

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. 23 2 KINGS

NAAMAN THE LEPER Part Two

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper (2 Kings 5.1).

FROM this verse and the seven verses following, the path of each person involved, directly or indirectly, displays the relationship each occupied in the final recovery of Naaman the Leper. These persons were: Naaman; his wife; a little maid taken captive from Samaria; an unnamed mediator; the king of Syria; the king of Samaria (Israel), and, finally, Elisha and his servant.

Since the prominent theme of these articles is the absolute predestination of all things, we have frequently attempted to demonstrate that (and how) each individual fit their appointed place. The absurdity of suggesting all these persons and events blended together by chance is clearly manifest. So perfectly does each link in the chain meld itself with the other it would seem that only the blind could not see the divine pattern.

Readers shall decide for themselves if predestination or chance accomplished the recovery of Naaman. Their decision, however, shall not change the eternal purposes of God.

The story continues

“So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha (Verse 9).” The long, weary journey from Syria was over but the boldest steps were yet to come. It must be remembered, Naaman had just been at the court of the king of Israel. There he witnessed the hissy fit Jehoram pitched because Ben-hadad, king of Syria, had sent Naaman to him. To Jehoram it was nothing less than a bizarre challenge for Ben-hadad to send Naaman there for a recovery of his leprosy. Based on what everyone knew about leprosy it would seem that Jehoram acted much like most anyone else would, excepting that a king should exemplify more rational conduct. Surely, all flesh is grass.

Naaman was a man who had experienced much. He was an impressive leader and a figure of considerable importance. Yet, for all this, he was stricken! Leprosy, like an insidious intruder, had marred his flesh and thus his life. After his hopeful journey he is confronted by the rude outburst of the king of Samaria, probably altering his disposition somewhat. He had, no doubt, bathed his sword in the blood of lesser men for such abuse. That with which he was confronted in the court of Jehoram might well have tempted his to a similar response. Yet he remained calm, at least outwardly. The Scriptures record noth-

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ing of his demeanor while in the presence of Jehoram. Naaman had not come this distance to simply inflict a deadly wound on this ranting king, much as he may have felt it was deserved. Naaman did not turn away just yet. It seems he awaited other developments, and they were not long coming.

"And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel (verse 8)." We dare not speculate on matters, but from other incidents of similar circumstances the kings, evil and untrusting, usually kept a close eye on the prophets and the prophets always knew what transpired in the king's court.

"Let him come *now* to me." Human endeavor had run its course; now it was time for a display of God's will and power.

Naaman, like one caught in the middle, had bided his time while kings exposed themselves for the fools they were. Was it curiosity that kept Naaman there? Was it a fleeting hope? Whatever it was, Naaman *must stand before the prophet in Israel*. The plan of God had not unraveled. All was going along apace at the direction of divine purpose.

Remember, this incident carried such significance that our Lord made direct reference to it (Luke 4.27), even reciting the name of *Naaman the Syrian*.

"So Naaman came." The words are simple, yet profound. All the events and seemingly trivial turns that brought the great soldier directly to the door of the prophet of God were all ordained of the Lord. Naaman's journey appears to have climaxed and from nature's viewpoint so it did. It was, however, just the beginning of an entirely new journey. Now in the company of Elisha, the servant of Jehovah, Naaman was a babe in the womb of divine providence. Travail and sorrow would soon ensue, emanating in the spiritual awakening of the leper of Syria.

"So Naaman came." No sooner had he come than he heard the words, not of Elisha, but of a lowly servant, saying, "go."

That which followed could not have been the way Naaman had planned the affair to develop, as we shall presently see.

Just here it seems good to examine the validity of our theme, absolute predestination as it regards our subject. There can be no doubt with the true believer, only the hand of God was sufficient to have brought events to issue so far as they had come. Those who differ would do all a great favor by revealing what portion of events God could have left alone to come into being by chance.

For many centuries the saints of the Living God have derived comfort and strength when seeing the unfolding events of time as so many landmarks through the eternally predestinated plan of God to bring to pass His will. It matters not if a small breeze of wind bends a blade of grass or the mighty upheaval of an erupting volcano rains death and destruction all about. God reigns! God reigns over all, and that with an exacting plan called predestination. From the first to the last event recorded in the Bible, remove predestination and there is nothing left but blind fate and the vagaries of chance. Remove one spoke from the wheels of time and the axle of progress grinds to a halt. God would be thus frustrated. Perish the thought!

Naaman surveyed a situation far different than he had supposed would occur. He had endured the rage of the king of Samaria. Next, he and his entourage arrived at the home of a surly (from all appearances) old prophet who would not even show him the simple courtesy of trudging to the door. Rather than a "Welcome, stranger," Elisha's messenger was sent out to the awaiting caravan. The lowly servant summarily dismissed them with, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." What is this? Had Naaman come this great distance to hear such nonsense? Blessed be the Name of the Lord; things were not as they seemed. This was but another step in the journey to light and truth in the Lord's great plan. But for the moment Naaman is blind to its glory and wonder.

The unhumbled Arminian and assorted other free willers would seize upon this situation as an undisputed crossroad for Naaman in the whole scheme of things divine. "Naaman had a choice to make," say they. "Naaman might just as well go one way as the other." "God won't force the leper to wash contrary to his will." "Naaman is no robot. He is no puppet on a string."

Can you not see the workmongers appealing to Naaman? "God did all he could and now it is UP TO YOU!" "Hell awaits the tarriers." On and on they would bleat like goats bloated on garbage. Dear reader, despite any perceived outbursts of Arminians this story would continue to progress *exactly* as it was determined from eternity. The whole disposing was of the Lord.

"Go and wash." No doubt the word *go* was a severe wound to Naaman's ego. *Go* and *wash* could only inflame the wound. That this was nothing like what Naaman expected to hear. Now came the salt for the wound. "Go and wash in Jordan." National pride was vexed as well. *Go*? *Wash*? *Jordan*? How can these things be? Could it be that the Lord had put more on this sinner than he could bear? Pride humbled is not easily recovered and Naaman seemed to be bombarded with stroke upon severe stroke, sufficient to crush his tried spirit.

The deepest wound was yet to come. "Go and wash in Jordan *seven times*." Naaman was totally ignorant of the importance of numerics to the Hebrews. Seven times did not signify that Naaman was seven times filthier than the ordinary leper. Seven meant completeness or perfection and seven dips in Jordan were no more vital to cleanse Naaman than one, except for one thing: *This was the word from the Lord*. Our Lord left out nothing when He directed Elisha to inform the Syrian general the manner of his cure. God told him *what* to do. He told him *where* to do it. He told him *how* to do it. He told him how many times to do it. Finally, He told him what he could expect from his obedience to the word of the Lord; "and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." None but fools, whose minds were inflamed with hatred for God's sovereignty, could ignore the evident; the Lord God almighty was ruling.

The First Departure

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, *Behold, I thought*, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper (2 Kings 5.11)." If ever there was an example in the Bible of a sinner in the state of rebellion, Naaman is it. Naaman was *wroth!* To the

Syrian general the whole trip had gone sour and was a waste of time. His pride was wounded. Sufficient respect had not been shown him. No doubt the leper's wounded spirit could uncoil at any moment, and he could vent his rage on almost anyone. But God yet superintended with each turn of events as He had at the beginning. The lion leper of Syria would soon lie down with the lambs, but in God's good time.

"And [Naaman] went away." O how resentful is the unhumbled sinner. Left to himself, even for a moment, he will flee the presence of truth and "run as far as sheep can run." Before his departure is aborted Naaman speaks, probably from anger and frustration, "*Behold, I thought!*" It is clear from what we have seen that Naaman had *thought out* how things would go. He had a *plan* all laid out in his brilliant mind and then, to his dismay, it is nothing more than a whiff of smoke disappearing before his eyes. Naaman, a living being of God's creation, was motivated by a *plan*. "I thought!" Arminians are fully deceived that man governs himself by a personal plan, to be executed to the full extent of his capability, at a whim. As for God, Arminians consider any plan He might have would be a violation of man's free will. Let them wallow in their ignorance. The Old Order of Baptists have been spiritually taught God has a plan, worthy of Himself, and He also has the capacity to execute His plan without any interference or assistance. Naaman, at that moment, was controlled by his "*Behold, I thought!*" Naaman reacted much like a creature whose plans have been shattered by others, without his agreement or consent. How true the text, "Verily, every man at his best estate is altogether vanity (Psalm 39.5)."

Naaman's assumption that the old prophet would come out to him was in keeping with his perceived importance of his (Naaman's) station in life. Surely, generals commanded more respect than soothsayers. Naaman even ventured the thought that the old prophet would call on the name of *his* God, whom-ever he may be. Observe, Naaman says *his* God, meaning not Naaman's god, but the prophet's. If Naaman even placed any value on gods in general at that time is open to question.

A difficulty of considerable proportions arises here. "Was Naaman spiritually quickened at that time and being brought through the process of God's plan to the truth?" Or, "Was Naaman yet dead in

trespass and sin awaiting the spiritual work of God to bring him to light from darkness?" This writer can only say "I do not know!" Furthermore, it is our opinion that far too much effort has been expended by the curious on matters such as these. It really does not make any difference if he was alive or yet dead in sin. We know from the end of the story that he was probably an elect vessel so all concludes well no matter your view here.

"Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper (2 Kings 5.11)." Contained in this text is an important item for consideration for it reveals a deep spiritual truth. Verse one of this chapter began by describing Naaman and concluding with, "*but he was a leper.*" In those days lepers were generally outcasts and the contagion was normally extensively spread so it could be seen from a distance and thus the leper was avoided. It is our view that Naaman had but recently contracted the horrible disease and the manifestations of it were at that time restricted to a place where the prophet could strike his hand over it. Otherwise, had the leprosy invaded a considerable portion of the general's body he would have begun to be held in contempt and possibly even be removed from his lofty station.

Nevertheless, a minor or an extensive manifestation of the plague was sufficient for it to be said, "But he was a leper." Just so, as we compare leprosy to the plague of sin, it matters not the extent of the manifestation; one spot of sin within or upon our being renders us sinners. "Strike his hand over the place" sounds minor in degree, yet that one place identified him with the host of outcasts called lepers. It would be difficult to imagine the horror Naaman, and even his family and friends, must have experienced when the disease was made known. It must be kept in mind also, there was nothing that would shock and panic Naaman's associates, or others for that matter, more so than leprosy. He and his circle of associates were living a mental hell at the time.

"Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, *and recover the leper* (2 Kings 5.11)." Naaman had not trooped all the way to Samaria to be insulted, ignored and shuffled off by an unceremonious instruction from

the servant of this prophet Elisha, whom all had come to believe could work miracles.

The reader might at this time wonder what all this has to do with absolute predestination, the theme of our series. Well, if you believe in predestination it has everything to do with it. If you do not believe in predestination it still has everything to do with it. What we believe or cannot believe has never altered the eternal will of our God of heaven and earth. If the reader can identify one single incident up to this point that evolved through chance we shall hastily extend our regrets and give up the struggle. If there is any chance occurrences at all in this fascinating series of incidents we would at once be compelled to think Elisha crawled out on a skinny limb when he sent instruction to Naaman to go and wash seven times in Jordan and he would be clean. Elisha was God's prophet! If he understood or not; if he believed what he gave instruction for or not; none of this matters. This was the word from the Lord. God had spoken through His prophet. Thus, the matter was sure. Sure as the foundations of eternity and as certain to come to pass as the rising of the sun each morning.

The Second Departure

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage (2 Kings 5.12)." Several things are revealed here of the mind of Naaman. First, he did not disbelieve the old prophet; he simply minimized his *specific* instructions. Pride, on this occasion national pride, enflamed the thinking of Naaman. Samaria was a conquered enemy of Syria. They were considered little better than rabble to the Captain of the Syrian host. Elisha's word from the Lord was fully unreasonable to the Captain. "So he turned and went away in a rage." Naaman, a man of war, was in a rage. What his plans were beyond leaving the humble surrounding of the prophet is not recorded. Appearance would suggest that he was on his way back northeast to take a dip in one of the rivers of Damascus. Mark well; Naaman never discounts the genuineness of Elisha's pronouncements. He simply discounted the methods to be employed. It appears this valiant captain of the Syrian army could handle the business of war but was completely frustrated by a recluse prophet of Samaria.

"So he turned." Naaman probably figured this was the end of a sorry chase for a phantom cure not to be. At least it was not to be at or in Jordan as far as he was concerned. "So he turned," heading home. Natural circumstances and geography were to direct the path of the Captain. Be certain, however, that Jehovah had control over the events of the moment. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Leaving Elisha to proceed homeward would bring Naaman and his troop directly across Jordan somewhere south of Galilee, depending upon where in Samaria Elisha was residing at the time.

Naaman's servants

At this point we see another unlikely event take place. Being near Jordan, Naaman is approached by several members of his band. "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean."

This was a daring and perilous move. Naaman had already manifested his predilection to rage. Servants are exceedingly wary to make suggestions to their captains, especially when their captains are giving vent to fuming emotions within. Moreover, Naaman was exceedingly disappointed, doubtless weary, and feeling somewhat foolish. He may well too have been embarrassed. Life and death may have hung in the balance just at that moment. Pause, reader, and ask: If God had developed all these previous details to get Naaman to this juncture, would He somehow lose grip on the entire state of affairs? Or rather, as we believe, was not the God of Absolute Predestination still at the helm? These servants, seeking the welfare of their leader, were in no more danger than David was when approaching Goliath. It is surely a blessing beyond measure to be persuaded "all our times are in His hands; and all events at His command."

Being near Jordan, the servants felt this was the time to speak. Who but a hardened agnostic would deny God directed these servants to speak at this time? "My father" was their salutation. Their reasoning was sound. If Elisha had bid Naaman to execute some mighty deed he would have done so at once. "Why not then, since you are at the river's bank, at least heed Elisha's words to 'Wash and be

clean’?” It much appears they are saying he really had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Where did these servants get this wisdom and courage? We suggest they received it from the same source as all the others had in this saga. Small as their part might have been in the unfolding events, they were as important as every other event. God was executing his plan. For those arrogant free-will worshippers that deny God has a plan we suggest they not waste any more time reading this article, for, the Lord willing, we shall extol absolute predestination at every opportunity.

“Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (2 Kings 5.14).” The first word, *then*, indicates Naaman accepted the counsel of his wise servants. “Then went he *down*” surely portrays the submissive posture of a poor sinner following the Lord’s bidding. We leave that thought as a suggestion only. In going down he dipped himself seven times. It can only be imagined what must have been going through the mind of Naaman each time he dipped himself. Down he went. Up he came. No change. If dipping in Jordan might cleanse a leper then, with all his good intentions and obedience why was he not cleansed after the first dip. And the second? On and on!

Now Naaman comes to dip number six and still no change. What must have he thought? Probably that he was a ridiculous fool for starting this whole thing. Bless the name of the Lord, there was yet hope. The command from the prophet was to dip seven times. One time would avail nothing, nor would five or six. God had spoken. Seven times! So, down he goes the seventh time.

“And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” When he rose from his seventh dipping he was clean. There, for all to see, Naaman was a renewed man with regard to his former awful affliction. He was clean. We may only indulge our imaginations as to the joy and excitement of Naaman and those gathered with him at the banks of Jordan. Sweet Jordan; the same Jordan our Lord would, many years later be dipped in by John, according to the will of God. But now, Naaman is freed from his terrible leprosy. Every detail, however detached they may have seemed at the time, had

fallen together as if guided by Divine decree, a truth we firmly believe.

Herein too is found a truth, somewhat concealed, but a truth nevertheless. It was not just that the leprosy was gone. “*His flesh came again.*” Dear readers, though our flesh and composition may rot and decay; and though disease and afflictions invade our frame, and corruption swallows us up, when the saints of the most High rise from their last Jordan in the resurrection, all these things will be swallowed up in victory. Like Naaman, we shall be whole again. Naaman did not get a new portion of flesh; **His** flesh came again! “And he was clean.” That awful and odious affliction was removed and his flesh came again pure as when he had been born.

Should someone ask, “If you are saying that that very flesh that once was clean had returned, where was it before? We would answer that it was in the same place the whole of creation was before God called it into existence. It was with God. All true believers will fail to see any problem. Furthermore, before this chapter is over we shall get another glimpse of the leprous plague that tormented Naaman. *It did not simply disappear.*”

Leaving the subject now to another article, it is suggested the readers explore the remainder of 2 Kings 5. Further mysteries and strange matters will present themselves if the Lord provides eyes to see. Finally, keep in mind this one healing of one leper was of sufficient note that our Lord Jesus brought it to the attention of His hearers during His early ministry.

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PSALM 119.176

I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments.

DEPRAVITY: *I have gone astray.* Specific election: *Like a lost sheep.* Jesus Christ’s effectual call of His people: *Seek Thy servant.*

Preservation of the saints: *For I do not forget Thy commandments.* Amazing grace!

REGENERATION WITHOUT MEANS

Part III. B.

“Means of Grace” continued

Introductory Remarks

WE ended our last segment (in the November-December issue) with the hope of addressing the subject of “Calvinism,” saying a little about what Old Baptists have in common with John Calvin, and bringing out what he and the historic forerunners of *all* varieties of Baptists had to say about *regeneration without means*. We propose to do so now. In so doing, we shall refer to a few books on church history, including *A Concise History of Baptists* by G. H. Orchard, and *Popular Symbolics* by Th. Engelder, *et al.*

As did John Calvin in his day, the Old School Baptists believe in predestination, regeneration by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (without the need of human means or human instrumentality), and the so-called “five points of Calvinism”: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Preservation of the saints. Where the Old School Baptists differ with Calvin is primarily in matters of the ordinances, discipline, and the government of the church. They did not and do not differ essentially when it comes to the doctrine of grace and salvation.

Between the apostolic times and our own, many groups are historically associated with the Baptists: Anabaptists, Waldenses, Paterines, Lyonists, Puritans, Albigenses, Mennonites, Vaudois, Henricans, Paulicans, and others. For convenience’s sake, these are often somewhat inaccurately lumped together under the first two names, **Anabaptists** and **Waldenses**. The term *Anabaptist* means re-baptizers. We (and the historians cited) will have occasion in this article to refer to these various groups by this more general term *Anabaptists*, which, being re-baptizers of their converts, they all were.

When it comes to these historic names, the bad thing is, these groups were almost as diverse as “Baptists” are today. Evidently there were indeed “free willers,” universalists, Unitarians, and other heretical groups (as defined by Rome), as well as predestinarian, sovereign grace believers. But, since all these sects required rebaptism of their converts,

they were classified as “Anabaptists” by their Roman Catholic persecutors who cared little for the details that distinguished one group from another. In point of fact, the doctrinal positions of some of these ancient groups are open to serious question because their enemies often accused them of fantastic practices and heresies they did not advocate. Frequently the Anabaptists’ records and writings were burned with them at the Roman stake, leaving little or no record of what these martyrs truly believed.

The good thing we find about these groups, who in every age remained entirely independent of and opposed to Roman Catholicism, is this: Since apostolic times, among these ancient sects, there always were those who held to free grace Baptist principles.

John Calvin and the Anabaptists

John Calvin, the French reformer, was born in 1509 and died in 1564 at the age of 55. Since Rome considered him a heretic when he left the Roman church, it is understandable that (among other things) he would (and did) examine the possibilities of fellowship with others whom Rome also called heretics. Similarly, as Calvin and his movement gained acceptance, it is also understandable that some of the persecuted and outcast groups would join with him, thereby gaining relief from martyrdom in exchange for their distinctive identities.

Some seekers for the truths of God’s sovereign grace have been led to the shallow and mistaken conclusion that the Primitive Baptists got their doctrine from John Calvin. If anything, history would indicate it was the other way around. Calvin, disillusioned by the Roman church, was influenced by the Anabaptists and Waldenses of his day. We cite *A Concise History of Baptists* by G. H. Orchard. Orchard himself cites many historical sources (that we omit for brevity’s sake), from which he drew the following information:

Dissenters were called by various names, as *the Poor of Lyons, Lionists, Paterines, Puritans, Arnoldists, Petrobrussians, Albigenses, Waldenses, &c., &c.*, different names, expressive of one and the same class of Christians. “However various their names, they may be,” says Mezeray, “reduced to

two, that is, the Albigenses (a term now about introduced), and the Vaudois, and these two held almost the same opinions as those we call Calvinists.” (Orchard, p. 192)

The Anabaptists, Albigenses, Waldenses, and the Vaudois (French Waldenses), while they held to a wide variation in their doctrines and practices, are generally regarded by church historians as being the forerunners of the modern Baptists.

In 1163, Alexander III., in a synod, made a canon against the Albigenses, to damn that heresy, that had so infected, as a canker, all those parts about Gascogne. “These heretics,” says Mezeray, “held almost the same doctrines as the Calvinists, and were properly Henricans and Vaudois (Orchard, p. 198f).

Note the year, 1163 A. D. *The French historian, Mezeray, verifies that our spiritual ancestors were “Calvinistic” in the year 1163, or 346 years before John Calvin was born!*

What this tells us is that, centuries before Calvin (and this goes as far back as the apostolic times), our spiritual forebears believed in divine election, absolute predestination, irresistible grace, the effectual call, limited atonement, and other points of so-called “Calvinistic” doctrine.

Calvin, who began in 1534 to preach the reforming doctrines, was found in his views more in accordance with the sentiments of the sacramentarians, or anabaptists, than Luther. “His views overthrew all ceremonies,” says Mezeray, “and, consequently, the Waldenses left Luther’s orthodoxy for communion with the reformed churches under Calvin. (Orchard, p. 285)

In 1561...It does not appear, that any great difference existed between the Sacramentarians or Anabaptists, and Calvin’s doctrinal views, but the principal points of discrepancy were on the church’s constitution and discipline.... (Orchard, p. 289)

In other words, the Anabaptists believed in local church government then, as we do now, while Calvin promoted his church-state.

In Orchard’s Appendix to the Waldensian Section, part 2, he writes:

The following statements establish their [the Waldenses’] doctrinal views.

Genebrard asserts that the Henricans, Petrobrussians, Arnaldists, Apostolicis (Fathers of the Calvinists), with the Waldenses and the Albigenses, were similar in doctrinal views with Luther and Calvin...*Lindanus*, a Catholic bishop asserts, Calvin inherited the doctrines of the Waldenses...*Gaulter*, a monk, shows the Waldensian creed was in accordance with the Calvinistic views...*Aeneas Sylvius* (Pope Pius II.) declares the doctrines taught by Calvin to be the same as those of the Waldenses...*Ecchius* reproaches Luther with renewing the heresies of the Albigenses and Waldenses of Wickliff and Huss, which had been long condemned...*Sieur de la Popeliniere*, a French historian, says, the principles of the Waldenses extended throughout Europe...These doctrines, which may be traced from A. D., 1100, differ very little from the Protestants of the Reformation...*Mezeray*, the historian of France, observes, the pope, at the Council of Tours, made a decree against heretics, i. e., a kind of Manicheans, who held almost the same doctrines as the Calvinists, and were properly Henricans and Vaudois...Calvin’s doctrines were more conformed to the Anabaptists in the valleys, than Luther’s. (Orchard, p. 295ff)

In 1535, ...Calvin appeared as a public teacher, and his views of truth, on being known, were preferred, and found to be more in accordance with the Baptists’ views than Luther’s... (Orchard, p. 360).

We next turn to another history book, *Popular Symbolics*. First, we give a few words by way of background, still pertinent to the subject of regeneration without means: a question asked, an accusation

made, and a little about the *Popular Symbolics* book itself.

The Question

Some few years ago, a man raised a question about whether there was “any writer among the Baptists who taught the view of ‘direct voice’ or ‘direct speaking’ regeneration before Elder [Gilbert] Beebe....”

By his question the man implies that Elder Gilbert Beebe, along about the year 1832, is the one who originated the doctrine of “direct regeneration.” It is not our intention in this article to prove such a writer or writers existed before Elder Beebe and to name them, but rather it is to prove the ancient, widespread, and accepted proclamation of the doctrine of regeneration without the “benefit” of human help. In so doing, the answer to this man’s question should be apparent.

The Accusation

Also, it has been falsely said, “There weren’t any who believed in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit before the Hardshells came along. In their opposition to Missions, the Hardshells concocted this new doctrine.”

Either the ones who perpetuate this falsehood are ignorant of history, or they would deliberately deceive those who are, or both. In the next few pages, we propose to look into some historical truths about the doctrine of immediate regeneration, hoping our understanding will be enlightened by the light that comes only from Christ Himself.

The *Popular Symbolics* Book

Many years ago, I bought a most interesting used book entitled *Popular Symbolics*. It was written by “Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Th. Graebner, and F. E. Mayer.” The first edition was published in 1934 by the Lutheran publishers, Concordia Publishing House. My copy is a second edition, published in 1945.

What makes this old book so interesting to me is twofold:

First, it was written and published *by* Lutherans and *for* Lutherans, to prove that the Lutheran church, in doctrine and practice, is the church Christ established.

Second, the authors document all the things Lutherans consider to have been “heresies” down through the centuries quite well: when and where all the other denominations originated (according to the authors), and the errors these “heretics” embraced.

Popular Symbolics, as a source, may not supply us with the name and address of any Baptist writer before Elder Beebe, but this book historically and thoroughly documents for us that the doctrine of regeneration without “the Means of Grace,” as the Lutherans put it, was common and widespread centuries before him.

Why should this book be so interesting, unless you want to become a Lutheran? Simply stated, the book interests me because I believe Old School or Primitive Baptists are exactly what Lutherans believe Lutherans are: in doctrine and practice, the church which Jesus Christ established. It should immediately be obvious, then, that, since Primitive Baptist doctrine and practice notably differs from Lutheran doctrine and practice, they cannot both be the modern counterpart of the church of Jesus Christ. That fact alone immediately puts us at odds with Messrs. Engelder, Arndt, Graebner, & Mayer.

This being the case, when the authors of *Popular Symbolics* say something is a heresy, an Old Baptist might well tend to think what is heresy to the Lutherans might really be sound doctrine.

Of course, Old Baptists do have some common ground with these modern Lutherans. For a few examples, the errors of Roman Catholicism’s doctrine of praying for the dead and their deification of Mary, or the Unitarianism’s denial of the deity of Jesus Christ, or the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ and Seventh Day Adventists’ notions of soul-sleep, “No Hell-ism,” and the annihilation of the wicked, to name only a few heresies, are abominable to Old Baptists and to historic Lutherans alike. Just because Lutherans oppose a doctrine, then, doesn’t automatically make that doctrine true; nor does it make it necessarily false, either.

So, when I saw this book in a used book store back in the 1950s, I bought it to see what the Old Baptists had in common with those whom its authors say are heretics.

We use *Popular Symbolics* as a basis for some comments, then, because we believe its authors,

though misguided in their understanding of the scriptures, were nevertheless thorough in their research and honest in their reporting. They believed “Enthusiasts,” “Spiritualists,” and “Mystics,” for example, were heretics, and they said so. And they classify all who believe in regeneration by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit as an Enthusiast, a Spiritualist, or a Mystic (and we say they do so wrongly). So it was to *their* advantage to point out what, to them, were erroneous beliefs. They thereby performed an invaluable service for us, since the more accurate they were in their gathering and reporting of historical facts, the more it is to *our* advantage.

Popular Symbolics is sprinkled (no pun intended) with references to Anabaptists and Mennonites. When we check the book’s index on the key terms of *spiritualism*, *enthusiasm*, and *mysticism* (“key” as viewed by these Lutheran historians), we find that the authors of *Popular Symbolics* give many historical notes about Anabaptists, Mennonites, and others whom the Lutherans pigeonhole as *enthusiasts*, *spiritualists*, or *mystics*. They classify them thusly because the Anabaptists held to “immediate regeneration,” a truth the Lutherans strongly oppose.

The Anabaptists believed regeneration was the direct operation of the Holy Spirit long before Elder Beebe came on the scene, by the way.

The authors do not mean by *spiritualism*, *mysticism*, and *enthusiasm* what we ordinarily think of when we hear these words—*e.g.*, communicating with the dead through a medium (**spiritualism**, Webster), and so on. They have well documented exactly what they mean in a doctrinal sense by these terms. The writers define them as follows:

Spiritualism: The teaching that *the Holy Spirit converts immediately*, as opposed to His converting *intermediately*, that is, by the use of means.

Any group that held to this teaching said the same as we say. This does not make us *spiritualists*, other than in the minds of these Lutheran authors, who use *spiritualism* as a synonym for *enthusiasm* (which see, below).

Mysticism: The teaching that *the believer is united with Christ without Word* (the Bible or Scriptures) *or Sacraments* (baptism or the Lord’s supper). Again, any group that held to this teaching said the same thing in their day as we say now. This does not

make us *mystics*, other than in the minds of these authors.

Once more, we let the Lutheran writers explain what they mean as they comment on the sixteenth century Mennonites and Anabaptists:

The doctrinal standard of the Anabaptists cannot be defined because there virtually was no bond which united the various Anabaptist camps excepting the enthusiastic subjectivism which led to a very definite protest against the rigid and dead formalism of the Roman Church and to a vigorous denouncement of Luther’s doctrine of justification by grace without works. **Anabaptism may best be defined as a movement which stresses the mystical idea that God not only reveals Himself to man directly and immediately, but that man must also enter into an immediate and mystical communion with God through the Spirit’s working directly upon the heart.**” (Page 257; emphasis supplied.)

By “immediate” they of course mean without any *intermediate* tools such as preachers and Bibles.

Regarding the historical Mennonites, *Popular Symbolics* says:

Mennonites usually claim intimate relation with the Novatians, Paulicans, Albigenes, Waldenses...some Mennonites were Enthusiasts...**Others rejected the Means of Grace, teaching that the Holy Spirit converts immediately (spiritualism) or that the believer is united with Christ without Word or Sacraments (mysticism).** (Page 258.)

The doctrinal position of all Mennonites is summed up in the Confession of Faith, adopted at Dort, Holland, in 1632. The doctrinal statements of the various groups do not differ essentially from the position confessed in the eighteen articles of the Confession of Faith. (Page 259.)

The fundamental theme of Mennonite theology is the mystical doctrine that salvation is conditioned upon the ‘spiritual’ knowledge of Christ...The Confession of Dort

teaches that the Bible is God's Word and the infallible guide. **But it does not teach that the Holy Spirit employs the Word as *Means of Grace*. On the contrary, with the Anabaptists and the Reformed Church in general, the Mennonites are *Enthusiasts*, lay great stress on the immediate working of the Holy Ghost, who is said to "guide the saints into all truth."** ...John Horsch, a prominent Mennonite, states that **the Holy Spirit is the "inner word," who enables Christians to understand the Scriptures. Without the inner word, or the light, the Scripture is a dead letter and a dark lantern.** (Page 259f.) (Italics theirs. Bold emphasis supplied.)

If you have ever heard an Old Baptist say that without the Spirit of God the Bible is merely dead letter, you can now be sure that he did not invent this statement on the spur of the moment. Nor did he get this from the Anabaptists. The text source for both the ancient Anabaptists and the Primitive Baptists of today is 2 Corinthians 3.5-6: "...God who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; **not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**"

Martin Luther and his followers, in protesting against Rome, were indeed "Protestants." They did not protest enough, for they perpetuated the Romish doctrine of "the means of grace" and do so until this day. Hear the Lutherans' official position:

Holy Scripture is not a dead letter, as the Enthusiasts teach; the power of the Holy Spirit does not merely attend the Word of Scripture, as the Reformed hold, but is inherent in it...In those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word (Page 28).

The modern Arminian-Missionary movement, like these Lutherans, by teaching that God must have the Scriptures handy in order to get anyone born again, is perpetuating the Roman Catholic doctrine of

"the means of grace." Rome, Lutherans, and most Protestants say the Bible (*i.e.*, the Scriptures) is one of the means of grace. The Missionary Baptists and their founders, in forsaking the biblical doctrine of regeneration, bought into Rome's error, and they still reside therein. **The modern Missionary Arminians do not differ from Rome in principle but only in details and in degree.**

What is "Enthusiasm"?

About the term *Enthusiasm*, the authors of this book have much to say:

True, the enthusiasts confess that Christ died on the cross and saved us; but they repudiate that by which we obtain Him; that is, the means, the way, the bridge, the approach to him they destroy.... (page 5, quoted from Martin Luther, 1692).

The spirit of Enthusiasm, which rejects the external Word as futile...declares that the Word and Sacrament alone are incapable of building the Church. (Page 104.)

The Enthusiasts deny the efficacy of the Means of Grace. While the Quakers dispense with them altogether, Reformed Enthusiasm, employing them, holds that grace comes through the immediate operation of the Spirit, that the saving power does not inhere in the Word and the Sacraments, that the "external invitation" does not carry with it the "internal efficacy of grace" (Pages 76f).

The Reformed churches, driven by rationalism into Enthusiasm, deny that Baptism is an efficacious Means of Grace, holding that it does not convey forgiveness and work regeneration, but merely serves as a symbol and token of the blessing wrought and conveyed by an alleged immediate operation of the Spirit. (Page 88.)

The authors of *Popular Symbolics* also classify as enthusiasts the Holiness churches, the historical Wesleyan Methodists, and the Pentecostal or Charismatic movement, since these all emphasize "the second blessing" or "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" as an immediate experience from God. Lacking the

discernment they needed to see otherwise, the writers also lumped the Anabaptists and anyone else believing in “direct” or “immediate regeneration” together with these extreme Arminian charismatic groups.

“Pentecostalism”?

We believe God gives the spiritually dead sinner life by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Some, like these Lutheran authors, superficially say this is “Pentecostalism.” It is not. Such accusations come only from those who know neither what the modern Pentecostalism movement is nor what the Old School Baptist position is. These accusers are like those whom Paul describes as “Desiring to be teachers of the law; *understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* (1 Timothy 1.7).”

So-called “Pentecostalism,” as we know it in the world today, is a fanatical focus on apostolic gifts (such as healing the sick or the ability to speak in foreign languages without first having learned them) that were not perpetuated beyond the apostles’ day. A man might stand up and say, “Boogledy boo, ugga umm um ahh! I am speaking in tongues just like the Apostles did. Prove I am not.” Alas! Unless the hearer knows every word and phrase in every language in the world, how can he answer such a one?

To coin the unscriptural term “Pentecostal,” however, and then to claim your actions are apostolic does not at all make such a claim true. To take any Bible phrase such as “Church of God (1 Corinthians 1.2)” or “Church of Christ” (a term that does not occur in the Bible. “Churches of Christ” is found once, in Romans 16.16) and say “We are **it**” does not make it so, any more than my wearing a badge on a blue shirt would make me a policeman or a helmet and khakis would make me a soldier. This principle is even more true when the term we are dealing with is unscriptural, like “Pentecostal.”

Those ignorant of the facts no doubt accuse Old School Baptists of Pentecostalism merely because they mistakenly think they see in the two something in common: Pentecostals claim a direct inspiration from God in their so-called tongue-talking shows. We, however, say something entirely different, in no wise Pentecostalism, and it is on an entirely different subject: not that of speaking in tongues (or, more correctly, foreign languages), but that of **regeneration**. We say regeneration is the direct operation of

God without any human agency or intervention, something no “Pentecostal” advocates. We claim it, however, because the Bible teaches it: “Born of the Spirit,” John 3.6, 8. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing (John 6.63).”

A Few More Scriptures

Before closing this series, let us examine a few scriptures we have not yet addressed.

1. Isaiah 52.13ff: “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.”

One of the clearest of Old Testament prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ, Isaiah 53, actually begins with these words from the end of the fifty-second chapter. Christ is the one who sprinkles the many nations, and He does so in such a way that they who have *not* been told about Him *shall* see, and they who *have not heard* shall consider.

The word **so** in the phrase, “**So** shall He sprinkle...” is of utmost importance, because what goes before, the marring of His visage and His form, is the means that He uses to sprinkle the many nations. “So” is like the pivot around which all pivots, like a giant lever, moving His people.

Christ exerted His mighty strength and power, as it were, in everything He was incarnated to accomplish. When He cried with a loud voice, “It is finished!” He knew exactly what He was saying, and He knew exactly what He meant. He had saved His people from their sins, with no qualification added, and no ifs or buts. Nothing needs to be added to a finished work, and truly, nothing can be added to it without marring it. When a carpenter builds a beautiful mansion and announces its completion, for someone to announce that it is still up to us to drive one more nail is an insult to the carpenter.

The results on the other end of the lever are that God’s elect in every nation will be a seeing and a hearing people on the sole basis of what Christ Jesus did for them in His life, suffering, and death. As with the carpenter, nothing is left undone; nothing needs to be nailed, painted, or polished, not even a little.

Yet the gospel regeneration crowd raves on, insisting that all Jesus Christ did on the bloody cross of His agony, yea, all the Triune God has ordained from eternity to save His people, all of this is to no avail until a sinful, fallen man, preacher though he is, arrives with a fistful of paper and leather to quote a few King James Bible verses to an audience. *This*, dear friends, **this**, the arrival of the preacher, is what they would tell us unshackles the Holy Spirit so that He can now continue. He can now apply the blood of sprinkling when before He was stymied, helpless, powerless! Until now, had the preacher never arrived, all of Christ's work as Prophet, Priest, King, Lamb of God, our All in All, was ineffectual—horrid blasphemy!—so they say. But, now that the preacher has brought his Bible by and put some verses into another sinner's ears, all is well. Zip! This, they tell us, is that for which the Holy Spirit must await before He can regenerate us.

Let the discerning and unprejudiced reader please note: These among the kings and nations of whom Isaiah speaks have *not* heard a man talking about these things before they see, and they have *not* been told about Christ before they consider. The text does *not* say they shall see and consider *as soon as* (or very soon after) the preacher or a missionary arrives and tells them something to consider. In fact, inserting a human preacher into Isaiah's hymn of gospel praise destroys everything the text is saying!

Not only shall they *consider*, but Paul, when he quotes this text, says they shall *understand*! "But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand (Romans 15.21)." Since the universal malady, as diagnosed by the Great Physician, is "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (Romans 3.11)," it should become increasingly obvious that God Himself has done something for His people, these who have *not* heard the gospel preached, these to whom no man has spoken, and yet they see, consider, and understand.

2. Romans 15.4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The Scriptures were not written to regenerate those who are not the children of God. They were given to comfort God's children and inspire their hope.

3. 2 Timothy 1.8f: "God who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

First, the text does not say that our Saviour Jesus Christ *or anyone else* has brought life and immortality through the gospel. It says He, Christ, brought these things **to light**. Something that does not already exist cannot be brought to light. It must exist first. Where does immortality exist? "...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...(1 Timothy 6.14ff)." We do not have "immortal souls." How could we have immortal souls, when immortal means "incapable of dying," and God tells us twice, "The soul that sinneth, it shall **die** (Ezekiel 18.4, 20)"?

There are at least two views of what is meant by bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel:

(1) Christ Himself has abolished death, given His elect both life and immortality in Him, and He brought this life and immortality **to light, or manifests it**, through the gospel as the children of God hear it and respond to it. This cannot be the proper understanding of this text, it would seem, for the text would then need to say, "Christ *brings* life and immortality to light," etc., which it does not.

(2) The gospel is not subjective, about us. It is objective, about Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection. Since only He hath immortality, the gospel brings to light His life and immortality and all of His other glorious attributes. This, no doubt, is the better understanding of this text. Least of all would Paul be telling Timothy that "the gospel preacher brings life and immortality by the gospel."

4. 2 Timothy 3.16f: "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." The Scriptures were not given to regenerate anyone. They are given for

those who are already regenerated, that they may be perfect, that is, as Paul explains, furnished unto all good works. By the Holy Spirit's application and use of them, which He has inspired, the Scriptures are an element of the *sanctification*, not the regeneration, of the children of God.

5. Jeremiah 31.31ff: "But this shall be the 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." Under the terms of the New Covenant, all God's people will know Him without anyone's trying to "get" people to know Him. It is not a matter of man's yelling God's law into their ears (for what if they are deaf?) or shoving the Bible before their eyes (for what if they are blind?). Paul goes to great lengths in Hebrews 8 through Hebrews 10 expounding this text. Man only works **on** other men, but the Lord works **in** men, putting His law in their hearts and writing it in their minds, two places where no man can reach.

6. John 3.14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up...." See Numbers 21, to which Jesus here refers. *Not one single dead person looked to the brazen serpent!* Only the living looked. They had to have had physical life before they could look to this wonderful figure of Christ. Applying the biblical figure Christ Jesus gives of Himself, one must have spiritual life *before* they can ever look to Him.

7. 1 Peter 1.3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead." This, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, is the one *means of grace* which begets His people unto a lively (living) hope. Peter says this is so. Nothing short of His resurrection power will accomplish this mighty spiritual act of bringing a sinner, dead in trespasses and in sins, into spiritual life in Him, nor is anything else (either more or less than this) needed to bring them to everlasting life.

Summary

As we find in every century an extensive, unbroken chain of believers in the virgin birth of Christ Jesus, His deity, His effectual blood atonement, and His literal bodily resurrection, even so we find in every age those who believed in regeneration by the Holy Spirit without human intervention. The fact that many denominations besides the Old Baptists held to this doctrine of regeneration without human means or instrumentality does not militate against its truth, any more than such a fact could be used successfully to argue against the deity of our Lord, His virgin birth, His blood atonement, or His bodily resurrection.

When we cite the beliefs of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites, we are not necessarily tracing Old School Baptist "perpetuity" through them, as though we of necessity are their modern descendents and counterparts, nor are we saying that we necessarily have any other particular point in common with them. Rather, for now, we are pointing out as straightforwardly as possible that **down through the ages, the belief in the Holy Spirit's direct operation in regenerating His elect has always been far more common and widespread than our doctrinal opponents suppose or will admit.**

The doctrine of regeneration by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit exclusively is an essential part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, attributing the salvation of His people to God alone. "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD (Jonah 2.9)." This is a legitimate, historical, biblical position, well reasoned from the Scriptures, well documented in history, and far more extensive than is generally known or admitted by modern-day, apostate, man-centered, socialized, free-will, Arminian religions.

—Elder C. C. Morris

PSALM 90.1ff

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in *all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*

PART OF THE WHOLE

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour (Ecclesiastes 2:10).

SOLOMON'S accomplishments are the substance of dreams for the majority of mankind. His glorious majesty, his immense wealth and acquisitions, his grand buildings, his mines, and of course his wisdom are all legendary. They are the subject matter for which archeologists and historians have dedicated lifetimes researching and exploring. Even during his own lifetime, Solomon's fame reached far and wide so that "...when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions (1 Kings 10:1)." His status was far and away the highest of the time, "...so King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and wisdom (1 Kings 10:23)," and men then and now would gladly trade places with him to assume that position.

Solomon, speaking autobiographically, states that he made great works (Ecclesiastes 2:4) and gives an extensive list of accomplishments. Such an acclamation! Great works. Nothing mundane or mediocre, small or insignificant. Houses, gardens, orchards, irrigation systems, servants unto the second generation, cattle, silver, gold, and "the peculiar treasures of kings and of the provinces (2:8)," and choirs and orchestras. Nothing was small; everything was on the grandest of scale.

Not only did he do great works, but, *he* was great, more than all that were before him in Jerusalem (2:9). His greatness involved everything that his heart desired and any joy that he could obtain (2:10). Yet, as he gave himself to these matters to see if there was any joy or satisfaction in them, he discovered pain, emptiness and sadness, while the world esteemed him great.

Many of his acquisitions came from his being King of Israel. Others came from those who paid tribute, and still more came from those who sought his favor by lavishing upon him shiny trinkets and shallow praise.

By all of the world's standards, he had arrived. He had it all. Yet, instead of finding joy, he found heartache. Instead of finding peace he found a conflict. Instead of security in wealth, he found emptiness. Instead of abundance, he found a void. "Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of the spirit (2:18)."

For all of the external comforts which he had, all the accomplishments he had achieved, and all the power which he had at his disposal, even the building of the temple of God, yet in all this he found no satisfaction, no peace, and no profit (2:11).

Solomon then turned inward to himself, "...to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly (1:17)." He attempted to find solace in the intellectual and philosophical realms. He abandoned the normal restraints and gave himself to vice. He loved many women of forbidden lineage, and they turned his heart away (1 Kings 11:1-3). He gave himself to wine and folly to "...see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life (Ecclesiastes 2:3)." He gave his heart to all of the natural means to find joy and peace, yet to no avail.

This was for him, like Moses and Abraham before him, his setting apart, his sanctification. This was his wilderness, his schoolmaster to bring him through trials and tribulations unto patience, experience, hope, and truth. God, who works all things according to his good pleasure, had afore ordained this vessel to undertake this arduous path, according to His abundant mercy, unto all knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

"And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge: yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs (Ecclesiastes 12:1)." He was given of God to see the heights and depths of the flesh and the disparity of life. This was his lot, his assignment, his portion in life (2:10).

Have you ever considered that word, "portion"? Even though Solomon was king he did not possess everything, nor did he have all wisdom, power, and knowledge. He did not possess all the riches of the world. He did not rule over all of his kingdom, nor over all of his own house, nor even his own body

and desires. He was a man, born of a woman, made under the law, of corruptible seed, who was given a portion by the hand of the Almighty.

Before there can be a portion of something, there must first be a whole from which the portion or part can be taken. Where there is a whole there must have been the origin of that whole, a plan and design for it, the actual making of it, and a purpose for both the whole and all its parts.

This also intimates that there was a designer and a planner whose wisdom and power rendered the portions completely passive so that His purpose may be fulfilled. This would also require a designation for the portions and the complete coordination of these designations, called *vessels* or *man*, so that all things would work together in harmony, “to the intent that now all principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3:10f).”

Each vessel, properly equipped to perform the portion assigned unto it, must, without any possibility of failure, complete its portion in the allotted time and in the exact required order. Such precision could not include such frailties as ‘free will’ or random choice. Nor could they be contingent upon conditions.

Therefore, in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit covenanted together to do whatsoever seemed good in His sight. According to the purpose of His will, He began, enacted, and completed all that has been, is, and shall be done, saying “...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 46:10).”

The whole creation was prepared from start to finish, and by His own power it was brought into existence. He “measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out the heavens with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance (Isaiah 40:12).” He created all things “after his kind, whose seed is in itself.” He

established the times of their habitations, their influences, and the boundaries of their existence, and in Him we live and move and have our being. He arrayed Himself in majesty and glory, and when He had finished His work of creation, time was set in motion to divide one portion from another and to establish a time for every purpose under heaven. This all-encompassing sovereignty extends to “...all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the 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).” This is where all of the household of faith were given to the Son in covenant, the plan for their salvation accomplished by the Son’s becoming the servant to the Father’s will.

Dare any rise up in objection to this? The flesh does, for it cannot comprehend this glorious truth. The will-worshipping workmongers do, with their socialized religion that endeavors to bring Christ to the world and to improve man, his society, and his lifestyle. These new and exciting places indeed do, that thrive on attendance, numbers, and the emotions of their people.

The signs out front may read, “Where Jesus is Lord”; but within, in word and deed, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is despised and hated, and every neo-ism of philosophy is preached, and every means of works is explored. Their “itchy-eared” teachers preach with emotionally charged words of man’s learning and education. They excite the senses of the hearers and drive the teams of “evangelistic” workmongers with a two pronged whip of duty faith and rewards.

Like swarms of locusts, they are sent forth into the world preaching hell-fire and brimstone in attempts to frighten prospective converts into their assembly. There, they learn man’s doctrine of self improvement and the fine points of the mechanics of man’s system. This massive juggernaut is fueled with the morose pleas of emotionalism centered on women and children, the poor and the indigent, the depraved, and the pseudo-passions of “good works.” The machinery is greased with the mammon of filthy lucre and arrayed with the tapestries of maliciousness. This whited sepulchre continues from age to age requir-

ing a labor for the wind in exchange for a promise of eternal gratitude from an impotent god. With the zeal of martyrdom and the pride of their humility, they accuse the children of faith of being hard-shelled, rigid in their system, and old-fashioned in their ways. They claim that the teachings of the sovereignty of God would legalize sin and excuse the offender. They defiantly ask, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will (Romans 9:19)?"

In effect, the apostle Paul answered such arrogance with the same words that God answered Job, "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous (Job40:8)?" "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor (Romans 19:20)?" And if God was willing for His own purpose, glory, and honor to make one vessel one way and another vessel another way, dare any of His creations say anything against Him?

If He made one wicked, fitted for destruction, for the purpose of revealing His strength and power, and that His name would be known throughout all the land, and this wicked one performed great wickedness to the point of indiscriminately killing man, woman and child, and burdening God's people almost to the breaking point, would God be unjust, seeing this was His way of delivering Israel from Pharaoh's bond and out of Egypt? Could this "vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction," upon whom God is "willing to show His wrath," do anything but that for which it was intended and created? And could the "vessel of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory," do anything which would translate it into a vessel of wrath by a temporal deed, either in commission or omission? Can the glory of God be tarnished in any way by a weakness of the flesh in doubt, fear, or backsliding? God forbid! The Lord God omnipotent reigns. He is seated in heaven and rules all things on earth, "And all the inhabitant of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou (Daniel 4:35)?"

To intimate that a vessel of honor, or one of dishonor, could in some way fail to perform the prescribed portion of the whole of creation assigned to them, or that their work may change their status from sheep to goat or visa versa, is to say that the God in whom we live and move and have our being is devoid of power and unable to sustain His work and His will.

Can a hand perform in such a way as to make itself a lesser hand or even no hand at all? If the foot goes astray, is it not God who directs the path of the righteous? Is the way of man within himself? When Peter looked about and saw the waves and the winds, the tempest and the storms, did he "fall from grace" as he began to sink? Did he not do that which was according to his Adamic nature and after his kind, so that the word of God might be revealed in him in power and majesty, without any assistance from him? No free will and no conditions were imposed.

In Ephesians chapter 2, it is written that the whole body is composed of parts and that these parts, or members, are fitly framed together unto an holy habitation of God through the Spirit (verse 22), each member being given a "measure of faith" (Romans 12:3) and "grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Ephesians 4:7)." Each member is given a portion in the proper amounts, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Ephesians 4:12f)."

Christ has made each one vital to the household and effectual in his duty, to the end that "...the whole body [is] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto edifying itself in love (Ephesians 4:16)."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)."

In hope of Glory,

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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 condemna-

tion; 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.