

The Remnant

*“Even so then at this
present time also there
is a remnant according to
the election of grace.”
Romans 11.5*

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CHRIST, THE GOD-BRANCH

In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel (Isaiah 4.2).

The Genealogies of Jesus Christ

In previous articles we have commented on the genealogies of Jesus Christ as recorded in the four Gospels. The omission of such ancestral lists in Mark and John is every bit as significant as is their inclusion in Matthew and Luke.

Reviewing, the four Gospels parallel the four faces of Ezekiel 1.10 and the four beasts (literally, living creatures) of Revelation 4.7: “...they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle”; “And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.”

Matthew, presenting Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, traces His ancestry back through King David to Abraham. Matthew thus verifies that Jesus was indeed the king of the Jews, the rightful heir to the throne of David, as promised to Abraham and his descendants for the 2,000 years from Abraham to Christ.

Mark, on the other hand, sets Jesus forth as God’s suffering servant (the ox as a beast of burden), giving no genealogy, for who considers the family background of a slave?

Luke presents Jesus as the Son of man, tracing His parentage back to the first man, Adam.

We come now to John’s gospel. John gives no genealogical tree, because he presents Jesus as God the Son, typified by the eagle, king of the sky or king of the heavens. The eternal God, with no beginning, has no family tree. The Son is coexistent and co-eternal with the Father. Indeed, the Son is the everlasting Father (Isaiah 9.6), King of heaven (Daniel 4.37), King of kings, and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6.15, et al).

In the Beginning

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1.1).” John begins where Genesis begins, with God in the beginning. But John expands upon this, giving details not found in Moses’ account. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made (John 1.1-3).” In this and the following chapters, John informs us that Elohim, the Creator God of Genesis 1, is incarnated in the Word, Jesus Christ. In language as certain and as sure as God Himself, throughout the remainder of his gospel, John demonstrates that Jesus is the eternal God manifest in the flesh.

“Words” and “The Word”

Why is Jesus called *the Word*? It is because one uses words to express oneself. God expressed Himself completely in Jesus. In this sense, He did not need *words*, as this one Word was sufficient: God “Hath in

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these last days spoken unto us by His Son (Hebrews 1.1f).” He does not merely mean Jesus said what God wanted people to hear, which is true enough; but he is saying Jesus is the absolute expression of the Father in all respects, as Jesus is God incarnate. “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14.9).” “I and my Father are one (John 10.30).”

Nor does this contradict the value of the Scriptures, which were given for quite other reasons. First and foremost, they were given, not to impart eternal life, but to testify of Jesus Christ. The error of *gospel regeneration* is one of the most popular and prevalent errors in so-called evangelical Christendom today, and one of the last vestiges of Arminianism a believer in the sovereign grace of God is made willing to give up.

Jesus righted this error in one sentence: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5.39).”

Second, the Scriptures were given for the saints’ benefit, that they, through the Holy Spirit’s inner application of the Scriptures, would have patience, comfort, and hope. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Romans 15.4).” Jesus, in contrast, being God manifest in the flesh, is the earthly, visible expression of God’s Being and attributes.

Third, the Scriptures were given, not to make a child of God out of a child of the devil, but that the child of God might be perfected—that is, thoroughly (or thoroughly) furnished unto all good works. The Holy Spirit does this by teaching them what good works truly are by way of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.16f).”

Considering Jesus the Word of God as the express image of God, the words *express* and *expression*, as used above and in Hebrews 1, are quite literal. Paul says, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high...(Hebrews 1.1ff).”

Ex-press means to *press out*. The term *express image* as used here means a pressed-out image, as the mark made by a king’s signet ring’s being pressed in a clay writing tablet. Such tablets, after being written and thus signed by the king’s *sign-et* ring, were then baked into a permanent and unchangeable record. In seeing the clay tablet, one sees the king’s message and the image of the signet ring, fired into the clay. In seeing Jesus, one sees both God’s message and His image, the image of the invisible God, pressed into Adamic clay and fired into a perfect, permanent image of God by the fire of His own purity and holiness (Hebrews 12.29).

The apostle John's gospel testifies to this marvelous truth, the beauty and glory of Jesus as the Branch of the Lord, the unique display of Deity in flesh, as prophesied by Isaiah. May we be blessed to examine some of this beauty and glory.

Christ Jesus as the Creator-God

In the opening verses John presents Jesus as the supreme and only Creator, Elohim. It was not Elohim and Jesus jointly creating; Elohim *is* Jesus: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made (John 1.3)." Jesus is the Creator: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not (John 1.10)."

Paul's statement in Hebrews 1 asserts the same and more: "...by whom also He made the worlds...and upholding all things by the word of His power..." Not only did He create all things, then, but He sustains them as well; from atoms, to galaxies, to spirit-beings in the heavenlies. "...by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or 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 1.16f)."

The Preexistence of Jesus

John the Baptist, who was Jesus' cousin (not the *Apostle* John, author of this Gospel bearing his name), gave testimony to the eternity of Jesus. When he introduced Him as the Lamb of God, he said, "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for He was before me (John 1.30)." John was not saying Jesus was born before John the Baptist, and therefore Jesus was older in the flesh, for the opposite was true. John's birth was about six months before that of Jesus. John would have assuredly known who was born first. In saying "*He was before me*," John can only be referring to the eternal preexistence of Jesus as God the Son.

But Jesus also bore witness to His own preexistence as the eternal God. "Then said they unto Him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning (John 8.25)." This *from the beginning* was no doubt misunderstood by many of His hearers that day who thought He only meant from the beginning of His public ministry. Many other citations in John's

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Gospel, however, make it apparent that He was referring to *the beginning* mentioned in Genesis 1.1 and John 1.1.

For example, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am (John 8.58)." Not only does Jesus here say that He *was* before Abraham, who had lived two thousand years previously; but He appropriates unto Himself the divine name with which He revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush, the eternal I AM. Whether the modern world knows or not, the Jews knew exactly what He was claiming—that He, Jesus, is the God who appeared to Abraham and to Moses. Because of this, they took up stones to stone Him for what they considered blasphemy.

The night before His crucifixion Jesus prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (John 17.5)." No mere mortal man could correctly identify himself this way.

As the Lamb of God

Closely related to His preexistence is Jesus' office as God's Lamb, because He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13.8). "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1.29)." "And looking upon Jesus

as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God (John 1.36)!”

The Divine Origin of Jesus

Jesus plainly said He came from heaven. “I am the living bread which came down from heaven (John 6.51).” “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before (John 6.62)?” “And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world...Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me (John 8.23, 42).”

The preeminence and supremacy of Jesus

Not only is Jesus the eternally preexistent Creator, but He retained all His preeminence, supremacy, and attributes while he tabernacled here below, clothed in flesh. “He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all (John 3.31).”

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand (John 3.35).”

Again, Paul verifies this truth: “For He hath put all things under His feet...(1 Corinthians 15.27).” Whether all things are viewed as in His hand or under His feet, He controls all.

The eternal glory of Jesus

The word *glory* comes from the same root as *glow*. It sets forth the blinding light of God’s presence in “...our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto...(1Timothy 6.14ff).”

It was this light Matthew described when Jesus “was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light (Matthew 17.2).”

Paul said, “At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.” This transcendent Light, the Light of the world (John 8.12, 9.5), identified Himself to Paul by saying, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (verse 15).”

John said, “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1.4).”

At His first public miracle it was recorded, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him (John 2.11).”

“These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him (John 12.41).”

John, who was there the night Jesus was betrayed, recorded what Jesus said of Himself after Judas left on his mission of murder: “Therefore, when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him (John 13.31f).”

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him (John 17.1f).”

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (John 17.4f).”

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one...Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (John 17.22, 24).”

The omniscience of Jesus

God’s omniscience means God knows all; there is nothing He does not know. Jesus was not limited to the senses of the eyes and ears while He dwelt here on earth in an earthly body. “...He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (Isaiah 11.3f).”

He who is Wisdom incarnate has infinite knowledge of all things.

Nathanael, at Philip's behest, came to Christ. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" thereby demonstrating that He knew Nathanael's innermost being. "Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee (John 1.47f)." Before he came to Jesus, Nathaniel had evidently been in his garden, miles away. Such omniscience as Jesus demonstrated convinced him that Jesus was the Son of God (John 1.49). In a deeper understanding, however, Christ's statement, "*Before...when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee,*" refers not merely to Nathanael's own garden and fig tree. It also means Nathaniel was foreseen and foreknown while he was yet unborn, in the loins of Adam, when our parents under the fig tree "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Genesis 3.7; compare Hebrews 7.9f)."

In the next chapter, it is recorded of Him that He knew all men (not just Nathanael), and, "He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man (John 2.24f)."

He again showed His omniscience while talking with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, a stranger in the flesh, but known eternally: "The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly (John 4.17f)."

When word came to His disciples of Lazarus being sick, Jesus already knew the dying man's exact condition. "...He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead (John 11.11ff)."

Likewise, He knew of Judas: "For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean...Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He (John 13.11, 19)."

In a similar statement regarding His approaching crucifixion, He said, "And now I have told you before

it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe (John 14.29)."

The omnipresence of Jesus

Omnipresence means He is present everywhere; there is no place where He is *not*. This is reflected in His seeing Nathanael, mentioned above, from a distance far too great for a mere mortal eye ("...when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee").

Another striking statement again drives this truth home. He told Nicodemus, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven (John 3.13)." While Jesus was speaking with Nicodemus, He was at the same instant occupying Heaven's throne. To try to "spiritualize" this statement of Jesus, by saying He only meant it was *heavenly* for them to be sitting around talking about these things, is to miss His point completely!

The Omnipotence of Jesus

Omnipotence means He is all-powerful. Jesus' healing of the Nobleman's son (John 4.46-54) demonstrated that He was not required to be in the physical presence of a person in order to manifest His power. In this case He did so from a considerable distance, showing He can reach anyone, anywhere, at any time, without His being present in the flesh. This healing from afar further impressed the Nobleman, his family, and his friends, with the infinite power of Christ.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6.63)." Jesus' words may vary as He speaks to one person or another. This verse emphasizes the unchangeable Word, not the *words* that change as He speaks to one person or another.

The Effectual Grace of Jesus

"And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1.16f)." Moses *gave* the law. That is, Moses was the instrument, because God gave the law to him to give to Israel. In contrast, grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ, as He ably brought these beautiful attributes as part of Himself. "*Grace for grace*" means the grace is not merely laid out for the sinner to take or to leave;

that would not even be grace. “Grace *for* grace” means it takes effectual grace to make grace effectual!

“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (John 3.21).” This grace effectually produces good works in His people. An alternate rendering of *wrought in God* is “*produced by God*.” He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are produced by God. Nothing seems to gall will-worshippers more than the clear scriptural teaching that, if there are any good works at all in a person, they are produced by God’s internal working in that person and not by an act of the individual’s will or choice. How could this beautiful truth be put into plainer words than those Paul wrote? “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are *by Jesus Christ*, unto the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1.11).”

Jesus’ Equality with the Father

God the Son is equal to His Father in every respect. In John 5.17-27, Jesus claims this equality on no less than seven (the number of divine completeness) levels:

1. Equal in work: “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”

2. Equal in will: “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

3. Equal in knowledge: “For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that himself doeth.”

4. Equal in resurrection power: “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.”

5. Equal in honor: “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.”

6. Equal in imparting eternal life: “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. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself.”

7. Equal in judicial power and authority: “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son...And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.”

Jesus said, “I and my Father are one (John 10.30),” “And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me (John 12.45).” “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am (John 13.13).” The New Testament use of the title *Lord* was everywhere understood to be a term of worship. When applied to Jesus, it was nothing less than acknowledging He was—and is—God (see John 9.35-38).

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works (John 14.9f).” The fools who deny His deity, when confronted by these words, say, “God dwells in all of us,” and conclude there is nothing unique about Jesus. If that is the case, let such an objector prove his point by doing the works He did!

When the mob came to arrest Him in the garden, He again both claimed and demonstrated His deity. Here, we retain the italics as used by the King James translators:

“...Jesus saith unto them, I am *He*. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am *He*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *He*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. (John 18.5ff).”

Three times He claims the name, I am, by which He revealed Himself to Moses (Exodus 3.14). Jesus did not say, “I am He.” You will notice in the King James Version, in each of the three occurrences of Jesus’ saying “I am” in the above passage, each “*He*” is italicized. Nowadays, we use italic print for emphasis or to call special attention to a word. The King James translators, however, used italic print to tell us which words they had supplied that were not warranted by a parallel word in the original (Hebrew

or Greek) text. They italicized *He* simply because Jesus did not say “He.” He said, “I AM,” and God’s power in Jesus’ identifying Himself as the eternal I AM was such that the mob “went backward, and fell to the ground.”

His Resurrection Power—Over Others

“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6.39f).”

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day...Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6.44, 54).”

His Resurrection Power—Over His Own Body

“No man taketh it [His life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10.18).”

His Infinite Spirit

When Jesus was baptized, God sent the third Person of the Godhead, His Holy Spirit, upon Him in a *manifest* way, as has never been done for any man before or since. *Manifest* is emphasized here, because the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove (John 1.32) only demonstrated the presence of the invisible Spirit who is one with the Father and the Son. As for all other people, God blesses whomsoever He will with His Spirit as pleases Him: “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal...but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will (1 Corinthians 12.4-11).”

It was not so with Jesus: “...for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him (John 3.34).” Being one with the Holy Spirit He had all power on earth even as in heaven He eternally had.

CONCLUSION

The above scarcely scratches the surface of what John presents concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, the Branch of God. One blest of our God to search John’s gospel on this subject could do so profitably for years. Here, if we have eyes to see at all, we see Jesus, the Branch of the Lord, most beautiful and glorious.

Christ’s appellation the Branch, as King, Servant, Man, and God, is truly one of the most meaningful of all His titles in the sacred Scriptures. In God’s economy of grace, it took the four gospels to expand and explain these four words. May God bless these feeble meditations to comfort and encourage the hearts of His dear children.

—Elder C. C. Morris

THE REDEEMED “SAY SO”

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy (Psalm 107:1, 2).

The occupation of the living family of God is to give thanks unto the Lord. They are often accused of being inert and backward—sitting on the stool of do-nothing. The fact is that the children of promise are engaged in the activity of praise, which He has commanded.

The scripture abounds with divine imperatives to praise and thanksgiving. “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice (Philippians 4:4).” “Rejoice evermore....In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).” “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation (Psalm 95:1).” “O sing unto the Lord a new song: for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory (Psalm 98:1).” “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name (Psalm 103:1).”

The text is a commandment to the children of God. When it comes to them with the power of the King’s voice they gladly and spontaneously obey. They say, “Draw me, we will run after thee....” The text gives

two reasons for this thanksgiving; the first is general—“He is good.” The second is a particular instance of the first, “His mercy endureth forever.”

He is good. This is in stark contrast to the false gods of the nations, which were tyrannical and capricious, and to man, of whom it is said, “There is none good: no, not one.” The Bible does mention good men, but any goodness found in man is only relative goodness. Man’s goodness is derived and imperfect. Goodness is a general term which embraces grace, mercy, generosity, kindness, tenderness, compassion, longsuffering, comfort, etc. God alone is essentially good. “His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145:9).” “He gives to all life and breath and all things (Acts 17:25).” It is “in Him we live, and move, and have our being (Acts 17:28).” He “sendeth rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45).” God’s goodness is seen in His providential governing of the world.

He is good. The goodness of God, like all His attributes, is eternal and unchangeable. He is not moved to goodness by outside influences. He is sovereignly good. He chooses to manifest His goodness in His dealings with men. There is not a creature that has not been the beneficiary of the goodness of God. He is good in a special sense to His elect. He is the “Savior of all men, specially of those that believe (1 Timothy 4:10).” The fact that there is such a people as His elect is a fruit of His goodness. God chose an innumerable host in Christ before the foundation of the world to inherit eternal glory. He predestined these souls unto perfect conformity to His Son and perfect fellowship with Him in eternal glory. There is no power under heaven that can overturn the decree of Almighty God.

’Twi’x Jesus and the chosen race,
Subsists a bond of sovereign grace,
That hell, with its infernal train,
Can ne’er dissolve, nor rend in twain.
(*Kent, #183 in Beebe Collection*)

Having secured the eternal destiny of His people, God works all things together for good to them that love Him, to them who are called according to His purpose. He orders their steps. He works in them that which is well pleasing in His sight. He perfects that which concerns them. He brings His blind by a way

that they knew not. He leads His sheep in green pastures and beside still waters. He teaches them to know the Lord. He writes His law in their hearts. He speaks peace and comfort to His troubled ones. He strengthens them to face the trials and temptations of life. He renews their strength when the mighty ones around them are fainting. He causes them to mount up with wings as eagles. They run and are not weary. They walk and faint not.

He surrounds them with the whole armor of God, that they may withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand victorious over the enemies of their souls. He insures that no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper, and the tongues that rise up against them shall be condemned. This is the heritage of His saints, and their righteousness is of Him.

Their very hairs are numbered. He gives His angels charge concerning them, and they keep them in all their ways, lest they should dash their feet upon a stone. No affliction can touch them without the consent of their eternal Keeper. If affliction or even destruction of the flesh should be allowed to touch them, He gives them sufficient grace to endure all things and overcome by His power.

Truly God is good to His saints. “Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance (Psalm 33:12).” “Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple (Psalm 65:4).” “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing (Psalm 34:7-10).” “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Romans 4:6-8).” The goodness of God carries His people throughout their lives here below, and it shines in its fulness on them in the endless aeons of glory.

Since God is good, His mercy endureth forever. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to

everlasting upon them that fear him...(Psalm 103:17).” The mercy of our God is sovereign mercy. God does not try to show mercy. He is not constrained by men or forces of nature or any other thing. He just does it, and He does it where He wills. “For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion (Romans 9:15).” From time to time I hear people talking about God and His mercy in such pitiful, God-dishonoring terms that I have to sigh and shake my head. They say God wants to do this or that. They say He cannot display His mercy unless we cooperate with Him. They say He has done all He can do, and now it’s up to us to let Him have His way in our lives. They tell us that millions and billions will die lost without our silver and gold to send the word to them. What a sad, defeated, impotent God they advocate. I just can’t buy into any of that. “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever He hath pleased (Psalm 115:3).” What a soul-stirring, encouraging, confident, certain sound concerning the true and living God and His mercy! He said to Moses, “I WILL have mercy....” He doesn’t try to or want to—He just does. I dare any created thing to try to get in the way of that mercy to divert it or hinder it when God sends it forth to His children. The irresistible force of it would blast the intruder into sub-atomic bits of nothing. His mercy is sovereign.

God’s mercy is distinguishing. God shows mercy to individuals according to His will. It’s not up for grabs. He said, “I will have mercy **on whom I will** have mercy, and I will have compassion **on whom I will** have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Romans 9:15,16).” The whole antediluvian world lay in wickedness, but Noah “found grace in the sight of the Lord.” There were many lepers in Israel, but none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. There were many widows in Israel, but to none was the prophet sent, save to the widow of Zarephath. The whole five porches of Bethesda were strewn with infirm souls, but Jesus approached a certain man and said, “Wilt thou be made whole?” The man didn’t seem to have any particularly great faith or anything else to distinguish him from the crowd, but Jesus healed him. There was a time when Jesus “must needs go through Samaria,” because He had an eternal mercy-appointment with a woman at a

well. God’s mercy is bounded by the everlasting covenant. It flows, in due time, to those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It overcomes them and surrounds them all the days of their lives and delivers them from this present evil world unto His glorious kingdom. It is distinguishing mercy.

God’s mercy is centered in Christ. The mercy of God is blood-bought mercy. God is absolutely holy. He will not tolerate evil. He does not compromise His holiness to show mercy and grace to sinners. If He is to be the justifier of sinners He must also be just in that justification. If He passes over sins He must be righteous in that remission. It can’t be based on something like “I said I was sorry” or “I’m not the man I used to be.”

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Here is the gospel. Jesus Christ was set up of old as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).” He came in the fulness of time to redeem His sheep. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10:11, 15).” His blood was shed that remission of sins, justification, and all salvation might and must come to those for whom He died. I say it must come.

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and with the shedding of the blood of Christ there cannot fail to be the remission of sin. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins (Isaiah 40:1).”

The blood of Jesus Christ does not make salvation possible. It makes it certain. He laid down His life for the sheep, and He said, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this [Jewish] fold: them also I **must** bring, and they **shall** hear my voice; and there **shall** be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16).” He also said, “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, **neither shall** any man pluck them out of my hand (John 10:27, 28).” The sovereign, distinguishing, blood-bought mercy of Almighty God must and does bowl over any and all adversaries and engulfs the children of God in a boundless sea of never-failing grace.

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” Let them indeed. When the Lord says, “Let them say so,” they say so. They can’t help but say so, because they are overcome by the wonder, might and glory of their good God and His everlasting mercy.

What does this “let the redeemed of the Lord say so” mean? I think it does NOT mean for them to say, “I’m redeemed.” Some interpret this verse as an encouragement for the redeemed to “say so”—that is, to say they are redeemed. Now, I believe that when the Lord fills one with an overwhelming sense of assurance of redemption he or she may say in faith and praise, “I’m redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.” The comfort and grounded hope of salvation is part of the blessing of grace, which the Lord has purchased for His people. However, I believe the “so” in this verse refers to the truth set forth in the preceding verse. “[The Lord] is good: for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so....” Let the redeemed of the Lord *testify to the fact that the Lord is good and His mercy endureth forever*. The children of God, who have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, delight to testify to the goodness and mercy of their great covenant God. They say so. They love to say so. They are eminently qualified to say so, because they have personal experience of it.

This experience is documented repeatedly in this Psalm, beginning in this same verse. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy....” Christ redeemed the children of God when He shed His blood for them. That is, the price of their redemption was paid. Yet they experience redemption as the Spirit of God delivers them out of darkness into His marvelous light. When awakened by grace, they feel themselves bound by the enemy of their souls. They find themselves unable to deliver themselves. They feel like the lawful captive and the prey of the terrible. If they are left to their own devices they will utterly perish without hope. When they are brought to the end of their ability Christ appears as their deliverer. Though they are powerless against sin and Satan, the Lord undertakes for them. He shows them His wounds which He received while suffering for them. He gives them an answer for the terrible accuser. He leads captivity captive. He creates faith, hope, and love in their hearts, and causes them

to overcome the evil one by looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.

“...and gathered them out of the lands....” The Lord knows His sheep. At the appointed time He calls them by name and puts them forth. The sheep are scattered among the nations. No eye but the shepherd’s can discern between His sheep and the goats. If it were up to man to find them they would be lost forever, but, thanks be unto God, the Shepherd Himself finds and gathers His sheep out of the lands. Notice again how discriminating the grace of God is. He doesn’t gather up the lands wholesale. He gathers in exactly every one who belongs to Him by the blood of the everlasting covenant. “I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name (Isaiah 43:6, 7).” When a child of God knows something about being delivered from the hand of the enemy and gathered out of the land, he or she will have to give thanks unto the Lord and “say so” that the Lord is good and His mercy endureth forever.

“They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way....” The path of the child of God is a solitary one. They don’t live off the experiences of others. They have to be brought through their own trials and temptations. They have to be made, in their own experience, to taste that the Lord is gracious. From our point of view the experiences we go through in search of the kingdom of God seem like wandering. We may feel aimless. We may think the things we go through are for no particular purpose, but from the Lord’s viewpoint each step is ordered and works together to form that solitary way. “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; but he knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:8-10)

“...they found no city to dwell in....” “Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” When the Lord separates His people, the world becomes a wilderness to them. They cannot find a dwelling place. I am thinking especially in a religious sense. The “cities” or religious gatherings of the world become desert places to the children of promise. The “do and live” systems of Arminianism beat them down

like the desert sun. They can find no water or nourishment for their souls in the “free-will” legalism and fleshly excitement of modern religion. That which satisfies the Ishmaelites is death to the children of the free woman. By the way, the feeling is usually mutual. The citizens of these religious “cities” have no use for Israelites. They will mock them, persecute them, and run them off, but they cannot fellowship with them. Just as the Philistines sent back the ark of the Lord, because it troubled them, so do the religions of the world expel the new creatures who trust in the Living God.

“...*hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them...*” The redeemed of the Lord are the “blessed” ones “which do hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6).” The promise is “they shall be filled.” The Lord, in His goodness and mercy, brings them to faint with hunger and thirst for this true and lasting righteousness. He will not let them be satisfied with the fig leaves, the spider’s webs, and the refuge of lies, which represent creature righteousness. Then His goodness and mercy blesses them to see the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:30, 31).”

“...*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses...*” The goodness and mercy of God does not keep His children out of trouble, but it does teach them to cry unto Him in their trouble. The Lord’s people are a crying people. They know they are limited and weak in themselves. They are made to have no confidence in the flesh. They are also made to have all confidence in their Almighty God. They cry unto Him, and He delivers them out of their distresses. Then they have to “say so”—He is good and His mercy endureth forever.

“...*And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation...*” The good shepherd calls His sheep by name. He puts them forth. He goes before them. He leads them by the right way. The right way is the way the Lord leads His people. It is not the way we can discern, nor is it the way we would choose, if left to ourselves. It is “a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen (Job 28:7).” This way leads them to a city of habitation—a city of refuge—a place where they can be safe. “In that day

shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusted in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:1-4)

“...*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*” If we have some experience of the goodness and mercy of God we must and do praise the Lord. “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise (Isaiah 43:21).” Though we do praise Him and love Him, we must confess with John Newton:

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I’ll praise thee as I ought.
(#339 in the Lloyd hymnal)

May the God of all grace and goodness move our hearts to love Him, fear Him, thank Him, and praise His glorious name for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men! May He bless us with an experience of redemption by Christ, and may he cause us to “say so”—The Lord is good and His mercy endureth forever.

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**Predestination from
GENESIS TO REVELATION
No. 18
I SAMUEL**

**SAUL: THE FIRST OF
THE KINGS IN ISRAEL**

And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! This same shall reign over my people (1 Samuel 9.17).

SAUL AND SAMUEL

God's purposes for Israel would be manifest in a unique manner to the twelve tribes. A new form of government would replace the old. No longer would Judges rule the twelve tribes. Samuel was the last Judge. He had occupied the seat of rule all his life (1 Samuel 7.15), but, beginning with Saul, the reigns of power would reside with the kings.

Saul was the first, and probably the most complex of the kings of Israel. Saul was chosen by God to occupy the throne. Any possibility he would decline, or fail to rule his appointed time did not exist. Despite the notions of limited Predestinarians and assorted other Arminians, nothing fails in the eternal plan of God. That unailing plan embraces all things. If such possibilities did exist, we challenge the world to produce evidence from the Bible that the choice of Saul by God could be nullified. God said, "This same [Saul] shall reign over my people." That, dear readers, settled it! God clearly, without a trace of ambiguity, foretold the rule of Saul. Therefore, every possible event since the dawn of time that could *in any way* affect, to the slightest degree, the rule of Saul, must be equally as sure as God's pronouncement saying Saul would reign. How else could God speak in certainty unless the events he foretold were certain?

Examples for the necessity of continuity in all transpiring events, from the beginning to Saul's actual reign as king over Israel, abound. We offer one.

Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was the last of the sons of Jacob and second son of Rachel, Joseph being the first. Lovely Rachel, the darling of Jacob, travailed hard in labor when Benjamin was born (Genesis 35.16). In fact, she died. Those blessed to see the predestination of God *in all things* know that

was the set time for Rachel to die. It was as ordained as the rising of the sun. Some deny there is a set time to die. To them Rachel might have died sooner, or even later, than when she did. This they affirm constantly. As far as they are concerned, Rachel might have died when delivering Joseph her first son as when she did. No predestination, say they, and thus no certainty. Well then, we shall ask, had Rachel died while delivering Joseph, a real possibility with no predestination to make anything certain, there would be no Benjamin, would there? And, neither would there be a Saul that God had declared would reign. This is the same as saying God either changed or did not know of what He affirmed.

This is but one of millions of interlinking events that renders the pronouncement of God relating to Saul a certainty.

Persons often exclaim they would never serve in public office, no matter what the populace desired. Concerning Saul, there was no public clamor to have him for Israel's king. Israel panted after a king, true enough, but they did not make the selection of Saul. God made the choice. He determined, promoted, and secured all to occupy this seat of power. His government governs all governments. This includes the grubby local official and the mightiest monarch. All alike are under the control and sway of God. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God (Romans 13.1)." We marvel how some dare complain against God, rejecting His ruling the affairs of men. Is there not far more blessed comfort knowing He superintends the affairs of men "for good to those that love Him" than to fear every moment that matters may suddenly rage out of control? So they might without predestination.

It is charged, and that falsely, Predestinarians carry their doctrine too far. It is said our pronouncements range far too excessive for the sensitive ears of modern religionists. If so, we insist, let our accusers show us precisely where to stop. Let them, our opponents, mark before us the line they have found, anywhere in the Bible, at which we are to stop. "Possibly" some will say, "God did govern the affairs of Israel then, and to some extent today, but He does not extend His sway and dominion to include the unwholesome [whatever that is] events of life." Let us see! "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).” If that text does not reveal God’s rule is all encompassing, what would it take to satisfy our critics? Shall they draw the line short of this text and admonish us not to pass? They deny heaven’s edicts at their peril. More need not be said, especially for those that reverence the Word of God.

“Behold the man whom I spake to thee of!” Even wise Samuel needed prompting by God that this man Saul, standing before him, was to be king of Israel. Samuel was wise and discerning, but he, like all fallen sons of Adam, derived his understanding *of* the affairs of God *from* God.

SAUL MEETS SAMUEL

There are many fascinating examples in Scriptures of encounters between prominent servants of God with those whom God purposed for them to meet. None are more engaging than our present. Samuel, the last judge of Israel, had grown old. The tribes of Israel had grown restless; they were weary (wrongfully) of a theocentric government, a disposition sadly complementing all human nature. As for Saul, he was growing up in his father’s household, and from appearances, primarily occupied with tending his father’s asses. Under the unerring guidance of God, these three, Israel, Samuel, and Saul met in conformity to the eternal will for their corresponding and intertwined futures.

“And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! This same shall reign over my people (1 Samuel 9.17).” Samuel was previously informed of Saul’s coming and thus God revealed him unto Samuel as the appointed king to rule over “my people.” There is comfort in those words, *my people*, when applied to the heart by the Spirit of God. *My people* speaks loudly of the peculiar relation accorded the chosen of God as distinct from all other people.

The nations about Israel, the Philistines, the Egyptians, and all others, were as much the created people of God as Israel, but never are they denominated *my people*. “And they shall be my people, and

I will be their God (Jeremiah 32.38).” This set the tone for coming relations between Saul and the tribes over which he would rule. He would rule them, but they would ever remain the people of God.

It is significant to see, while Samuel knew Saul when first they met, for the Lord told him who he was, Saul was totally ignorant of this exalted servant of God, even when in his presence. “Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer’s house is (1 Samuel 9.18).” Saul was in the presence of Samuel for only one reason, at least as far as he was concerned; he sought information to enable him in finding his lost asses. Remarkable indeed; God had chosen to lead and rule His people this grown man that was completely unaware when in the presence of Samuel, God’s most highly favored man among the tribes. But the tide that swept Saul into the presence of Samuel was not simply the flow of unrelated events in uncharted waters. The ordained occasion had arrived. God was to invest the temporal rule of affairs with a carnal king. He had from eternity chosen a lowly ass-herder, Saul, who, at that time was in futile pursuit of his lost asses. And God put Samuel in his path. “And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart (1 Samuel 9.19).”

KNOWLEDGE

“Tell thee all that is in thine heart.” Who can accomplish such apart from the Spirit of God? Samuel would apprise Saul of everything necessary to fully establish God was superintending this transition. This is one of many instances in Scriptures where a prophet of God revealed things otherwise unknown. With the exception of skeptics and God haters, we know of no Bible students that question the revelation of things unknown by those anointed prophets of God. In chapters nine and ten of 1 Samuel there are at least nine instances where Samuel revealed unto Saul proceedings that could not be learned or foretold with ordinary human discernment. Had there been only an item or two, we might conclude Samuel held this high position by personal shrewdness. We shall briefly examine these pronouncements and therein behold, not the wisdom and knowledge of Samuel, but of God.

Ask yourself this one question in reviewing what Samuel revealed to Saul: how did Samuel know all this? We hope to answer that question subsequently.

1. “And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them: for they are found... (1 Samuel 9.20).” Saul had not mentioned how long the asses were lost. In fact, Saul told Samuel nothing. Nevertheless, Samuel unveils the unknown. Moreover, Samuel sets the mind of Saul at ease; he assures him the asses are found. How did Samuel come by these facts? Clever guessing? Enchantments? Absurd! Samuel, the servant of God, was given this knowledge directly from God (verses 15 and 16).

2. “...And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee and on all thy father’s house (1 Samuel 9.20)?” Samuel took no polls. He had no time to visit among the tribes. To arrive at the conclusion the whole nation desired Saul required knowledge beyond normal. In fact, the whole of the nation did not know they desired Saul to reign. But Samuel related it to Saul as a fact. Why? God told him so, and clearly that was good enough for Samuel. It is good enough for the elect today as well. We will appraise the evident truth to which this conclusion leads later.

3. “And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God (1 Samuel 9.27).” Nothing specific is here given but the statement of Samuel establishes a foundation for all that transpires between him and Saul; that which passed from the Judge to the future king was nothing less than the very word of God. “That I may shew thee the word of God.” This statement alone is sufficient to raise our inquiry from that of knowledgeable men to the knowledge of God.

What Samuel unfolded to Saul was eternal; it was settled forever. “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven (Psalm 119.89).” Every syllable uttered by the aged judge was as settled, certain and sure as the foundations of God’s eternal throne. Samuel surely knew these things. Did Samuel’s knowing them make them sure? No, but he could not have known them unless they were sure. Otherwise they would be no better than vain speculation.

Parenthesis: “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head and kissed him, and said... (1 Samuel 10.1).” It is worthy of notice, Samuel anointed

Saul from a *vial* of oil. When he later anointed David in Saul’s place he used a *horn* of oil (1 Samuel 16.13). See Revelation 15.7 and the whole of Revelation, Chapter 16.

4. “When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel’s sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son (1 Samuel 10.2)?” This verse weaves together such complex and intricate involvement by so many persons it is impossible to believe Samuel could dream this up. For all to come to pass exactly as he foretold it without some measure of Divine certainty to bring it to pass is incredulous. *Five* people in *three* different locations are involved in one brief statement; Samuel, Saul, two unnamed men, and Saul’s father. Circumstances, distance and time forbid a conspiracy or a fraud by Samuel. The exact location, some good distance away, is fully given. The exact language of the two men Samuel affirmed Saul would encounter is declared. The mind and disposition of Saul’s anxious father is cataloged as fact. Who but the willfully blind can view this text and fail to see Divine certainty, Divine will, Divine predestination abounding? Saul had no pet theories or personal agenda to promote. The aged judge recited the word of God to Saul *just as the Lord had bid him*. Would he find out later God Himself was only speculating, or did all come to pass in flawless agreement with the disclosure? We shall see.

5. “Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands (1 Samuel 10.3,4).” The old judge not only speaks of events of the present day at Rachel’s sepulchre, he speaks of the further activities of Saul with such detail we must marvel. We are struck with wonder at the vivid display of the predestination of God in Samuel’s words. Can the accuracy of all coming to pass, as foretold by Samuel, be accounted for by other measures? Surely not! Either Samuel knew these things were as positive as God’s revelation of them to him, or he was the “luckiest” guesser the world ever saw.

How could Samuel say Saul would “go on forward from thence” unless it was sure? Could Samuel know the mind of Saul? Could he accurately forecast Saul’s movements with nothing more than human discernment? Certainly not!

Should the reader be weary of our pattern here they might as well close the paper without reading further. This is our meat and drink. The deep ways of God’s revealing His mind are far more satisfying than the stiffly structured appeals of Conditionalists aimed at bringing the Baptists up from the dunghill.

We continue: Samuel unfolds a remarkably complex series of events no human could formulate without divine aid. Saul would go to the plain of Tabor. Why there? Because it was the word of the Lord to Samuel. There Saul would meet three men (not two or four, but three) going up (not returning) to God to Beth-el. Samuel told the son of Kish not only where he would go, but how many persons he would meet, and where. This is grounds of holy rejoicing for those weary of false prophets. Samuel told Saul where the three were going themselves; to Beth-el. Marvelous as all this is, Samuel yet wove more threads of wisdom into this coat of many colors. According to the judge, one of the three going up to Beth-el would be carrying three kids. This in itself seems a hefty load, but so it would be, for Samuel had divine authority to say so. The second would be carrying three loaves of bread. We can be sure Samuel was no Conditionalist. Otherwise he would have said that the fellow would be carrying three loaves of bread, *unless perchance*, he got hungry, gobbled up a portion on the way, before Saul reached him and deprived him the portion the Lord said was his. The third fellow of Samuel’s prophecy would be carrying a bottle of wine.

Reader, ask yourself, is all this, apart from the knowledge of God, beyond the capacity of man to foretell with such detail and accuracy or not?

There was more. “And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands (1 Samuel 10.4).” How can Samuel possibly know the disposition and liberality of these men? At the time of this incident the prospects of such liberality to a stranger were minimal. Yet, Samuel cites all this with the penetrating authority of one who knew exactly of what he spoke.

It must be acknowledged by all with common sense and a reasonable fear of God, the knowledge of Samuel

in these events was such that the Lord alone could surpass it in detail and accuracy.

6. “After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy (1 Samuel 10.5).” Surely Samuel believed it was “...not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10.23).” Here was no license to walk any uncertain way, but rather, a “thou *shalt* come” punctuated the prophecy of the old judge. Moreover, Samuel was cognizant of the position of the Philistine forces. This shows he had understanding of activities of both the enemies of God and the people of God equally. We can only conclude, those Philistine forces could have overturned the foundations of the world or snatched the sun from its orbit as soon as they could have relocated, thereby falsifying the word of Samuel to Saul relative to their whereabouts.

History vividly furnishes through the centuries the imperative nature of timing in the conduct of every activity. We need not elaborate. In this instance, Saul was to meet a company of prophets. If there was even a measure of truth in Conditionalism, these prophets might have failed to arrive on time. A bad night’s sleep could have roused them earlier than planned and thus the meeting would not occur. On the other hand, Saul, being a tall individual, might have traveled somewhat faster than Samuel anticipated, being long-legged, and arrived prior to the arrival of the company of prophets. Without predestination this would be a very real possibility, and, try as they may, Conditionalists cannot deny it. Such is a sample of the fruit of all conjectures where predestination is discounted.

“...with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them.” The details with which Samuel outlines Saul’s immediate future are amazing. There could be no deviation; Saul would encounter these things; no more, and no less! When we consider this is the pattern of the entire Bible, the predestination of all events can be our only conclusion. And why not? Nothing more exalts God than the doctrine of His absolute Sovereignty.

7. “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man (1 Samuel 10.6).” Harken,

brethren! We have entered a new dimension. Thus far Samuel prophesied of matters concerning men. Here, however, he conveyed to Saul intelligence about heaven itself. Samuel could not possibly relate this matter unless the wisdom and knowledge of God had been settled prior to Samuel foretelling it. As we develop these verses it becomes more and more apparent, all Samuel had told Saul was based upon concrete intelligence; the sure knowledge of things to come based on the eternal decrees. Can it be otherwise?

8. "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee (1 Samuel 10.7)." To a casual reader, this verse might appear to present considerable latitude for Saul in the form of free will. In context, however, and with the magnitude of the person of God considered, no such latitude exists. Even the possibility vanishes as a vapor in a gale.

That these dramatic signs would come upon Saul, none may deny, unless they believe Samuel orated absent of God's authority. As for the expression "let it be," the simple motive with Samuel was obvious; he instructs Saul that opposition or objection to the will of God is useless. "Let it be, Saul." Struggle is useless! "Do as occasion serve thee" is similar. Saul is encouraged to simply remain passive. Saul will not serve the occasion; the occasion will serve Saul. Why? "For God is with thee." How then, could he do contrarily?

9. "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do (1 Samuel 10.8)." Should an ordinary individual attempt to divine the future, as did Samuel, they would at once be branded as an audacious fool or even worse. Either prescience or presumption must have driven the pronouncements of this verse.

Samuel could not possibly have known the events of the following seven days apart from divine direction. That is exactly what we believe led Samuel to recite all this intelligence to Saul. Could a humble believer in the Lamb of God see these statements and not conclude they emanated from an eternal plan and not the carnal planning of mortals?

"And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day (1 Samuel 10.9)." Stamp predestination across the whole scroll of Samuel's communications to Saul. No sooner had Samuel done speaking than the inspired word records "And it was so!" Heaven itself sanctioned the volume. This we have forevermore; Samuel spoke with authority for he knew of what he spoke. Lest someone cringe away from our conclusion and view it with suspicion, we once again emphasize the close of the verse. "And all those signs came to pass that day." What Samuel foretold and what came to pass were one and the same.

If the Lord may be pleased we shall compare the knowledge of Samuel as it related to Saul with the knowledge of God relating to the same in our next issue. Our ultimate purpose is to establish that the knowledge of God and the predestination of God embrace the same things and so are equal.

—Elder James F Poole
30233 Mallard Drive
Delmar MD 21875

NUTS FOR ARMINIANS TO CRACK

By Elder J. B. Hardy, Sr.
(1837-1913)

Number 6.

(Continued from the
May-June, 1998, issue of *The Remnant*)

202. Do we not have to live a spiritual life before we can hunger and thirst after spiritual things?

203. Does the seed sown prepare the ground, or does the seed have to fall into good ground in order to bring forth fruit? (Matthew 13:23)

204. Is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit a sovereign? If so, how can the sinner be a co-willer or co-worker in the work of regeneration?

205. If the carnal mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7), are not the works of the carnally minded the same?

206. Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit (Matthew 7:18), or must the tree first be made good?

207. If a corrupt tree can bring forth both evil and good fruit without being changed, how can we know a tree by its fruit? (Matthew 7:16)

208. Is heaven assured to man in consequence of the work of man or the work of Christ?

209. If Christ has done all that He can do and sinners are not saved, is Christ the Saviour of sinners?

210. Does a sinner's salvation depend upon his obedience to either law or gospel?

211. Will a sinner come to Christ while he is destitute of the love of God? (I John 5:40-42)

212. Is not every one that loveth born of God? (I John 4:7)

213. Is not God's love everlasting (Jeremiah 31:3), and is not His power equal to His love?

214. If it is God's will to save all men, is not His love and power equal to His will?

215. Did not God love us when we did not love Him? (I John 4:10)

216. Did not God love us when we were dead in sins, and did He not quicken us because of that love? (Ephesians 2:4,5)

217. Is not God's love to us the cause of our love to Him (I John 4:19)? If so, will He not cause every one to love Him that He loves?

218. If we love God because He first loved us, will the effect cease as long as the cause exists?

219. If whosoever is born of God cannot sin (I John 3:9), how can they apostatize and be finally lost; or can one apostatize without sinning?

220. Did not Jesus love us before He washed us from our sins in His own blood? (Revelation 1:5)

221. Is not redemption the fruit of God's love? (Isaiah 63:9)

222. Does not the word atone mean "at one"?

223. Is not He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified all of one? (Hebrews 2:11)

224. Will any be lost that are with Christ?

225. If God loved His people as He loved Christ, and He loved Christ before the foundation of the world (John 17:23,24), did He not love His people before the foundation of the world?

226. If God loved sinners when they were dead in sins, will His love ever cease toward those who refuse to repent and obey the gospel?

227. If the goodness of God leadeth to repentance (Romans 2:4), will not His goodness lead all to repentance that are embraced in His eternal love?

228. If God changes not (Malachi 3:6), did He not love every object in eternity that He loves now or ever will love?

229. Are we by the blood of Christ redeemed to God (Revelation 5:9), or just part of the way?

230. If all men are redeemed to God, how can any of them get away from Him if they are kept by His power? (I Peter 1:5)

231. If Christ died for all men and all men are not saved, did not Christ die in vain?

232. If Christ died for all men and rose for their justification, are not all justified?

233. If the justified are lost, who will be saved?

234. Will not all be saved that are justified? (Romans 5:9)

235. Did Christ give Himself for the world or for the church? (Ephesians 5:25)

236. Did Christ give Himself for the church to give it a chance for heaven, or that it should be holy? (Ephesians 5:27)

237. Did not Christ love the church before He gave Himself for it? (Ephesians 5:25)

238. Are not some persons greater sinners than others? If so, is not the greater sinner forgiven the most (Luke 7:41-47)? If so, is not the atonement personal?

239. If Christ did not know every man and every act of man, how could He atone for the sins of those who lived a thousand years after His death?

240. Was the atonement made for man before he believed, or is it made for him after he believes?

241. Did Christ die for the godly, or for the ungodly? (Romans 5:6)

242. Did not Christ redeem His people from all iniquity? (Titus 2:14)

243. If Christ has redeemed all men from all iniquity, for what does God send a man to hell?

244. Is a sinner sent to hell for the same sins for which Christ died?

(To be continued)

A PERSONAL NOTE ABOUT ELDER J. F. POOLE

Since there have been quite a few friends who have desired to know the circumstances of Elder James F. Poole, founder and former publisher of *The Remnant*, I will submit the following:

For some months Elder Poole realized his health was declining, even to the point that a transfer of responsibilities for this paper was made. Having suffered many things of many physicians, Elder Poole did not grow better but rather grew worse.

At the appointed time, his symptoms grew so severe that immediate attention was given. It was determined that there was a growth obstructing the common bile duct through which the pancreas, the gall bladder, and the liver drain. The blockage caused the gall bladder to swell to about four times its normal size. Surgery would have been performed at once except for a severe bout with pancreatitis that had resulted from invasive tests.

When the surgeons brought the forms to sign, they informed Elder Poole of the grave dangers involved with massive surgery for the blockage and the equally grave dangers of delay. It is usually assumed that a blockage of this type is always cancer. Elder Poole asked for a week to consider, since at the time he had no time to reflect, and he had neither spoken with his wife nor had he carried the burden before the Lord.

Through a series of events, the surgeons were made to reconsider their approach, and exploratory surgery was decided upon with the option for the more dramatic procedure if they thought it was necessary. After repeated biopsies throughout the surgery, it was determined there was no sign of cancer. Several needful procedures were performed along with the removal of the dead gall bladder.

Elder Poole is now recovering and hopes that he will return to near normal conditions. The Lord favored him with a renewed sense of His love and grace during the ordeal, once again proving that "All things work together for good to them that love God." As he is brought to mind, and as you are enabled, please continue to remember him in your petitions before the throne of grace.

—Editor

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Unless we are totally deceived, Brantley was not an outsider regarding the spiritual body of Christ. His comments in *The Tie That Binds* range through all the holy emotions of a child of God. He speaks of the sweetness and of the bitterness. He relates the highs and the lows. More than all else, however, he promulgated the predestination of all things by a holy God worthy of all praise and adoration. For these and other reasons we are thankful to publish his beautiful dissertation, *The Tie That Binds*.

We leave you, the reader, to determine if the sweet spirit of the Lamb of God is found in the pages of this little book. For us, it has been read through several times with mixtures of joy and sorrow. At times we read with tears flowing. At other times our voice was lifted up in praise to Him Who does all things well. May that be your lot as well.

—The Publishers

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A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

The following is an outline of principles the readers of *The Remnant* may expect to see maintained in this publication. Under no circumstances do the publishers or writers for *The Remnant* seek to delineate herein a standard of doctrine or views to be imposed upon the readers. Rather, we set these principles before the readers that they may know what general principles guide our efforts. All attempts at declaring articles of faith will be marred by prejudices and frailty, and ours are by no means any exception.

We believe these principles are, in the main, harmonious with the articles of faith published by predestinarian associations and churches of the old order of Baptists known as Primitive, Particular, or Old School Baptists the world over.

1—The eternal existence, sovereignty, immutability, omnipotence, and perfections of Jehovah God; He has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these sacred Three are One; Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

2—The Old and New Testaments in their original languages are the verbally inspired word of God, and they are the complete and only valid guide of faith and practice; the King James Version is the preferred English translation;

3—The will of the eternal God is the first cause of all causes;

4—The absolute predestination of all things;

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world began, and their eternal, vital union with Him; their number is fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished; their fall in their federal head Adam into spiritual death,

total depravity, and just condemnation; their utter inability to recover themselves from this fallen state;

6—The blood atonement and redemption by Jesus Christ are for the elect only, and are both efficacious and effectual in accomplishing the will and purpose of God to reconcile His people unto Himself;

7—The sovereign, irresistible, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the elect of God; the new birth is by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit without the use of any means;

8—The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone;

9—No works are good works other than those which God Himself has so designated; none of the works called good are left up to men to perform or not, at the creature's discretion; nor do the works of the creature, either before or after regeneration, result in merit accruing to his account in God's sight;

10—The peaceable fruits of righteousness are the certain result of God's working in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and His people will be found walking in paths of righteousness for His name's sake;

11—The separation of church and state;

12—The principles outlined in the Black Rock Address of 1832;

13—The bodily resurrection, first of Christ, and also that of all the dead;

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

15—The bliss of the redeemed and the torment of the wicked are both eternal and everlasting.