

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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**Predestination from
GENESIS TO REVELATION
No. 20: I KINGS
SOLOMON, THE THIRD KING IN
ISRAEL;
JEROBOAM, AND REHOBOAM,
THE FIRST KINGS OF A DIVIDED
ISRAEL**

“Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord (I Kings 12.23).”

IN keeping with our theme, the predestination of all things, we call the reader’s attention to the expression found in the text, *“for this thing is from me.”* With but a little examination it may be seen that *this thing* is in reference to the division of the twelve tribes of Israel into two distinct, antagonistic camps; the ten tribes of the North and the tribe of Judah, along with a portion of the tribe of Benjamin, to the South. After about 500 years of unity and solidarity, the spirit of division and strife rent asunder the families of this peculiar and chosen nation. Saul first served the tribes as king for 40 years followed by David for another 40 years. These periods were not without disagreement and lack of unity but not until

the reign of Solomon, David’s son, did the seeds of discord mature and grow a crop of hostile resentment between the tribes sufficient to engender a full disruption of relations.

Jeroboam, the king of the northern tribes, and Rehoboam, king in Judah, following the division, will be the principal subjects of additional articles, with Solomon, the predominate subject now. Solomon was a leading figure in Israel and was, in many ways, a type of Christ. He was more well known than his son, Rehoboam and His counterpart to the north, Jeroboam, although they were also directly involved in the division of the twelve tribes. After a review of Solomon, specific attention shall be given to the many, seeming incidental, details of the lives and conduct of these two contemporaneous kings, with the expression, *this thing is from me*, as our focal point. May God’s blessed sovereignty shine forth on our efforts as a consoling beacon from first to last. A guiding text throughout this study should be as follows: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1.11).”

The observant reader will easily notice that the purpose of God was visibly displayed in the raising up of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and, following that, of the 12 sons of Jacob as heads of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. Next came the deliverance of the twelve tribes into Egypt, there to sojourn for over four centuries. Following that period of Israel’s development came their exodus

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from Egypt, the forty years wandering in the wilderness, their crossing the Jordan into the land of promise and the parceling out the land to the tribes. After the death of Joshua came the advent of the Judges to rule over the populace and finally, God gave them a king in His displeasure, Saul of Kish, a Benjamite.

Saul is replaced by David, of the tribe of Judah. From thence the extent of God's embracing the descendants of Abraham was essentially focused on this one tribe. It would be through the tribe of Judah that God would preserve the visible kingdom until such time the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus of Nazareth, would come to His people. This is an element of profound significance! The focus of God

was thus limited, from the whole of the families of Israel, until one tribe only remained in His royal favor. Everything that transpired during the reigns of David, Solomon, Rehoboam, and even Jeroboam, was calculated by divine wisdom to converge our focus upon the sublime purpose of salvation in the King to come, Jesus our Lord, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. If we see only Solomon, Jeroboam or Rehoboam in these lines, we have missed the glory of the whole history, from first to last.

SOLOMON

Although Solomon was peculiarly unrivaled in all the history of Israel's kings, his ascent to power and supremacy was as much the appointment of God as was the ascent of those who came before. Saul, the first king, was selected immediately by the direction of God.

David, the second king, Solomon's father, was selected also by God to replace Saul, who had grievously disobeyed the Lord and thus squandered his royal position. From a natural perspective it may reasonably be said that Solomon was born to the robes of royalty and power. Viewing Solomon from the record of Scriptures, in all his qualifications and as king, it will be seen he was the product of God's eternal will.

Solomon was one of four sons of David to be born in Jerusalem by Bathsheba (see I Chronicles 3.5 where Bathsheba is called Bathshua and the other sons are named). Six other brothers were all born in Hebron and at least five of the six had different mothers. Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, was a heathen from the Hittite tribes, yet was by far the most beloved of the wives of David. Of the birth of Solomon it is recorded: "And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord love him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet: and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord (II Samuel 12.24, 25)."

Several noteworthy elements are at once manifest from this text. Beyond any delight this new born son brought David and the child's mother is the unavoidable fact *the Lord loved him*. This essential fact, combined with the history of this son of David and Bathsheba, at once tells us this child was an eternal darling of God; that is, God had chosen him

unto Himself before the world was formed, or the dust of the mountains had been raised. Poor Arminians and assorted other Conditionalists, with considerable loathing, acknowledge God was sufficiently wise to know what Solomon would do throughout his reign, but it is a source of considerable annoyance to them when it is suggested God wisely ordained the whole of the life of Solomon. If God loved Solomon *from the beginning* did God also know what Solomon would do as king? "Please do not go over this ground of God's foreknowledge again" the free-willer will lament and plea. We respond, why not? If what we say is the truth about the knowledge of God, then admit it. If what we say is not the truth, then expose it as any lover of truth would.

The fact is, it will be almost universally admitted, if only by a grunt or guttural "Yes, I suppose God knew it all." Is not then this fact established, whatever God knew about the life of Solomon (and all others, as well, for that matter) was as certain as God's infinite knowledge? Can we really worship a God of limited intellect? Properly, the engagement is not about what God has predestinated. It is respecting the wisdom of God! If God knows *all* from *all eternity*, then *all from eternity is sure*; no matter the avenue or channel that brings it to pass. This is either a foundational truth or it is a foundational lie. Which view do you prefer, reader? Is God omniscient or not? Or, is God deficient in knowledge? Where your sentiment goes here requires the honest and consistent Bible student to be either an ardent Arminian or a devoted Absoluter. Brethren, do not run to error due to prejudice. Example: did not Moses, by faith, choose to suffer with the despised people of God (the true Israel, who were no doubt, spoken of to him in a very prejudicial tone) rather than continue in the popular path?

As for this writer, it is preferable, far more delightful too, to stand resolutely alone, surrounded by a rancorous world of religion, and contend for the absolute omniscience and sovereignty of God, than to have a place among deluded millions who love and embrace a lie.

Returning now to II Samuel 12.24, 25, another unique expression is given us to behold. "And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord." Jedidiah means "divine darling" according to reliable sources of

word meanings. David would call his son, Solomon, meaning "peaceful" but the Lord directed Nathan to call him Jedidiah, *God's darling*. Whatever else may be said of Solomon, it is a truth indisputable that this unique man who served as king over Israel was retained in great affection by God.

The kingdom of Israel during the reign of Solomon expanded greatly. Peace abounded. Prosperity was beyond anything that might have been imagined. The king ruled absolutely and firmly, but with wisdom such as was never known before or after. Except for an aborted effort by Solomon's brother, Adonijah, to acquire the throne (I Kings 1.5ff), he was never rivaled. Zadoc the priest, along with Nathan the prophet and Benaiah, a warrior, stood with Solomon during this coup and afterwards served him faithfully, even to the extermination of many old foes of David, Solomon's father.

Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, bringing the powerful empire of Egypt into alliance with Israel. He ruled from the Red Sea to the Euphrates, thus fulfilling Jehovah's ancient prophecy to Abraham, recorded in Genesis 15.18. Jehovah bestowed upon Solomon understanding and wisdom so extensive that travelers came from afar (from the uttermost parts of the earth, Matthew 12.42) to marvel at this wise king. The construction of the private house of Solomon and the erection of the temple, in conjunction with other magnificent buildings, took at least 20 years to complete (I Kings 9.10). It seems everything Solomon did was carried out in a lavish scale. It is worth mention as well, all of this was accomplished before Solomon was forty years of age.

SOLOMON IN LATER YEARS

It is just here that Solomon's desires appear to take a strange turn. Seemingly, Solomon had all any man could desire. He had the blessed favor of God. He ruled an empire. Fame spread his name to the outermost regions. Untold wealth secured his every desire (I Kings 10.23). Yet for all this, Solomon was a lustful sinner! God raised him up, provided for him every instrument for the accomplishment of each purpose, but Solomon, despite all this, could not rise above his carnal passions. "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites (I Kings 11.1ff)."

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin (Nehemiah 13.26).”

Could anyone have dreamed this precipitous fall of so favored an individual?

At that time Solomon “...had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart (I Kings 11.3).” The question must be asked, why would any man on earth need, or want, much less acquire, 1000 fair ladies for his possession except for reasons of excessive vanity and worldly show? Especially troubling is the situation of Solomon, for wisdom was his paramount gift. Yet it was so; Solomon succumbed to carnal passions. Did God somehow select the wrong man for the leadership of Israel?

Remember, it was Jehovah that raised up Solomon, endowing him with an array of talents, at the same time securing his kingdom from the river to the seas. What then could have happened? Why would Solomon fail his God? And fail he did! A better question to ask might be, why would Solomon *not* fail God? Despite his lofty attainments and gifts, was Solomon more able to rise above sin than any other son of Adam? “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans 3.10).”

There can be no doubt Solomon turned from the holy commandments of God and went a whoring after strange gods. (Poor, self-infatuated man, who thinks he may stand firm in the day of trial apart from the grace of God.) Look upon Solomon; wise, rich, powerful, yet seeming helpless to follow the cunning enticements of many outlandish women. “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites (I Kings 11.4, 5ff).” This chronicle of Solomon’s wickedness is solemn indeed! Can it be imagined that after building the temple for the God of Israel he then built high places for the gods of the heathens, as Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of

Ammon? Not only for these leading heathen deities did Solomon erect places of worship. So did he for all his strange wives (Verse 8).

Here develops what many would consider a conflict in doctrines. There are those who feel certain Solomon’s deeds were not involved in, or restricted by, the wise purposes of God. “God did not have anything to do with Solomon’s terrible sins” we are informed. Though there are many Scriptures concerning the wise government of God, one shall be sufficient at this time for this feeble argument. “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).” All the vain attempts of devils or men cannot blunt the force of these plain and precious words.

Whatever end, or ends, there may be; whatever beginning, or beginnings, may prompt those ends, we may be sure God, God alone, has declared it or them. Solomon had a very good beginning. Few deny his beginning was eternally purposed. Then, why should we be fearful or reluctant to find comfort knowing the end of Solomon was equally purposed as was his beginning? Did God raise up Solomon or not? Read I Kings 3 concerning the prayer for wisdom by Solomon and see if God did not raise him up. Should it be a thing incredible that God had a purpose in this son of David and God would surely bring that purpose to pass?

That there was a judicious purpose in the failure of Solomon should not be doubted. This was by no means the only time God had dealt so with a powerful ruler. Consider: “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Romans 9.17, 18).” Behold the contrast. God *raised up* Pharaoh! By *raised up* we understand it to include the will of God for this ruler to be born, survive to maturity, gain authority, resist Moses and Aaron, and a multitude of other things for Jehovah to display His glory and power in overthrowing all the devices

in the heart of Pharaoh, including his implacability, and rout Pharaoh's mighty armies in the process. In short, the Potter formed the clay, then exercised His eternal will over it to accomplish His wise plan for the deliverance of Israel. If then God assumed the control of the heart of this wicked king to show forth His power, how much more would He do so in raising up Solomon?

Whenever predestination is proclaimed by the servants of God there always seems to be those, wiser than Solomon, at least in their opinion, who decry the thought that God could be anywhere near, or remotely involved with, the universe where the sin occurred, lest He be the "author of sin." We resist the temptation to take up that subject while saying, it is impossible to separate the wicked conduct of the lives of God's children from the righteous conduct of God's children. Did not David say, "My times are in thy hand"? Shall we then say he only meant the good times and not the evil? May the Lord deliver us from such foolishness! Moreover, Solomon himself said, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven (Ecclesiastes 3.1ff)." With such positive declarations from the Word of God, how dare any son of Adam question God had a wise purpose in *all* the events of the life of Solomon, including the folly of his later years? Has not God fully and positively declared, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isaiah 46.10)?" There can really be no question that God raised up Solomon to enlarge and secure His great nation, Israel, then, in His wise counsel, He brought Solomon's rule to a terminus at the appointed time, and finally, He divided his kingdom. The divided kingdom is exactly what is meant by the expression in our text, "*For this thing is from me!*"

To fortify the above conclusion, that *is* the way things took place. Did God lose control? Did Solomon fizzle out and ruin the purpose of God by frolicking with strange wives, paying homage to their strange gods? Worse yet, did God have to change courses when Solomon fell from his lofty status and debased himself and his nation? Certainly not! May we join with Paul, saying "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, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11.33-36)."

Surely no one approves Solomon's conduct, nor their own sinfulness for that matter, but it must be admitted that by whatever name you desire to call the process, Solomon's conduct fell within the scope of God's wise plan. God, who cannot err, and who rules in the affairs of heaven and earth, is infinitely above all the speculation and vain imaginations of mortals. Some, seeking to compromise the will of God with the notions of man, say God has both a secret and a revealed will. We disagree, but we have no serious quarrel with them so long as they do not deny God's will embraced all of Solomon's activities, good and bad. Others suggest God overruled or suffered these things to come to pass. Even so, if that be the case, surely He *willed* to suffer or overrule. It is unthinkable that matters simply slid by God while He attended to better things. Many things were transpiring then (and so today) that were all components in shaping the outcome of the will of God for Israel in general and His elect in particular. As we shall see later, at the same time Solomon was coming into the arena of life, so too were those God would later raise up to be his foes. Forces were being forged into alliances. Opposition was building even while Solomon was growing in power. The very instruments Solomon used to bring power and fame to himself and Israel were the same instruments that drove a wedge in the twelve tribes; particularly the levies and the forced servitude employed in the building of the houses of Solomon, including the temple. Strange, that while God was blessing Solomon to gather the materials and bring to pass that which God had promised, his efforts were alienating his brethren.

An observant reader may well want to counter our views by saying that portion of our text we have emphasized, *for this thing is from me*, came as a result of Solomon's transgressions and for no other reason. That surely will not solve any problems for Arminians and will-worshippers, however.

Solomon's sins were only a part of the instruments employed in bringing to pass the division of the tribes. An example of this can be seen in Joseph and his brothers. They sinned against him (Genesis

37.18ff). It led to his exile in Egypt. His exile in Egypt then led to his ascension to the throne with Pharaoh, the king. In the time of famine (which God sent, not a quirk of nature) the brothers are delivered by Joseph.

Beings Arminians by nature, they believed their sin brought all this calamity upon their heads, not seeing the wise purposes of God as the ruling cause. But Joseph, wiser by far than they, being taught of God, says "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive (Genesis 50.20)." The brothers of Joseph *thought* one thing; God *meant* another!

This is exactly what is to be seen in the life of Solomon. What Solomon did was one thing. What God meant was another.

The tribes would be separated. Warfare and separation would continue until the end of the nation when God finally dispersed it. But the wondrous plan of God to preserve a family, and within that family a seed, until the birth of Jesus may be clearly seen from first to last. If the Lord enables, we hope to inquire further at another time.

In closing this article on predestination we include a brief comment from a dear and well-respected Old School Baptist minister from the past. He has said in a few words what most of us could only desire to be able to say:

"So, in regard to predestination, some who oppose that true and precious and solemn doctrine, will sometimes say, that if God purposed the wicked acts of men, then he himself does the wicked acts, and they will gravely profess to reply to us by saying that God does not work efficiently in the wicked to do evil, as he does in the righteous to do righteousness, as though we believed the contrary. Such arguments avoid the question, and create the issues to which they apply. And still they have to acknowledge that if God permitted a thing to be done, or even foreknew that it would be, and still created the world with that knowledge, then it was his purpose that it should take place. That truth a child can see, and the wisest man cannot evade it, and an angel cannot understand the full meaning of the glorious truth of God's absolute sovereignty in will and purpose and works. 'He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.' 'His judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.'"

Elder Silas Durand, *Fragments*; July, 1898.

What more could be said in regard to Solomon, David, or us today? Our God is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. Amen!

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THIS also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working (Isaiah 28.29).

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A BETTER COVENANT FOUNDED ON BETTER PROMISES

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament (Hebrews 7.22).

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Hebrews 8.6).

IN pursuing which is the better vineyard, either the God-given heritage belonging to the Lord's people or the one Ahab and the world offers to them in exchange for it, we are again pressed to examine the *better things* presented in the book of Hebrews. If there is one thing of which we may be certain, it is this, that there is nothing better than what the Lord has provided for His people in the blood atonement and the finished work of our God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The existence of any better object, and indeed the word *better* itself, always implies the existence of an inferior object by way of comparison. In the book of Hebrews we have set before us two covenants, one old and one new. The newer one, designated as the better covenant and associated with better promises, implies there was also an older, inferior covenant with inferior promises. The New Covenant is the covenant of grace; the Old Covenant is the legal or law covenant which God gave to Israel through Moses.

THE OLD COVENANT

First, we do not disparage the law covenant as it was given by the Lord to and through Moses. The Old Covenant was God-given, and it was indeed glorious. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ... For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.... And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished (2 Corinthians 3.7ff)."

The Old Covenant was not merely a list of dos and don'ts to be aped in the flesh. It was and is holy, just, good, and spiritual. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.... For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7.12, 14)." In the thick of his dismantling Conditionalism, Paul goes so far as to say, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law (Galatians 3.12)." The problem never was with the law. The problem is with the sinner. God has every right to demand of His creatures total, sinless compliance with every jot and tittle of His law. That we cannot comply with its terms does not at all diminish our God's prerogative to demand from His creatures an unswerving, undying perfection in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4.24).

The Old Covenant is based in the law that God gave to Moses in the Old Testament. It is inferior to the New Covenant in that (1) it is conditional and therefore breakable, and (2) it was made with the people of Israel who broke it ("which my covenant **they** brake," Jehovah said, in Jeremiah 31.32).

Those who have never seen the extent of their own depravity, their helplessness, their death in sin, and their frightful inability to perform the least of that which God requireth are quite content to stick their necks into the yoke of which the apostle Peter said, "...neither our fathers nor we were able to bear (Acts 15.10)." Currently they come in two varieties: (1) Those dead and cursed religionists who advocate the deeds of the law as a means of salvation and justification before God, whom we ordinarily refer to as Arminians, for that is what they are. (2) Then there are also those who profess to be Primitive Baptists while advocating the weird position that our *eternal* salvation is all of grace, but our salvation *in time* (what they call *time salvation*) is hard won only by our obedience and strict adherence to the Bible's laws, commandments, and "conditions." These we appropriately refer to as Conditionalists.

(Since "eternal salvation" *in our experience* begins in time, and "time salvation" is but the experience of eternal salvation, we will not further humor the Conditionalists by differentiating between their

so-called “salvations.” Paul refers to “so great salvation” in Hebrews 2.3, not “so great *salvations*.” There is only one salvation, and that, for time and eternity, is of the Lord.)

Regretfully, somewhat like approaching the unattractive chore of cleaning a stable, I must introduce this subject of Conditionalism. We cannot otherwise fully address the two covenants without also addressing the subject of the people who call themselves Primitive Baptists and yet champion the law-works justification system.

THE OLD COVENANT PROMISES

The Old Covenant was founded on the conditional “If you will, then I will” promises of God. It is external to the sinner’s heart, soul, and mind. It comes from the outside as restraining requirements the thrice-holy God places upon the sinner. As work-mongers expound their law-works system, its requirements are always presented as something we *must* do, *should* do, *ought* to do, and *can* do. We do not deny that the Scriptures use such language as should, ought, must, and can. We do vehemently deny that it is in the power of the sinner or the saint to do the least of these things without the Holy Spirit’s causing them to do them. In sharp contrast, there is no hint in either Conditionalism or Arminianism that **the sinner, who cannot meet God’s requirements, needs saving by an outside source.** This knowledge only comes by a direct revelation from God and is something He has not seen fit to reveal to the Arminian and the Conditionalist.

The promises under the New Covenant are better than the conditional promises God made under the Old Covenant. Since we often mention them but rarely produce them, now would be a good time to introduce some specific examples of the Old Covenant’s many commands and their associated conditional promises.

1. “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah 1.19f).”

The will-worshiper loves this one because, wrenched from its Old Testament setting, it leaves the door open for him to earn his salvation by the sweat of his brow. Note that there is no hope in this text for

the rebellious one mentioned therein. The only hope for a rebel sinner is salvation by grace under the New Covenant: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; **yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them** (Psalm 68.18).”

2. “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit (Leviticus 26.3-4).” Such Old Covenant promises the Arminian and the Conditionalist delight in, being fully persuaded that, whatever they have promised to God and to themselves, they are able also to perform.

3. “But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you (Leviticus 26.14ff).”

These negative promises are based on Israel’s falling short of the **ifs** found in this chapter in verses 3, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 27, and 40. Threats of anguish and torment in this world and the world to come are not sufficient to shake a modern work-monger loose from a hope in texts such as this.

4. “And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers... And **it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.** (Deuteronomy 6.18, 25).”

Do you really want righteousness by keeping the law? You may have it, IF, first, you do **all** of God’s commandments, including the ceremonial law, not merely selecting the commandments you like. Second, these commandments must be done **exactly** as He hath commanded Israel, and you may not cut any

corners. When you have done all (but not until then), exactly, you will have your very own righteousness. Its quality is described in Isaiah 64.6: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our **righteousnesses** are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away (Isaiah 64.6)."

Also, you may then confess you officially qualify as a genuine, unprofitable servant: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done **all** those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17.10)."

Paul described himself, as touching the righteousness which is in the law, as being "blameless." When he was given to reevaluate such fleshly glorying, he said, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do **count them but dung**"; hence, the earlier reference to cleaning stables. Paul continues, "that I may win Christ, and be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law**, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Philippians 3.6-9)." Such was his opinion, as is ours, of the worthlessness of a legalistic self-righteousness.

5. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known (Deuteronomy 11.26-28)."

Will-worshippers delight in such conditional promises (i.e., promises conditioned upon obedience to certain requirements) because they had rather go to the everlasting burnings in disobedience, doing so "of their own free will," than admit they cannot keep the least of God's commandments without His working in them to cause them to be obedient.

6. "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; then will the Lord drive out all

these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves (Deuteronomy 11.22f)."

Will-worshippers cannot stand the thought that their only hope is God's predestinated grace. They cannot admit their flesh profiteth nothing. Lip service to grace they will give, perhaps; but an utter condemning and abandoning of all their fleshly effort as filthy rags and dung, never!

7. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7.14)."

Such promises the Arminian and the Conditionalist revel in, not because God hereby gives an escape route for their sin-cursed nation, but because it gives them something else wherein they can glory in the flesh.

8. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deuteronomy 30.15-19)."

If Conditionalists could produce a few scriptural examples of men and women who earned salvation by perfectly keeping the law's requirements, it would be enough to encourage themselves to thus try to save themselves. But, alas! They cannot produce a one, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not (Ecclesiastes 7.20)."

The above eight examples are enough for now to show the type of Old Covenant texts the free-will mentality thrives upon. If you wish to see more of the Old Covenant commands, promises, curses, and language, sample Deuteronomy 28, especially noticing the parallel between the blessings of verses 2-9

and the curses of verses 15-32; but see also to the end of chapter 28.

TRUMPETING THEIR OWN ABILITY

Lest some reader think that we exaggerate the depths of free-willism to which a Conditionalist “Primitive Baptist” will plunge, we will now give some direct quotes from a typical article in a leading Conditionalist magazine. We withhold the names of the magazine and the article’s author in order to protect the guilty.

The article in question is on 1 Corinthians 10.13 and “resisting temptation.” Its author enumerates four (or more accurately, three and a half) sound principles *deduced*, as he puts it, from the text: (1) Temptations are common to man; (2) God is faithful; (3) God will not suffer us to be tempted above “our ability to turn against temptation”; and (4) God will make a way to escape from the temptation. So far, I can personally go along with these points he is making other than his introducing the unscriptural, free-willish phrase, “**our ability** to turn against temptation.” (Emphasis supplied.)

Next, he injects some poison he admits is “*deduced, in a manner of speaking.*” He says, “Now there is a fifth principle here that can be deduced, in a manner of speaking. And this fifth principle, if I may call it that [Editor’s note: Here even the author himself seems to question his own point], is that **it is up to us** to seek that escape route. **It is up to us** to find that way out that the Lord has promised He would provide for us. **It is up to us** to resist the temptation.” A bit later he says, “**We have to** be careful, wary of the wiles of the devil...**we must** be sober and vigilant to avoid the snares of the devil...**We must** be wary to always seek that escape route the Lord will provide us...**We must** humble ourselves...**We can** lean upon the Holy Bible...**We can** call to mind over and over...**we must** use this sword of the Spirit...The word of God has all the answers, provides all the escape routes, **but it is up to us to use them, to seek them out, to stand in righteousness.**” (Emphasis supplied—Editor)

As if the foregoing were not full enough of fleshly bloat, he continues: “Something else that may give you strength in the face of temptation is to remember that **you will be blessed for enduring temptation.**”

(Editor’s note: The article’s author does not once

indicate that God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit gives His children strength in the face of temptation or that He actually delivers them. This Conditionalist only expects to find strength in what he himself can do—in this case, by “remember[ing] that you will be blessed for enduring temptation.” This is not what the text says, and there is not a text in the Bible that says you will be blessed **for** anything you do. One may be **blessed to do** certain things, and blessed **in** the doing of them, but never do the Scriptures say one is blessed **for** doing anything.)

He goes on: “Read verse 12-15 of the first chapter of James to see how this servant of Christ’s [*sic*] has written about it. We will be blessed **for** enduring temptation, receiving the crown of life...”

We have read the text he commends to our reading, dear reader, and being “blessed **for** enduring temptation” is not what the text says. Would that the Conditionalist author and his companions in misrepresentation would show us where James said what he did not say! James does say in this chapter, “...But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed **in** his deed (verse 25).”

After telling us the manifest lie, “We will be blessed **for** enduring temptation, receiving the crown of life...,” he later writes, “And what I exhort you dear sisters and brethren to do is to [be]...ever praying that we should be spared from temptation!” But why would he have us pray to be spared from temptation, the very gateway (according to his doctrine) to blessings and the crown of life? Shall we pray to be spared from blessings? Shall we pray *not* to receive the crown of life?

Lest the reader think we do not believe in praying to be (not spared, but) delivered from temptation, we most assuredly do: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26.41).” Our motivation is a far cry from that of those whose flesh is strong in these matters.

The author also writes about the parable of the sower. He says of the stony ground, “...of the seed that fell on the rock, Jesus said they on the rock are those who receive the word with joy when they hear it – but they have no root and believe only for a while – because in time of temptation they fall away. As I

mentioned earlier, we all have times of temptation....”

The author implies that the stony ground is a picture of a child of God, but he stops short of saying the stony ground can **will itself** into being good ground. But he might as well tell us that as to think it of himself.

In examining the modern legalists, we can see they are not at all content to demand perfection by the law of Moses and be done with it. They must also warp and change, wrest and twist the Scriptures as suits their purposes.

We leave the Old Covenant and its promises for now, and the Conditionalists who dote upon them, so we can examine far better things, namely,

THE NEW COVENANT

The New Covenant is contained in the New Testament. It is superior to or better than the Old Covenant in that it is unbreakable, because God is the only party to it, and He says, “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips (Psalm 89.34).” It is unconditional because it is wholly of grace, requiring nothing of the sinner. It was made with Jesus Christ, the second Adam, who, as the Covenant Head of His people, eternally stood as their representative (Isaiah 49.8).

In contrast to the old “If you will, I will” promises, the New Covenant is founded on the unconditional “I will” and “they shall” promises of God. Such a gracious approach is new to the legalistic way of thinking and totally foreign to it. The New Covenant is internal, inside the sinner’s heart, soul, and mind, all of which are renewed, the work being effectually wrought in His people’s innermost parts by His infinitely powerful Holy Spirit. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [literally, *creation*]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5.17).” These new things include a new love for Christ and for God: “We love Him, because He first loved us (1 John 4.19).” From this gift of love, the first enumerated fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5.22, proceeds all else in the believer’s new life.

These new things also include a new attitude toward sin—it becomes disgusting to and hated by the child of grace. There is also a new attitude toward righteousness; God’s children hunger and thirst after

it. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matthew 5.6).” This hungering and thirsting after righteousness is not something either saint or sinner can do to obtain a blessing. Rather, this hungering and thirsting after righteousness is an evidence the sinner has been blessed of God to do so.

THE NEW IS THE ETERNAL COVENANT

Perhaps it will come as a surprise to some, but there is nothing new about this New Covenant other than its being revealed in the fullness of time. The New Covenant between God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the eternal covenant, which, being eternal, predates the creation itself and all within it.

Involved in the eternal covenant of the Godhead was the choice of a great multitude of sinners unto salvation, their names being “...written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Revelation 17.8).” And Jesus Christ, as their surety and covenant Head, was set forth eternally as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13.8).” “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1.18ff).” It is that covenant agreement established in and by the Godhead that at once embraces and overrides all other covenants.

NEW COVENANT PROMISES

The New Covenant also has promises from eternity. These promises did not “begin in eternity,” because they had no beginning. They are as eternal as God Himself, because He changes not. This in itself proves the promises, with their applications and results, to be predestinated. Nor are these gracious promises conditioned upon man’s reaction to God’s commands; that is the weak link of the Old Covenant. The heart of the New Covenant promises is found in Jeremiah 31.31-34, to which Paul alludes in Hebrews 8 and Hebrews 10.

One such eternal promise involves eternal life, of which God's saints stand in hope: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began (Titus 1.2)." This promise was not made to men, as such, other than as certain ones in the fallen race of Adam were represented by their covenant Head, the God-man mediator, the Christ, the second personage of the eternal Godhead. The promises were made to the eternal Christ, the Son of God. No man was there before the world began to receive any promise, whether of eternal life or of anything else. All the elect benefit freely from this eternal covenant, but they are neither parties to it nor participants in it.

This was strikingly illustrated in Genesis 15, where Abram was a witness to a demonstration of the eternal covenant between God the Father and God the Son. There, Abram was instructed to kill certain sacrificial animals and place their carved-up carcasses in two piles in a specified way (Genesis 15.9f). Abram, by doing this, did not buy his way into the covenant. His sacrifice only set the scene for what was to follow, which showed where his hope truly lay. That night, he saw God the Father manifested as a smoking furnace and God the Son as the light of the world, a burning lamp, pass between the two stacks of sacrificial meat. What is so significant about this event is that *only the parties in covenant passed between*, and Abram was not asked or told to do so. The eternal covenant by blood sacrifice, being enacted here, was between the Father and the Son, and not between God and Abram. Abram was there as a witness only. He was indeed a beneficiary of the covenant made by these divine Others, but he was not an actual party to it. He was a recipient of eternal, unconditional blessings purchased by God the Son for Abram and all his seed.

THE COVENANT IN HEBREWS

The Greek word *diatheke* occurs sixteen times in Hebrews; it is translated into our English Bible both as *covenant* ten times (Hebrews 8.6, 8, and twice in verse 9; 8.10, 9.4; 10.16, 29; 12.24 and 13.20) and *testament* six times (Hebrews 7.22; twice in 9.15; 9.16, 17, 20).

We may wonder why the translators jumped back and forth between these words, using *covenant* and

testament to translate the exact same word. *Diatheke* does carry the weight of both English words in it, as there is a common legal element in testaments and covenants.

Strong's concordance says the word comes from yet another expression meaning to "dispose (by assignment, compact or bequest)"; so we have in it the idea of disposing of property, assigning property, bequeathing property. Hence, in this word we have the idea of a person's "last will and testament," something Paul develops in chapter 9.15-18. It should be pointed out that this is the same word Jesus used when He instituted the Lord's Supper, saying, "For this is my blood of the new testament (*diatheke*), which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26.28)." It is also the word from which we derive Old and New *Testaments*. In a true sense, the New Testament is the record of the last will and testament of a dying man, the Lord Jesus Christ, and what He left to His heirs.

Strong also says of *diatheke*, "a disposition, i.e. (spec.) a contract (espec. a devisory will)," but it is this, a *last will and testament* viewed as a *contract*, which brings out the *covenant* aspect of this word. "Devisory will"? A *devisor* is "one who devises property in a will" and *to devise* is "to give (real estate) by will" (Webster). Any way we look at it, the result is the same. A dying man's will and testament, then, may be thought of as a legal covenant agreement between himself, his heirs, the court system, judges and attorneys as representatives of the law of the land, and anyone else who may either legally have an interest or otherwise be involved.

To some sinners, out of sheer mercy, God shows and demonstrates their weakness to them ten thousand ways and times, and by His irresistible grace He forces them to flee to their prearranged refuge in Christ. They do so willingly, because God has *made* them willing (Psalm 110.3). Do you think for a second that such a poor sinner who has "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" will *not* sing God's praises in unending eternity?

Other sinners He sovereignly and justly blinds to their own weaknesses, even giving them little encouragements and false victories along the way, letting them think they are pleasing God no end. "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes

to see, and ears to hear, unto this day (Deuteronomy 29.4).” They are entrenched forever in the habitual, reprobate-oriented, super-smug, self-satisfied mind of free-willism, thinking they can do anything and everything God requires of them, if they “just *will* to do so.” Nor am I referring to licentious, riotous living and the indulging of every foul lust of the flesh. No, I am speaking of the self-righteous religionist who “think[s] that he doeth God service,” even to the killing of the Lord’s people (John 16.2).

In Hebrews 9.15 (“...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”), “might” does not mean they which are called *might* receive the promise of eternal inheritance or they *might not*. In Jesus all the promises of God are yea and amen, not “yea and nay” (yes and no, or maybe). “For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us (2 Corinthians 1.19f).”

What exactly, then, is this “new” covenant? Both the Old Mosaical Covenant and the New Covenant of grace are identified in Jeremiah 31.31-34: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt [i.e., the Old Covenant]; which *my* covenant *they* brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the [new] covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I **will** put my law **in** their inward parts, and write it **in** their hearts; and **will** be their God, and they **shall** be my people. And they **shall** teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they **shall** all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I **will** forgive their iniquity, and I **will** remember their sin no more.” We hope to mean by a “new” or “everlasting covenant” exactly this, what God meant by it.

THE BETTER PROMISES

The better promises of the New Covenant are better because:

1. The promises are rooted in the electing love and grace of God the Father toward His elect: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1.3ff).”

2. The promises are procured by the blood of God the Son for His elect: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence (Ephesians 1.7f)”

3. The promises are applied and effectuated by God the Holy Spirit in the lives of all whom the Father chose and the Son redeemed: “in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1.13f).”

4. In the New Covenant there are no ifs, contingencies, or conditions for man to dally with. There are only the absolute shalls and wills of Jehovah. There is nothing for man to break: In both the Old Testament and the New, the riches of His grace abound with promises such as these: “And **I will** make an everlasting covenant with them, that **I will not** turn away from them, to do them good; but **I will** put my fear in their hearts, that **they shall not** depart from me (Jeremiah 32.40).” From this standpoint, there is not a richer text in the Bible than 2 Corinthians 9.8: “And **God is able** to make *all* grace *abound* toward you; that ye, *always* having *all* *sufficiency* in *all* *things*, may *abound* to *every* good work.” In the face of such gracious, unconditional promises, to say the Lord leaves our works “up to us” demonstrates a complete, woeful ignorance of what grace and salvation are.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood* of **the everlasting covenant**, make you perfect in every good work to do his

will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13.20f).”

Our Lord Jesus is represented as the Good shepherd, the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13.20f), and the Chief Shepherd. As the Good Shepherd He giveth His life for the sheep (John 10.14f). As the Chief Shepherd He superintends His undershepherds, the Elders among His people (1 Peter 5.1-4). As the Great Shepherd, He makes His people perfect, in every good work, to do His will, working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight. Actually, as the text says, it is “the God of peace” who does this, doing it through Jesus Christ and through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Talk of “means and instrumentality”? The blood of the everlasting covenant is *the* means and instrumentality whereby He does this. Nothing less will do. For that reason the glory is to Him, not to His people, and not to man, but unto God in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.

— Elder C. C. Morris

SELECT WORKS OF ELDER SAMUEL TROTT

A NEW 488 PAGE BOOK FROM
WELSH TRACT PUBLICATIONS.

WE remind our readers of *Welsh Tract Publication's* recent release of this new book. Elder Samuel Trott's writings deserve our attention because of his remarkable insights into the teachings of the Word of God. He was blessed to proclaim the truth boldly from the stand and in print, often in the face of fierce opposition.

Many Primitive Baptists who rejoice in that great document, *The Black Rock Address of 1832*, are unaware that Elder Samuel Trott, who was then the pastor of Welsh Tract Church, was its chief author and the primary mover in bringing about the Black Rock meeting.

No Elder of his era wielded more influence among the churches than did Elder Trott. History bears record that, by the grace of God, he was an uncom-

promising champion of truth. Even when it was to his own detriment, he did not yield to the forces of compromise, but stood nearly alone defending the truth during those days of controversy which assaulted the Old Baptist faith and order.

Now, we may again hear him telling the same sweet story and defending the same precious truths that have delighted God's saints in every age. This book contains 65 of his articles setting forth the eternal, unchanging God as sovereign, and man as a helpless beggar. Some of his included articles are:

- The Absolute predestination of all things.
- Further remarks on predestination.
- My thoughts on Justification.
- Missionary Priestcraft.
- Origin of Satan.
- Duty-faith and repentance.
- Three-Oneness of God.
- On the sonship of Christ.
- Objections to Benedict's *History of the Baptists*.
- Communion with God.
- Laborers together with God.
- Sovereign Grace and Good Works.
- Christian experience.
- The Word made flesh.
- Son of God and Godhead.
- The sin against the Holy Ghost.
- Difference between the Spirit of God and the Grace of God
- What are the Conditions of Salvation?
- On the Atonement.
- Prayer of the unregenerate

In addition, there are articles by Elder Trott on Genesis 4.23-24 and 6.1-2; Exodus 10.1, Isaiah 51.1, Romans 8.28, 1 Corinthians 7.39 and 14.34f; Ephesians 1.3, Philippians 3.10-11 and 21; Colossians 1.12, James 5.14-15, 1 John 5.6-8, and other texts.

The *Select Works of Elder Samuel Trott* is now available for shipment. As with all the books Welsh Tract Publications has manufactured, only the finest materials available were used. The cover is F grade Library Buckram and stamped with gold foil. Each book is individually shrink wrapped for protection until opened. We encourage our readers who have been planning to order this book to do so now. Please see page 19 for ordering instructions.

ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Policy Statement

FROM the time of this paper's inception, *The Remnant's* policy has generally been to print any associational or church meeting notices without question, so long as the associations and churches considered themselves to be Predestinarians. This policy has worked quite well in times past. We have not printed such notices recently, but we are willing to continue to do so if we have the notices in time and have the space available to publish them.

Our periodical was originally begun as a Predestinarian paper primarily for those the Lord has led to love this blessed truth, regardless of how they have been led in other matters of doctrine or practice. We often get inquiries from our widely scattered readers who are seeking and searching for Absolute Predestinarian meetings. Publishing these meeting notices can be of great help and consolation to these brethren and sisters.

Accordingly, we will not knowingly publicize meetings other than those that are Absolute Predestinarian in doctrine. As we cannot possibly know all the details of what is preached in all churches and associations, we cannot be responsible for whatever variations in doctrine or practice our readers may encounter. We do reserve the right to refuse to publish notices of organizations that are not in general harmony with Old School Baptist principles.

If, in accord with these terms, your church or association wishes to announce your meeting time and place, please send your notice to us as early as possible. Three or four months is definitely not too early to suit us, but one day past our publication deadline will be too late.

When sending your notice information, please include the name of the host church or association, the date and time of the meeting(s), the directions to the meeting place, the name and telephone number of a contact person or persons, and any other pertinent information, such as your e-mail address if there is one available. Please send all notices to:

**THE REMNANT PUBLICATIONS
P. O. BOX 1004
HAWKINS TX 75765-1004**

THAT WHICH WAS LOST

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19.10).

UNTOLD thousands of men and women, old and young, of every conceivable belief about God, religion, and salvation flock to the Internet day and night to debate their creeds with whomever they can. Unless you have been there to see these exchanges, you could scarcely believe how many countless millions of words are exchanged each day on Bible doctrine and related matters.

High among the subjects being argued are divine election, the limited atonement, predestination, and irresistible grace.

Heated exchanges appear on computer screens all over the earth, not as complete and well-rounded treatises, but more as quick, almost conversational notes between the combatants. One such note out of the middle of a typical exchange is the following comment on Luke 19.10. It is obviously from one who believes that Jesus Christ came to *try* to save all of the Adamic race. It reads as follows:

Calvinistically speaking, it would be more precise if not more accurate to say that "The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost *elect*." G.B.

Only one whose chief preoccupation is helping hunch his god along would have the effrontery to suggest how Jesus might have improved His communication skills. Mr. B. would have no problem with this Bible doctrine if he were given to see that "the lost" are indeed the same as the elect.

One who had followed Jesus Christ for awhile even from afar would doubtless have noted how He often figuratively referred to men as different kinds of animals—e.g., dogs (Matthew 7.6, Philippians 3.2, Revelation 22.15), swine (Matthew 7.6, 2 Peter 2.22), sheep, and goats (Matthew 25.32-33).

Not without reason, Christ called His people **sheep**. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for **the sheep** (John 10.11)." "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for **the sheep**. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall

be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10.15f).” “**My people hath been lost sheep:** their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains...(Jeremiah 50.6).” It is a fact that sheep do get lost. It is another fact that **dogs, swine, and goats** do *not* get lost. Jesus therefore did not come to seek or to save them.

There are, then, these dogs and swine to consider, of whom Jesus said: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you (Matthew 7.6).” Since G.B. feels capable of advising Jesus on how He might improve His wording, he might yet advise us, in disregard of Jesus’ command, to give that which is holy to the dogs and to cast our pearls before swine. Why would he do so? Probably in the hope that all the animals in the barnyard will eventually become sheep.

Mr. B. obviously believes in spiritual evolution—that is, he believes a dog, a hog, or a goat can somehow (doubtless by an act of their own free will) evolve into a sheep.

It should go without saying, but we say it anyway: We don’t.

CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Joshua 24.15).”

IS it not amazing that those of the free will persuasion, who would rarely look at the Old Testament otherwise, will run to it and frantically dredge about to find a text, any text, that might prove that it is up to man to choose God? Then, when they have settled on Joshua 24.15, they gleefully flaunt it as the perfect, unanswerable rebuttal to anyone who proclaims God’s sovereign election.

As usual, proponents of the free choice system dare not quote the entire text. Many who refer to it do not even know where to find it. As a rule, about all they can tell us is, “Choose you this day whom ye

will serve,” leaving the impression Joshua told the children of Israel to “Choose whatever God you want to serve, either Jehovah or some other god. It’s up to you to decide.” Of course, Joshua neither said nor implied any such thing. Let’s look at exactly what he did say on this occasion—and what he said certainly was not confined to verse 15.

Consider the ten words, “**If** it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord...” *If* is one of the biggest words in the Bible. The *if* in this verse separates all those whom Joshua addressed into two distinct groups. Before proceeding further, in order to make the situation as clear as a cloudless sky, the reader might answer this question aloud with either a “Yes” or a “No”: **Does it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord?**

If your answer is “**No**, it does **not** seem evil unto me to serve the Lord,” then what Joshua said about “choosing” *does not* apply to you. It is as simple as that. Read on to find out why.

If, however, you answered “**Yes**, it **does** seem evil unto me to serve the Lord,” then what Joshua said about “choosing” *does* apply to you.

They to whom it seems evil to serve the Lord are told to choose which **false god** they will serve. It is not a choice between serving the living and true God or serving false gods. It is a choice between false gods only. As for idolaters, Joshua is saying, which false god an idolater worships really does not make that much of a difference. Joshua sets before those to whom it would seem evil to serve the Lord this choice and this alone:

1. The gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood; or
2. The gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.

For clarity’s sake we should also address the question, to what flood does Joshua here refer? On the other side of *what* flood?

There are few floods that could be meant, as most of this relatively young nation’s past had been confined to servitude in Egypt and to wandering in a barren wilderness, neither of which was associated with a flood. The waters Israel had encountered that could be called a “flood” were: The Jordan River, which they had recently crossed (Joshua 3); the Red Sea, which Israel crossed under the leadership of Moses (Exodus 14); the flood of Noah (Genesis 7-8); or perhaps, in their father Abraham, when

he left Ur of the Chaldees, in his crossing the Euphrates River.

Usually, the context of a verse—that which precedes and follows it—will answer such questions. A verse should never be considered out of its context, a truth to which the will-worshipers might well give heed, the more especially in this verse's case.

Remember what Joshua said in our text: *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord...* Notice, the verse begins with “**And...**,” which shows that he had already said something else before this verse. No proposition begins with “and.” The “and” harks back to what precedes it. Joshua's complete statement begins in verse 2 of this chapter: “And [this “and” also shows a continuation of what precedes verse 2] Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.”

This narrows our search for what flood and what gods Joshua means in verse 15, our text. It was not the flood of Noah (Genesis 7-8), which was before Terah (Genesis 11.24-32).

God mentions the crossing of the Red Sea in verses 6-7 of this chapter (Joshua 24), but He does not call the Red Sea a “flood.”

The flood must be one of the two rivers, then, either the Jordan or the Euphrates.

According to Strong's concordance, the Hebrew word *nahar*, here rendered as “flood,” occurs 109 times in the Old Testament. It is translated *river* in all but seven places, four of which are in this chapter (verses 2, 3, 14, and 15). This is probably because the Jordan was indeed out of its banks when Israel crossed it: “And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (**for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,**) that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap (Joshua 3.15f).”

There is nothing in the word *nahar*, however, which indicates it must always mean a river flooding out of its banks. Usually, it is merely a *river*. This common use is first found in Genesis 2.10-14: “And a river (*nahar*) went out of Eden to water the

garden...And the name of the second river (*nahar*) is Gihon...And the name of the third river (*nahar*) is Hiddekel...And the fourth river (*nahar*) is Euphrates.”

To further eliminate “Jordan”: This name Jordan is found 197 times in the Bible (per Strong). Even though the Jordan is surely a river, you probably know that neither term, “Jordan River” nor “River Jordan,” ever occurs in the Bible. The Jordan is actually called a river only once in the entire Bible (and it is not in Joshua). Therefore, Jordan is probably not the *nahar* for which we seek.

It is the fourth *nahar* in Genesis 2, the Euphrates, that seems to be under consideration in Joshua 24. Verse 2 would indicate this is what Joshua meant: “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (*nahar*) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” Terah, Abraham, and their family were idolaters, Joshua says. In Ur of the Chaldees,

The two main Temples were those of the Moon-God, Nannar, and the Moon-Goddess, Nigal...deities Abraham's father worshiped. (Halley's *Bible Handbook*, 24th edition, page 89).

What about “the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell”? The Amorites worshiped Baal and Ashtoreth:

Baal was their principal god; Ashtoreth, Baal's wife, their principal goddess. She was the personification of the reproductive principle in nature. Ishtar was her Babylonian name; Astarte her Greek and Roman name. Baalim, the plural of baal, were images of Baal. Ashtaroth, the plural of Ashtoreth...Priestesses were temple prostitutes. Sodomites were male temple prostitutes...their temples were centers of vice....

In excavations at Gezer, Macalister, of the Palestine Exploration Fund (1904-09), found in the Canaanite stratum, which had preceded Israelite occupation, about 1500 B.C., the ruins of a ‘High Place,’ which had been a temple in which they worshiped their god Baal and their goddess Ashtoreth (Astarte).

It was an enclosure 150 by 120 feet, surrounded by a wall, open to the sky, where the inhabitants held their religious festivals. Within the walls were 10 rude stone pillars, 5 to 11 feet high, before which the sacrifices were offered.

Under the debris, in this "High Place," Macalister found great numbers of [clay] jars containing the remains of children who had been sacrificed to Baal. The whole area proved to be a cemetery for new-born babes. (Halley, page 166)

If possible, it gets worse:

Another horrible practice was that they called "foundation sacrifices." When a house was to be built, a child would be sacrificed and its body built into the wall, to bring good luck to the rest of the family. Many of these were found in Gezer. They have been found also at Megiddo, Jericho....

...Macalister found enormous quantities of images and plaques of Ashtoreth with rudely exaggerated sex organs, designed to foster sensual feelings.

So, Canaanites worshiped, by immoral indulgence, as a religious rite, in the presence of their gods; and then, by murdering their first-born children, as a sacrifice to these same gods.

It seems that, in large measure, the land of Canaan had become a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah on a national scale. (Halley, page 166f)

The conclusion is that "the flood" or river to which Joshua alludes is the Euphrates, and the gods under consideration "on the other side of the flood" were those of Terah and his family while they were yet in Ur of the Chaldees, the false gods Nannar and Nigal.

Certainly, no one needs to know all of this background material in order to see that Joshua was *not* telling anyone that they should "choose to serve the Lord." We have perhaps gone to extra lengths to make as clear as possible exactly what Joshua told the people of Israel on that day, and why: *It does not really matter whether idolaters worship Nannar and Nigal on the one hand or Baal and Ashtoreth on*

the other. There is no "second best" as far as our God is concerned.

Joshua's personal statement was, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." There was no hint of his saying, "You can worship and serve the Lord also, if you only will," or the like. He did not even remotely suggest to the Israelites that they could be more like himself and serve the Lord, "if they just would." In fact, the opposite is true. When the people answered him, saying, "...we also [will] serve the Lord; for he is our God," Joshua replied, "Ye **cannot** serve the Lord: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (verse 19)." Joshua denies that man has any natural ability whatsoever to serve God. Our depravity is twofold; we **cannot** come to the Lord and we **will not** come to Him. As Joshua set these truths before Israel in his day, so Jesus Christ did in His day: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, **ye cannot** come (John 8.21)." "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, **ye cannot** come; so now I say to you (John 13.33)." "And **ye will not** come to me, that ye might have life (John 5.40)."

When the Israelites insisted, "Oh, yes, we will," Joshua insisted with equal vigor that they would not. Joshua was right, and the will-worshippers were wrong, as their subsequent history in the book of Judges proved.

Human nature has not changed. Modern-day religionists still think they have the innate ability to serve the Lord God or not to serve Him, as they choose, and thus they read into Joshua 24.15 a non-existent choice, a figment of the carnal imagination, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Genesis 8.21)."

—C. C. M.

KNOW ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100.3).

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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 condemna-

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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;

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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.