrinal utterance. To conceive of God as being eternally perfect in wisdom and power, then we must conceive of His purposes, decrees or determination, as originating in Himself, and as being based wholly upon the counsel of His will, which will was in no sense hampered, biased, by or influenced in its determination by any external cause, force, power, circumstances or events foreseen but undesired. To argue otherwise, is to impeach the eternal perfection of God. To say that He was "before all things," and that He is the "Creator of all things," "that are in heaven and that are in earth, that are visible and that are invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers" (Colossians 1:16), then to say that all or any part of these things that He created are not working exactly what He desired or intended when He made them, no more nor no less, is to say that He was either deficient in wisdom to devise a plan for their creation so that they would do exactly what He willed for them to do, no more no less, or He is deficient in power to so perform in the making of them as to so make them that they would do this and no more.

If we admit that God knew what the result would be if He made the world as He did, then we admit that He willed these results, or was powerless to prevent them. The first admits His predestination of all things, and the last admits that He is imperfect.

What intelligent man, going to make a machine or implement, does not first consult his will as to what he wants it to do? And having determined just what he wants it to do, does he not then engage his wisdom to devise a plan for the making of it so that it will meet and perform the exact demands of his will? And having thus by his intelligent devised a plan to meet the demands of his will, does he not then, to the full extent of his power or ability so

perform the task of making it as to make it so that it will do exactly what he willed for it to do? If he should see that if he makes it as he planned, it will not do what he willed or purposed for it to do, but will do that which he does not want it to do, will he not, if he is wise enough, so change his plan as that when it is made it will meet and perform the exact demands of his will? When it is done, and in operation, will it not, by its workings and movements reflect the exact character of the wisdom that planned it and the power or ability that made it? If it does what its maker did not will for it to do, do we not know at once that he made a mistake somewhere, either in his plan for it or in the making of it? And does not this mistake declare plainly that he is imperfect? Is God less intelligent than man? If what God has made is doing that which He did not will or purpose for it to do, and is leaving undone that which He did will or purpose for it to do, does not His perfection stand impeached by the workmanship of His hand just as truly as man's perfection does when judged by the same rule?

Paul gives us this rule to judge the perfection of God by when he says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The word power here means to present the perfection of His creative power which includes His will, wisdom and strength as they are brought to view in the things "that are made," they being the workmanship of His hand. We are justified then in judging of the perfection of God by the things that He made. The many, many places in the Scriptures that call our attention to God as the Creator of all things are to heighten our conception of His infinite perfection and greatness.

The man then who, with the book of nature open before him, will conclude that the things that God has made are doing more or less than He willed and arranged for in His divine plan, must and does deny the infinite perfection of God, and Paul says he is "without excuse" for so doing. These people, whom the prophet was speaking of in the text at the beginning of this article, belong to this class. It is said of them in the same chapter, "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way: the priest and prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (Isaiah 28:7).

This is the exact condition of things today, and it is the cause of the great wrangle on the question of God's sovereignty and Conditionalism. This

"wine and strong drink" does not mean literal wine and whiskey, but alludes to the doctrinal tenets that they have imbibed. They are drunk on the wine of the doctrine of Babylon. This causes them to err in vision when they look at the things that are made which are the works of God's hands, and to stumble in judgment, when they judge His perfection by the things that are made and conclude that they are doing much more on the one hand than their Maker designed, and much less on the other, and thus they impeach His perfection and sovereignty. In the 9th verse, the prophet ask, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? " Then He answers, "Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." Thus we see at a glance, that doctrine is the thing under consideration. Not only do they err in vision and stumble in judgment when they look at the works of God and thus misjudge Him by His works, but when they read His word, they do the same thing, for we read in the 13th verse, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." Here, it is clear to be seen who it is that have erred in vision and stumbled in judgment. It is those who hold that the precepts of God as laid down in His word were intended for men to obey them and thus obtain the favor of God and escape the trouble and awful scourging which is here announced against this people. But it is most emphatically asserted in this verse that they were given unto this people for exactly the opposite purpose; for it is said that it was "that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and be snared, and taken." Those who deny the purpose of God in all things, even in the disobedience of men to the precepts of God, are the ones who are drunk on false doctrine, and therefore they err in vision and stumble in judgment. They are the class of whom Peter speaks when he says, "But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (1 Peter 2:7-8). Peter believed in the appointment of all things, even in relation to the disobedience of wicked men and here asserted that these people were appointed to disobedience.

Who can gainsay it but an infidel? Isaiah believed and asserted the same truth in the last verse that I have just cited from the 28th chapter; not only so, but also asserts that the consumption that shall come upon the whole earth is determined of God. He does not stop at this, but when he makes this statement, he then goes out to men in their every day avocation and says, "Give ye ear and hear my voice, hearken and hear my speech, doth the

plowman plow all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he had made plain the face thereof doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cumin, and cast in the principle wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cartwheel turned about upon the cumin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff and the cumin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working"(Isaiah 28: 24-29). This is God's work even in the skills and activities of men in nature! How wonderful indeed is the determinate counsel of our God! There is nothing left out of it. It reaches to obedience (1 Peter 1:1), and to disobedience (1 Peter 2:8). It reaches to salvation (2 Thessalonians 2: 13), and to condemnation (2 Thessalonians 2:12 and Jude 4); to our every day avocations (Isaiah 28: 23,29). Yet in all of it God is just and right (Deuteronomy 32:1-4). But while this is true the carnal mind cannot see it; it is only seen by faith. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God through faith unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also the Greek; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith"

(Romans 1:16-17). The system then that God has devised is one, which none can see His righteousness in, only as it is revealed to them. It is no wonder then that the entire religious world unite in saying that if God has predestinated certain things, then He is unrighteous for His counsel, and as it is proclaimed in the true Gospel, is only known to those to whom God reveals it. The preacher who proclaims it must be in possession of the true faith of God's elect and the hearer who receives it must be in possession of the same; otherwise the preacher cannot preach it, and the hearer cannot receive it. Jesus says that, "wisdom is justified of her children" (Matthew 11:19). To justify the wisdom that devised such a scheme one must be born of the same wisdom.

If we proclaim that God has not purposed anything but righteousness, every one from the vilest wretch in a felon's cell to the most popular Doctor of Divinity in the throng of antichrist will join in one chorus of "Amens" to it; but if we declare that the eternal God in His determinate counsel has determined just what shall be in the world, there is a howl goes up from the same class, that is heard throughout the land, declaring that God is unrighteous and there is no such thing as justice if this be true. But there are

a few who can see the righteousness of God in such a gospel and they join in that sweet song, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." But let us drop back and considered more fully the language of the text. The prophet says, "I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a consumption even determined upon the whole earth." If the consumption was determined, a legitimate question arises here, "Who determined it?"

If God had determined this consumption upon the whole earth, when did He determine it, and by what was He moved to so do? Was it by the free and immutable counsel of His own will that He did it, or was He moved to do it by some extraneous or external cause or influence? If He is "without variableness or shadow of turning" (James 1:17), or if "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth" (Job 23:13); or in other words if "same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8); free, immutable and absolutely independent, then He was Master of the surroundings, and was not moved in any degree by anything outside of Himself. If God was infinite in wisdom, then He was certainly wise enough to arrange a plan for creation so that all things embraced therein would work exactly and at all times just as He willed for them to work; and if He was unlimited in power, then He was fully able to make them so they would do this; Then if He did not thus make them, why did He not do it? Did He foreknow just what each of His creatures would do? If not, then He was not perfect in wisdom. Was He not able to make them so that they would do exactly to suit Him? If not He was not perfect in power. Would any intelligent being, who had the wisdom and the power to make a thing so that it would suit him in all its movements knowingly make it so that it would not do what he desired it should? That God did determine this consumption upon the whole earth we cannot deny. To say that He had rather the thing which it was to be a punishment for, had never existed, and that He was moved by them to determine this consummation is to impeach His perfection and say that He has anterior and posterior purposes, the former being based on the free and immutable counsel of His own will, and the latter upon some unpleasant foreseen events which He had much rather would never occur, but seeing that they would occur, He was moved thereby to make arrangements to accommodate them. And as at that time He alone existed, the indication would be, that He was unable to arrange in the making of the world so as to prevent their occurrence, but was forced out of necessity to meet these things by new arrangements and do the best He could under the circumstances. Such an idea of God is preposterous. God says to those who hold such an idea, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself" (Psalm

50:21b). To avoid this conclusion we are forced by the Scriptures to conclude that God's purpose or determinations are all of one age, and are all free and immutable, and are all based on one internal cause, the counsel of His own will. To argue that God had rather that sin, (the thing which this consumption is to destroy), had never entered the world, and that He was moved by foreseeing that it would come to determine all of His dealings with it and the subjects thereof, is to argue that God in all of His dealings with man as a sinner, has in every act of His done that which He would rather not have done, but was moved thereto by conditions thrust upon Him, which He would rather had never existed, I must conclude then, that such is not and cannot be true. But we cannot escape this position if we deny that His free and eternal purpose embraces all events.

I will say with Paul, "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 counselor or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen" (Romans 11:34).

GOD'S DECREE AND THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

**By: Jonas C. Sikes, Sulphur Bluff, Texas
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PROPHECY EXPRESSES THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL OF GOD

To all who love the truth, greetings:

With a felt sense of my weakness and an humble desire that the God of truth may enlighten me and direct my mind in the way of truth in a manner that it may be enlightening, strengthening and comforting to His people, and to silence and put to flight the enemies who are so loud and boisterous against the truth, I have decided to pen my thoughts on the doctrine of God's most holy, righteous, and sinless "decree of all things whatsoever come to pass." (London Baptist Confession Of Faith, 1689, Chapter III, paragraph 1)

To my mind, to deny that God predestinated all things is to deny the very existence of God Himself. To my mind, to say that an all-wise and all-

powerful being would make a thing for Himself, and not make it so that it would operate to suit Himself, is unthinkable. I wish to ask all who may read this to stop and think. Would you, dear reader, do such a thing? You undertake to make a thing for yourself; you know how you want it to perform; just what you want it to do; and you know also what you do not want it to do. You are perfectly able to make it so that it will function exactly as you want it to, so that it will not do anything you rather it would not do. Would you willingly and knowingly use your wisdom and power to make it so that it would not do what you wanted it to do, but would do what you most rather it would not do? Would it not be absolute folly to do such a thing? Yet if you deny that the things that God made are not performing as He desired and intended for them to do, but to the contrary, are continually doing that which He rather they would not do, you are charging Him with such folly as you nor any other sane man would be guilty. A man might for lack of knowledge and ability to do otherwise, make a thing that will not fill the purpose for which he made it, and it may do that which he much rather would not be done. But his work brands him as an imperfect bungler and a failure. Any one seeing his machine in operation, and knowing what it was intended to do, would understand that he, as a mechanic, was a failure. He would understand that by the thing that the man made. If it was contrary to God's will for sin to enter the world, and for His creatures to do as they have done, and He had rather things had come to pass as they have and yet He willingly and knowingly used His wisdom and His power to make it so that it would not operate to suit Him, He made the most colossal blunder that was ever made. The perfect wisdom and almighty power of God forbids the thought of such folly to Him. And yet there is no escaping that awful charge against Him by those who deny the predestination of all things.

They admit that God knew that if He made the world as He did, that it would turn out as it has. They admit that He could have made it so that no sin could have entered it. They say that He had much rather man had kept the law and that none of his race had sinned, and yet they acknowledge that He willingly and knowingly made it so that sin was sure to enter and all mankind were sure to become sinners and commit every wicked act that they have done, when it would have suited Him much better for none of these things to ever have taken place.

Dear reader, my God is not guilty of such folly as that. No one who knows our God can believe such foolishness. The Bible teaches as clearly as it teaches that there is a God, that all things are appointed by Him. God Himself says so. In Isaiah 44:7, he says: "And who, as I, shall call, and shall

declare it, and set in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them." Here, God Himself declares that He appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming and shall come. The old Geneva Bible which is 105 years older than the King James, reads thus: "And who is like Me, that shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order before Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And what is at hand, and what things are to come? Let them shew unto them." This is clearly set forth in Isaiah 46:9-10, where God Himself said again: "Remember the former things of old; for I am God and there is none else; I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10). If this language means anything it means, that His declaration of the end and the things that were not yet done in ancient times when He declared these things, were all embraced in His counsel, and when He declared them, He said "My counsel shall stand," meaning these things shall surely come to pass, for they are in My counsel and it shall stand. Reader, if this is not what it means, can you tell why when He made this declaration back in ancient times He said at the end of that declaration "My counsel shall stand"? What relation has His counsel and this declaration in connection, if He did not mean to emphasize the certainty of what He declared by saying "My counsel shall stand"? And why should that give any assurance whatever to their certainty if they were not determined in His counsel? There is no question in my mind but what all things were embraced in His determinate counsel, and back in the beginning, from the most ancient times, He declared the whole thing.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF WORKS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD

In Genesis 3:15, God said to Satan, "and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His heel." Here is a declaration, in a prophetic way of all that would come through Satan, and it was made "in the beginning" which is the most ancient of time; and it was made by God Himself. It declared the end, which will be the final destruction of Satan and all of his works, when all whose names are "not found written in the book of life" shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and Satan that deceived them shall be cast into the same lake. And in this shall be fulfilled another declaration of God by the mouth of Isaiah, when he said: "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the

dragon that is in the sea" (Isaiah 27:1). To that end Jesus was made partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14b-15). All this was determined in God's counsel and declared from the beginning by Himself in a prophetic way, when He said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). Every sin that has ever been committed from that day to this has been the work of Satan who through that enmity, is striking at the Seed of the woman –the blessed Son of God. Not itemized and declared separately; but in the one short sentence is contained all things, both good and bad, that has since that time, and shall ever take place in time, "yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein" (London Baptist Confession, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1). All the works of Jesus Christ, and all the works of the devil, are embraced in that prophecy and its declaration. For all good works done by men are the `fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:11); God "working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:21). While all sin is by Satan, the "Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Every act of man, either good or bad, are by one of these two princes; all good, by Jesus Christ, the Prince of righteousness; and all sin or disobedience by Satan, the prince of all unrighteousness, and the enemy of all righteousness. The entire work of both was declared in this short declaration of God to Satan: It is like the word and saying of Christ; if all that is contained in it was brought out and itemized in specific detail, I suppose the world itself would not contain the book.

Let me say right here that all the words of God's mouth, whether written or spoken directly to the people or through the prophets are a declaration of the counsel of His will, what John the Baptist preached to the people was called the counsel of God, and it was said of those who rejected his preaching, that "They rejected the counsel of God"(Luke 7:30). That which is written in the scriptures is repeatedly called either that "which was determined," or the "counsel of God" In Matthew 26:24, it reads, "The Son of man goeth as it is written." And in Luke 22:22, I read: "And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined." Thus showing beyond a peradventure that, that which is written is that which was determined. In Acts 4:27-28, it says Herod, who put to death all the male children of Bethlehem two years old and under, and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were "gathered

together to do what Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." And it is said in Acts 13:29, "And when they, (these men that had gathered together to do what God's counsel determined before to be done) had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree." It is made very plain here that which was written was what God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done; and when they had done it all, they took Him down from the tree. Yet they, who committed the act, did it "by wicked hands ye have seized and slain." Jesus said, "The Scriptures must be fulfilled" and again, He said, "And the Scriptures cannot be broken." It is not only a fact that the Scriptures will not be broken, but Jesus says they cannot be broken. If this is truth, then the men who do the wicked things that are told in the Scriptures cannot do otherwise.

Because we believe and teach this Biblical truth as set forth by the blessed Savior, the enemies of Jesus and all those who teach what He taught, have named us "Can't-help-its." But the Scripture is God's word, and David said, "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." The word "settled" here means, fixed, established, made certain, etc. If the word of God was settled or settled in heaven, who settled, or established it there? And when and how did he do it? Surely it was God that settled it in His counsel when He determined or purposed in Himself what should take place in time. Having thus established it, or settled it, He could declare it with certainty, saying, "My counsel shall stand. " And on this certain basis He could say by Isaiah, "The Lord of Host hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24). Again, "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." And again, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). Not one word that He has spoken has returned unto Him void. Not one word has failed to accomplish that which He pleased and not one word that has not prospered in the thing whereunto He sent. This is a wonderful statement from a wonderful God. The word that went out of His mouth to Adam in the garden, though Adam disobeyed, "it did not return unto Him void but it accomplished that which He pleased, and prospered in the thing whereunto He sent it." If He had not forbade Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam would not have sinned in eating of it, hence no sin would have entered into the world, nor the remedy for sin determined in God's counsel would have been

of no use, and not one of the human family would have shouted God's praises for their redemption from sin. For there would have been no sin, hence, no redemption from sin; and the admonition: "And now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen, "(Jude 24,25) would never have been given. And no voice of redeemed sinners would ever have been lifted in His praise, 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 out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

Dear children of God who have a precious hope that you are one of this number, would you wish it to be otherwise? You see what you would have missed if you had not been a convicted sinner. You can understand and appreciate what Paul meant when he said: "But GOD BE THANKED THAT YOU WERE THE SERVANTS OF SIN, but ye have obeyed FROM THE HEART that form of doctrine which was delivered to you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). If God had nothing to do with you becoming the servant of sin; and did not purpose it, nor did not arrange for it in His counsel, and it was not His will for you to be such, then why in the name of reason, should you thank Him for it? How could you thank Him for your deliverance from it? If you feel He had nothing to do with it, and there is any thanks due for it, why not thank the devil and yourself for it? If sin had not entered the world, it is evidence that there would not have been any multiplication of the human family. And Adam and Eve would have remained childless and with no knowledge of good and evil.

Jesus said: "Except a corn (grain) of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Jesus did not mean to teach them a lesson in the germination of wheat, but He expressed a universal law in nature, by which He meant to assure them that He must die, or there would be no spiritual multiplication. There would none to come forth in his image. There was no multiplication until Adam and Eve died in trespasses and sin. The desire that is necessary in order to the multiplication did not come until after the transgression. It then came as a part of the curse of the law. God said unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be unto thy husband and he shall rule over thee." The desire, without which there would have been no multiplication,

was given as a curse because of transgression. I doubt, even now, that there ever would be another child born into the world if that desire was entirely removed. If man had not been made subject to vanity, he would not have yielded to temptation, but he was made subject, not willingly (on his part, for he had no will in the matter) but by the reason of Him who subjected the same in hope (Romans 8:20).

God's desire and expectation was that a man subject to vanity would fill the purpose for which he was making him, and for that reason He made him that way. Adam could have made a world as easy as he could have kept that law. The idea that he was "able to stand, but liable to fall," is to my mind, very foolish. I mean absolute inability. He did have what is called relative ability, which means he had some of the qualifications necessary to enable him to keep the law (hence, his accountability), but not all of them. It takes three things to constitute absolute ability: they are physical, mental and moral. Physically, means strength to perform; mental means the knowledge of how; and the moral means the will or desire to perform. Any one of these three constitutes relative ability. And two of them constitute relative ability. But no one has ever done anything without all three of them in operation. The physical and the mental are used as agents to accomplish the desires of the moral. The moral (will) suggest what to do; the mental directs how to do it; and the physical performs the work. It took more mental ability to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge than it would to have let it alone. One who did not have knowledge enough to reach out his hand and take hold of the fruit and put it to his mouth, could have let it alone, and it took more physical power to eat it than it would to have let it alone, for a paralytic with the lock jaw could have let his hands hang limp at his side and his mouth remain closed; while the one who eats it must have the strength to eat it and the knowledge of how to perform in doing so. But the knowledge of how and the strength to perform will never do anything until the will suggest what to do. Adam possessed abundant knowledge and strength to have turned away and let it alone, if his will had suggested that; but he lacked the will. The will said eat it, and when the will says do a thing his wisdom and his strength will make the attempt, and if they can do so they will do just what the will has suggested. This is a law of nature, and they cannot do otherwise. They are made that way and they cannot help it. Adams' ability was all on the side of eating at the time he ate the fruit, and he had no ability whatever, to not eat at that time.

THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED

If Adam was "able to stand" of himself without divine aid, then he possessed more ability than God thought Jesus Christ possessed. God said of Christ, "He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways" (Psalm 91:11) "and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6). Do you suppose, dear reader, that Adam possessed greater ability than Christ had? If not, and God thought it was necessary to uphold Jesus Christ and keep Him in all of His ways to prevent Him from stumbling and falling, do you suppose Adam was "able to stand" without any such divine aid? Such a thought is preposterous; and yet all who hold that Adam was able to stand, teach this absurd and ridiculous idea. Jesus said in John 5:30, "I can of mine own self do nothing," yet men insist that Adam could of himself have kept the law. The evidence is that no man can do anything except what he does. Leaving out predestination entirely, if God knew what we would do, we cannot do otherwise. If we can do that which God did not think we would do, then we can deceive Him, and prove that He did not know anything about it at all; but only thought it and was mistaken. No need to say, "O, we could do differently from the way we do, but God knew that we would not." For that only means "O, we could fool God and prove that He did not know what we would do, but He knows we will not." There is no escaping the conclusion that if we can do different from the way God had a mind that we will do, then we can deceive Him and prove beyond a doubt that He was mistaken. If, in the six thousand years that the world has stood, with millions of men and billions of other things acting every moment of that time, and yet, none of them have ever done anything except that which He foreknew they would do; the logic of events teaches us that such is impossible. But if God has "declared from ancient times the things that are not yet done," and God cannot lie, then they cannot fail to come to pass just as He has declared them. For the Scriptures, which is God's Word and a declaration of His counsel cannot be broken. They must be fulfilled. Jesus said so, and Peter emphasized it in the case of Judas. He said, "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). Everything Judas did in that whole tragic scene at the crucifixion of Christ was minutely described in the Scriptures (Psalm 109: 6-20), and it was not only determined and written that it should be fulfilled, but it was "needful." If it is a fact that what was written concerning a wicked wretch as Judas, must needs be fulfilled then it is reasonable that all other Scriptures must needs be fulfilled as well.

The following statement of Jesus covers all of the scriptures. It says: "But the scriptures (not just a part of them) MUST be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49. These

are God's words, a declaration of His counsel; and He has determined that shall be fulfilled. He absolutely decreed that the word which He sent out by His messengers – the prophets – shall be fulfilled, and He has so firmly fixed it that Jesus says the "scriptures CANNOT be broken" (John 10:35). If this is true – and it is – then not one thing that has been foretold by the prophets can fail to come to pass. Hence, the absolute predestination of things, whether appearing good or evil, that has been told by the prophets is the truth. And there is no room for a reasonable doubt, that in a general way, all things that ever take place are embraced in prophecy. Thousands of most wicked things that have ever occurred were foretold in the scriptures, and in many instances occurred when those wicked men fulfilled what was foretold of them. It is written in the New Testament that: "This was done THAT the scriptures might be fulfilled" (Matthew 26:54; Mark 14:49; 15:28; Luke 4:21; John 13:18; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28; and 19:36)."THA7', "as used in these places, introduces a clause expressing purpose. As, "The man traveled, THAT he might regain his health." Those scriptures do not mean that it was the purpose of wicked men that fulfilled them to fulfill the scriptures, but they mean that it was God's purposes being fulfilled. Through the entire scene, at the crucifixion of Christ as act after act of wickedness was committed, just as it was written in the scriptures that it should be. The writers that recorded the fulfillment of them said repeatedly, "This was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled." Meaning they were done for that purpose. And yet it is made very clear that it was not the purpose of those who did those things to "fulfill the scriptures;" for it is positively said of them that "Because they knew Him not, neither the voices of the prophets, which were read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him, and though they found no cause of death in Him yet they desired Pilate, that He should be put to death," (Acts 13:27-28), "And when they had FULFILLED ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN OF HIM, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre" (verse 28). This makes it very clear that God has purposed that everything, both good and "bad," shall come to pass just as He has declared them by the prophets. If all things foretold in the scriptures are purposes to come to pass just as He has foretold them, who has the right to say that all are not purposed of Him to come to pass just as they do? Jesus said in Matthew 23:34 and 35, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye SHALL kill and cruces, and some of them ye SHALL scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; THAT upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35). What did Jesus say that they should kill these prophets and wise men

and scribes for? He says they SHALL do it "THAT upon them may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth." Did they kill righteous Abel? Here it is stated as His absolute purpose THAT they SHALL do this in order to bring down upon them all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zecharias. Just here I will ask those who charge that God would be unjust if He punished a man for that which that man could not help; could those men help what CAIN DID four thousand years before they were born? Not only are they held to account for the shedding of the blood of Abel, but for ALL the righteous blood from Abel down to this day, is to be visited upon them. Just here all the weak-kneed and faint-hearted will do like their forefathers did when Christ was here on earth. They will say, "These are hard saying, who can hear them?" and they will turn back and walk no more with Him. Here is expressed His absolute purpose that they shall kill these wise men, prophets and scribes, that He may visit them with the punishment due all the righteous blood that has been shed since the foundation of the world.

I have been in the Old School Baptist church 43 years. When I joined them, nearly all who called themselves Primitive or Old School Baptist, believed this hard doctrine. But I have lived to see thousands of them turn back and walk no more with us because of these hard sayings. But let us not stop here, for the half has not yet been told.

In Jeremiah 10:23, we read: "Lord, I know that the way of man is NOT IN HIMSELF; it is NOT IN MAN that walketh to DIRECT HIS STEPS." Now let us reason just a little on this text. Jeremiah says he knows that it is "NOT in man that walketh to direct his own steps." Did Jeremiah tell the truth? If he did, then every one who teaches that IT IS in man that walketh to direct his steps is teaching a falsehood. Every doctrine that is based on the idea that man can direct his own steps is based upon a falsehood.

The next thought then is if man does not and cannot direct his own steps, then by whom, are his steps directed? Solomon answers that question by saying: "A man's heart deviseth his way, but THE LORD DIRECTETH HIS STEPS" (Proverbs 16:9). We will add to this one more statement from Solomon. He says in Proverbs 20:24: "Man's goings are OF THE LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" MAN'S GOINGS (in the plural, not just one steps of his goings, but all of them) is OF THE LORD. In all candor and all seriousness, dear brethren, are not these three last scriptures cited the truth? If they are, then beyond shadow of doubt, the predestination of all things is the truth. God does not just merely permit man to walk as he does, but He "directeth his steps." His "goings is of the Lord."

Not one step has ever been taken by man on earth that God did not determine in His counsel to direct. If He did not determine in His course to direct the steps prior to man's going just what man's steps should be, then He determined something since then and was not of the same mind now that He was before. But He is an unchangeable God with an immutable purpose! (Hebrews 6:17).

Solomon said again, "There are many devices in a man 's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Proverb 19:21). David said in Psalm 33:10,11: "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Then he adds, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart unto ALL generations." Not one thought has God ever had concerning all generations that was not just what He had determined in His counsel! That counsel was so complete and all reaching, that God has never had a thought of anything that ever transpired in this world throughout all generations that was not embraced in His determinate counsel. Hence, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever. THE THOUGHTS of His heart unto all generations" (Psalm 33:11). Not AND the thought (singular) of His heart, but THE THOUGHTS (plural) of His heart. His counsel is the thoughts of His heart to all generations.

Isaiah said, "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought, so shall it comes to pass; as I HAVE PURPOSED, SO SHALL IT STAND" (Isaiah 14:24). Here again, His purpose and His thoughts are co-extensive. There is not a single thought of His heart unto all generations that He has not determined in His counsel shall stand and come to pass just as He thought it.

To illustrate, suppose that I, in my early life had sat down to study out my course for the future. I consult my will as to the end or goal, or final ambition toward which I shall strive, or devote my life in an effort to attain. And to the full extent of my wisdom and understanding, I think out and plan every detail of things in my domain that will come under my control, direction and supervision. To the full extent of my ability, I think out every thing that is necessary to be done by me or others who are, or will be, at my disposal, direction or control, and having thought it all out, and am satisfied that I have made no mistake, I determine that this course shall be carried out in every detail with perfect precision, in every thing that I shall do, and in every step taken by those under my control. Of course, as a man I am imperfect. I will, in my deliberations, have many thoughts that I have to abandon. I find that they were not the right things to do. They would not work out the end

desired. This is because of my imperfections. If I had been perfect in wisdom and understanding I would not have had any imperfect thoughts. God is said to be perfect in knowledge (Job 36:4). And His understanding is infinite (Psalm 147:5). He never has to change His thoughts, abandon His thoughts, or take a second thought concerning any thing. For the accommodation of our finite minds, God has seen fit to set forth all of His entire course, both with regard to His own actions and the actions of all things else that come in His domain under His directions as His creatures, as having been thought out and determined by Him in counsel before the world began. In His course, His own will was His only counselor. In Isaiah 40:13,14, the very important and pertinent questions are asked: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord or being His counselor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding?"

The meaning of all these very pertinent questions is that no one taught Him anything. He has never consulted anything but His own will as to what the future should be. It was He Himself, who gave futurity to the things that are future. There would have been nothing in the future if He had not so willed, determined, planned, arranged for it to come and brought it to pass. Who, but an infidel, will deny this? If this is true, then the predestination of all things is the truth beyond a shadow of a doubt. These questions are pertinent to ask those who hold to the foreknowledge of God in all things, but deny His predestination of all things. They say that He foreknew just what men would do in time, because He had the power of foresight to look down into time and see just what man would do. He, therefore, according to them, foreknew all things.

When I was a small boy I had never seen an elephant. I lived near the turnpike between one county seat and another. There was a circus passing from one town to the other on the turnpike. Nearly everybody went out to the little village on the highway to see the circus, and especially the elephants, pass. The turnpike was perfectly straight for several miles. The merchant at the place had a telescope. Many of the larger ones present, who had never seen an elephant, looked through the telescope and saw the elephants at a distance and learned how they looked before they got there. But we little fellows had to wait until the elephants got there to see, and thereby learn how they looked. However, what they knew about how the elephants looked they learned by seeing them before they got there, just as we learned it by seeing them when they got there. They learned how they looked by the telescopic view that they got of them before they got there. All Arminians in the

universe who pretend to believe in the foreknowledge of God, claim He learned how things will be in time by seeing them coming before hand, just as these people learned how the elephants looked by seeing them coming before they got there. Under that theory, God as truly learned what He knows about actions of men by foreseeing them acting, as we learned it when seeing them act. Accordingly, their view is that God as surely learned from the creatures themselves as we learned it from them beside the turnpike. The difference is this: He has a telescopic vision and we have not.

All of you that teach that God foreknows things because He looked down before time and saw them coming, stand up here and behold your ugly old Arminian faces in the Bible looking-glass. Here it is: "Who taught Him knowledge and shewed unto Him the way of understanding?" Answer thou Him, will you? If a vision should open up to you so that you could look down to the tenth generations and see the people of that time in action just as they will be when that time shall arrive, you would learn from them by foreseeing them in action, just what their actions will be at that time. You learned it from them just as surely as those who live at that time and see them in action will learn it from them.

Truly did Moses say, "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deuteronomy 32:31). Our Rock God- challenges all who believe in such a god as that to produce one that can do as He does. He says, "And who, as I, shall call, and declare it, and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them" (Isaiah 44:7). This, our Rock (God) affirms that He not only appointed the ancient people, but He also appointed the things that are coming and shall come and He challenges them to show unto the people another god that can do such things. Not only did He appoint the things that are coming and shall come, or as the Geneva translation puts it, "Since I appointed the ancient people and what is at hand, and what things are to come" but He decreed them from ancient times. Our Lord is the only God that can and has done this, our enemies themselves being judges. They all deny that their god has done this. Shout on, ye dear old servants of the most high God, for if He is for us, who can be against us? One man with this God is greatly in the majority.

He has also "Declared from ancient times the THINGS that are not yet done" (not saying, I see them fore-coming, and therefore I can declare them) but, saying, "My counsel shall stand and I WILL DO ALL MY PLEASURE" (Isaiah 46:10). For further proof that the things God has declared by His

prophets, are a declaration of His counsel, which He has declared shall stand, see Jeremiah 49:20. The greatest part of this chapter is a declaration by the prophet of the things that shall befall Edom. And in the 20th verse, the prophet said: "Therefore hear ye the COUNSEL OF THE LORD against Edom," meaning that all of this that God is declaring by him concerning Edom, is but a declaration of His counsel, which shall stand and surely come to pass. Then He begins the next chapter (50) by speaking against Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans. And He pronounces the most terrible things that shall come upon her by the hands of other nations. And in the 45th verse, He says, "Therefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord that He hath taken against Babylon, and His purposes that He hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans, etc." Here again that which is declared by the prophet is called the "counsel of the Lord," and in this place it is called His "purposes which He hath purposed." There is no room whatever for doubt that all prophecy is but the declaration of God's eternal counsel.

Again, this is clearly shown in Acts 4:24-28. In this scripture we have the Apostolic Confession of Faith and it declares very clearly just what I am herein declaring. It reads: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice TO GOD with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE" They did nothing there on that occasion, except what GOD'S HAND AND HIS COUNSEL, HAD PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED TO BE DONE. What was done by God's hand, as well as His counsel, to make those things that were done on that day, certain, was not done on that day, but was done before. Further on, I will show the part that God's hand took in determining beforehand the certainty of those things that took place on that day. But for the present I am showing that prophecy is only a declaration of God's counsel. In almost everything that they did on that occasion, was declared by those that recorded it, that this was done "that the scriptures might be fulfilled " And while what they did is what God's hand and COUNSEL determined before to be done, it is recorded that when they did all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree. That which was written of Him was that which God had declared by the mouth of the prophets should be done to Him on that day. And it was what

God's hand and His counsel had determined before should be done there and then.

It is recorded in Acts 3:18, "But those things, which God before spewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, HE HATH SO FULFILLED." I think I have clearly shown that prophecy is the determinate counsel of God revealed to the prophets, and declared by them. It is written, "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret to His servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

The prophets are God's messengers, declaring His counsel, all of which must stand and be fulfilled, for it is written again: "He performeth the counsel of His messengers" (Isaiah 44:26). But let us turn back now and see what part God's hand took in determining before, the things which those men did, who met as one great mob, to put the blessed Son of God to death. The hand performed the same part that the hand of the watchmaker performed who designed and made the watch. Although the design might be perfect, yet if the hand was not able to do the work with precision, according to the design, the watch when completed, would not fill the purpose for which it was intended; hence, the hand defeated the purpose of the watchmaker, and determined it to be a failure. In the counsel of his will, the watchmaker had determined to make a perfect time piece; but his hand could not perform the task assigned to it, hence, his watch was a failure.

God, in the counsel of His will determined to make a world. Yea, to make THE WORLD with all of its various and intricate parts, His wisdom devised the plan for it, and His hand performed in the making of it with such perfect precision, that nothing ever failed to fill with perfect precision the place and time for which it was designed, and to do with perfect exactness, the thing or things for which it was intended. It is said in Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord bath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." David said that the wicked are God's sword (Psalm 17:13). He made them for "the day of evil; " and nearly five hundred years before the coming of Christ, God said by the mouth of Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of host; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn My hand on the little ones" (Zech. 13:7; see Mark 14:27). Could the sword have refused to obey His call and slept on over the time for which it was made? Nay, verily, God in His counsel before He made the sword had determined where and when and for what purpose He would use it. And the workmanship of His hand was so perfect, that each of those wicked men that were to take part in the smiting,

were born into the world at the right time, and were at the right place at the right time, and in the right frame of mind to do whatever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done. No human invention or creation has ever worked with such marvelous precision! Although it had been four thousand years since God's hand performed in the creation, yet everything worked with such wonderful precision that these men were there on the very day, and at the very hour that was set in God's counsel for them to be there, and do whatsoever His hand and His counsel had determined before to be done. They could not have done it one hour sooner, nor have put it off one hour later. They sought to do it before the hour had arrived, but Jesus said, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20). Jesus prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him (Mark 14:35). But it was not possible and it did not pass from Him. In John 12:27, He said, "Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." No, they could not have done it one hour sooner, nor have put it off one hour later. This must be what is called "Absolute Predestination." Every thing that God made works with as perfect precision as was manifested in this case.

David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). The firmament is here given as a specimen of God's handiwork. Was this spoken by inspiration? If so, we must accept it as a declaration of God's infallible truth. The word "handiwork", in theology, means the great arc or expanse over our heads, in which are placed the atmosphere, the clouds, and in which the stars appear to be placed and are really seen. There is not a thing in the firmament above us that is not governed in all of its movements according to God's absolute decree. In Psalm 148: David said that the angels and all of God's hosts (which include people), and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the heavens of heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens praise the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. "He hath also stablished them forever and ever. He hath made a decree which shall not pass."

He then goes on and includes fire and hail, snow and vapors, and stormy wind as fulfilling His word. There is not a body, and object, nor an element in the firmament, seen nor unseen, the course, movement, and effect of which is not in accordance with and embraced in God's "decree which shall not pass" (Psalm 148:6). Job said, "He made a decree for the rain, and way for the lighting for His thunder" (Job 28:26). Now if the firmament sheweth God's handiwork (Psalm 19:1) and we find that every thing in the firmament is under, and moves according to God's unchangeable decree, it must follow

as an irresistible conclusion that all His handiwork is the same way. The course and movement of all things made by His hand are established forever, and are under His decree that shall not pass. There is no escaping this conclusion if the firmament is a fair specimen of "His handiwork."

Why should inspiration call our attention to the firmament, in which everything that exists there, is under God's absolute and unchangeable decree, and where their every movement is unchangeably fixed, if it did not mean to convey the idea that all His handiworks are the same way? David said, "All Thy works shall praise Thee" (Psalm 145:10). "All Thy works" mean everything that He has made. This includes the devil and all wicked people. They all praise Him in magnifying His terrible justice in the condemnation of wickedness. They do not do so intelligently or intentionally, yet they all praise Him in the sense that they are exactly what He intended them to be, and are moving according as He determined. All things are exactly as He intended them to be, to the intent that they all bring forth praise to Him. In all His dealings with Pharaoh, it is said of God, "And He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearken not unto them; as the Lord had said" (Exodus 7:13). Paul, in making reference to this incident wrote, "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Romans 9:17). Again, we see the same in the crucifixion of Christ, for it is written, "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28). It is in this way that God manifest both His mercy and His justice. His mercy and his justice are attributes of His divine nature and it was in this manner He is pleased to manifest them. Everything in this life is so unalterably fixed that man cannot by "taking thought" (Matthew 6:27) change the events that are to come on the morrow. Jesus in admonishing His disciples not to take any thought for the future of what they should eat, drink or wear, finally asked them, "Which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? " (Matthew 6:28). Then He added, "If ye be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought of the rest?" (Luke 12:26). If the language of Jesus has any meaning whatever, men cannot change the least thing in the affairs of this life. This brings us back to the statement of Jeremiah, that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

There is no doubt that Solomon told the truth when He said, "Many goings are of the Lord, how can a man then understand his own way? " (Proverbs

20:24). Solomon also said, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as rivers of waters, He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). This was proven in the case of Pharaoh, and in the case of Saul and others we could mention. If He turns the king's heart whithersoever He will, then He must also turn the hearts of the common people in the same way. And we are not lacking in proof on this point: David, speaking of the Egyptians in Psalms 105:25, said of God, "He turned their heart to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants." Stephen says, "The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live" (Acts 7:19). Keep in mind that God "turneth their heart" to do this. All the cruelties perpetrated and inflicted upon Israel in Egypt by the Egyptians, God turned their hearts to do it. They were doing just what He had turned their hearts to do, and just what He swore to Abraham that they should do. He swore to Abraham saying, "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). And when the set time came for it to begin, "He turned their hearts to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants." (Psalm 105:25).

Reader, what think you? Do you believe this, or are you an infidel? Here are four hundred years of wicked, cruel, and sinful treatment by a whole nation, to God's servants, which God had not only previously purposed and had sworn that they should do it, but which He turned their hearts to do. The man who can accept this (those who cannot are infidels, for this is the precise statement of the Bible) has no grounds whatever to raise any objections to the predestination of all things. For if God did purpose four hundred years of wickedness to be practiced by a nation, and turn their hearts to do this wickedness, and He still remain just, then every argument that has ever been made against the predestination of all things falls to the ground, and is swept away like chaff before the wind. These are stubborn facts that cannot be denied.

Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens." Let us keep in mind that we are now considering purposed things. "A time to every purpose under heaven."

Solomon was not talking about man's purpose, but of God's purposes. He then begins to numerate some of the things that are purposed and the first things that he mentions are: "A time to be born, and a time to die." This proves beyond doubt that he is talking about things that God has purposed and the time for their occurrence, for we know that man does not purpose his

own birth and the time for it.

He then proceeds to mention some things that are purposed and have a set time for their occurrence. He says, "A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

Solomon has here presented the things that men engage in here in this life, from the most trivial things, such as children gathering stones together and then casting them away. Even such things as one tearing a hole in his pants and having it sewed up ("A time to rend, and a time to sew), and on up to the greatest calamity that can befall a people, which is war. All these things are purposed of God, and the time set for them to take place. Solomon begins this statement by the most sweeping expression that he could employ: He says, "To EVERYTHING there is a SEASON and a time to EVERY purpose under the heavens "(Ecclesiastes 3:1). The word season means a suitable time. Not only just a time set, but also a time that suits the One that set it for the occurrence of the thing purposed, or a proper time.

This brings us back again to the statement of Jeremiah: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). There is not a step in man's life from the cradle to the grave that the Lord does not direct. ("A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps" – Proverb 16:9; "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord"- Proverb 16:1; "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord"- Proverb 16:33; "The Lord has made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" –Proverb 16:4). Even children gathering stones and casting them at birds are so directed in their movements that they cannot bring one sparrow to the ground unless God so directs. Jesus says: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one shall not fall without your Father." Then He adds: "But the very hairs of you head are numbered" (Matthew 10:29- 30).

Do you suppose God made the hairs of the head, and then counted them?

My, wouldn't that be a job! Thousands of children being born each day and God counting the number of hairs each one has on its head? Perish the thought! They were numbered in His determinate counsel before He made the world. He determined the number of hairs that each head should have and that number is with Him in His perfect mind.

He even gave the seas their decreed places and broke up the fallow ground for them. God said by Jeremiah, "Will ye not fear Me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at My presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?" (Jeremiah 5:22). Also, God said to Job: "Oh who shut up the sea with doors, when it break forth as if it issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness as a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it MY DECREED PLACE, and set bars and doors, and said hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:10). Hence, every element in nature is under God's perpetual decree. The raging, heaving, tossing waves of the sea can neither go beyond nor stop short of the place that God has decreed for them. His decree says, "Hither to shalt thou come and no further." And every thing that lives and moves in the sea is also in His decree and has a time set by Him for them to take each and every particle of food that they eat. From the greatest monster to the smallest insect that moves in the sea, all wait upon the Lord to take their meat in due season. Did God purpose for them to eat? Then to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. David said: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works: in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both great and small beasts. There goeth the ships; there is that Leviathan, which Thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That THOU givest them they gather; Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good" (Psalm 104:24-28).

Due season here means the set of God. The ships' crews and passengers; the whale (leviathan) and everything that lives in the sea are included in this sweeping statement of the Psalmist as waiting upon God to give them meat at His appointed time. As every step of man is directed by Him, so too, every movement of these things that inhabit the sea are directed by Him.

Was it by chance that Jonah and the ship he was on, and the whale that God had prepared to swallow him, and the wind that rocked the floundering bark

all met at the same place at the same time? Was it by chance that the ship's crew concluded that the storm had been sent because of some one on the ship? Have you ever in all of history read of another case where, in time of a storm, the mariners concluded that the storm had come because of some one that was on the vessel and cast lots to find out who it was and then cast overboard the one that the lot fell on? Was it by chance that they thought to cast lots in this case to see for whom the storm had been sent? Was it by chance that the lot fell on Jonah? Not at all! These things, like all things else, were what God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done. And all things in nature are His agents and are directed by His Providence to the carrying into effect "what His hand and His counsel determined before to be done."

We will next notice what the Lord Himself says about the king of Assyria and his people. In Isaiah 10, He says, "O Assyria, the ROD of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the street. Howbeit, HE MEANETH NOT SO, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart (already!) to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he sayeth, are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Charchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As MY HAND HATH FOUND THE KINGDOM OF THE IDOLS, AND WHOSE GRAVEN IMAGES DID EXCEL THEM OF JERUSALEM AND OF SAMARIA? Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the LORD HAS PERFORMED HIS WHOLE WORK UPON MOUNT ZION AND ON JERUSALEM, I WILL PUNISH THE STOUT HEART OF THE KING OF ASSYRIA AND THE GLORY OF HIS HIGH LOOKS. For he saith by the strength of MY HAND have I done it and by MY WISDOM; for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man, and MY HAND hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped." That is precisely what natural men would conclude.

Then God said: "Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were not wood?" This old king with all the arrogance of the devil

himself, goes into Jerusalem and willfully murdered the inhabitants, robs them of all their honor, their young, their craftsmen, and treasures, takes all of their property that he wants and treads the people down like the mire of the street. He acted just as freely, and as cruelly and as wickedly as any one ever did in this world, and boasted of his wonderful wisdom and prudence; and yet God was using him, and directing his every step just as truly as any man ever used an ax, or a saw, or a rod, or a staff. If there is any meaning to God's own Word, He, Himself, was using this old king and his armies to accomplish His purposes on Israel, as surely and as truly as men use the ax, and the saw, and the rod, and the staff to accomplish their purposes. God's language will not allow of any other conclusion.

The language shows this king and his armies to be just as powerless to do more than God purposed or less than He purposed as the implements which He mention have in the hand of them that use them. No language could be used to state more positively that God absolutely purposed and directed every step of this old king and his armies in all that they did in this affair. And God Himself still further proves that the whole thing was decreed of Him before He quit speaking. For He goes on to say, "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of host, send among his fat ones, leanness; and under his glory He shall kindle a burning like unto fire, and the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His holy One for a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest and his fruitful field both soul and body, and they shall be as when a standard bearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Israel, unto the Mighty God. For though Thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return. The consumption DECREED shall overflow with righteousness."

What was the consumption decreed?

First: God decreed that the king of Assyria, and his hosts, should, after his own corrupt will and the evil desire of his own wicked and corrupt heart (for it was "In his heart to cut off nations not a few"), make a raid on Israel and overcome them by force, killing many of them, and taking many of them captive, and entering to the city of Jerusalem, killing the people and treading the people, men, women and children, down like the mire of the street, taking the spoil and the prey, and gloating in his wicked deeds. Every thing he did

in consuming of Israel, he did it to satisfy his own wicked desire for gain and self-exaltation. And in doing this he consumed Israel, killing many and carrying away captive as a prey and taking whatever he wanted of their possessions as spoil, acting under his own unrestrained lust, just like all other wicked men act in the practice of their wickedness, just as freely as men ever act, and his every act was decreed of God to consume Israel. And the consumption decreed was to overflow with righteousness (relative to the righteous judgment of God).

Did I say that he acted freely? Yes, in the doing of just what God's hand and His counsel had determined to be done. No more, nor no less. Free to do what God had decreed for him to do, but not free to not do it. If it is "not in man that walketh to direct his steps," as is affirmed by Jeremiah, but "God directeth his step," as Solomon asserts that He does, then we know that man is not free to take any steps, except what God directs. And as God does not wait for the time to arrive before He determines where He will direct man's steps, it follows that man's steps were predetermined of God.

I am aware that men, in their natural walk, think and feel that they direct their own steps. If the way is rough or muddy, they look where they place their feet, and they feel like it is left wholly with them as to where they step, but is that a fact? Not if Jeremiah and Solomon told the truth. Men not feeling, nor thinking, that God is directing their steps, do not prove that it is not true. The king of Assyria did not think so. God said, "Against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and take the prey and tread them down like the mire of the street" (Isaiah 10:6).

Then he adds: "Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is IN HIS HEART to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:7-8). "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (verse 12). The king of Assyria felt sure that he, by his own wisdom and prudence, of which he boasted mightily, had directed his own steps in the whole affair. For he said, "By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent" (Isaiah 10:13). No man was ever more sure that he was a "free moral agent" than this man felt; and yet he was just as free as the ox, or the saw, or the rod, or the staff, is in the hands of him that uses it. His freedom was only in the realm of God's will, or His determinate counsel. Beyond this, he was not free.

As Elder Walter Neal once said: when you go to the table and there is coffee, tea, milk and water on it, you take which ever you want to take, but what is it that controls your "want to"? There is some unseen influence that controls and shapes your mind and thus controls your action. Who is it that has control over all conditions, circumstances, and influence? Who was it that made it possible for these alternatives to exist? Who was it that made it possible for such things to affect your mind? Did He do it on purpose or accidentally?

Men always think when they are doing such things, that they are free to do them or let them alone. Herod and Pilate, and all the others, who took part in the crucifixion of Christ, thought they were freely directing their own steps in the matter. They never once thought God was directing their steps, and that they were doing what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

Joseph's brothers did not think that God was directing their steps and that they were fulfilling His purpose when they sold him and lied to their father about it (see Genesis 15:13 together with 37:28). But Joseph told them that they indeed thought an evil against him; but "God meant IT (their evil deed) unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive"

Pharaoh did not think that God was directing his steps, and that he was fulfilling God's purpose when he was refusing to let Israel go; but the Lord had told Moses to go and say unto him, "The Lord God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness" (Exodus 7:16).

God had previously told Moses however, that He would harden Pharaoh's heart that he should not let them go. "but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exodus 4:21). He finally told Moses to tell Pharaoh that, "In very deed for thus cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power, and that My Name may be declared throughout the earth" (Exodus 9:16). Every step that Pharaoh took in the drama was directed by the Lord for the fulfillment of this expressed purpose of God. For four hundred years prior to this time the Egyptians had thought that in their hatred and subtle dealings with Israel in the cruel afflictions that they heaped upon them, that they were directing their own steps. But they were only doing what God had purposed, and had sworn to Abraham that they should do, and what He Himself had turned their hearts to do. He even told them how many years they would serve. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in

a land that is not theirs, and shall sever them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. . . but in the fourth generation they shall come thither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15: 13, 16).

I know that the natural man cannot receive this, but it is God's truth as sure as the Bible is God's book. Even the natural man, though he cannot believe it, can find it clearly taught in the Bible if he will read the Bible.

THE "SHALLS" OF THE PROPHETS EXPRESS FUTURISTIC DETERMINATION

In Daniel 12:10, we read: "Many shall be purified, made white and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Our limited brethren will readily agree that the first, second, fourth and fifth clauses of the above sentence are expressing the purpose of God, but they balk at the third —"but the wicked shall do wickedly"- Strange, isn't it?

Let us quote it again. "Many SHALL be purified, made white, and tried" Here are the three first clauses in the full sentence. Let one of those who claim to be "Primitive Baptist" get into a discussion with an old-time Arminian, and he will insist on the word shall as expressing determination when used in the second and third person. He will quote: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1: 23). He will insist, "All that the Father giveth unto Me shall come unto Me" (John 6:37), and, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). And again, "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, shall have everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation," etc. (John 5:24), and, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish" (John 10:28). Let his opponent say that these do not express purpose, but are merely foretelling, and it is possible for them to fail to come to pass, for sinners can refuse to be saved, and it is possible for the dead to fail to hear, and if they hear, they may not live. If his opponent says that these "shalls" only express possibilities, which may, or may not come to pass; or that it is possible for any or all of them to fail – all of which is true if they do not express determination, - he will surely object. It is not only possible, but is highly probable, if the scripture can fail to come to pass or be fulfilled. Let his opponent argue that the three clauses first in the sentence that we are considering, do not express purpose, but only express a possibility that men can prevent, and he will vehemently deny it, and argue that these things (shalls) cannot fail to come to

pass. He will argue that God has said they shall, and heaven and earth may pass away, but His word shall not fail. But let the same Primitive Baptist get into a discussion with an Old School, or real Primitive Baptist, who will argue that the next clause in the same sentence expresses purpose when it says, "But the wicked SHALL do wickedly," and he will then argue just as vehemently that the word SHALL in that clause does not express purpose. That the wicked could keep from doing wickedly, and brand all who say that the wicked can't help doing wickedly as "CAN'T HELP ITS."

THE "CAN'T HELP IT" CHARGE BY CONDITIONALISTS

Let us see if they can help doing wickedly. Peter says of them: "Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin" (II Peter 2:14). Paul said, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Then the man who has no faith cannot do anything else but sin. Jesus, speaking of men, compares them to trees, and says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matthew 7: 15-19). Then Luke records, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil, for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:13cf).

In Matthew, it is recorded: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit also good, or else make the tree evil and his fruit also evil, for the tree is known by his fruit. O ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:33-35). We learn from these statements of Jesus, that an evil man can no more help doing that which is evil, than an evil tree can help bringing forth evil fruit. Has Jesus exaggerated things in His picture that He has drawn? It was the decree of God expressed in the creation, that every thing should: "bring forth after its kind" (Genesis 1:11; 12; 21; 24; 25). Jesus has argued this question on the basis of that decree, and says positively that they cannot do otherwise. Who is it that is constantly declaring that God would be unjust if He punished a man for what he could not help, and that idea, as "Can't help it" doctrine? Let them tell how the evil tree can help bearing evil fruit, if they

can, or brand Jesus as a "Can't help it." Can any of Adam's race help being sinners? Since they are born sinners, can they help sinning? Can those that are accustomed to doing evil learn to do well any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots? (Jeremiah 13:23).

The God-limiting Baptists claim to believe that God foreknew all things and that He chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, and left no chance for the rest of the human family to be saved, and that He knew before He made Adam that he would sin, and He determined before He made him that He would condemn his whole posterity to death for the sin of this one man, Adam, although they would not be in existence when this one man committed this sin, and of course, they could not help it; yet He condemned all of his offspring to death for what they could not help, and determined that when He should bring time to an end, He would assign all mankind, except His elect, to everlasting torment, without ever giving them a shadow of a chance to escape it! And yet, when we declare our belief in the predestination of all things, they hold up their hands in holy (?) horror, and cry out, "Unjust, unjust, unjust."

They had no chance in the garden to keep from being made sinners by Adam; and they have had no chance since to change their sinful natures; and no more chance to not do evil than the evil tree has to not bear evil fruit.

Now as I have made this charge against the God-limiting Baptists, I will say that if any of them believe that any of Adam's race, except the elect, has ever had any chance whatever to escape everlasting punishment, and will write me and tell me when, where, and how they had that chance, I will correct that charge as publicly as I have made it. And if they believe that any of the human race could help being made sinners, and will explain how they could have helped it I will also withdraw that charge publicly. If they do not do that, my picture of their position will stand as stated.

But let us further consider the language of the prophets, and see if we cannot establish beyond doubt that the "shalls" in prophecy are used to express determination. When I was a boy, our schoolbooks, both our grammars and dictionaries taught us that shall, in the second and third person, denoted, or expressed, determination. And I have not yet been convinced that it is not the truth as regards prophecy.

We will start with the book of Daniel. The words shall and shalt, if I mistake not, occur 239 times in that book alone, and there is not a place in the entire

book, when spoken by the prophet in the second and third person, but what is used to express God's purpose or determination of things that shall come in the future. Then there are only two or three places where it is used by any one else, where it was not used to express determination. The word does not occur in the first chapter, but it occurs 23 times in the second chapter. And in every place, except in the ninth verse, it expresses determination. In that place the king said to his wise men, "Tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can chew me the interpretation. " Even in this place it is used to emphasize the fact that they should tell him his dream or they should be put to death. The other 22 times "shalls" are spoken by Daniel, showing this king the interpretation of his dream, all of which was a revelation from God of the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, all of which God had determined. In the fourth chapter, in interpreting the king's dream, he tells the king: "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High which is come upon my Lord the king, that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will " (Daniel 4:24).

Earlier in the same chapter, Daniel tells him: "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17). Daniel used the word shall nine times in this fourth chapter, telling this king the things that the Most High has decreed shall come to pass.

We will step back to the second chapter. In it the king had a most wonderful dream, and it had gone from him and he demanded of the wise men of his kingdom who pretended they could interpret dreams, that they tell his dream and the interpretation thereof, and they could not do it, and he passed a decree to put all the wise men of his kingdom to death. But God gave Daniel the interpretation. In order to prove conclusively that God was revealing the things which He had decreed should come to pass, as He had declared them by Daniel, saying these things shall come to pass, and to show that these "shalls" were all intended to express God's decree of the thing contained in his dream, I will quote a part of Daniel's language. The first shall used by Daniel in this chapter, (that contains 23 "shalls") is in the twenty-eighth verse. It reads as follows: "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to King Nebuchadnezzar, what shall be in the latter days." In telling him of things God had shown should be in the latter days, he said: "Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the

image upon his feet that were of iron and clay and brake them to pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the brass and the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and become as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Then he said, "This is the dream, and we will tell the king the interpretation thereof " He then tells the king what it means and in doing so, he tells the king of four kingdoms that shall rise up and go down, and he then says, "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand forever. For as much as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces, the iron, and the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath shown unto the king what shall come to pass hereafter, and the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure. "

Can any one read this and not see that all these things are determined of God? In his other dream in the fourth chapter, Daniel told him that the thing that he gave as the interpretation was the decree of the Most High God. And yet this dream and its interpretation were of far greater importance than the other one. That only dealt with Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom and what men should do to him and it; while this one deals with Nebuchadnezzar and the ending of his kingdom, and the rise of four other natural kingdoms (Persian, Mede-Persian, Greece, and Rome) like his was, and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom, which He said shall brake in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and shall stand forever.

If the things contained in his other dream were decreed of God, and Daniel said they were, then there cannot be any doubt but that every thing contained in this one was also decreed of God. Hence, every "shall" used by the prophet in the second and fourth chapters were used to express or declare God's decree, that which He had determined in His counsel. The third chapter has no word by the prophet in it, but it has the word "shall" in it six times, and five of them are used to express what the king had decreed, and the other means "can" or "is able." It says, "Where is the God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Keep in mind this was not a prophetic "shall."

This brings us to the fifth chapter of Daniel, which has but four "shalls" in it and they are the king's, and they tell what shall be done for the man who can read the handwriting on the wall. There is not a prophetic "shall" in it, but it

proves the truth of the statement of Jeremiah when he said, "O Lord I know, that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." When the king's wise men could not read the writing Daniel came forward and read it. But before he read it he told the king, Belshazzar, about his father, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, all of which was by the decree of the Most High, and said to him, "And thou, his son, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and hast brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, and thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor know; and the God in whose hand is thy breath, and WHOSE ARE ALL THY WAYS, hast thou not glorified " "And whose are all thy ways?" Yes, that is exactly what he said.

I must say that I have never read after a stronger Predestinarian than the prophet, Daniel. He even declares that all the ways of this old king are God's!

I would ask the objector to this doctrine, does God claim anything as His of which He did not even determine its existence? He claims by the mouth of His prophet Daniel that all this wicked king's ways are His. He must mean that they are His in the sense He purposed them in His determinate counsel where and when He determined all future, and which He directs in His universal Providence. If this is not true then I would be glad for any one who objects to this position to write me and tell me in what sense they are God's ways.

In the fifth chapter of Daniel, the word "shall" occurs five times; and the word "decree" eight times; and the word "purpose" one time; but there is not a prophetic "shall" in it. In the seventh chapter, the word "shall" occurs twenty times, and in every place it an expression of God's absolute decree.

GOD'S "SHALLS" AND HIS ABSOLUTE DECREE

In the seventh chapter of Daniel, every place the word "shall" appears expresses God's absolute decree. I will quote the first two places and the last two following. The two first used are in the following quotation from Daniel's vision. He says: "I saw in the night vision, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (verses

13,14). These are the two first "shalls" and any one can see and know that they are expressing God's absolute decree of the coming of Christ and the setting up of and the perpetuity of His kingdom.

The last two say: "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey Him" (verse 27). No one, who is not biased by prejudice, can fail to see at a glance that God has here revealed to His prophet the things that He has determined should come to pass. If God had only determined that a part of the things which He showed Daniel in this vision should come to pass, but had not yet determined whether the other part should come to pass or not, then why did He move Daniel to declare that part which He had not yet determined should come to pass?

The eighth chapter of Daniel contains another vision of Daniel's wherein God is showing him what shall come to pass in the last end of the "indignation." At the end of Daniel's vision, he saw as it were, the appearance of a man, and he heard a man's voice, and it said, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision," so he, Gabriel, came near him and talked with him, and said, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation for at the time appointed the end shall be" (verse 19). Isaiah has prophesied of this indignation that shall be at the time appointed. God said, by the mouth of Isaiah: "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in My highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdom of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land "(Isaiah 13:3-5).

The weapons of His indignation are men. He called the Assyrian the "rod of His anger", and David says the "wicked is His sword." He calls Jacob His battle-ax and weapons of war (Jeremiah 51:20). When He has mustered His host for the battle, the weapons of His indignation, to punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, He tells how He will do it. He says: "Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished" (Isaiah 13:16).

How, and by whom, is this to come about? Listen: "BEHOLD I WILL STIR UP THE MEDES AGAINST THEM WHICH SHALL NOT REGARD SILVER, AND AS FOR GOLD, THEY SHALL NOT DELIGHT IN IT, THEIR BOWS ALSO SHALL DASH THE YOUNG MEN TO PIECES, AND THEY HAVE NO PITY ON THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB, THEIR EYE SHALL NOT SPARE CHILDREN"

(Isaiah 13: 17,18). "Behold I will" – God will do this. Is there a darker picture than this in the Bible? Surely there cannot be; and yet God has declared these things shall be done, and that He will do it. He Himself is to muster this army and be its commander-in-chief. He it is that collects His weapons of war and goes to the battle. He it is that stirs up the Medes, to dash Babylon's children to pieces, spoil their houses, and ravish their wives. This is the out-pouring of His indignation, and these men are the weapons of His indignation, and it is in the end of the indignation that it is appointed for what Daniel saw in his vision to take place. And, it took place. There cannot be a doubt but God predetermined this whole affair and foretold it by Isaiah and Daniel. Every "shall" in it was used to affirm that God had predetermined it.

PREDETERMINATION IN THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

We will now proceed with our examination of the Book of Daniel. The ninth chapter has the word "shall" in it ten times, and God Himself says that HE WILL bring every word of it to pass. Not that He merely foresaw (prescience) them coining and then declared them, but He determined that they should come. Every "shall" in it is spoken concerning the 70 years captivity that God had said by Jeremiah should come upon Israel, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. Daniel understood from the prophecy of Jeremiah that the 70 years were determined in which God would bring this to pass, and he was praying to God for Israel and for the city, and confessing his sins and the sins of his people. And while he was praying, the man Gabriel, whom he had seen in a former vision, came and said unto him, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth and I am come to shew thee; for thou are greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION and to make an end to sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most

holy. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be 70 weeks and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for Himself; and the people of the prince shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined". (That is predestination as absolute as it can be expressed.)

I have quoted all of this that my readers may see that every one of these "shalls" express determination. The cutting off of Messiah means the crucifixion of Christ by those who "were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had before determined to be done, " and is here set forth as one of the things that was determined. Daniel referred us back to the prophecy of Jeremiah, so we will go back and see just what he said about it. When I have proven by the book of Jeremiah every word of which is the word of God Himself, I will then (God willing) finish my investigation of the Book of Daniel. It is certain that the Limited Primitive Baptists are completely wrong in claiming that God's predestination, or decree, has nothing to do "with things."

The proof of what I have said about the ninth chapter of Daniel is found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. I am aware that I am entering into a field that has been neglected in a great measure too long by our ministry. One thought that I have never heard advanced by any one is made very clear by God Himself in His talk with Jeremiah, when He made known to him that He had ordained him to be a prophet. I ask all who read this to with-hold judgment and not condemn the thought nor what I shall say until they hear my reason for saying it; when you have heard, I am sure that all except the infidels will accept it, for it is what the Bible says very plainly, and an infidel is one who disbelieves the scriptures. I am aware that many professing Christians are only infidels in disguise, who wear the name because it is popular to do so. If there are any such among those who bear the name of Old School or Primitive Baptist and this writing serves to unmask them, then I shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Now what I am going to say is this: that God Himself asserts that He, Himself will fulfill, perform, or bring to pass all the word of His mouth that He speaks j His messengers. In Amos 3:7, it is written: "Surely, the Lord God will do nothing, but He

revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets." All the Lord does then is revealed before hand to His prophets. He says in Isaiah 44:25,26, that it is Him "That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh divines mad; that turneth wise men backward and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of His servant, and PERFORMETH THE COUNSEL OF HIS MESSENGERS," etc.

Note you; He says He does this Himself. If He says that He does it, why should any one deny it and seek to cover up this truth? In Jeremiah 1, He says, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and ordained thee unto the nations" (verse 5). Then Jeremiah said: "Ah, Lord God! Behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not unto Me, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put My word in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, TO ROOT OUT and to PULL DOWN, and to DESTROY and to THROW DOWN and to BUILD and to PLANT " Is not that, which you have set a man to do, what you have purposed shall be done? Then Jeremiah said: "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, "Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen: for I shall hasten My word to perform it." Here, before Jeremiah has ever spoken one word of prophecy the Lord said unto him: "I will put My words in thy mouth;" and also "I will hasten My word to perform it." The Lord then asked Jeremiah again, "What seest thou? " and Jeremiah answered, "I see a seething pot, and the face thereof is toward the north. Then the Lord said unto me, "out of the north an evil shall break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. For lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord, and they shall come and set every one on his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the wall thereof and against all the gates thereof, and against all the cities of Judah." God says HE will bring all of this about. Then He pleads and threatens through fourteen chapters, after telling them what He will visit, bring, or send upon them if they do not hearken and obey Him, notwithstanding He says in chapter 6, verse 10, their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot hearken. Yet because they did not hearken when they could not do it, He said to Jeremiah in the fifteenth chapter, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, whither shall we go, then thou shalt

tell them, Thus saith the Lord, such as are for death, to death, and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are J the famine to the famine; and such as are J captivity, to captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth," etc. Can anyone doubt that God has purposed all of this? He told Jeremiah in the outset, before He had caused him to speak one word of prophecy, He would hasten to perform His word. And so far, in every threat He has made, He assured them, that He would bring it to pass, and every promise was what He would do to them if they did not listen. In the thirteenth chapter, He says to them: "And if thou say in thine heart, wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquities are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil. " Here we have it from God Himself, that the people whom He said would Him and do good, than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots; and yet because of their disobedience that was appointed, He has appointed them to be slain by the sword, torn by the dogs, and devoured and destroyed by the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field, and His promise to Jeremiah is that HE WILL HASTEN HIS WORD TO PERFORM IT. From the first chapter to the twenty-fifth, where God promised the curse upon them because they had not hearkened, He says unto them, "Behold I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a perpetual desolation." God said He would do all of this. He will send and take all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, and He would bring them against these people, and He would utterly destroy them, and He would make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and a perpetual desolation. He goes on to tell them that they shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. That is a specific number of years. He then says that, "When the seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it a perpetual desolation." So far God has asserted that He will bring all these things to pass. Keep in mind that I have started in to prove that all prophecy is a declaration of the things that God not only foreknows will come to pass, but which He also has determined shall come to pass. Hence, the "shalls" of prophecy are meant to express His determination that these things shall be fulfilled. When I have done this, I will have proved the predestination of all things to be the truth, and will have extracted the fangs

from all the infidels who still want to pretend to believe the Bible. I do not, however, expect to cause any one to believe it who despises this God-honoring doctrine, for God says, "Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41). In this is another one of God's "shalls." It is scripture and it CANNOT be broken.

If there are still any of God's dear children that what I have written leaves them in doubt, I will say to such Doubting Thomases, listen to what God says next. He says: "And I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kingdoms shall serve themselves of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the work of their own hands" (Jeremiah 25:13,14).

GOD USES MEN, BOTH GOOD AND EVIL, TO PERFORM HIS COUNSEL

The above should forever settle it that God has determined that all prophecy shall be fulfilled: and that He Himself will bring it to pass. But stop, listen, and give particular attention to what I am now going to say. I do not believe that God acts differently in bringing these things to pass than He does in directing our steps in our every day life. Those men whom He says He will bring, or send, or stir up, or cause, to come to do these things act as freely as, and have no more thought that God is using them to fulfill His word and to carry out His purpose than does the bird that flies through the air, when He said, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, the staff in their hand is Mine indignation, I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of My wrath, will I give him a chore, to take the spoil and take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the street" (Isaiah 10:5).

God then adds to this, "Howbeit, HE MEANETH NOT SO, NEITHER DOTH HIS HEART THINK SO, but it is in his heart to cut off and destroy nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:7). God did not put in his heart to do it, for it was already in his heart to do that to any nation whenever opportunity was afforded him. Water will freely run down hill when it is not restrained from doing so, and so will the wicked. They freely do wickedly when they are not restrained from doing so. God is not thereby the author of sin, if so be it that He does not restrain it from fulfilling His counsel.

David said, "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). God will restrain the wicked and allow them to do no more than will redound to His praise.

Let me be very clear on this point, for some have taken the position that the text in Isaiah, that says, "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou hast wrought all our works IN us"(Isaiah 26:12) means that He had wrought all their works in them "both good and evil." We hear this false charge leveled against us repeatedly from the Limited side. If that is the truth, then universalism is the truth. For the prophet said, "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace US, for Thou hast wrought all OUR works in US". His assurance that God would ordain peace for them was based on the fact that He had wrought, or worked, all their works in them. If all the works done by men, "both good and bad," are wrought, or worked, in them by the Lord, and He ordains peace for all whose works are all wrought in them by Him, it follows that He will ordain peace for all men since all works, "both good and evil" would have been wrought in men by Him.

But we have plenty of instances in the Bible of how God directs the steps of men in wickedness. In the case of Job, He turned all that Job had into the hands of Satan, and said unto him, "Behold all that he (Job) hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not thine hand. "(Job 1:12). Up to this time God had prospered Job, and the devil was barred from touching him or any thing that he possessed. The devil called it "having him hedged in." God has all men "hedged in," or out of Satan's reach, until He removes His hand. But as soon as God turned all that he had into the hands of the devil, the devil's servants came in and robbed him of his property and murdered his servants, and God also turned the forces of nature into his hands so that he burned up his sheep and his servants that looked after them, and an east wind blew down the house of his eldest son and killed all of his children, and then Job arose, when he heard of this, and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell upon the ground and worshiped God and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:20-21). What lessons are to be found in this story for our "admonition and learning"? Why is it in the Bible? Even though Satan is doing this, Job said the Lord did this. Did he tell the truth about it? If so, then you may see how God uses Satan and wicked men in accomplishing His purposes. Job said that God did it, and the record says that, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged his God foolishly" (Job 1:22). If Job did not sin when he said God did it, and he did not charge God foolishly in what he said, then it was the truth. God did it.

Again, when God had turned Job himself into the hands of Satan, and he afflicted him all over with sore boils, and his wife said to him, "Dust thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job said to her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speakest. What? Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Here again, it is recorded, "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips," meaning, Job told the truth. This must have been recorded for just such a time as now, when Satan's forces are trying to dethrone God and rule Him out of the affairs of men and devils. But He is still enthroned as high above Satan and men, as heaven is above the earth, doing "according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35) Job believed that God had appointed what was taking place with him and was also performing it; for he said, "He is in one mind and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He DOETH. For HE PERFORMETH the thing that is APPOINTED FOR ME, and many such things are with Him" (Job 23:13-14).

Dear reader, if all this was appointed for Job as he claimed, and God performed it, as Job sincerely believed; if God took away Job's children, his servants, and all his property, and afflicted him from head to foot (as Job said that He did), then is it not a fact that God uses wicked men, and even the devil, to accomplish His purposes? He claims that He does these things Himself!

Peter tells us that unbelievers and the disobedient are appointed to disobedience. ("And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" I Peter 2:7,8). But it does not follow that God works in them to disobey as He works in His children "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" which is well pleasing in His sight through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are often accused of believing this, but the accusation is false. It is stated very plainly in Ephesians that the "prince of the power of the air" works in the children of disobedience. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). God made every thing in the universe, and He made them for Himself, and He made them because He had a use for them. The psalmist said, "In wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Psalm 104:24). If He made them for Himself, then who will deny that He made them suitable for the purpose for which He made them? And who will deny that He is using them for the purpose for

which He made them? He even made the prince of the power of the air, which is the serpent, the devil and Satan, and dragon that is in the sea; and is called "leviathan" in Job 41, and in Isaiah 27. No one will take the position that an intelligent being would make a thing for himself, that he had no use for, or control over; and no intelligent man will take the position that any one making any thing for himself will not make it suitable for the place or purpose for which they are making it.

There are many, however, of late years that are denying that God made the devil! On this point hinges the concept of the predestination of all things. For if God did not make the devil, there is one thing in existence, the existence of which God did not predestinate. They knowingly take this position in order to deny God's sovereignty over most of what occurs. For proof that God made him, I will first quote John 1:3, "ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." The objector, however, argues that the last part of this text, which says "And without Him was not any thing made that was made," signifies that there is something that was not made. Listen to the first part of the text again: "For by Him were ALL things made." Do you see it? To argue that the last part implies there is something that was not made is to make the first part of the sentence to contradict the last. The man that cannot see this is blind to the first part that declares that God made all things, and cannot see the last part right. In Ephesians, Paul said of God, "Who CREATED ALL THINGS by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3: 9-11). Here is a wonderful text and it is most comprehensive in its fullness. It takes in the creation of all things and what they were created for which was that His church might know His manifold wisdom. Not merely know it according to His creative power: but that they may know it according to the eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. The world, even the wicked can see His manifold wisdom by seeing the things that He has made. Paul said in Romans, "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The world can see that it took wisdom and power to make the things that are made, but they do not see that these were all made to conform to God's eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. His church is to see all creation as it relates to God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. They can see how wonderfully it became Him Lot: whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through

suffering. The revealing, or making His glory known, unto His chosen people, the church, by bringing them unto this glory by making Jesus Christ who in His eternal purpose, was to be the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, was the eternal purpose which He purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord. To this end, it is said "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isaiah 53:10). Understand it was the Lord that bruised Him and put Him to grief, and we do not have to guess at how He did it, for His decree in the beginning, was that Satan should be the instrument by which He should be bruised (Genesis 3:15), which bruising was completed when all the powers of hell were combined in the person of "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." When it was completed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "It is finished, and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Dear reader, what could you have ever known of the wonderful mercy and wrath of God, if sin had not entered into the world? But I hope to say more on this point before I am through.

In Colossians, it is written, "For by Him were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers; ALL THINGS were created BY HIM, and FOR HIM: and He is before all things, and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST" (Colossians 1:16-17). Reader, can you imagine why so many of the writers have stressed this point in their writings? Do you ever hear any one except those who believe in the predestination of all things stress it in these days? Paul said in I Corinthians 8:6; "But to us there is one God of whom are ALL THINGS. " And in Romans 2, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are ALL THINGS: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Again, in Revelations, "The four and twenty elders cast their crowns before His throne, crying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power, FOR THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelations 4:11).

GOD CREATED THE DEVIL AND USES HIM AS HIS OWN INSTRUMENT

Trying to make the devil an uncreated and eternal being to get around the doctrine of the predestination of all things, therefore, is futile and unscriptural doctrine. If the devil is in heaven or in the earth, God made Him! And if he is either visible or invisible, God made him. If he reigns on a throne, a principality, dominion, or had all power, God made him.

And if God made him, it was for God's "pleasure" that he was made, and it is for His pleasure that he now exists. This is what the Scriptures just quoted say. Who then will deny it?

But for the sake of doubting Thomas, we will give further proof. As has been quoted, "The Lord hath made ALL THINGS for Himself, yea even the wicked FOR the day of evil." In Job 41, he is presented as leviathan. In the last verse of this chapter God says of him: "He beheld all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride." This then is Satan himself; not a "whale." In the verse just above this one, God said; "There is not his like, who is MADE without fear" (verse 33). This verse shows that he was made, and none can deny that God made what was made. Verse 11 shows that he belongs to God, for He says, "Who hath presented Me that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is MINE." This creature or being that we are here discussing was made, and he belongs to God, and it is the king over all the children of pride. Is this not the devil? This verse proves beyond contradiction, that if there is such a thing as a devil under the whole heaven, he belongs to God, for God said, "whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine. " While this point is proven beyond a shadow of doubt, I will still show that this CREATURE that is called "leviathan" is the devil. Literally, "leviathan" means whale, but not in this case. There are thousands of whales, while this creature is spoken of in the singular, and there is not another one of "like", or of his kind, in all the earth, and he is the only thing that was made without fear, and the only creature who is a king over all the children of pride. We find him mentioned again in Isaiah 27. In this place he is presented with four names. The first given is leviathan, the second is a piercing serpent, the third is the crooked serpent, and the fourth is the dragon that is in the sea. In Job, where we first find him with the name leviathan, he was in the sea, for it said in that chapter, that, "He maketh the sea to boil like a pot of ointment." It is also said, "By his neeing a light doth shine and his eyes are like the eye lids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out" (Job 41:18). So we can see at once that he is not a natural whale. God asked here in this chapter, "What doth hinder that I should repay him? " In Isaiah 27, He has a set time to punish him. He says, In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, that crooked serpent, and He will destroy the dragon that is in the sea. " Notice that in this place he is called that crooked serpent. This signifies that there is but one "crooked serpent," as if there were more than one serpent, but that crooked serpent would indicate that he has been spoken of somewhere before. We will try to find the place before we are through. In Revelations 20, we read, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven,

having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should not deceive the nations any more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season." There are several things to say about this yet, but not just here. We have traced leviathan on up to be that crooked serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea, and we have found him to be the devil and Satan, so now we will clinch the whole thing by finding who made him. In Job 27 it is said of God, "By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens, and His hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are part of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him, and the thunder of His power, who can understand?" It is, indeed, a very little portion that is heard of this God. There are not many who know anything about Him.

Surely no one who sees all this array of divine testimony will deny that the Bible teaches that God made all things, and that this also included the devil, whether they believe the Bible to be true or not. The foolish, silly and absurd thought, that Job intended in this language to drop from the wonderfully and stupendously great things that he has ascribed to God as the work of His hand, to the little and insignificant snake, is ridiculous. Listen to what Job says, "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth on nothing. He bindeth the waters up in His thick cloud, and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back

The fact that he has been let run loose for six thousand years, when God could have already bound him at His will, proves that He had a use from him being loose. And the fact that he must be loosed at the end of the thousand years, prove that God has a use for him loose in the world again at that time. God is the one loosing him and binding him.

Surely, surely, surely, none will think for a moment that after He has him bound He would then turn him loose again, if He did not have a use for him being loose again. The language of the Scripture, "That he shall deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled," proves that this is and yet will be his business until God binds him, and that it will be his business again after he is loosed again. That is what he is to be loosed for, according to the scripture.

The seventh and eighth verses (of Revelation 20) says, "And when the

thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." No one can fail to see that he was turned loose for the purpose of deceiving the nations, that they may gather to battle against the saints, that God may destroy Gog and Magog from off the earth. The fact that God allowed him to deceive our mother Eve, and has allowed him to go on and will allow him to go on as a deceiver until a set time, when He will bind him for a set time, then loose him for a "little season" to deceive the nations, then destroy him, when He could have destroyed him before he deceived any one, had it been His will to do so, proves to any sane mind that He made him for that purpose and has been using him for that purpose, and will continue to use him as He sees fit until His set time to destroy him is come.

Why, O why, must he be loosed "for a little season to deceive the nations," if it is not God's will and purpose for him to do so? The echo is asking why? And why, O why, did He make him, and allow him to do as he has done, if it was not His will and purpose for him to do as he has done? The echo is asking why? But I feel sure that there will be no intelligent reply! Convince me that Satan out "generated" God in the Garden of Eden and got sin into the world contrary to God's will, and you, at the same time, destroy my hope of ever being free from sin and the power of Satan. For if when there were only two people in the world for God to watch over, and they were not sinners by nature nor by practice, and He was opposed in His will to them ever becoming sinners, and the devil put one over on Him then and deceived them and captivated them and with them their entire offspring, what hope can I possibly have that Satan will not out general God twain in all His undertakings? And since all men in their natures "are enemies to God by wicked works," (Colossians 1:21) and as such, "are children of their father, the devil, and the lust of their father they will do," (John 8:44) they are all, of course, on his side now. Did Satan, after all, win? Hence, if God could not manage, when there were only two to keep the devil from getting control of them contrary to His will, what ground can we now have to hope that God can now get them out of the devil's possession, since there are now so many of them, and all of them in league and in love with both the devil and with sin?

Don't tell me that God has promised to free us from sin and Satan, and, therefore, He will do it; for if the devil got us into his possession contrary to God's will, power, and purpose, I have then no grounds for assurance that Satan will not hold us contrary to God's will still. And if God should get a

few of us out of the devil's hands and get us to heaven, what assurance have we that we will not again become sinners and fall from our standing there and be finally lost? If it happened in the Garden, why could it not happen there too? Don't tell me that God will not let sin enter into heaven because it is contrary to His will, and He is fully able to prevent its entrance there now; if it entered the Garden in like manner already. For if you convince me that He let it enter the world contrary to His will and power and purpose when He was fully able to have prevented it, how can I know that He will not let it enter there the same way? If God did not "want" sin to enter the world, and the devil did; and God did not "want" any man to ever be a sinner, and the devil wanted all men to become sinners; and God did not "want" sin mixed in any of the affairs of men in this world, and the devil wanted it mixed in all the affairs of men in the world; and God did not "want" any man to ever die, and the devil wanted all men to die; does it not look like the devil has out-generated God in all things up to now and proved himself to be more wise and powerful than God?

Some people may rejoice in believing in such a God and such a devil as that, but there is no comfort in it for me. They can shout for their god, and I will shout for mine. My God is so great, and His Providential care, direction, supervision and control of and over all things is so perfect and complete, that a sparrow cannot fall on the ground without Him (Matthew 10:29).

GOD'S PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE IS BASED ON HIS ETERNAL COUNSEL

I wish to quote again the language of the blessed Savior on this point. To my mind, it covers the whole question under discussion, and proves that He is the one who provides all things for His creatures. Jesus introduced this matter by telling His disciples to "take no thought for your lift what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and your body more than raiment?" Let us see if we can get at what Jesus means. Who made the body, and gave it life? Who prepared for its first food, and its clothing? Was it not God Himself? Hark; Do I hear the objector say that Adam and Eve made their first clothing? This is a mistake. They made aprons of fig leaves, but they would not do for clothing; for when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day, they were still naked, and afraid and went and hid among the trees of the Garden – fig leaves notwithstanding. Their fig leaf aprons were no good, and God made them coats of skin and them upon them.

His next words prove that He means to teach that God Himself furnished

their food and their clothing. He said: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns, YET YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDETH THEM. Are ye not much better than they?" Can any one doubt that both the food and the clothing of the fowls of the air come according to God's pre-arranged plan? And does He not see to it the working of His providence, that their food and clothing (feathers) are furnished them? Not by them taking thought, but by divine providence in the fulfillment of God's purposes. Is He not teaching His disciples that it is the same with them and that it is not in their power to change it? What then is this we now hear, that God's predestination has nothing to do with "things;" or that God does not provide for "time salvation; but that is left up to you to do?"

Listen to His next statement and you will see that it is absolutely true that God provides all things and this by His determinate counsel. He makes an interrogatory affirmation that they cannot change the least thing in the world from its pre-arranged course. He says: "Who of you by taking thought can add one cubit to your stature?" (Matthew 6: 27) Then He adds, according to Luke: "If ye then be not able to that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Food, drink and raiment are of far greater importance to you, my friend, than a little variation in your height; and yet you cannot change that thing that is of least importance to you, neither can you change the things that are of greater importance. Jesus is certainly teaching this.

Listen to His next statement. After assuring them that they cannot by taking thought, change the least thing, He then says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith" (Luke 12:28). How can any man read this and the many things that Jesus has referred to that are absolutely fixed and determined, and come to pass according to His unchangeable decree, and then deny what is so plainly taught by Him in these illustrations?

If God purposed the food and raiment for the lowly sparrow, and He feedeth them, as Jesus said that He does, then as He teaches that the life is more than food and the body more than raiment, He meant when He said not one shall fall on the ground without your heavenly Father, that the ending of its life and the falling of its dead body to the ground, which is greater than the food and raiment, and for which they were prepared, were not left out of His pre-

arranged plan and purpose. After He had made these statements, then He added, "But even the very hairs of your head are numbered" Will any one take the absurd position that God makes the head with its hairs and then counts them to find out their number? Or did He determine when He determined that a man should have hair, just what the number should be? Not one hair can fall without God (it does not say "knowing"), for He will watch over and bring them back in the resurrection, else we will be baldheaded.

Jesus said to His disciples, "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinfolks and friends, and some of you they shall cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for My name 's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:16-18). Many have been burned at the stake, yet not one "hair of your head shall perish"! Wondrous thought! It was after He had showed so plainly, that everything in connection with the life, the body, and its drink, food, clothing and its stature, were all unchangeably fixed in God's rearranged plan, and He, in His providence, brings them about according to His purpose, that He said; "But even the very hairs of your head are numbered; " showing that even the smallest things are determined by God.

Solomon said, "And I gave my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning ALL THINGS that are done under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 1:13). And he tells some of the things that he found. One was that every thing was purposed of God, and a time set for it. He said, "Moreover, I saw under the sun, the place of judgment, that wickedness was there: and the place of righteousness that iniquity was there, and I said in mine heart, that God will judge both the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and every work" (Ecclesiastes 3:17). In the beginning of this chapter, he said, "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven," then he enumerates many of the things that are purposed and a time set for them, and even brings into it so small a things as tearing your pants and the place being sewed up. And in a providential sense, He brings all to pass.

Let us see if I have exaggerated in this statement. God says, "I have declared the former things from the beginning and they went forth out of My mouth, and I shewed them: I DID THEM SUDDENLY and they came to pass" (Isaiah 48:3). And in the 46th chapter, that He "declared the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand, and I WILL DO all My pleasure." In the text above this one, He says that He declared the former things and did them, and they came to pass. And in this text, He says that He

has declared the things that ARE NOT YET DONE, and that HE WILL DO ALL HIS PLEASURE. In other words, He declared the former things and also did them. He has declared the things that are not yet done and He will also do them too. In the 44th chapter, He has declared that He appointed the things that ARE coming (to pass now) and the things that shall come (to pass in the future). These Scriptures cover everything from the beginning to the end. They show very plainly that He has appointed every thing, and He declares everything and will bring it all to pass. For just under the text that says, "He has declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10), He says, "I have spoken it, I will also BRING IT TO PASS: I have PURPOSED it, I WILL ALSO DO IT"

What I am after in these texts is to show that all prophecy is a declaration of God's counsel, which He has determined shall come to pass, and as none will deny that God has determined or purposed that He will do Himself, I am selecting those scriptures where He says that He will bring or He has brought them to pass. I cannot use one half of the scriptures that He has declared Himself, that He has done, will do, or will bring to pass.

Just yesterday I found and marked 40 such places. I will give you a sample of them. In Ezekiel 5: 8-10, He says: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, and I will execute judgment in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. AND I WILL DO in thee that which I have not done and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the father shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers: and I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT IN THEE, and the whole remnant of thee will I SCATTER into all the winds." God says that He will do all of this.

Now we will have Jeremiah testify. In every verse he says the Lord did it, and in the eleventh he pours out his soul in sorrow for his people, because of the great afflictions that God had brought, "because they had not hearkened and obeyed Him," when He had said "their ear was uncircumcised and they COULD NOT HEARKEN" (Lamentation 2). Then he begins to tell of the deplorable condition that God had brought them into and he says, "Because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city. They say to their mothers where is corn and wine? When they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mother's bosom. What thing shall I take to witness for thee? What thing shall liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I equal to thee that I may comfort

thee, O virgin daughter of Zion?" Then he goes on to tell them how their enemies will rejoice over them, and then he says: "The Lord HATH DONE THAT WHICH HE HAD DEVISED: HE hath fulfilled His word that He commanded (the prophets to speak) in the days of old: He hath thrown down, and hath not pitied, and HE hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, and hath set up the horn of thine adversaries." God did all of this in fulfillment of His word that He commanded in days of old. This was accomplished by God Himself by the use of all the other nations of the earth just as He had said that He would do it. All of this was written by Jeremiah, and just what should be done unto Jerusalem and all Israel, and what God WOULD DO to those nations that He would use to fulfill His word concerning Jerusalem.

You will find in Jeremiah 25 that God said, "Behold I WILL SEND and TAKE all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, My servant, and will BRING them against this land and against the inhabitants thereof and against all these nations round about, and I WILL utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment and a hissing, and a perpetual desolation, and I WILL TAKE from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, and the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle, and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations SHALL serve the king of Babylon SEVENTY YEARS. And it shall come to pass that when seventy years are accomplished, I WILL punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for THEIR iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I WILL MAKE it a perpetual desolation, and I WILL bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah bath prophesied against all the nations." (In this prophecy, the Lord's dealings are as His dealings with the Assyrians, that I have covered earlier.)

The man who, with all proof before him, will deny that all prophecy is an expression, or a declaration, of the things that God has determined shall come to pass, has no grounds whatever, in truth, to say that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. For I can show ten places in the Bible where God says that He will bring such things to pass, to where he will find one where God has acknowledged Jesus Christ as His Son. He firmly declares here in Jeremiah 25, that HE will bring upon that land, and against all the other nations, ALL HIS WORDS that are written in this Book of Jeremiah. That includes all that Jeremiah has ever prophesied, and God asserted most positively that HE would bring it to pass. If I should publicly and repeatedly declare my intentions to kill a man, and he should be found dead, and I

should then declare that I did it, the very men who deny that God does these things that He has declared that He will do, would convict me in court on my own testimony without any corroborating testimony.

Listen, now, and God Himself will testify in His own behalf. He says: "For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the house of this city, and concerning the kings of Judah which are thrown down by the mounts and by the sword; They shall come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of MEN WHOM I HAVE SLAIN in anger and in My fury, and for whose wickedness I have hid My face from this city." Now as God Himself has said that HE WILL BRING to pass all that Jeremiah prophesied against Jerusalem and against all nations; and as He has affirmed that HE declared the former things and did them; and as He has declared the things that are not yet done and says He will bring them to pass and do them, that covers all prophecy and my point is absolutely proven that all prophecy is a declaration of God's determinate counsel. I could bring ten times as much proof as I have brought, but the man who will not believe these statements made by God Himself, would not believe if one should rise from the dead and declare them.

God has made an interrogatory affirmation by Amos, that there shall not be an evil in a city and He has not done it. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there BE EVIL IN A CITY, AND THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Amos 3:6) There is not a kingdom on earth where God does not rule; neither is there a ruler high or low, noble or base, that God has not set up.

ALL POLITICAL POWER IS ORDAINED OF GOD

It is said, by Daniel, "He ruleth in the kingdom of men, and setteth up over it the basest of men, and giveth it to WHOSOEVER HE WILL" (Daniel 4:17). Paul, speaking of the laws and the officers that enforce them, said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be (not just some of them) are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power (law) resisteth the ordinance of God" (Romans 13:1, see also Colossians 1: 16,17).

Would you object then, if I should say there never was a law enacted that was not foreordained of God? Let me prove it before you have time to object. Listen, God says in Jeremiah 33:25, "If My covenant is not with day and

night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances (laws) of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I WILL CAUSE their captivity to return, and I will have mercy on them." God promised in covenant, that they should return and He would have mercy on them. But here He affirms that He will not keep His promise, if He has not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth. Not some of them, but all of them. No matter what kind of laws they are, whether it is a decree by Cyrus or Darius for Israel's captivity to return, or statutes, He has appointed them. The "why" is His business. How does He rule in the kingdoms of men? It is by the appointing both the laws and the officers, and directing their steps, or heart, for "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23), "But the Lord directeth his steps" (Proverbs 16: 9), and "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: HE TURNETH IT WHITHERSOEVER HE WILL" (Proverbs 21:1).

Men, such as kings, think they are rulers, but they no more rule than did the king of Assyria when God sent him against Israel, to take the spoil and take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the street. He boasted of what he had done, but God said, "As if the ax should boast itself against him that heweth therewith."

King Nebuchadnezzar thought he ruled the world, and wanted to know where the God was that could deliver out of his hands, but God cast him down and made him to dwell with the beasts of the field, and made him eat grass like an ox, to teach him, "That the heavens rule" (Daniel 4: 15-17, 25). When he learned it by experience, like everyone must learn it who ever knows it, he wrote to all the people, nations and languages, that dwell upon the earth, and told them about this wonderful God, and told them that "All the inhabitants of the earth were reputed as nothing before Him, and He doeth according to HIS WILL, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou" (Daniel 4:35). No man has the right to call into question anything God does.

THE LOT, OR VOTE, IS OF GOD'S DETERMINATE COUNSEL

We think, in this country, that we elect our own officers. We go to the polls and cast our votes, like the votes, or lots, that were cast by the mariners of the vessel when Jonah was on the ship. The Lord rules in these matters, and we cast our votes so that the one WHOM HE HAS APPOINTED for the

place gets it. God has already cast the lot of each man in the election, and disposes of it in accordance with the same when the set time comes. Solomon said, and I believe, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the **WHOLE DISPOSING THEREOF IS OF THE LORD**" (Proverbs 16:33). The simplest meaning of the word "lot", as used here, is the portion reserved by one for himself, or that which falls out, or is set apart to one or more, as their portion. "The **LORD'S PORTION** is His people. Jacob is **THE LOT** of His inheritance."

Here is an example of its' meaning: The lot here is the portion that God has set apart for Himself. When they cast lots on the ship to see for whose sake God had sent the storm, it fell on Jonah. The apostles believed that **GOD** directed the casting of lots, so they prayed to God, then cast their lots, and the lot fell to Matthias and the apostles accepted it as God's appointment, and then he was "numbered with the twelve" as being so ordained of God (Acts 1: 22).

The first place where the word "lot" occurs in the Bible is in Leviticus 16. God commanded by Moses, that they take two kids of the goats for an offering, and they should cast lots before the Lord to see which one of them should be for a sin offering and which one should be for a scapegoat. You may think to ask, Why, if God has fixed all things, should they go to this trouble, seeing that it is already fixed, and could not fall on the wrong one? I am glad to answer, that God, both for their sake, and for ours for whom it was written, chose to impress the fact upon their minds and upon ours who may read it, that the lot, even of two young goats, just alike, was fixed by Him. The lot is His portion, to do with as He pleases. The casting of the lot by them was as much fixed as the kid upon whom that lot was fixed. That is a part of what we mean by the "predestination of all things." It is inclusive of the whole. David said in Psalm 16:5,6; "The Lord is the **PORTION** of mine inheritance and of my **CUP**: Thou maintainest my **LOT**. The lines **ARE FALLEN** unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly inheritance." All of this that David is rejoicing over is that which God has apportioned, which is the lot that God has cast for him, and it fell to him in pleasant places.

He said, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." The cup holds that which is allotted to one as his portion. Again, in Psalm 11:6, "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest. This shall be the portion of their gm." Jeremiah said, also, "Babylon hath been a golden op in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken, the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad " "Babylon

hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand " One meaning of the word "golden," is something highly valuable. So Babylon has been highly valuable in the Lord's hand. If she has been a "golden cup" in His hand, and the nations have drunk from that cup, then the Lord put that cup to their mouth and made them drunk on its contents, for He held the cup in His hand while they drank, and He said, "The nations have drunken of her wine, therefore, the nations are mad" How many nations drank of that cup from the hand of the Lord? In Revelation 14:8, it is written, "She hath made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication." Remember that while she was doing this she was a valuable cup in the hand of the Lord. He held her to their mouth, just as the king of Assyria was an "ax, a saw, a rod, and a staff," in the hand of the Lord, and as the "wicked are His sword," and "Israel His battle ax." So Babylon was a valuable cup in His hand to make all the nations of the earth drunk on the wine of her fornication, and thus make them mad, that they might in their madness, destroy one another, and thus drink the wine of His wrath out of the "cup of His indignation" at HIS hand. This is their lot, which was "cast into the lap (divine providence), and the WHOLE disposing thereof is of the Lord"

When the lot is cast in any case or cause, the matter is settled by the casting of the lot." The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty" (Proverbs 18:18). All the land of Canaan was divided to Israel by casting of lots. The lot that fell to each one when the casting came was his portion. It fell to him, by the casting of the lots. (See Numbers 26 and Joshua chapter 16 through chapter 23.) When it fell to one by the casting of the lot, that lot belonged to him. God had spoken. He had by the lot revealed His will. The matter therefore was settled. The man could lease that land for forty-nine years, but at the end of that time it reverted to him or to his heirs. The idea in casting lots was to determine, settle and fix the thing, or things, for the future according to God's will. In the text under con-sideration, the lot is already cast. The lap is the lap of time. What is to be the lot of everyone is settled. It remains for God to determine that it comes to each one at the set time, for there is a set "time to every purpose under the sun."

In all the wonderful things that were revealed to Daniel, they were the lot, or settled arrangement of God. In different places it was said that these things "are determined," and in numbers of places it is said that they shall be at "the time appointed," and in the last verse in the last chapter it was said to Daniel, "But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest (die) and stand in THY LOT at the end of the days." (In the resurrection)

When I left the discussion of the Book of Daniel, I was examining the ninth chapter in which the word "shall" occurs eleven times, in which he calls attention to the book of Jeremiah, in which God said that He would accomplish seventy years in the destruction of Jerusalem in a set time period. That seventy years had not been yet completed when he wrote. God's hand was heavy upon the Jews, and Daniel was fervently pleading with God to show mercy and forgive them, and God dispatched the angel Gabriel to inform him, and he informed him that seventy weeks were determined to make an end of these things that all the prophets had foretold and especially Jeremiah, which meant the absolute destruction of Jerusalem by all the armies of the north, during which seventy weeks the transgressions should be finished and the Messiah cut off to make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness and unto the end of the war that should be in progress at that time. The angel told him that these desolations WERE DETERMINED, not just foreseen. [Both the seventy weeks from the going into captivity to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the temple when the Jews returned, as well as the seventy weeks from the restoration to the Messiah were determined and revealed.] The seventy weeks were said to be determined, and therefore all that should take place during those seventy weeks were determined. God had said that HE would gather all the families of the north and Nebuchadnezzar, and bring them there and that He would bring to pass all that is written in the Book of Jeremiah the prophet. He says in the time of this great prince, which the Lord hath sent to destroy the city, that He shall cause the sacrifices and the oblations to cease, and for the overspreading of the abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that the consummation determined shall be poured upon the city.

This is the same type of destruction that is described by Isaiah, where God said He would send the Assyrian as the rod of His anger to take a spoil, and take the prey and tread them down like the mire of the street. In this He used him as an ax or a saw, or a rod or a staff, and made light of the king, which was this same Nebuchadnezzar, and said He would punish him because he said that it was by the strength of his own hand that he had done it, and by his wisdom. There cannot be a doubt but what this old king acted just as freely and as willing in this whole affair as any man ever acted in anything; and he felt proud of his achievements. He was the visible actor in the whole tragic scene, and did that work as truly as any man ever did anything in his life. Yet back of him was the unseen hand of God, who in His all-wise Providence, rules, controls, guides and directs all creatures and things to His most holy ends. If language means any thing, God as certainly used this old

king and his hosts to accomplish His purpose, as any man ever used any kind of an implement in his life for the accomplishment of his purpose and far more so, for if it is "not in man that walketh to direct his steps" then God is using both you and your ax just as surely as He was using that old king and his subjects, while they consumed and destroyed Israel.

Is this too hard? If it is, throw down the Book called the "Holy Bible," and declare yourself to be what you are: An infidel. God goes on to show that after He has used this old king with all his hosts, which were all the nations of his world at that time, and had made an utter destruction of Jerusalem, and brought on her the abomination of desolation as spoken by Daniel and Jeremiah, as well as Isaiah; He will then bring just as great a destruction on this old king and the city of Babylon and all the other nations over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled at that time. He said that He would consume them till they would be so few that a child may write them. Then He said that it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel and they that are escaped of the house of Judah shall no more stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel in truth. "For though Thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant shall return: the consumption DECREED, SHALL OVERFLOW WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS. For the Lord God will make a consummation EVEN DETERMINED on the whole land" (Isaiah 10:22). This shows that all things connected with these entire affairs as had been spoken by the prophets, were determined in God's unchangeable decree, and were brought to pass by Him.

These men, kings and all others engaged in all these affairs, as free and willing and yet as wickedly as men ever acted in any thing in this world, and in so doing they were carrying out what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." They did just as John Gill said in 1735, concerning those who crucified Christ. He said: "Nothing was ever more peremptorily decreed and determined of God than was the crucifixion of Christ: yet men never acted more freely, nor more wickedly, than did the Jews in all those tragic scenes and circumstances." With all the above proof before us, there is no room left for doubt that God claims that HE did all these things Himself, even to the putting of Jesus Christ to death. For it is said in Isaiah 53, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief"

Now let us reason together over these things. If the Lord has done all these things and we cannot cavil over this point, for, He has had it recorded in His book that He did them, and he that denies the record that He has given of

Himself makes Him a liar (I speak as a man), and we can't afford to do that. Then tell me, please, can you think of a more reasonable conclusion than that He, in His determinate counsel, determined just what should be, and take place in this world and then by

His own hand made every thing so perfect and complete and appointed all the laws, that He calls the "ordinances of heaven and earth" by which everything is governed in its action with such perfect precision that they are doing as those men did that crucified Christ, who did just what "God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done"? If you can, I am anxious to hear it. If there is any way that you can think of that involves Him less directly in the performance of these things, I would like to know it. There is not another truth in the Bible that is so often and emphatically asserted as this one. God has said this by nearly all of the prophets, and by some of them many times. If He does not do all these things in the sense that He predetermined them and gave to every thing its nature, and fixed the laws of nature by which all things are governed, then I cannot see how He can claim that He does all these things without being the direct and immediate actor in them. Ah, you say: You make God the author of sin! In no wise do I conclude the same as you. I yet know that Adam fell, and all his offspring in him. I yet know that man is wicked through and through by nature. I yet know that man would commit far more wickedness than he now does if God did not restrain him. And what wickedness man does, he does it from his own nature and for his own evil end. That God uses the wickedness of wicked men to fulfill His determinate counsel is no grounds to charge those sins to Him! God forbid! But to continue:

It is said that He causes the grass to grow for cattle, and herbs for the service of man, and oil that maketh his face to shine, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man (Psalm 104:15). It is a violation of the law of our country now to make wine [Ed. 1931-32 Prohibition]. Is He the actual, personal and immediate Maker of wine? That kind that makes glad the heart? Surely not: But He makes it in the same sense that He makes the grass to grow for the cattle. He decreed it and fixed the laws by which it is caused to grow.

Charles H. Spurgeon said in his first book of sermons, "I believe that the falling of the sheer leaf of the poplar is as fully ordained as the march of the devastating pestilence; that the chaff from the winnow, is steered in its course as the stars of heaven; that the smallest spray that dash against the steamboat, has its orbit as the sun, moon and stars; that the smallest particle that floats in the sunbeam does not move one atom more than God designed

it. It is either a mighty God that works all things after the counsel of His own will or no God at all. There is no standing room between this and Atheism. He that believes in a God at all must believe this truth."

I do not give this as proof, but as what I believe about it. But all things spoken by the prophets who prophesied of the calamities that should befall Israel and Jerusalem, and then what should befall the nations whom God should use in accomplishing this seventy years disaster upon her, are determined and shall be done. Jeremiah not only told the length of time that was determined to accomplish the determined consumption, just how it should be accomplished and by whom, but he shows that God has determined to bring it all to pass; and not only fulfill all His words concerning the things that should be done to Jerusalem and all Israel, but all His words concerning the other nations, even all that is written in the Book of Jeremiah. God has determined and declared that HE will bring every word of it to pass.

Isaiah declares that God Himself will do it by the use of Nebuchadnezzar, and all his hosts; not just as silent spectators, but as agents in His hand, as "the ax or the saw, the rod or the staff," accomplishing the decreed consumption that He said should overflow with righteousness (Isaiah 10).

Daniel shows that the same king with his mighty hosts from the north shall come as it is determined of God, and shall do just what the other prophets have declared shall be done, and the period determined for the accomplishment of all these things that are determined to come upon Jerusalem and Israel is seventy years, and that every thing connected with it has an appointed time to take place. He enlarges on it and shows the different kings that shall rise and fall (Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Romans) in the awful struggles that shall go on during this time, and he shows in all of it these things are all predetermined, and shall all take place at the appointed time, and yet, in all this wicked carnage and bloodshed, these wicked men shall do according to their wills. That in no wise makes God the author of their sins.

In the three last chapters, the word "shall" occurs one hundred and fifty-one times! It is the language of the angel Gabriel, who was sent to show Daniel that which God had determined should come to pass in the latter end of the Jewish nation, or kingdom, as it was written in the Holy Scriptures. These things begin with Daniel's vision as recorded in the eighth chapter. Daniel had seen a great vision that he could not understand and as he sought for the meaning there stood before him, as the appearance of a man, and he heard a

man's voice say, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." All that he saw in that vision were things that were determined and that had an appointed time to come to pass. And from thence forward, on through the Book of Daniel's very word of it, except Daniel's prayer and the few words spoken by Daniel to the angel, are the words of the angel telling Daniel the things that are determined, and that have a set time to come to pass. Five times before the close of the angel's talk he speaks of those things as having been determined. Four times it is said that they shall be at the "time appointed" And four times it is said those who do those things, shall do according to their will, and in chapter 11, verse 36, it says, "And the king shall do according to his will, and shall exalt himself, and magnify, himself above every god and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished for that that is determined, shall be done." The Book of Daniel should forever settle the controversy over the doctrine of the predestination of all things. The greater portion of these things that are determined and a time set for them to come to pass are wicked things. The greater portion has already been accomplished, and that at the exact time prophesied for them. While they are said to be determined and a time set for them, yet it is said that those who do them shall do according to their will. How then can it be said that those believing these things make God the author of sin, or charge them with being "can't-help-its"? In the last chapter and near the close, it is said, "And the wicked shall do wickedly and none of them shall understand" (Daniel 12:9b). God does not take a good man and make him do evil against his own will. He takes a wicked man ready at hand and uses him according to his own will. The wicked run greedily and willingly into these wicked deeds, and yet, they cannot exceed or go beyond that which God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. No man can exceed in actions that God's hand and His counsel determined "before to be done." Here is the basis, or foundation, of God's foreknowledge of all things.

There are only two positions that can be taken for a foundation or basis for the foreknowledge of all events. (1) One is that all things were going to happen anyway, and God foresaw, telescopically, what was going to come to pass and forewarned of them by the prophets. This of course, makes God a mere bystander in the affairs of His creation, divorced from any entanglement in any and all conditions, events, and behaviors of men, which conditions, events and behaviors are subjects of mere chance, and as such is unpredictable.

(2) The other is that God in eternity, before He made the world, thought out

without any outside help, counsel, or assistance, in His own mind by His own wisdom, and according to His own will the future with all future things and events. No one existed but Him, and it was just with Him and Him alone, as to whether there ever would be anything else or IV. It was with Him to determine just what should be in the future. It depended wholly upon Him to determine what He would make, how He would make it, and what He would make it for. The perfection of God forbids the thought that He would make any thing that He did not have a use for. No intelligent being would do that. His perfection forbids the thought that He would not make every thing suitable for the purpose for which He designed it. No intelligent being would do that. And no intelligent being would make a being for his own use, and make it so that it would do what he had rather it not do. No sane man would do that, and to charge God with doing that is to impeach and demean His perfection and charge Him with folly.

This being true, it follows that God, in the counsel of His will, before He made the world or brought time into being, determined to make the world and every thing that He did finally make; and fixed by an eternal decree the course, movements or actions of every thing that exists, fixing with perfect exactness the movements of everything that He made, by a decree that He says shall not pass (Psalm 148:6), and He affirms by Jeremiah that "If My covenant is not with day and night, and i f I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them" (Jeremiah 33: 25,26). This affirmation is so strong that it binds Him to break His covenant with David that was confirmed by His most solemn oath, if this is not true. The ordinances of heaven means the fixed and inexorable laws or decrees of God, according to which the sun, moon and stars are established in their courses and movements so that they never vary in the least from their courses, their movements nor their decreed effects. So true is this that the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). David said, "Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever; He hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Psalm 148:3-6). These things are all fixed and established forever by the decreed ordinances of the Almighty Jehovah. Every element, and all the bodies that course through the heavens above us are under this perpetual decree of their Creator, which He says, "shall not pass." Not only has He

appointed the ordinances of heaven by His unchangeable decree, but He affirms that He has also appointed the ordinances of earth. Every movement of His earthly creatures are as certainly determined as are the heavenly bodies. Man's goings are declared in Holy Writ to be, "of the Lord" (Proverb 20:24); "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). "The Lord directeth his steps" (Proverb 16:9). These are all positive statements by inspiration, and prove that God has as certainly determined the course of His earthly creatures as He has the heavenly bodies. There is no escape from this Biblical conclusion.

The poet, many years ago, expressed the exact truth on this subject when he said,

"Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore Him,
Praise Him, angels in the height;
Sun and moon rejoice before Him,
Praise Him, all ye stars of light.
Praise the Lord for He hath spoken,
Worlds His mighty voice obey,
Laws which never can be broken,
For their guidance He has made.
Praise the Lord for He is glorious,
Never shall His promise fail,
God doth make His saints victorious,
Death and hell shall not prevail.
Praise the God of our salvation,
Hosts on high His power proclaim,
Heaven and earth and all creation,
Praise and magnify His Name."

God having determined in the counsel of His will, all that should ever exist in time, and every event that should ever take place in time, He therefore knew all things, just like He knew that the heavenly bodies would exist, and just what their movements would be. He knows it because He has so determined. He knew there would be a world, because He had determined it should exist, and how it should come into existence. He foreknew that the sun, moon, and the stars would exist and just what their every movement would be, because He did so determine. Surely no one would be so simple as to say that God foresaw these things coming, and therefore He knew they would come. He knows every thing that will ever exist or take place because He determined in the counsel of His will that they should be. The other

position is, that God determined to make a world and to populate the earth with people, but did not determine what these people should do, but looked on ahead and saw them all on the stage of action, and thereby learned from the creatures themselves just what they would do when they got here. This latter view certainly presents God as a pupil, time as a school room, and all the creatures of time as teachers, and that God looked clear through time before He gave it existence, and saw all the creatures of time in action before they had existence, and thereby learned in advance just what each would do, and that was moved by what He foresaw coming, that He had rather would not come, to make all the arrangement for salvation, and damnation, for a heaven and for a hell, that He has made. If this be true, then God's whole course of action in all that He has ever done, or ever will do, is the result of what He foresaw coming, that He rather would not come. There is no escaping this conclusion. If this is true, God has never had any thing, as He would have preferred to have it. His preference would have been to have a world into which sin would never enter, but He never had His preference there. He would have preferred a man that would not sin, but He failed there as well. He would have preferred, if these things are true, to populate heaven with people that had never been sinners, but He will never have or enjoy what He would have preferred in that matter. And He would have preferred no hell at all, but seeing that some would never be fit for heaven, He just had to accept the situation as He foresaw it coming, and do the best He could under the circumstances. That is not my God.

SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD AND THE ETERNAL COUNCIL OF GOD

I am aware that as I follow my mind in this subject, some may entertain the thought that I take a light or permissive attitude towards sin. This is not the case, however. To ignore the entrance of sin into God's creation is to ignore a large portion of His determinate counsel and fail to set forth many of God's glorious attributes. It is without levity or permissiveness toward sin and evil that this discussion is pursued.

Some six or eight years ago, as I was on my way to a meeting in another county, I was thinking about God and His determinate counsel, and in my mind there came a picture of the seven Spirits of God in Council. In this picture, in my mind, the Will of God was the central figure in the group of the Seven, and it faced four ways. Around it were grouped Wisdom, Power, Love and Mercy, Justice and Wrath. All of these constituted God in Council. At first, this picture was very dim in my mind, but gradually as the days

passed by, it grew plainer, and its glory flamed with brightness. At the head of this stood Wisdom to preside over all their deliberations, that all things might be wisely planned, arranged and determined. On one side stood Love and Mercy, and on the other stood Justice and Wrath. And at the opposite side of the Will from Wisdom, stood Power, ready to carry into execution the findings of this Council. These seven Spirits, or attributes of God, were God in all His glorious fullness. He stood alone, unknown and unrevealed, save to Himself This Council was to devise a plan by which the glorious perfection of God in all of these attributes could most gloriously be revealed. This was the Will of God, as expressed in this Council. The plan that was agreed upon and determined in this Council, in which God's Will was the only counselor, was to make a world with every thing contained in it that was necessary for carrying into effect the object which they were seeking to accomplish. This object was the revealing, or making manifest the Glory of God as it will finally be revealed in and to the many sons, which He, in this Council, determined to bring unto glory, by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering: such were my cogitations as I looked upon the picture, as it presented itself to my mind. I fully believe that this picture represents the truth. I fully believe that God made everything in order to reveal or make known His glory. To this end and for this purpose He made the world and all it contains.

This is why David said, "All Thy works shall praise Thee and Thy saints shall praise Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (Psalm 145:10). All of these things are to reveal His glory. Everything that He created must, will, and does, praise the glorious WILL that suggested their creation, and the wisdom and the power that planned for and brought them into being.

Paul said the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). How could the wrath of God ever have been revealed had there been no ungodliness or unrighteousness for it to be revealed from heaven against? One of the meanings of the word "wrath," is the just punishment of a crime or an offense. No one could ever have known the justice of God, if there had been no right and wrong to judge between. And no one could have known the justice and righteousness of His wrath without an offender for it to be manifested upon. And as mercy means a disposition to pass by the offenses of an offender and treat him better than he deserves, there could have been no manifestation of this attribute of God, had there been no offender for it to be

manifested toward, or upon.

Creation alone manifested three, but only three, of the attributes of God. They are the Will, Wisdom, and His Power. The Will suggested the creation; the Wisdom planned it, and the Power performed the work of bringing things into being. All men, even the wicked, can see a great manifestation of these three attributes of God as they are wonderfully manifested in creation.

Paul said of those, whose ungodliness, and unrighteousness the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against; "For that which may be known of God (by creation), is manifested in them, for God hath shewed it unto them" (Romans 1:19). Then he tells how it was shown to them. He says, "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they (the wicked) are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Now let us take this rule by which Paul said the invisible things of Him are clearly seen and understood. He said they are understood by the things that are made. That which may be known of God by the wicked is clearly seen and understood by the things that are made.

His Will, Wisdom, and Power are seen and understood by what He has made. That is the way we judge a mechanic whom we have never seen, if we can see something that He has made, something of His Will, Wisdom, and mechanical Powers. For instance, we will take a watch. In the very face of it we see three of the invisible things of its maker. First, we see his will manifested. We see that his will was to make a timepiece, one that would keep time and mark or indicate the hours, minutes and seconds. Second, we see wisdom, the wisdom that devised the plan. If he was wise enough his plan will be perfect, or in others words, it will be planned so that if it is made according to the plan it will run perfectly and keep the time with perfect precision. We also see in the watch the mechanical power or ability of the maker. If his plan was correct, and his ability as a workman was equal to the occasion, his watch, when it is done, will mark him as a perfect watchmaker. But if it fails to keep correct time, it stamps him as a bungler and a failure. We understand this by the thing that he made. This is exactly the rule that Paul lays down by which even those who hold the truth in unrighteousness to judge and understand the invisible, will, wisdom and power of God. And they are made so plain that Paul said they are without excuse.

Dear reader, what do you clearly see as pertains to the Godhead, when you look at the things He has made? Do you think they are doing with exact and perfect precision the things that the Will desired? If not, then by the same rule that you judged the watchmaker and stamped him as a bungler, would

you not condemn God as a failure? If He is clearly seen and understood by the things that He made and they are not moving or doing what was in His Will for them to do, then you clearly see that He is a failure as a Creator. This rule is given us by inspiration and it must be our guide. I am fully satisfied, myself, that everything God made is doing exactly what the Creator willed and determined for them to do. Otherwise, if I judge Him by the rule Paul gave, I would be compelled to say that the works of His hand prove Him to be imperfect; that the things that He made do not perform as He willed they should perform, therefore they have proved from the first test, in the garden, to be unsatisfactory to Him that made them. God forbid that we should thus impeach Him!

In the Council of God's Will, when Wisdom, Power, Love, Mercy, Justice and Wrath all consulted the Will of God, they agreed on a plan that would manifest, or reveal, in a most glorious manner, each of them in the fullness of their perfection. To do this they determined to make a world into which sin would enter, so that the four attributes that were not brought out and revealed in creation could be made manifest. Had there been no sin, love would have never been revealed in its pleading and making the great sacrifice that it made for sinners; Mercy would not have been revealed in the forgiving and saving of unworthy objects; Justice could not have been revealed in the condemnation of sin; and Wrath could not have been revealed in the execution of those whom Justice condemned. So God would only have been manifested as a wise and powerful Creator who willed, planned, and made the world, with no apparent object in view than to show what He could do. There was no love, Mercy, Justice nor Wrath, revealed in creation. But let us suppose that God had made the world just as He did, but had determined not to reveal any of His attributes that were not revealed in creation, except Love and Mercy. When man sinned, what would have been the results? There would have been no Justice to condemn, nor Wrath to execute. So when Love plead for this salvation, all men would have been saved, none would have been condemned or executed, and universal salvation would have been the result, without any sacrifice being made to satisfy Justice or appease the Wrath of God. On the other hand, if Love and Mercy had been left out of the Council, and no arrangements made for their manifestation, the result would have been that when man sinned there would have been no Love to plead to Him and no Mercy to forgive. Justice would have condemned, Love would not have offered a sacrifice, and Wrath would have executed the sentence of Justice and the whole race of man would have been lost, universal damnation would have been the result.

However, the plan agreed upon in the council of God, was to reveal the glory of God in all of His perfections.

"Truth, Wisdom, Power and Love,
In all their glory shown,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And died to save His own"

Love, Mercy, Justice and Wrath, were gloriously revealed in the crucifixion of Christ, but they could not have been thus revealed, had there been no sin, for Jesus died for sinners. All who hold that God was unwilling for man to become a sinner, are bound to admit that if their theory is true, all the glorious things that God has done in planning and saving sinners, has been a matter of second choice with Him; for His first choice would have been that there be no sinners to redeem. But Paul does not state it that way. He says that, "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 "(Hebrews 2:10). It "became Him" to bring many sons unto glory in the very way He has and is doing it. The word "became" is the imperfect of "become," which means it was suitable, or befitting, for Him to accomplish the bringing of these many sons unto glory in this way. The way that He chose to do was firmly fixed in His determinate counsel before He made man. And when He made him, He made him so that he was sure to become a sinner. Why? Because He had determined to bring many sons unto glory by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. This was "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord "(Ephesians 3:11), and the way in which He had determined in council to make His glory known on the vessels of mercy which He had "afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23).

That the plan to save sinners was arranged before there were any sinners to save is evident, for Paul said they were "chosen in Christ before the world began" (Ephesians 1:3-5), and were "predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL." This plan then (instead of being a matter of second choice with Him and grievous to Him that it must be made as a necessity forced upon Him contrary to His will) was according to the good pleasure of His will, and was to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:1-6). For this reason it is said, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isaiah 53:10).

In doing it the glory of His grace - the grace of love and the grace of mercy - was gloriously manifested in transaction, so much so, that Paul said, "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved" (Ephesians 2:10).

And what was all of this for? "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7). Here is the summary of the whole plan: His glory will shine through the ages to come in the revealing of the riches of His grace, which could not be revealed except upon sinners. In this wonderful plan, Jesus was foreordained as "a lamb without blemish and without spot, before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18-21). Why make this arrangement before He made the man if the thing was in the least a displeasure or repugnant to Him? It is said, "an ounce of preventative is worth a pound of cure." If it did not suit Him for sin to come into the world, why did He not prevent it? If He could speak a world into existence, could He not as easily have kept sin out, as to allow it to enter the world? According to the Scripture, He "prepared a kingdom" for His sheep, "before the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34), and, also, a place for the goats. (Matthew 25:31-46) And it pleased Him to do this, for David said, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psalm 135:6).

This proves beyond all doubt, that it pleased Him to make a world into which sin would enter, and it further proves that it would not have pleased Him to have a world into which sin would not enter, or He certainly would have made that kind. To my mind, it is very unreasonable and silly to say that God foreknew that if He made the world as He did, sin would come into it and every thing transpire that has and will transpire, when He much rather it would not be so. Was He powerless to prevent it? Could He not have given man a nature that would not incline to sin? Knowing as He did that if Satan came in contact with the woman, he would beguile and deceive her, could He not have prevented it? Could He not have done as He has determined to do in the future, and bound Satan and put him in the bottomless pit and thus have prevented him from deceiving her?

Tell me, you who think that it would have suited God better for man to have kept the law; do you think it would have been better for God to have bound Satan back there before he deceived anyone than to have allowed him to deceive them and bring about all the sin, wickedness, vice, and corruption

that have come as a result of that act back in the Garden? There would have been no sickness, no death, no sorrow, no weeping, and no mourning, no sadness of heart, nor shedding of tears, no hell, no Savior of sinners, no shouts of praises to God and to the Lamb by redeemed sinners, hence, no heaven. In fact, don't you think God committed the greatest folly, and made the most colossal blunder that could have been made, when He failed to bind Satan back there, instead of waiting six thousand years or more later, and then binding him to prevent him from "deceiving the nations any more for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:3)?

First: Why not have bound him before he deceived anyone? Second: why loose him at the end of the thousand years? If God will get more glory to Himself through the redemption of sinners, than He would have gotten had there been no sin, don't you think that the devil will be entitled to some of the glory for his part in the matter? There would have been no opportunity for God to have gotten the glory that will shine forth out of the redemption of sinners, had there been no sinners to save, and if it was contrary to God's Will for man to sin, then, if Satan had not defeated God's Will by deceiving the woman, this glory never would have arisen to God out of the redemption of sinners. There would not have been any sons brought to glory by the making of the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. There would have been neither suffering nor salvation. If the devil brought about this condition contrary to God's Will, out of which God will get so much glory, don't you think God should thank him for it? God forbid such a position!

If your hope of heaven is based on the thought that you are redeemed sinner, which you could not be unless you had been a sinner, which you would not have been, had it not been for the part the devil played in making you a sinner, then don't you think you should say: "But the devil be thanked that I was the servant of sin," instead of the saying of Paul, "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you" (Romans 6:17). Paul made a great mistake if the devil brought sin about contrary to the will of God. No one who denies that we became sinners according to the will and purpose of God would ever say, as Paul did, "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin." According to their theory, Paul should have said, "The devil be damned that you were the servants of sin, but God be thanked that you have been made free from sin, and yourselves be thanked that since being made free from sin, you have volunteered to become the servants of God, and as such have obeyed that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you and

now being made free from sin and become the servants of God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end conditional time salvation."

How fittingly appropriate this would have been, if the theory of limited predestination and conditional time-salvation had been true. But thank God, it is not true; hence, Paul said, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:17-23).

Here we have the sequel of the whole matter: eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. God arranged the whole thing in His salvation for this special ending. "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" (Hebrews 2:10). So He arranged for sin, that His Son might suffer for the sins of His people (being "slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8), and thus bring them to glory by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:10). And because of this, Paul said, "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin," for unless you had been sinners, you would never have been brought unto glory by the sufferings of Jesus Christ. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). There would have been no Jesus Christ; for "Jesus Christ" means "Savior anointed" and there could have been no Savior where there was no one to save as Savior means "one who saved." There could have been no salvation where there were no sinners, as "salvation" means, "The redemption of man from the bondage of sin and the liability of eternal death, and conferring upon him eternal happiness."

We are forced to take one of two positions relative to this matter. (1) We must either admit that the whole of it, both sin and salvation, were decreed and appointed of God in the free, eternal and immutable counsel of His Will;

or, (2) that the devil is the first great cause of every purpose of God that relates to His dealing with man since He gave man the law in the garden. He was moved and induced to plan salvation by what He foresaw the devil would do. His purpose to save some and His purpose and to damn others were induced by the foreseen act of the devil in the Garden of Eden. There has never been a single word spoken, since God gave man the law in the Garden, by Himself, His prophets, His Son, His apostles, nor His ministers, that would have been spoken, had the devil not beguiled and deceived our Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Not one act of God since the world began would have been as it has been, had He not been influenced or moved to do it through the act of the devil in the Garden of Eden as the first cause of such act. Can you imagine the above to be the correct view of how sin entered into the world and death by sin, had God been forced to react to Satan's act as the origin of all these things?

Do you tell me that God is an independent sovereign? Not if His acts have all been induced, influenced and shaped by what the devil did in the Garden of Eden. All His acts determined in the counsel of His Will before the world began, were induced by His foreseeing this act of the devil in the Garden of Eden, if this act of the devil was not also embraced in the sovereign, free, and independent purpose of God. There is no escape from this conclusion. Either the devil acted freely and independently of God in his act of beguiling and deceiving the woman in the Garden and God foreseeing this act was moved thereby to hold a council and in that council was moved to make all His arrangements through time and on into eternity by His foreseen act of Satan, or the whole thing was arranged in God's free and independent purpose before the world began, and this act of Satan was according to the pre-arrangement, or determinate counsel, of God. If limited predestination is the truth, then God is but a pawn in the hands of Satan, and has been moved by the acts of Satan to do all that He has done, and will do, and God is playing a losing game, because the devil will have the majority of the men in his hands in the wind-up, contrary to God's Will and desire.

We must either admit that God has freely and unchangeably decreed all things, whatsoever comes to pass, or admit that all of His actions in eternity in the counsel of His will in arranging for the salvation of sinners; the entire covenant of redemption; the determining of all of His acts in dealing with sinners in time; and His dealing with His saints as redeemed sinners here in time and on into eternity; and His dealing with the wicked in their everlasting punishment as sinners, have all been and will all be caused or induced by the

foreseen acts of Satan. If this is so, then there is no such Being as a sovereign and independent God For all of His thoughts, purposes, and actions, in time and in eternity have been and will be induced, shaped, and governed, by what He foresaw Satan would do.

Would it have been better for the world, and more pleasing to God, for sin to have not entered into the world? Did God do that which was best for His people and most suitable for His own glory when He let sin enter the world? If it would have been best for sin not to enter into the world, and God could have prevented its entrance, did He do the best that could have been done when He allowed it to enter? If all that He has done and will do is for the best, and yet He would not have done these things, had Satan not done what he did, don't you think you should credit Satan with being the first cause of God doing that which was best? These are some of the things one must seriously consider when discussing God's decree and predestination. Sin has to be considered. It plays too much a part of God's dealings with man to be lightly and frivolously shoved aside.

It cannot reasonably be denied that the foreseen act of Satan caused God to first think of arranging a plan to save sinners, and caused Him to consult his will, which resulted in the arranging of the covenant of redemption, if He was moved to do so by what He saw Satan would do. In such a case, if God had any plan, purpose, will, desire, or thought for the future that were eternal, free, independent and in no wise affected, caused, influenced or induced by what He foresaw Satan would do, then it is evident that such plan, purpose, will, desire, and thought, were abandoned, because of what He foresaw; and Satan, not the sovereign, free, immutable, and independent will of God, moved God to do all that He has done and will do concerning sin and sinners. Reason as we may, we cannot escape the conclusion under the idea of limited predestination, that Satan caused God to arrange the covenant of redemption and to do all that He has done or ever will do in His dealings with men as sinners. This being true, it logically follows, that as the entrance of sin into the world was not provided for as a free and independent purpose that any body should ever be everlastingly damned and punished; hence, there was no hell or place of punishment in His original Will, but the thought of punishment, and the preparing a place for that purpose was induced by the foreseen act of Satan in causing our fore-parents to sin. And if this is true, then it follows that God did not eternally, originally, freely and independently hate, and/or will, the damnation of anyone. Then it further follows, logically, irresistibly, and inevitably, that He has changed somewhere along the line in His feelings, mind, purpose and will since His

first thought of creating [sic] man. Reason as we may, we cannot escape this conclusion under the idea of limited predestination.

Nor is this all; for if God was moved, influenced or induced by what He foresaw Satan would do, to arrange to save some and damn others, then it follows as an irresistible conclusion, that if God ever had any plan for, or purpose of, or thought concerning the creation of man that was in no way affected, moved, induced, caused or influenced by what He foresaw Satan would do, then neither salvation nor damnation were thought of in such plan, purpose, or thought. For neither salvation nor damnation can be thought of separate and apart from sinners. Hence, it follows, that if God ever had any plan or purpose for the future that was free, eternal and independent of Satan and his works, He abandoned such plan or purpose because of what He foresaw coming independent of Himself or His organized plan or purpose, and adopted a contingency plan to meet the conditions that He saw would be thrust upon Him independent of His Will or desires. In other words, He abandoned all thought, plan or purpose of a sinless world and sinless men, if He ever had any such thought, plan or purpose, and devised a plan to meet the conditions, that unwillingly (on His part) was going to be thrust upon Him, and determined to accept the situation and do the best He could under the circumstances.

Taking this view of the matter, and seeing, according to this view, that God would have preferred that sin never enter the world, then, of course, He would have preferred that there be no sinners; hence, we are forced to conclude that His present plan to save the minor part of the human family, and to damn the rest, was a matter of second choice with Him, and was the best He could do under the circumstances.

There is no escaping these conclusions under the idea of limited predestination. Reason as we may, if we admit that salvation and damnation were both determined of God as a result of His foreseeing that the devil would lead man into sin contrary to His will, and outside of His purpose, then it follows that the devil is the great first cause of God determining to save a part of the human family and to damn the rest. These are the legitimate deductions from limited predestination, but, of course, the advocates of that theory do not avow these natural consequences. Yet they are inevitable, if that theory is true. The old-time Arminians are more consistent than these, because they freely admit that God would have kept sin out of the world if He could. They freely admit that it would have been best for sin to have not entered the world; and that God would have prevented it if

He had been able. In other words, according to Arminians, God would have done better if He could, while the limited predestinarians say that it would have been better for the world and would have pleased God better, if sin had not entered the world. And yet they admit that God could have prevented it if He would. In other words, they say that God could have done better than He did if He would. If they admit that it would have pleased God better, and would have been better for man for sin to have not entered the world, and then admit that God could have kept it out if He would, they say plainly that God could have done better than He did if He would. Their doctrine says that He could have kept sin out of the world if He would. And it also says that it would have been better for sin to have never entered the world. All of these positions mean that God could have done better than He did. The man who holds to that theory must think that if it had been him, instead of God, that made the world, and he had been infinite in wisdom and almighty in power, he could and would have kept sin out of the world; and thereby have done better in the matter than God did. The theory of limited predestination denies the existence of God, and sets up a Being that its devotees call the devil, which from the beginning of time has proved himself to be more wise and more powerful than the thing that they call "God," by getting sin into the world which they say their "God" made, and which He was unwilling for sin to enter.

Not only did this devil, according to the Limited Predestinarian view, outwit their "God" and get sin into His world contrary to His will, but he kept it here ever since, while their "God" was unwilling for it to be here any part of the time. The devil has caused all men to sin, while their "God" was not willing for any man to sin, nor have any utility for its existence. He will drag millions down to hell while it was not in the original will, purpose or intention of their "God" for any hell. He never had any such thought as a heaven or a hell, salvation, or damnation until He looked into the future and saw sin coming, propelled by the devil. Then he got busy and held a council in which he consulted his Will as to what He should do about it. And either because He was unable to find a way to prevent it, or unwilling to do anything to prevent its coming into the world, He decided to let the devil have his way about it, and usher it into the world. And while He did not, at his first thought of making man, mean, purpose, or intend to hate and everlastingly damn anybody, yet when He saw that they would become sinners, hatred arose in Him toward the greater part of the human family, and he decided that he would rather prepare a hell and punish them forever than to either take steps to prevent them from becoming sinners, or prepare a remedy for sin and save them.

Understand me; this is the limited predestinarians' "God" of whom I am speaking. They cannot afford to admit that their "God" arranged the whole program in his own eternal mind, unbiased and uninfluenced by Satan or anything outside of himself. They deny that he eternally willed that things should be as they are. They also deny that he eternally willed or purposed the damnation of anyone. But they say he prepared a hell and determined to damn millions, because he foresaw sin would come. If he foresaw sin would come he certainly saw that Satan would be the cause of its coming; hence, from the time he foresaw this He has never been free for a single moment from the influence of what He foresaw. All of His purposes, from thenceforth, were influenced and shaped by what He foresaw. Everything that He has ever done or said since He foresaw this "unpurposed" [sic] and unpleasant event coming contrary to His will, has been determined and shaped by what He foresaw. Not a single prophet would ever have been sent out to tell us of the things that should and have come to pass. Jesus Christ would never have come into the world to save sinners if not for this foreseen contingency. No apostles would have been sent out, no Bible would have been written, and there would not have been a single church house nor a single minister of the gospel contemplated nor provided for in that "God's" arrangements, had he not foreseen something coming that he did not will nor purpose should come. Surely, surely, surely, if there is no God greater than that held forth by limited predestination, then the man who said in his heart, "There is no God, " (Psalm 14:1) was no fool. What I would like to impress upon the mind of the reader is that the theory of limited predestination is the truth, then God has never done anything as a matter of purely SOVEREIGN, free and independent choice, of a free and independent Will. But to the contrary, all that He has ever done or will ever do, was, is, and will be a matter of second choice, or expediency, with Him. All that He has done or will do, He does it as a matter of necessity, and not as a matter of original, free and independent purpose. For if sin, with its consequence, together with all that He does in His dealing with sinners, both in saving some and damning others, were not embraced in His original, free and independent Will and purpose, then it follows that all that He has done or will do in these matters, He determined to do them as a result of what He foresaw. He was moved to do it, not because it was the good pleasure of His own will to have it that way, but because He saw something coming contrary to His will and was moved thereby to devise a plan for dealing with the unpleasant situation that He saw was going to be thrust upon Him contrary to His will.

How any one who believes in an all-wise and all-powerful God can believe

such folly is a mystery to me. None can fail to see that both salvation and damnation were made possible by sin entering into the world; for surely no one thinks that either the salvation of sinners or the damnation of sinners would be possible if there were no sinners to be saved or damned. Hence, if God ever had any thought, purpose, or plan for the future, independent of, and not induced by sin, He abandoned them when He telescopically saw sin coming and arranged all of His plans for time and eternity in connection with sin, sinners, and those that were once sinners. None can fail to see this. Eternally, He will punish one set of sinners, and dwell with others that were once sinners. Is all of this a matter of second choice with Him? Perish the thought! Would He rather this state of affairs have never been? Certainly He would, if He rather there had been no sin; for his final state of things could not have been as it will be, if there had been no sin. So we are forced to choose between the real God who "doeth His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand" and a so-called "God" that has never had anything, nor will ever have anything in time or eternity, as He would have preferred to have it. Well did the apostle say: "Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things and we by Him. Howbeit, there is not in every man this knowledge "(I Corinthians 8:5-7).

Paul says of this God, that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). It is His Will to make a man subject to vanity. It was His Will to make a tempter and to allow him to tempt this man to violate the law, knowing that no one but Himself could withstand his seductive influence. No, not even His Son; for He gave His angels charge over Him to keep Him in all His ways, so that He would not fall when lead up into the wilderness to be tempted of this same one that tempted Adam. He gave this tempter power to incline Adam's mind to eat the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so that –

"When Adam to eat of the fruit was inclined,
It answered the end that Jehovah designed,
No purpose of grace was altered thereby,
It was all for the lifting of Jesus on high.
From thence we behold He made nothing in vain,

For Adam thus formed was a link in the chain.
In Him `twas decreed that His members should die,

And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.
The devil was non-pulsed in what he had done;

The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run dry And all for the lifting of Jesus on high."

The Scriptures abound with the proof of the predestination of all things. The very name and nature of the Tree and its fruit, that Adam ate of in the Garden, signifies the purpose for which it was made, just as surely as the name and nature of the Tree of Life signifies the purpose for which it was made. The name of one signified that it would give the knowledge of good and evil to those who eat of it; and the same of the other signified that it would give life to those who eat of it. The fruit of one contained a nature or property that would impart the knowledge of good and evil to the eater, while the other contained a nature or quality that would give everlasting life to the eater thereof. God made each of these trees and gave to each its nature. Did He give them that nature on purpose? Or did He do it accidentally? Common sense would say that He did it on purpose. An all-wise God could not do any thing by accident, and no intelligent being would knowingly do anything without having some purpose in so doing, and some end in view which he intends to accomplish by means of, or through what he does as a means to that end.

**OBJECTIONS TO GOD'S
DECREE AND THE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS A Letter
From Elder Thomas J. Blanchard
To
Elder Jonas C. Sikes**

My precious brother, I have had a mind to write you for some time, and after having read quite a number of your papers through the kindness of brother Richardson of Texas, I now make the attempt.

Now, dear brother, I think you know me too well to think that I am prompted by an spirit of evil, but, precious brother, as there are some things taught by you that I can not reconcile with my limited knowledge of the Bible, and I think if there is a man living that can do it, it is Jonas Sikes. First, I cannot see how God could predestinate all the wicked acts of man, and then forbid a whole lot of them. I have always understood predestination to be the cause of all that it embraced. Now, dear brother, will you show me how this is?

"Thou shalt not eat of it," yet I have predestinated that you shall; "thou shalt not kill," yet I have predestinated that you shall; "thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not covet," etc. Again, "out of the same mouth proceedeth not blessings and cursings, my brethren these things ought not to be."

Second, I cannot read the predestination in the Bible and get any evil consequences there from, and where it stops I must stop. Let us look at it just as it reads: "For whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." Now, precious brother, will not this predestination cause every one of them to be conformed? And if it causes one thing it embraces, why not all? Again, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children," etc. Now will not this predestination bring about this adoption? I think we will agree it will. Then I repeat if it brings about one thing it embraces, why not all? Now, dear brother, the true logic forces us to this conclusion: now you notice that it reads, "For whom He did foreknow." This cannot embrace the wicked, for He says to them, "I never knew you," hence did not predestinate them, for if this reaches them, will they not as surely be conformed to the image of His Son as the elect will? And will they not as surely be adopted as children? Mark you logic forces us to accept all that a proposition embraces. Now my dear good and precious brother, I believe from the foregoing Scripture, that every one of God's children of the Adamic race will in time be conformed to the image of His Son, and hence adopted into the heavenly family. I had as soon think that God would cease to be, as to think that this purpose of predestination would fail, and all I can see that God had to do with the wicked acts of man is to forbid them and overthrow them when arrayed against His purposes.

Third, if He predestinated my sinful acts, why did He convict me and make me mourn for that He predestinated I should do? Now, my dear brother, no man esteems you more highly than I, and therefore I have been very candid in this little epistle of love and earnest inquiry, thinking that you would think more of me for so doing than you would if I went about bush-whacking you as though I considered you an enemy to the cross of our blessed Redeemer, and I trust that you will receive and answer this in the same spirit of meekness in which it is written. If you see proper, publish this with your answer, and send me the paper in which it is published. Give my love to Sister Sikes, brother Money, and all the dear saints with whom you meet, and rest assured that I am your true friend, Oh! That sweet peace and true fellowship may be restored among all in Texas, is the prayer of your little brother yet in hope. Thomas J. Blanchard

Browns Creek, Miss.
July 18th, 1902

ELDER SIKES' REPLY TO OBJECTIONS

My dear precious Brother in Christ:

Your very kind and brotherly letter came to hand yesterday. I am sure, dear brother from the very spirit of it, that you had no evil motive in writing it, and I am also sure that no evil can result from an investigation of this subject when carried on in the noble spirit which is so clearly manifested in your letter to me; and I am also sure that if all that has been said and written on the subject of predestination had been done in this same fine spirit of kindness, the Baptists would have been in perfect peace on that subject today. But instead of a spirit of brotherly kindness, it seems that a spirit of self importance, of egotism, of strife for the mastery and a desire to publicly score some and get a name and to say, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou," has so captivated our people that a brotherly investigation of a subject is almost impossible. I want to say, dear brother, before taking up the points to which you call my attention, that I fully realize my imperfections, and my weakness and insufficiency for these things; and I am always willing to acknowledge that after all, I may be mistaken in the whole thing. I am also free to admit that I find some difficulties in the doctrine of the predestination of all things; yet I find the foreknowledge of all things surrounded and embraced by the same difficulties.

But when I turn to the other side and try to deny the predestination of all things, I find the difficulties increased tenfold, and if I try to hold to the foreknowledge of all things and deny the predestination of the same, I become perfectly bewildered and lost in the fog of Arminianism. I cannot see how the certain foreknowledge of a thing can possibly exist when as yet it has not been determined that the thing foreknown shall ever exist. Neither can I see how the time that a thing will take place can be foreknown unless the time for its occurrence be fixed, settled, established or determined by some one. And the Scriptures are full of places where the time of events is set forth as certain. If things cannot be certainly foreknown and yet be uncertain, then the certainty of all things must be fixed or established by some one and in some way, or else they cannot be certainly foreknown. This fixed or established certainty of all events is what I call "predestination;" and is to my mind the only certain basis of foreknowledge. But that you may more fully see and appreciate the difficulties that arise before me when I undertake to hold to the foreknowledge of a thing and not hold to the

predestination of it, I will ask, how did God foreknow that there would be a world? How did He foreknow the shape and size of it? How did He foreknow what would inhabit the earth? How did He foreknow that the sun, moon and stars would exist? How did He foreknow the course that each would pursue? How did He foreknow the exact effect that they would have upon each other? How did He foreknow that there would be a man? How did He foreknow how many people should descend from Adam? How did He foreknow just who should be the father and mother of each child that is born into the world? How did He foreknow just when and where each one should be born and the place or "bounds of their habitation"? (Acts 17:26) How did He foreknow the number of the hairs of each of our heads? (Luke 12:7).

These and ten thousand other things arise before me when I try to find a basis for foreknowledge outside of God's determinate counsel.

If these things must be determined in order to establish their certainty, and in order to establish the certain foreknowledge of them, then it follows logically and inevitably that all things foreknown must be determined by some one in order for them to be certainly foreknown. Then if a thing must be fixed or previously determined by someone in order for it to be certainly foreknown, we are driven inevitably to conclude that God has fixed, or predestinated, or predetermined all things; for if God was before all things, which the Scriptures declare, then there was none else to fix, settle, establish or determine the future with its various events with certainty.

These, my dear brother, are some of my reasons for believing in the predestination of all things.

If the certainty of these together with all things else and the certain foreknowledge of them does not depend upon the determinate counsel of God, then please tell me upon what it does depend?

Before taking up your letter I wish to say a few words about the meaning of the word "predestinate." I think much of the trouble now among us on this point of doctrine has grown out of a misunderstanding of its real meaning. Convince me that it means "to cause", to influence or force, and I will at once give up the doctrine. True, many things that God predestinated God causes to come to pass, but predestination does not cause them. If predestination is the cause that brings about events, then there was no necessity for the death of Christ. His people were predestinated to the adoption of children and to be conformed to the image of Christ. It is obvious that predestination adopts no

one, nor does predestination conform God's people to the image of Christ.

If predestination is the cause that produces the end predestinated, then the death of Christ to redeem and the operation of God's Spirit to change us to the image of Christ were not necessary at all; predestination would have done the work. But I have searched every available source for the meaning of the word and if it means to cause, I have failed to find it. The word from which the word predestinate (in our Bible) was translated is Pro-o-rizo. It means to predetermine, foreordain, fore-limit, fore-bound, etc., but it does not mean to cause. We read in Acts 4, "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4: 27,28).

These two words, determined and before is from the Greek word "pro-o-rizo," the exact same word from which "predestinate" was translated in every place where it occurs in the Bible. Now if you will find what those wicked men were gathered together to do, then you will know what God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done –predestinated. If predestination did not cause those wicked men to do what they did, then we have no reason to believe that it would be the cause of any other crime or sin; for if there is any meaning to language, God had predetermined or predestinated what these men did. That is a fact. And we cannot deny that they did it wickedly; and that they did it! From this we are forced to acknowledge that God can, and has, predestinated a thing and He not be the author of sin nor His predestination the cause or admit that He was the author and His predestination the cause of the blackest crime ever perpetrated by mortals upon the earth. This we cannot admit, so we are forced to accept the first position; and now we come to the points that you ask me to harmonize or tell you how they can be. As they will be seen in your letter which will be published with this, I will not quote them here, but will say whatever explanation will make clear the cases above mentioned will explain each case mentioned in your letter.

God said, "Thou shalt not kill," yet these men were gathered together to kill the blessed Son of God, and were gathered to "do whatsoever" His "hand and counsel determined before to be done." God had said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." These men bore false witness, and yet it is emphatically stated by the apostles who lifted up their voices with one accord, that those wicked

men were gathered together to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done. I cannot explain how it was that God moved David to say, "Go number Israel," and yet David committed a great sin in doing what God moved him to do, but such is the testimony in holy Writ. [Editor's note: David did not pay a ransom for every soul numbered, as required by the Law] I cannot see why God bid Shemei to curse David and then held Shimeii to account and punished him for it, yet I find it thus recorded and I bow to it. (II Samuel 16: 5-13; and II Samuel 19: 21).

I cannot tell how it was that God sent a lying spirit into the mouth of Ahab's prophets and caused them to prophesy lies, and He Himself, not be responsible for their lies, yet it is true. (I Kings 22:22-23).

I cannot explain just how God turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants and He not be responsible for their subtle dealings: yet David said He did it, and I must accept it. I cannot explain the matter as to just why He should send Moses to Pharaoh and command him saying, "Thus saith the God of the Hebrews, let My people go," and tell Moses, "Yet I will harden his heart that he shall not let them go," but thus it is written and thus I accept it.

I cannot fully understand and explain the justice of God in decreeing the death of His innocent, holy, harmless and sinless Son that vile, sin-polluted, hell-deserving rebels as you and I might go free; yet we find it so recorded in God's holy book, and we accept it with praise and thanksgiving to His holy Name, and we bow before Him and cry out, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." But when we turn our eyes to that awful day in which that thing was done and hear that wicked rabble cry out "Cruces Him! Cruces Him! Release unto us Barabas" we cry out in our hearts against them and say they are unjust and have committed a very unjust deed in killing the innocent and releasing the guilty, forgetting that Barabas is a type of ourselves and at the very moment that that wicked mob delivered Jesus to death and released Barabas, the Lord of Glory delivered His sinless Son to die and set us poor wretches free. I cannot understand it, I cannot explain it, and yet it is the joy of my heart and the theme of my song. The whole affair was to this intent: that the "Scriptures might be fulfilled."

These things, my precious brother, and the things that you ask me to explain, together with many other things like unto them, I cannot explain, yet I can and do believe them. If I could reject all of God's book which I cannot

explain, I would have but little, if any left to believe. If I could explain all of His ways, then He must not be finite, or I infinite. I felt sure that any or all of these things would be as easy to explain as it would to tell why He let sin enter into the world when I know He could have just as easily prevented it as to have allowed its occurrence. We are forced right here to take one of two positions, i.e., He either allowed it on purpose, or He allowed it without a purpose; if on purpose, then the predestination of it is established; if He allowed it without purpose, then He was either ignorant of its coming or powerless to prevent it. This would evolve a worse difficulty than the predestination of it! So you see, if we shun the difficulties of predestination on the one hand we run off the road into the gulf of Arminianism on the other. If we use the text, "Whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate," to prove that God's predestination is limited, then we should also use it to prove that His foreknowledge is limited, for if it limits one, it just as certainly limits the other.

True, all men were not foreknown as His covenant people; nor predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, but they were foreknown as His creatures, and He must have had some purpose in creating them, and He must have determined before He made them what disposition He would make of them when time should end; and if He did not determine what disposition He would make of them when time shall end, He may yet determine to save all of them.

It seems from your letter that your objection to the predestination of all things is because you think that predestination means to cause. As I said in the first part of this letter, I do not so understand it. Predestination means a previous purpose, while the cause that produces the fulfillment of that purpose is entirely a different thing. God surely predestinated (pro-o-rizo) the death of Christ, yet it was "by wicked hands" that put Him to death. It is once appointed unto men to die, yet it is sin that "bringeth forth death." As to God's attitude to sin, it is very different to His attitude to righteousness. God (not His predestination) is the cause of all righteousness and holiness, while Satan (not God's predestination) is the cause, source and fountain of all sin and wickedness; yet enthroned as high above him as the heavens are above the earth, with all power to restrict, restrain, check or prevent him at his will is the Lord God "who reigneth in Heaven, in earth, in seas and all deep places" and "doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him What doest Thou." To me there seems to be far more honor to God and comfort to His people to believe that the Lord God omnipotent reigns and

that He established the certainty of all things in His determinate counsel, than to believe that some other power existed in eternity by which the greater part of the events of time were made certain and thereby God, the Lord Jehovah was induced to arrange an emergency plan to meet and offset the events that were made certain by some other power. There is no way to escape the conclusion that if all things were certainly foreknown, the things themselves were as certain to come to pass as the foreknowledge of them was certain. How could any future event be certainly foreknown when as yet the coming to pass of that event was not an established certainty?

It does seem to me that there is far more comfort to the child of God in the thought his gracious and loving Father established the certainty of, and controlled, governed, directed and disposed of all things to His glory and our good, than to believe that blind chance, or heartless and soulless Fate had established the certainty of the greater part of the events of time and made necessary the remainder. To my poor mind we are bound to accept one of these positions. I cannot find any standing room between them.

My dear brother, if the entrance of sin into the world was not purposed in God's original plan, then I am forced to the conclusion that the covenant of redemption was a matter of second choice with Him, arising from a necessity that was entirely outside that plan. Hence His will to make a covenant was originated by a very displeasing necessity instead of being according to His own good pleasure. With these thoughts continually before me and many other reasons equally as strong as these I believe, my dear brother, that you in your charity and Christian liberality will at least justify me in my belief and continue to hold me in your love and fellowship, even if you cannot fully endorse my position. My heart is sorely pained within me over the distressed condition of our beloved Zion. This trouble has been forced upon us by those who are ever ready to cry "heresy" and set up bars of fellowship, but who will not take up the arguments of those whom they oppose and in a spirit of brotherly kindness, try to show wherein our arguments are not good. I do not know of any in this country whom I could not live in fellowship with so far as our doctrinal differences are concerned, but there are some who by their unbrotherly course and repeated misrepresentations have impaired my fellowship for them. I could love to meet you again and hear you proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. I will publish your letter with this reply, though we do not make it a vile to do so.

With love to yourself and family and all the household of faith, I remain,
Your unworthy brother.

Jonas C. Sikes.

[The following letter from Elder Jonas Sikes to Elder Hutchens, editor of The Lone Pilgrim in the 1930's has reference to a published letter from Claude H. Cayce published in The Primitive Baptist. This publication should not be confused with the original magazine with this name, published in Virginia. Elder Cayce adopted the title after the former went out of publication.

The reader may need to know of the Fulton Convention of 1900, held at Fulton, Kentucky. This convention was called together by the Progressive element of Neo-Primitive Baptists to revise the London Confession of Faith, and find an ecumenical union of different factions of Anti-mission Baptists. This they did via Annotations affixed to it, explaining their take on what the Baptists in England meant in 1689 when the Baptist Confession was submitted to Parliament to gain freedom of religious worship under the Act of Toleration.

Elder Cayce was one of the most able debaters among Primitive Baptists, had a very keen wit, and was an obstinate opponent to the sovereign dominion of God over all things. From him, and other young elders associated with him, they rooted Calvinism, and most elements of it from their ecumenical union, and were ardent opponents to it. At this publication, Calvinism has made new inroads among them, and their opposition to it is rising sharply. The reader may find this Letter of historical, as well as doctrinal, interest. ED.]

I have before me, three clippings from a paper wrongfully called "The Primitive Baptist." They were written, by its editor, C. H. Cayce. One of these clippings is an answer to a sister Terrell, one to a brother Owen, and one to a sister Carson. The date of their publication, were September 1, 1925; February 15, 1926; and March 1, 1926. These parties had asked him to discontinue their papers and he proceeded to give each of them a lambasting. His answers do not sound like they came from one who is commanded to be "gentle unto all men and meekly instruct those who oppose themselves." Rather, they are rantings of some parrot mouthed blatherskite, who is sorely afflicted with a diarrhea of words and a constipation of thought. I have had the clippings several days, with a request for me to answer them, but I have been hesitating and halting between two Proverbs, hardly knowing which one to obey. In Proverbs 26:4, Solomon says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly lest thou also be like unto him." And in the next verse, he says, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." As

his answers to those parties strongly indicate that he is badly affected with that trouble, I feel I will be justified in answering him according to his folly as requested.

I will now quote some of his sayings in those extracts, and then see if I can't find where he has talked entirely differently on another occasion.

In his answer to sister Carson, he says, "The heathenish, blasphemous, devil invented doctrine that God did from all eternity absolutely and unconditionally predestinate, unalterably fix and decree everything that come to pass; molded and fixed every link in the chain of events, so that everything must come to pass just as it does, which some folks among the Old Baptists advocate, is not Old Baptist doctrine and never has been and never will be. The man who advocates such a blasphemous heresy, gives evidence that he needs something, - either regeneration or reformation." Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). I will now proceed to try "C. H. C." by his own words.

In November 1900, there was a council held at Fulton, Kentucky, in which were fifty-one ministers, who claimed to represent fourteen thousand five hundred Old Baptists, and be in direct correspondence with more than one hundred thousand Old Baptists. In that meeting they said, "The London Confession of Faith, adopted over two hundred years ago, by thirty-seven of the ablest ministers of England and Wales, representing over one hundred churches, has served one of the most needful services among our people of any document of faith since the days of the Apostles, and has stood unquestioned as an expression of the Primitive Baptist interpretation of the Bible from then until now."

Among those who said this, I find the name of C. H. Cayce, of Martin, Tennessee. Now let us Quote from that Confession, what he said that he believed. "In Chapter 3, Section 1, it says, "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass." Unquote. How much does it say that God "hath decreed"? All things whatsoever comes to pass. How did He decree it? Freely and unchangeably. From when hath He decreed it? From all eternity. Elder Cayce may pile up all the prefixes that he can think of, to this, and he cannot make it express it any stronger than is expressed in the words, "Freely and unchangeably." He may add "absolute," "unalterably," and "unconditionally," and it is no stronger than "unchangeably." And he may add "good," "bad," and "indifferent," and he

has no more than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." He may go back as far as he can with every expression that he can think of, and he cannot get farther back than "all eternity." If God has unchangeably decreed all things whatsoever come to pass, and good, bad and indifferent things come to pass, then all the angels, men and devils in heaven, earth and hell has never, will never, and can never change one single thing from the way it was decreed, for it is unchangeably decreed from all eternity.

Elder Cayce said so himself in 1900, and he said that had stood for more than two hundred years as an expression of the Primitive Baptists' interpretation of the Bible. In this he was correct.

Listen again at what he said. He and fifty other ministers said, "We would be glad to see this document which has stood the test as an expression of our faith for more than two hundred years, become uniformly used in our churches as their expression of their faith and practice." Elder Cayce recommended this and then bucks all over creation because some of his subscribers believe it! All the prefixes and affixes that he has put to it in his letter to those parties, does not make it any stronger than unchangeably decreed That which is unchangeable cannot be changed, then how can you make it any stronger? And if it includes all things whatsoever comes to pass, then how can you crowd any more into it? It cannot be done. When Elder Cayce has piled up all of the prefixes and affixes that he can think of, and has beat the air on all sides in an effort to make the doctrine of truth look hideous, he has not got any more in to it than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." Nor made it any stronger than being "freely and unchangeably decreed of God."

The difference after all his ranting is only the difference between sheep meat and mutton. When he has ransacked all the different languages and exhausted his vocabulary, he can not make it any stronger than being "freely and unchangeably decreed of God," nor has he got more into it than "all things whatsoever comes to pass," neither has he got any further back with it, than "from all eternity." Let him tell us how he can go farther back than all eternity, and let him tell us how anything can be more firmly fixed than to be "unchangeably decreed of God." And let him tell us how he can crowd more into that decree than "all things whatsoever comes to pass." If he cannot tell us these simple things, then judging him by his own words, it is evident that "he needs something — either regeneration or reformation." Perhaps both. Is this all the proof we have? Let us see.

In Chapter five and Section four of that Confession which he has recommended so highly, it reads as follows: "The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His Providence, that His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the .cyst _fig and all other sinful actions both of angels and men, (and that not by a bare permission,) which also He most wisely and powerfully boundeth and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold dispensation to His most holy ends; YET SO AS THE SINFULNESS OF THEIR ACTIONS, PROCEEDETH ONLY FROM THE CREATURES, AND NOT FROM GOD, WHO, BEING MOST HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS, NEITHER IS NOR CAN BE THE AUTHOR OF SIN" This statement has the highest approval that Elder Cayce can give it, and as if he would add force to it, he helped to put a footnote to it which reads as follows: "We understand this section to teach that while God does not cause men to sin, nor is His predestination in its attitude to sin causative, yet He exercises such a control over all His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe." This was written in 1900, and expressed what Primitive Baptists believe then. (But this is two decades later.)

Now let me deal with him for a while according to his folly. What is he kicking about anyway? According to this statement, which he himself help to put as a footnote there, there was no chance for those parties to do different from what they did, because God was exercising such a control over them that there was no chance for them to do otherwise. According to this statement that Elder Cayce helped to draft and put in that Confession, there is no chance in the universe for anything to be different from the way it comes to pass. Not merely because of what he calls the "heathenish, blasphemous, devil invented doctrine that God did from all eternity absolutely, and unconditionally predestinate, unalterably fix and decree everything that comes to pass; molded and fixed every link in the chain of events, so that everything must come to pass just as it does," but "because God exercises, now, continuously, such a control over all His creatures, as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe."

Truly did Solomon say, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Proverbs 26:16). If God is exercising such a control over all of His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe and Elder Cayce says He is, then it is up to Elder Cayce to tell us how, where and when there is any chance for anything to come to pass in the universe different to the way it does come to pass. And if he cannot do it, then judging him by his own words, he needs something - either

regeneration or reformation.

Elder Cayce asks sister Carson, "Do you object to God's will and pleasure being done? If it is not according to His will and pleasure and yet He fixed it that way, why did He do so? Could He not just as easily fixed it so it would be according to His will and pleasure as to fix it the way it was and is?" Let us turn his logic back to him and see what kind of an answer he will make. If it was contrary to God's will and pleasure for sin to enter the world, why did He make it so that it would enter? Could He not just as easily have made it so that sin would not enter? And if it was contrary to the will and pleasure of God for sin to enter the world, and yet He used His wisdom and His power to make a world into which sin would enter, then is it not a fact that He used His wisdom and His power to defeat His own will and pleasure? And if sin entered into this world contrary to the will and purpose of God, what assurance have we that it will not enter heaven in the same way? It being contrary to God's will and pleasure for it to enter heaven and immortal glory is no assurance, whatever, that it will not enter, if it be a fact that it entered the world contrary to His will and pleasure. Does Elder Cayce now believe what he said he believed in 1900 at the Fulton Convention? If not, and that was the truth then, is not sister Carson's charge that he has departed from the truth correct? If he still believes what he said then that he believed, then he now believes that "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity -- freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever comes to pass." And if he believes this, then he does not believe that any, nor all of the angels of heaven, the creatures of earth and the demons of hell can bring one thing to pass in this world, different from the way they do come to pass, unless they can defeat, thwart and change the unchangeable decree of God. And if he believes that there is any chance in the universe for one thing to be changed from the determinate counsel of God, then he does not believe now as he stated in that council, that "all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe."

But the strangest argument that I have ever heard from anyone claiming to be an Old School or Primitive Baptist, is presented to Sister Carson by Elder Cayce. His entire argument is an effort to prove that when God says a thing shall be, His word may prove to be untrue, and the thing never be as He says it shall be. Listen to what he says. "Sister Carson asks if we do not believe that every will and shall between the lids of the holy book shall be fulfilled? Sister Carson, suppose we ask you to read your own question, and allow us to ask you if you believe that every shall in the Bible shall be fulfilled. Do you? Let us read: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of

good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it" (Genesis 2:16-17). The words, "thou shalt not" mean the same as "you shall not" in our present day English. Now sister Carson, the Lord said, "You shall not." Do you believe that the man did not, or do you believe that he did? If you say you believe that the man did not, then you admit that you do not believe the Bible. If you say you believe that he did, then you admit that at least one shall is not fulfilled. Which horn of the dilemma will you take?"

A man who is a minister, trying to convince the people of God that He does not tell the truth is almost inconceivable! To insinuate that when God says that a thing shall be, there is no certainty as to whether it will come true or not is contrary to a minister's calling. Yet this same man has said that God "exercises such a control over all of His creatures as that all chance and uncertainty is excluded from the universe." The gist of his argument is, that Adam did that which there was no chance in the universe for him to do, and proved God to be a liar! But Paul said, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

I am going to accept God's word and let Elder Cayce be the other fellow. In many places in the Scriptures, the seal of certainty is announced by the prophet saying, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." But this fellow in his blind and unholy zeal, to overthrow the truth of God's sovereignty, does his uttermost to prove that God Himself may either lie or be mistaken. And to prove it quotes a part of what God said to Adam, to prove God's word is not necessarily true.

Well did Jesus say, "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). The first account we have of the devil, he was trying to convince the woman that what God had said should be would not come to pass. And as late as March 1, this year, one of his ministers, was trying to convince a woman that another one of God's shalls in the same conversation, did not come to pass. Now let us read God's command to Adam and see if God's word did not absolutely come true. He said, "Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that shalt not eat of it **FOR IN THE DAY THOU EATEST THEREOF. THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.**" Elder Cayce was deceitful in his selection of the contents of this verse. The Devil tried to prove that the last "shall" in the verse was not the truth, and his minister tried to prove that the first "shall" was not the truth and the two of them deny any part of it being true. Paul tells us of some who turn the truth of God into a lie, and I am sure that this was done in the argument that

we are now answering. When you take this command as a whole, anyone can see at a glance that it means, "Thou shall not FREELY eat of it. You shall not eat of it and not die." He said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest FREELY eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil" — the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the only tree that they should not eat of and remain free. But they shall not eat of it and be FREE, "for in the day," (not if you do) "FOR in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This command, as a whole, within its context, came to pass precisely as God said it should! For anyone to dissect it and disassociate the middle part of the command (Thou shalt not eat of it) from the preceding and succeeding part of it, and thus make it appear that God has either lied or was mistaken, has "handled the word of God deceitfully" and thus "turned the truth of God into a lie." But his crowning effort to discredit God, and prove that He has no stability about Him, and that He is mutable, and that His oath is mutable, and that He is unreliable and does not respect His oath comes in his next argument.

He starts it by saying, "Sister Carson, let us read Numbers 14:23 and 34, "Surely they shall not see the land which / swear unto their fathers neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it" and, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise." Can you harmonize with your doctrine that God absolutely and unconditionally predestinated every thing that comes to pass and that every thing has to be just as it is? Let us kindly ask some questions, Did not the Lord swear unto their fathers that He would give them the land of Canaan? Did He not promise them the land? Did the Lord intend when He made the promise and swore to it that these people should have the land of Canaan? Did He swear a lie? If He did not, then He meant what He promised, did He not? Did He not determine that they should not do what He swore they would do? Did He not say they shall see the land? Did He not promise it to them — the promise being made to their fathers? Did He not say, Ye shall know My breach of promise? The marginal reference to breach of promise, says, altering of My purpose. "I have quoted at length, for the reader to get the trend of what he is driving at, and to include his marginal reference, so that all may see that he does not believe that either God's promises or His oath are immutable, and that God is mutable and changes and forsakes His original purposes, promises, and oaths, and determines a new thing exactly to the reverse of His original purposes.

If this be true, then where is the foundation for "strong consolation for those

who have fled for refuge to lay hold of a hope set before them" by a mutable God whose promises and oaths are like Himself, mutable? Where is there any foundation for any hope at all, if God, His promises and His oaths are mutable? Not in His statement, "For I am the Lord, I ebonny not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed " For if the light in which Elder Cayce presents Him in the above extract be true, He did change and destroyed a lot of the sons of Jacob, contrary to His promises and the oath of His covenant made with Abraham, confirmed in Isaac and Jacob, etc. Not in His promise to save, for His promises are mutable; not in His oath, for that also is mutable. Not in the promise of eternal life made before the world began, for Paul based this hope on God's inability to lie, which was made impossible by the nature of His promise and His oath, which nature Elder Cayce sets aside as something which does not exist. Paul said, "For when God made promise unto Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end to all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things (God's promise and His oath) in the which it was impossible for Him to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6: 13-20).

Paul evidently means in the above, that the immutability of God's promises and His oath is the only foundation for a hope that those who have fled for refuge could lay hold of with any degree of consolation whatever. And if Elder Cayce can find a consoling hope in a mutable God whose purposes, promises and oaths are mutable, then it is evidence that he has not fled for refuge to the same God that the saints of Paul's day fled to. Whatever the Scripture cited by Elder Cayce in Numbers 14 may mean, it cannot mean that God, His purposes, His promises and His oaths are mutable. Whatever the phrase "breach of promise" in the text referred to may mean, it cannot mean that God perjured Himself, which He must do IF He violates His oath. It cannot mean either, that if any of the offspring of Jacob failed to get to Canaan, that God has changed His purpose, broken His promise and perjured Himself by the violation of His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for then Joseph and all others who died in Egypt, even the male children that Pharaoh had put to death, were only victims of God's mutability and unfaithfulness to

His promise and His oath.

But Paul comes to our assistance just here and takes up the subject and discusses it at length in the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews. "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost sayeth, today i fye hear My voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My works forty years, wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I sware in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.) (Hebrews 3: 7-11). In verses 18 and 19 Paul asks, "And to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not." And adds, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief " In the next chapter, in the third verse, he says, "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Paul talks very different about this affair from the way Elder Cayce talks. After narrating the whole thing, how the Holy Ghost said these people acted and how God was grieved with them and swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, then he adds, "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" He means the works that he has been discussing. Everything in connection with this whole affair was finished, completely arranged in God's determinate counsel, with no detail lacking, from the foundation of the world. This is exactly as Solomon teaches in Ecclesiastes 3:15, "That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." His statement: "That which hath been is now," means there is nothing now, which has not been in God's determinate counsel. "And that which is to be hath already been," is, that nothing shall ever be in this world that has not already been in God's counsel from eternity, for the works were finished in His counsel from the foundation of the world. It was all appointed by Him.

Since Elder Cayce refers to the margin of his Bible to try to prove his position, he cannot object if I quote from an old Bible printed away back when the characters "f" and "s" were almost alike. [Elder Sikes quotes from the Geneva Bible of 1615] "And who is like Me, that shall call and shall declare it, and shall set it in order before Me, since I appointed the ancient people? And what is at hand and what things are to come? Let them spew unto them" (Isaiah 44:7). This is exactly what Solomon means in Ecclesiastes 3:15 "That which hath been (appointed of God) is now. And that which is to be hath already been, (appointed of God) and God requireth that which is past. " That is, that which has ever stood in His appointments. Even in our

revised Bibles, where the revisers have tried to revise the truth out of them, it still shows that God "has appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming shall come."

Elder Cayce has done exactly what God charges that Israel did in the day of provocation. He says in Psalm 78, "How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert. Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and LIMITED THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL." Elder Cayce once declared in council with fifty others, that God had, from all eternity, freely and unchangeably decreed all things whatsoever comes to pass. {But, alas, since then he has turned back and tempted God and limited the holy One of Israel. I feel sure in my heart that what is taught in his paper "has never been, is not now, and will never be true

Primitive Baptist doctrine." What he once put his name to, and turned back from, is the expressed faith of our people yet today. Sulphur Bluff, Texas
J. C. Sikes

GOD'S DECREE
Jonas C. Sikes, 1929

If Jehovah is Infinite in all His ways,
Giving life to man and numbering his days,
Who dares to impeach Him if in His wise plan,
He gave shape and direction to the ways of man?
If He in His wisdom did all things create,
Should He turn loose the helm, leave things to Fate?
Did He not have a right in His sinless decree
To mark the way for both you and me?
If He did decree just what we should do,
I cannot arraign Him, say brother, can you?
Before whom will you try Him as judge of your court?
Who will act as your clerk and make your report?
If all things are in the decree of His will
And all things are working the same to fulfill,
Who but a vile sinner too wicked to bow,
Would call Him in question or say, What doest Thou?
If He decree the death of His only Son,
The sinless, the righteous, the most holy One,
And this did not make Him the author of sin,
To make Him the author, where will you begin?
Will you begin with Judas whose act was foretold,

And as was determined His Master he sold?
Did not the dear Savior say "Woe to that man,"
I go as determined in God's holy plan.
If Pharoah be one you think would no doubt,
Prove that God's purpose was not carried out,
Did not God command him by Moses you know?
Saying, thus saith Jehovah, "Let My people go."
Yet I will harden, yes, harden his heart,
That he shall refuse and not let them depart,
Till I bring My just plagues on all of your foes,
And thus get Me honor on him and his host.
Yet sinners most wicked will oft Him arraign
Against His just counsel, they often complain,
And say, if He decreed all things to the end,
Then He is unjust and the author of sin.
The heathen may rage and imagine vain things,
The lowest, the highest, yea, even their kings,
And shout till the world hear the sound of their din,
"The author, the author, the author of sin!"
His saints will still praise Him and shout as they go,
Jehovah most holy all things doth foreknow;
His counsel did settle just how they should be,
So shout on you heathen, you don't disturb me.
We learn from an Angel that time shall soon end,
And saints shall be welcomed by Jesus, their Friend,
This all is established by holy decree,
For it is written, and thus it shall be.

If all things are certain, then how came them so?
If things were not certain, how could God foreknow?
Were all things to which foreknowledge relate
Made certain by the old heathen goddess of Fate?
We surely know at a thought or a glance,
That things are not left to haphazard or chance,
Will some please tell me that I may once see,
How things can be certain, yet uncertain be?
Now, while you are thinking, I'll come to a halt,
If you don't see the point, it isn't my fault;
But, brother, please tell me how this thing can be?
All things were made certain without a decree?

ELDER SIKE'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM AN ENQUIRER

Taken from The Advocate Of Truth, 1901

In a recent issue of one of our exchanges, I found a list of questions for some brother to answer. The writer that asked them requested that they be answered in private, but as they were asked publicly, and there are (no doubt) many others beside himself who would like to see them answered, I will answer them through the columns of The Advocate Of Truth. These questions are on the subject of predestination. The dear brother that proposed these questions says, "The solution of this subject is to be found in the transgressions;" so I will answer them along that line. I desire to answer them in a spirit of kindness and gentleness. If that course would exist and be pursued in all our writings, I am sure that a better state of affairs would exist among us than what we have at present. The first question asked by this dear brother is:

1st QUESTION- "What kind of a man did God desire and make?"

ANSWER- He desired exactly the kind of man He made, or He failed to make the kind of man He desired. Which did He do, dear brother? If He made the kind of man that He desired, then it follows that He desires a man that was "subject to vanity" (Romans 8:20), that was corruptible, and that would not remain in his upright state, but would become a transgressor; for this is the kind of man that He made. Is this not a fact, dear brother? If God desired a man that would not sin, then ask you in your own language, "Where was His wisdom and power that He did not use it in making a man satisfactory to Himself"? Can you answer your own logic, dear brother?

2nd QUESTION- "Was God satisfied with this man – His workmanship? If not, where was His wisdom and power that He did not use it in making a man satisfactory to Himself?"

ANSWER- Yes. Indeed, dear brother, where was it? If (as you seem to imply) He really wanted a man that would not sin, then your question demands that you answer it: "Where was His wisdom and power that He did not use in making" that kind of a man? If you say that He did not desire a man that would not sin, then all of your questions are meaningless or are all answered by this one admission. If you admit that He made a man that He

knew would sin, then you must either admit that He wanted that kind of man, or that He failed to make the kind of man that He desired. Which will you say, dear brother?

3rd QUESTION- "If God wanted a man to be something else besides upright, good and perfect, is that not an admission that God failed to make the kind of man that He desired to make?"

ANSWER- Not at all. For He knew that when He was making him that he would certainly become something else besides upright, good and perfect. But if He desired a man that would never be anything but upright, good and perfect, is not this indeed an admission that He failed to make the man He desired to make? Dear brother, can you answer your own logic?

4th QUESTION- "If God was dissatisfied with this man, was it not after He made him? It could not have been before He made him, for if that had been true He would have made him differently. If after He made him, then there is an admission that God was disappointed, ignorant and powerless to make the man He desired."

ANSWER- Well said, dear brother, but will you now take the absurd position that God desired a man that would remain upright, and then be forced to the ridiculous admission to which you infer, i.e., "That God was ignorant and powerless in making the man He desired?" What say you, dear brother?

5th QUESTION- "If God was satisfied with the man He made, and yet His purpose was that he would be the very opposite (a sinner), then could God be pleased or satisfied with His own purpose?"

ANSWER- Most certainly He could, for He knew that His purpose would be accomplished, and man would be the opposite. Are you not satisfied with your purposes when you know they will be accomplished? But if God purposed for a man to remain upright, then could God be satisfied with His own purpose, seeing that it was a failure? Here you must meet your own logic again. Can you do it? Did God purpose that Adam should remain as long on earth as he did? If so, did He purpose for him to remain upright? If so, did not His purpose fail? If He purposed for him to remain as long as he did, and yet did not purpose for him to remain upright, then did He not purpose for him to become a sinner? (For "the wages of sin is death.") If He did not purpose for him to remain upright, nor become a sinner, then how did He purpose for him to remain? Can you tell me? If not, who can?

6th QUESTION- "Is God divided?"

ANSWER- No,

7th QUESTION- "Does God oppose His present mind with future purposes?"

ANSWER- No. His mind and purpose are both like Himself, immutable and always present. Do you mean to say by this question that if God created a thing in a certain way, and purposed that it should not always remain as He first created it, that He opposes His present mind by future purposes? If so what about man? Did He not make him natural? Did He mean for him to remain so eternally? If not, do you think that He opposed His present mind with a future purpose? In fact, can you tell me of anything that God created that He meant for it to remain eternally as it was first created? If this is not what you mean than I must confess that I do not know what you mean by this question?

8th Question- "Is God in one mind?"

ANSWER- Yes. But if it was His mind for Adam to remain upright, don't you think that He made some mistake in His calculations? Did God think that man would fall when he did? If so, would He not have been deceived if man had not fallen? If not, why not? Would not God be deceived if things were not to turn out as He thought they would? If so, was Adam actually able to stand longer than he did? Seeing that God thought he would fall when he did, would have been deceived had he not fallen? And if so, was he able to deceive God? Was Adam able to stand longer and liable to fall sooner than God thought he would? If so, was he not both able and liable to deceive God? If not, why not? Seeing that Adam was both able and liable to deceive God? If Adam was not able and liable to do differently from what God thought he would do, then what does all your questions amount to anyway! In fact, are not all of your questions based on the thought that man could have acted differently from what God had thought he would act? If so, are they not based on the thought that man was able to deceive God?

9th QUESTION- "Does God oppose Himself?"

ANSWER- No.

10th QUESTION- "Could God have purposed one thing and done another?"

ANSWER- God makes no mistakes, but what say you? Do you think that He purposed to make a man that would stand, but did the opposite? i.e., Made one that would not stand? You need not try to answer these questions by saying that God made man upright, there is no one denying this, but did He not make a man that would no remain upright? Did He do this on purpose, or by accident? If on purpose, did He not desire that kind of a man? If not, why did He make that kind? Could He not have made one that would not sin, [as the elect angels] if it had been His purpose to do so? If not, where was His wisdom and power?

11th QUESTION- "Some one says God purposed in eternity that man should be a sinner. Then did God make the man that He purposed should be? If not, does God do whatever He purposeth?"

ANSWER- God made the man He purposed to make, but did not purpose that he should remain as He first made him. If so, was not that purpose a failure? As to God doing whatever He purposed, I will say that God purposed many things that He does not do. He purposed that Jesus should be betrayed, but He did not betray Him. He purposed that Jesus should be crucified, but He did not crucify Him. Do you think that God does everything that He purposed should be done?

God purposed that the Egyptians should hate His people, but He did not hate them. He purposed that they should deal subtly with His servants, but He did not deal subtly with them Himself. Rather, "He turned their hearts to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants. (Psalm 105: 25).

12th QUESTION- "Was Adam truly man complete before he became what God purposed he should be?"

ANSWER- Yes. He was truly man complete before he became what God purposed that he should be afterwards. Will you deny this? If so, will you affirm that it was God's purpose, intention or desire for him to remain eternally just as he was when created? If this is not what you mean, then your questions are meaningless, are they not? "It is appointed unto man once to dies" (Hebrews 9:27). Could Adam so have acted as to have annulled and made void this appointment of God? If not, could he have remained upright, since "the wages of sin is death"?

13th QUESTION- "Is not God's work to accomplish His purpose? If not whose work is it? If it is, and He purposed that man should sin, was it not His work that caused man to sin?"

ANSWER- It is not God's work to accomplish all His purposes, for many of His purposes are accomplished by man as is clearly shown in my answer to Question 11. He purposed that sheep should eat grass, but He does not eat grass nor force the sheep to eat it. Do you think that God must either eat grass or force the sheep to eat it in order that His purpose be accomplished? If you do not, then what do you mean by your 13th question?

14th QUESTION- "Is He the author of His own achievements?"

ANSWER- He is the author of all that He does Himself, and all that He authorizes others to do; but He is not the author of all that is according to His purpose. He purposed that Pharaoh should do the very thing that he did, and says Himself that He raised him up for that purpose, but He was not the author of Pharaoh's actions. Do you think that He was?

15th QUESTION- "Could God be just and punish man for doing what He purposed man should do?"

ANSWER- God was just for punishing Pharaoh for doing just what He purposed and raise him up to do (Romans 9: 17-18), but Paul spoke of some who, like yourself, would question God's justice in punishing man for doing what He purposed that he should do, and asked them, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus? "(Romans 9: 20). Dear brother, don't you reckon that this question was meant for you? The parties for whom it was intended could not see how God could be just and hate Esau when he had done no evil, and punish Pharaoh for doing what He purposed that he should do; so they asked, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will? " Does not your question indicate that you are of the same mind as those objectors of whom Paul spoke? Your 15th, 16th, and 17th questions are fully answered in my answer to your 14th and 18th questions.

16th QUESTION- "If God purposed that man should sin, did man disobey when he transgressed?"

ANSWER- Yes. Man disobeyed God's commandment when he transgressed,

but he did not violate any purpose of God. If so, will you please tell me what the purpose was that man violated? Did not God command Pharaoh by Moses, saying, "thus sayeth the God of the Hebrews, let My people go" (Exodus 9:1) And did He not tell Moses, "Yet I will harden his heart and he will not let them go, and I will get Me honor upon him and his host" (Exodus 10:1; 20, 27; 14:17,18). Did not Pharaoh disobey God when he refused to let them go? And did he not at the same time fulfill God's expressed purpose when he refused to let them go? Did not God punish him for his disobedience and was He not just in so doing?

17th QUESTION- "Was it not by disobedience of man that sin entered the world?"

ANSWER- Yes.

18th QUESTION- This is answered in my answer to your 19th question.

19th QUESTION- "Did God command Adam not to eat the forbidden fruit and yet purpose that he would?"

ANSWER- Did God command Pharaoh to let His people go and yet purpose that He would harden his heart that he would not let them go? If so, your question is fully answered. If not, then is not His language meaningless?

20th QUESTION- "Can a man be accountable when his acts are regulated by the achievements of God's decrees?"

ANSWER- I don't know that I understand what you mean by "regulated by the achievements of God's decrees." If you mean that God's decrees exercise an influence over man and causes him to sin, I know of no one who is arguing that; but if you mean to ask if man could be accountable for doing what God purposed that he should do, I answer yes. The case of Pharaoh and the men who crucified Christ are directly to the point and you are found in company with Paul's objectors again who asked, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who has resisted His will?" Will you allow me to ask as Paul did, "Nay, but 0 man, who are thou that repliest against God?"

21st QUESTION- "In fact would we not always be doing the will of God if His purpose is effected in all we do?"

ANSWER- We would be doing His purposes all the time, but not keeping

His commandments all the time. His commandments are sometimes called His will and are often violated, but His will of purpose is never violated. But while His commandments are often violated, the purpose for which He gave the commandment is always accomplished, unless some of His purposes fail. Will you deny this? If you will not, then you give up all the ground covered by your entire list of questions. If you deny it, then will you have the kindness to inform me how God could give a commandment for a certain purpose and the purpose for which He gave it never be accomplished, and yet that purpose not be a failure?

22nd QUESTION- "If we do God's will and purpose will we ever do wrong?"

ANSWER- Here you are in company with Paul's objectors again. They could not see how God could find fault with Pharaoh for doing His will. Their questions and Paul's answers show that Pharaoh had done God's will, and Paul's arguments which called forth question proves that he was doing God's purpose, and the faded find fault with him proves that he did wrong. So your question is fully answered by the Scriptures itself. But why do you blend the will and the purpose of God together so often, as if they were the same and always meant the same? Is it because you think by so doing that you can prove that God's purpose sometimes fails to be accomplished? If this is not what you mean, what is it?

23rd QUESTION- "If we never do wrong will we ever be condemned?"

ANSWER- No.

24th QUESTION- "Did God purpose all we do?"

ANSWER- I think He did. What think you? Our brethren in 1689 said that He decreed all things whatsoever come to pass. Do you agree with them? If not, who has departed, you or I? Were they heretics? If so, have you not descended from a heretical body?

25th QUESTION- "If so, do we not all do our duty?"

ANSWER- No. Pharaoh, nor the wicked men who crucified Christ, were not doing their duty, and yet the Scripture clearly proves that God purposed what they did. Can you do your full duty? If so, can you not live without sinning unless it is your duty to sin? If you can live without sinning, then is not the modern sanctificationist right? If not, why not?

26th QUESTION- "In fact, could we do anything only that which is well pleasing in the sight of God?"

ANSWER- Yes Sir. God has said, "The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). The prefix "shall" before the verb "do" is an auxiliary verb and strongly expresses determination; yet, notwithstanding the fact that God has expressed His determination that they shall do wickedly yet He had an end in view that He will accomplish through His dealings with them as sinners, and with this end in view, He is well pleased. As to their wickedness, I will say as did our ancient brethren, "He was pleased to permit it, having purposed to order it to His own glory." Will you deny this?

27th, 28th, 29th and 30th QUESTIONS- "Did God purpose the transgressions? If so, was the transgressions offensive to God? If not, was man the offender? If not, could he (man) be an object of mercy?"

ANSWER- All of these questions are answered many times over in this article except the one which refers to man as an object of mercy. To this one, I will say no, man could not have been an object of mercy if he was not an offender. Did God purpose to bestow mercy upon man? If so, did He not purpose that man should be an object of mercy? If so, and man could not be an object of mercy unless he is an offender, as your question indicates, then was it God's purpose that man should be an offender? Are you not caught again in your own trap?

31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, and 35th QUESTIONS- "Was the devil in deceiving our Mother Eve doing God's purpose? If so, was it God's purpose to deceive? If so, was He not a deceiver? Do you not preach a deceiver as your God?"

ANSWER- How dare you to question the rights of the eternal Jehovah with such impunity? If He purposed that the lying spirits should deceive Ahab's prophets (1 Kings 22:22,23 and 2 Chronicles 18:21, 22), shall man that is mortal, and whose breath is in his nostrils, rise up and reply against Him, saying, "Thou art a deceiver"? If He purposed that these prophets should be deceived, and should also deceive Ahab, have you the right to reply against Him and call Him a deceiver? If He is not just in so doing, will you set as a judge and pronounce Him guilty? Do your questions mean to question His right to do as He pleases? If not, what do they mean? If God purposed that Ahab's prophets should be deceived, and yet the lying spirits did the

deceiving, does that make God a deceiver? If not, would the other case to which you refer make Him a deceiver? If so, why, seeing that it does not in this case?

36th QUESTION- "Again did God purpose that the devil do the work that he did?"

ANSWER- God either purposed that the devil should do the work that he did, or that he should do something else besides what he did, or that he should not do anything at all – which horn will you hang on, dear brother? If He purposed that the devil should do as he has done, then His purpose is accomplished. But if He purposed that the devil should do differently, or not anything at all, then His purpose is a failure and God is defeated. Take either proposition that you may and you as Haman (Esther 6:6-13 and 7:1-8), are hung on your own gallows.

37th QUESTION- "Did God send His Son to destroy the work of the devil?"

ANSWER- Yes.

38th and last QUESTION- "If so, would God not be destroying His own purpose?"

ANSWER- No. Do you think that God purposed that the earth should exist, and also that He purposeth to destroy it later that He will destroy His own purpose in so doing? Would this not be the fulfillment of His purpose rather than the destruction of it?

Now in conclusion, let me ask you some questions. Is the devil an eternal being? If so, was God "before all things"? (Colossians 1:17). If he is not an eternal being, then is he not a created being? If so, did God create him? If God created him, did He not create him for a purpose? If so, is he not filling the purpose for which God made him? If not, is not God's purpose for which He made him a failure? In fact, was it God's original idea that anything in the world should be as it is, seeing that all things are affected by sin? Is not the redemption of sinners a matter of second choice with God if His original desire was that sin should not enter the world? Did God originally desire "to show His wrath and make His power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction"?

(Romans 9: 21,22). Now, dear brother, I am done. May God bless you with

an understanding heart, and may you see the folly of replying against Him.
Fare ye well in the Lord, Jonas C. Sikes

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

By

Elder Jonas C. Sikes, 1929

(LM, or 8.8.8.8. meters)

Come all ye men of every age —
Yea, all the noble and the sage,
Let's view the things that God hath done
The counsel t'wixt the Three-in-One.
Before the earth, before the skies,
Before the noble and the wise,
Yea long before there was a man,
All things were settled in His plan.
Before the sun, the moon, the stars,
Before the seas with doors and bars,
Before He ever made a hill,
All things were settled in His will.
Before He gave to man his form,
Before the Serpent did him harm,
All things that ever were to be,
Were firmly settled by God's decree.
According to this wondrous plan,
God made the earth then made the man,
Unto this man He gave a law,

In which no one could find a flaw.
There was a Serpent also made,
Who dwells in darkness or in shade,
Who thought he found a flaw in man,
And thought to thwart God's holy plan.
He pointed man unto a tree,
And said, "It's fruits are good to see,
That fruit so dazzling to your eyes,
If you will eat, 'twill make you wise."
"I know God said ye shall not eat,
The rest of which I'll not repeat,
But I am sure it was a lie,
For if you eat you shall not die."

"Behold its beauty and it's form,
Just eat, I'm sure 'twill do no harm,
'Twill open up your blinded eyes,
And you, like God, will be all-wise."
So man did eat and lost his race,
Then he sought to shun his Maker's face,
He hid himself among the trees,
But could not find a place of ease.
So when He found he had no rest,
He tried to make himself a dress,
To hide his nakedness from God,
And thus escape the chastening rod.
This dress was made of green fig leaves,
'Twas just an apron without sleeves,

It would at most just hide a part,
It left exposed his sinful heart.
God came that evening in the cool,
To talk with man as was His rule,
But man with shame instead of pride,
Was much afraid and tried to hide.
God called out, "Adam, where are thou?"
Old Adam heard and made his bow,
And said, "I heard and was afraid —
O God, Thy law I've disobeyed."
"I am naked, wretched and undone,
There's none to pity, no not one;
Without Thy grace, I know full well
In justice I must sink to hell."
God's Mercy then began to show,
Which was of old, as all should know,
It was a promise in His plan,
Held in reserve for fallen man.
So for him God did slay a beast,
Or made them coats of skin at least,
Which represents Jehovah's plan,
To slay His Son for fallen man.
Glorious plan which was of old,
The half of which has never been told,
Or grace in Jesus Christ bestowed,
For they to whom He nothing owed.

This turns our minds back up to heaven,

To where these blessings first were given,

And makes us think upon that plan,
From which all blessings flow to man.

In God's decree which was of old,
A bleeding Lamb we do behold,
Brought forth as slain for fallen man;
All this was in God's wise laid plan.

Methinks I hear some men object,
For some you know, can't retrospect,
They cannot see God's way of grace,
For this is only seen by faith.

Faith views God's plan before the world,
Before this rolling sphere ere whirled,

And sees that sin was just as sure,
As grace, which is sin's double cure.

If sin don't come then grace must fail,
To speak of debt, implies a sale,

So with this view we read of old,
That we for naught ourselves have sold.

If man don't fall then grace never can,
Cancel the debt of fallen man,

For how could grace ever be bestowed,
To pay a debt that no one owed?

So in God's Counsel we must know,
If grace was certain sin was also,

For all must see just at a glance,
Grace can't be sure, if sin's by chance.

Methinks I hear some cry, "Unjust!"
Of course `tis those who want a fuss,
We nothing else could well expect,
Of men who cannot retrospect.

Now let us step back down to earth,
The place where all men have their birth,
The place where sin must first take place,
For God to show His saving grace.

We must admit God did intend,
To execute some glorious end;
His glory was the end designed,

To which all things were predestined.
He made of clay of the same lump,
The human race from top to stump;
From one blood came the human race,
Which leaves our two-seed friends no place.
[They claim that some God did not make,
Then they of sin did not partake;
For none could ever be made to sin
By Adam, but the sons of men.
They think they find a seed of God, Who were not made of earth or sod,
Who dwell in God ere time began,
But since have come to dwell in man!
But this of course, must be a lie,
And here is certainly the reason why,
Jesus died for sinners of Adam's breed,
And not for some eternal seed "

But over them we will not boast,
Although they're few and not a host,
For truth is only seen by faith,
Which none can have except by grace.
And still there is another class,
Which we must see before we pass;
They boldly say that grace must depend,
On things performed by sinful men.
Now of this class there are two kinds,
Which shows the trend of natural minds;
Their difference is in slight degree,
As any one can plainly see.
One says that God, "if He is just,
Must give the man He made of dust,
A chance of heaven and of bliss,
Which he can either hit or miss."
He has a natural disposition,
To hinge "free" grace upon condition,
And thus destroy Jehovah's plan,
And give His glory unto man.
Now when we come to see the other,
We must admit his is his brother;
For "Sure," says he, "much depends
Upon conditions performed by men."

"Stop!" says he, "I mean for time,
And not for heaven all sublime;"
But if on man it must depend,

`Twould give God's glory unto men.
If grace and works we try to mix,
We get the grace in such a fix,
The works will soon the grace alloy,
And thus God's sovereignty destroy.
Then with disdain, but all pretense,
He says his brother "has no sense;"
Now if salvation be by grace,
Then conditions have no place.
But let him meet with those who claim,
Salvation all, in Jesus name,
Then he begins to twist and quirk,
And hinge grace' blessings on man's work.
He says "Of course `tis all of grace,
And yet conditions have a place;
Man can accomplish or can thwart,
The ends Jehovah has at heart."
He says, "God wants man to obey,
That He may bless him every day;
But then it all on man depends,
Who often thwarts Jehovah's ends."
But when we come to view the two,
`Tis hard to tell just who is who;
The arguments they both employ,
God's grace and sovereignty destroy.

But here at least I must confess, To some extent I have digressed;

So now with joy will turn my face,
To God's great plan of Sovereign Grace.]
`Tis here we see man brought to view,
With nothing good that he can do;
He cannot satisfy the law,
Hence can no blessings from it draw.
`Tis here that God's free grace steps in,
This grace doth reign much more than sin;
It reigns to free from death's great power,
It reigns to keep us every hour.

It reigns to conquer sinful lusts,
And bow us down unto the dust;
It reigns to raise us up again,
This glorious grace doth sweetly reign.
It reigns to bring us unto God,
And make us know and love His Word;
It reigns to make His saints obey,
His laws and precepts every day.
It reigns where'er His saints are found,
It reigns more than sin doth abound;
It reigns that we may show His praise,
In time and unto endless days.
Arise my soul and ne'er forget,
This grace that cancelled all my debt,
And reigns to guide us in the way,
And bring us blessings every day.
O glorious hope: O wondrous plan

In which is seen God's love to man-
O give me grace to tell the story,
And magnify Jehovah's glory.
Come then dear saints who love His name;
All whom these thoughts your souls aflame,
Come, let us join to shout His praise,
Through sin's dark maze to endless days.
And when we all shall meet in heaven,
Where all these blessings first were given;
O then we all shall see His face,
And know the fullness of His grace.

Finis