

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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THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Forasmuch as some from time to time trouble Zion with either an outright denial of the resurrection of the body or with a perversion of this truth it seems proper to once again examine this doctrine which both was preached in apostolic times and which has been unquestionably held by saints in all ages.

In setting forth this doctrine I shall follow what our forefathers before me outlined in the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, not because their words are superior to the scriptures, but because their words briefly capture the essence of what the Bible in many places sets forth as the believer’s hope. They declared their faith in this way:

“At the last day, such of the saints as are found alive, shall not sleep, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other; although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

The bodies of the unjust shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just, by his Spirit, unto honour, and be made conformable to his own glorious body (Chapter 31, sections 2-3).”

I. The Implications of No Resurrection

How important is the resurrection? Paul took up a non-resurrection hypothesis and examined its implications. Let us for a moment suppose what the apostles

preached on this subject was untrue. Paul speculated about this in 1 Corinthians 15.13-19.

He wrote: “if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen (verse 13).” He echoed the same conclusion in verse 16: “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.” Clearly, if there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, then Christ’s remains are still somewhere in the earth.

He wrote: “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (verse 14).” It would be vain because it would be untrue. What Peter proclaimed about Christ on the day of Pentecost: “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2.24),” would have been a factually unfounded message. Sadly, many would have believed something that really never happened. However, this is only part of the story: “Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not (verse 15).” The apostles were false witnesses. If this is the case, every preacher who has to this day declared this same doctrine has preached something that never happened, and, sadly, many throughout the centuries have believed something that never occurred.

He wrote: “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins (verse 17).” Paul reiterated that our faith is in vain but he went further to say Christ did absolutely nothing for you. You are deceived in thinking He took your sins away. He did not. You are still in your sins.

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He wrote: "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished (verse 18)." Forget your hope. It is worthless. You have been deceived. You have no reason to hope there will ever be any good outcome for those who have already died. There also will be no good outcome for you. We all will remain dead.

Finally, he wrote: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (verse 19)." We have relied upon one who could not help us. We have believed and suffered in vain. Our lot will be no better than His. He died and stayed in His grave, and we too will die and stay in our graves forever.

This is what it means to have no resurrection. Thank God, Paul went on to say: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15.20)."

II. The State of Man After Death But Before The Resurrection

Before proceeding further let me make this point. To declare the truth of the resurrection is not the same as denying the continuing existence of individual life immediately after death. The Bible also teaches that when one dies the person also survives in a disembodied state. It was no contradiction for Paul to have confessed his hope "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts 24.15)," while he also expressed his confidence that "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body,

and to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5.6-8).” Both doctrines are true. Realizing this, our Baptist forefathers also declared:

“The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and under darkness, reserved to the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none (Chapter 31, section 1).”

Since my major attention is not directed in this writing to the subject of the state of men after they have been divested of their bodies I shall only briefly deal with this matter. Let it be sufficient to say that Christ did give assurance to believers they remain alive continually when He said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5.24).” In short, the believer has endless life by virtue of the fact he passes from death to life. But this is not the same thing as the resurrection for He spoke of it as a future event: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5.28-29).”

That the child of God is in a blessed state when he dies is confirmed by the words of Paul to the Philippians when he told them that “to die is gain” and when he spoke personally of “having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better (Philippians 1.21, 23).” So, too, Christ had told the poor malefactor who asked to be remembered when the Lord came into His kingdom: “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23.42-43).”

Should there still be doubts that human personality survive apart from the body, why was there a question whether or not the visions and revelations of being caught up in the third heaven; that is, paradise, occurred while in the body or out of the body (2 Corinthians 12.1-4)? Surely, if there is no such thing as human personality surviving outside of the body, it would have been a foregone conclusion the experience would have occurred in the body. The fact the apostle had a question what the case happened to be is sufficient proof he believed in disembodied existence.

The state in which men appear before God during this period is a spirit-state. Jesus’ words from the cross were: “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” With this, “he gave up the ghost (Luke 23.46).” That is, He gave up the spirit. So, too, the martyr Stephen’s last words are recorded: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts 7.60).”

There is a wide difference between how the child of God fares and how the unjust fares in this bodiless state. Note the contrast between the rich man and the beggar, Lazarus, as cited in Luke 16.19-31. For his part, when Lazarus died he was carried by angels into a place called “Abraham’s bosom,” but the rich man died, was buried, and “in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” His torments were further shown by his suffering in the flame and his desire to have water to cool his tongue. The contrast is not only noted in how each fared at the time but also by how God viewed each person. Although found in a very low station in this life the beggar was by the Lord specifically identified by his name, Lazarus. However, the other man who seemed to fare very well in this life was simply identified as “a certain rich man.” There are those who argue this was simply a parable and not much weight should be given to its content in establishing doctrine. Whether or not it is a parable I cannot say. If it is, it is not introduced as one. But even if it is, can we not assert with confidence that when Jesus spoke in parables the composition of His remarks had a reality base to them? I, therefore, have to believe that He was describing how different individuals fared immediately after death. Having said this, I confess one must understand Jesus did use language figuratively in describing some of the details. Unless I am completely misunderstanding what it means to exist without a body I have to assume the description of the beggar’s finger, and the rich man’s tongue is given as symbolic

language to describe an experience similar to what we who are presently in our bodies can understand. The major point to note is that one is blessed in his state while the other is suffering.

With these words I leave this subject so that I may return to the doctrine of the resurrection.

III. The Primary Sense of the Term

Without examining at present what the full composition of the Christian hope is, I would like to define the essential meaning of the term “resurrection.” That is, what it means to be resurrected. There are three nouns for the term employed by the New Testament writers. Each word fits the English definition, “the state of rising from the dead.” By far, the most frequent Greek term is “anastatoo.” It comes from a root word meaning “a standing up again.” Another word, used only one time, is “egersis.” It springs from the root word meaning “to waken” as to rouse from sleep. This word is used in Matthew 27.53. The last word is “exanastasis.” It too is found only one time in the scripture: Philippians 3.11. One can recognize elements of “anastatoo” in this word. It relates to a begetting, so as to start up out of the ground.

By looking at cases where reference is made to a resurrection one can see how each of these terms fit. In the one place where “egersis” is used, the Bible states: “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matthew 27.52-53).” Here death was referred to as sleep. The graves were opened for them. What happened? The bodies of those once asleep in their graves arose. Interestingly, the verb, “arose,” is from the same root word translated in the next verse “resurrection.” This word is “egeiro”. Thus, when speaking of Christ’s resurrection it is fitting the same idea is conveyed; that is, that both the bodies of Christ and these saints were aroused from sleep. Then, in the one case where “exanastasis” is used, Paul wrote: “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Philippians 3.11).” Since he used the word that sprang from the idea of starting up out of the ground he is identifying with the same thought given in 1 Corinthians 15.42-44 when he spoke of the body being sown in the ground but later raised up. Finally, the case of Lazarus may be only an example of a mortal body rising again into mortality

but it does nonetheless give us a picture of the meaning of the word, “resurrection.” Here, Christ commanded his friend who had been dead to “come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with the graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go (John 11.39-44).” Despite the fact his body had laid in the grave for four days, and despite the fact he had been bound with all of the graveclothes, as the Greek word signifies, by the command of the Lord his body stood up again.

A simple fact about the resurrection should not escape our attention. It is the body that is resurrected. Whether it is a mortal body that rises again into mortality or a mortal body that rises into immortality the doctrine of the resurrection pertains to giving life again to the body. So, in the case of those saints who appeared unto many after Christ’s resurrection, the text makes plain that it was their bodies that arose when the graves were opened. So also, in the case of Lazarus it was his dead body that was restored to life.

Let’s approach this subject from a different standpoint. The Bible tells us what corporeal death is. When writing about lifeless faith James compares it to a corpse. He used these words: “as the body without the spirit is dead (James 2.26).” You visit a funeral home. The body of a friend is in the casket. You, and others who attend the wake, are also composed of a body. What is the difference between the body in the casket and the others? The difference is, the spirit has departed from the body of your friend. The spirit remains in the bodies of those who are attending the wake. Therefore, your friend is dead. You, and the others, are still alive. Now, follow this a step further. Stephen was stoned to death. Before he died, he was blessed to see the heavens opened so that he also “saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7.55).” Also before he died, he called upon the Lord, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then, what happened? “He fell asleep (Acts 7.60).” What fell asleep? It was his body. It was not his spirit that devout men carried away (Acts 8.2). Rather, it was his spirit-less body they carried away for burial. One more step is needed. Consider the case of Jairus’ daughter. Jairus had sought the Lord out on behalf of his dying daughter. On the way to the house it was reported there was no need to go further. His daughter had already died. Sad as this news was, the

crowd laughed when Jesus said: "Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth." He then "took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise, And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway (Luke 8.41-42; 49-55)."

I make this as plain as I can for the benefit of anyone who has a hard time understanding what the resurrection is. It does not consist of spirit being. The spirit does not die. It is immortal in nature. For that reason the believer "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5.24)." Therefore, the spirit does not need to be raised. It is the body that dies. It dies when the spirit leaves it. When, as was the case with Jairus' daughter, "her spirit came again" she "arose." That is, she stood up again. When the spirit returns to the body, the body is resurrected.

So, whether you approach this subject from the standpoint of examining the meaning of terms, or whether you look at the role that one's spirit plays in life and death, it comes out the same. The resurrection consists of a return of life to the body that dies.

IV. The Solid Argument for the Resurrection of Christ

Immortality is not a hope rooted in the "wishful thinking" of some past philosopher who simply could not bear the idea of endless death. At least it is not for the Christian. It is founded upon the concrete reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospels present these facts. The Romans, at the instigation of the Jews, crucified Jesus (Matthew 26.57-27.35). Jesus "yielded up the ghost (Matthew 27.50)." That is, His spirit left His body and He died. Joseph of Arimathea received permission from Pilate to take the Lord's body, and, along with Nicodemus, prepared, and then buried His body in a sepulcher (John 19.38-42). To fulfill the sign of Jonah, His body remained in the grave three days and nights (Matthew 12.40). Certain women arrived early on the first day of the week to anoint Christ's body and found the stone that had covered the tomb had been rolled away (Mark 16.1-4). An angel told these women: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28.5-6). After His resurrection the Lord first appeared alive unto Mary Magdalene (Mark 16.9). Later, He appeared unto all eleven of the

apostles, and He told them they were "witnesses of these things," and when He finished His time on earth He "was parted from them, and carried up into heaven (Luke 24.33-51)." This has been just a brief sketch of events. I realize many details have been omitted. Nevertheless, it provides details taken from each of the four gospels that focus upon His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Further, to remind the doubters at Corinth of the abundant evidence of Christ's resurrection, Paul wrote: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also (1 Corinthians 15.3-8)." This was quite an impressive number of people who could certify they saw the Lord alive again after He had died. It should not be missed what he wrote about the more than 500 brethren. His words carry this weight. It is as if he was saying to these Corinthians, if you do not believe what I have preached, go and ask these brethren who saw Him at once. Most of them are still alive today. They can tell you doubters He indeed arose from the dead.

Some time back a television network featured a piece concerning Jesus. The show used a number of biblical and historical scholars to contribute their analysis of Christ's earthly life. For the most part they rejected biblical teaching. Except for one scholar, they rejected the virgin birth. They thought He was an illegitimate child. They even doubted the events reported in the gospels that surrounded His birth. They believed most of the miracles ascribed to Jesus were made up stories. They made Jesus to be one whose ministry was solely focused upon social justice and the overthrow of Rome. They went on and on like that. It seemed they tried to disclaim every account provided in the Bible about our Lord. Then, the network piece ended in a way that was quite surprising to me. Based upon what each scholar had said throughout the show I had expected only one to say he believed Christ was resurrected. However, what surprised me was that, except for one man, all of these so-called experts did

not outright reject the claim Christ had risen from the grave. They either said they felt His resurrection did occur or else they said they were uncertain whether or not it did. Why do you suppose these men were less skeptical on this subject? I submit these men were confounded by what has always confounded unbelievers. No one who has extensively researched the early Christian period has been able to get around the fact the disciples claimed to be eyewitnesses to His death and resurrection. They reported they had seen Him alive again many times before they witnessed His ascension into heaven. The fact they were so firmly convinced He was resurrected, and published that it was so, even to the point they were willing to suffer many things themselves, including torture and death at the hands of unbelievers, is so powerful that it puzzles an otherwise unbelieving world. These scholars did not have an answer why they would have endured such sufferings in order to perpetuate a lie. They, therefore, could not dismiss the idea of His resurrection.

We ought to count the resurrection of Jesus Christ as one of the most cardinal of all Christian truths. This truth alone confirms Jesus as Lord, Christ, and the Son of God. Because of His resurrection Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2.36)." And Paul wrote about Him that He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1.4)."

All of the founders of today's world religions were men who were born, raised to adulthood, taught what they believed, and then died. Their remains are still in their graves. Our Jesus also was born, reached adulthood, taught, and then died. However, He, unlike them, arose from death. Deny the resurrection and you deny the greatest proof that Jesus, the Lord, is superior to all others who have ever lived on the face of the earth.

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(To be continued, Lord willing)

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder Morris

I feel compelled to write after reading the last issue of The Remnant. I refer to the article by A. W. Pink...The reason I feel compelled to write is the question of whether or not "God is the Author of Sin": In my opinion he foreordained for sin to come into the world. Yet some articles I have read would lead one to believe that Adam had a free will Whether or not he is the "author of Sin" is not a great worry for me. I don't need to defend him and I cant [sic] denounce him. But if God didn't predestinate sin it wouldn't be here. He created all things not some things for his good pleasure and glory. My Book tells me that "Man deviseth his way in his heart but God directs his foot steps." Also "Man cant [sic] put one foot in front of the other with out Him." Then again "For we know that all things work together for those who love Gog [sic!] who were called according to his purpose." Mr Pink also said that God never tempts man. May I ask then who does tempt us!...He taught them to pray "and lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil." Who then tempts us...sometimes I feel I need an explanation as to why one believes the way he does....Thank you for your time. A brother in Christ I hope....

The above is the gist of a two-page letter that is necessarily abbreviated because of space requirements. I would not have brought this letter to the pages of *The Remnant* at all, were it not for several considerations:

- (1) the brother's statement that "sometimes I feel I need an explanation as to why one believes the way he does";
- (2) the consideration that there might be other readers who share our correspondent's expressed sentiments; and,
- (3) As Elder H. H. Lefferts once said, "It is never for the good of the cause to keep silent on controverted points."

Regarding the first point, Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...."

I trust we are only too happy to try to answer one who asks us a reason of the hope we have in God the Savior. Paul, in a way similar to Peter's injunction, said: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2 Timothy 2.25)." I hope I might be blessed to do exactly as Peter and Paul said, and answer the brother in a spirit of meekness and a genuine fear of the Lord, without Whom I can do nothing.

First, in addressing our brother's concerns, I agree with him that God foreordained for sin to come into the world. God did so for a holy and righteous purpose. Had His desire been at all otherwise, it would have been so, even as He desired it to be, for "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth (Job 23.13)."

God's purpose for sin's entering into His creation was not at all that He has pleasure in evil, unrighteousness, or iniquity, but rather that He might demonstrate, in perfect accord with His eternal purpose and counsel, His righteous hatred of, indignation toward, and holy wrath against all sin and all that is unholy and unrighteous.

This hatred, wrath, and indignation He will display, at least in part, by either (a) the eternal confinement of all the wicked reprobates in the everlasting burnings, or (b), in the case of His elect, in their suffering Savior's graciously bearing their sins in His body on the tree. The Lord also demonstrates His abhorrence of sin in (c) countless providential judgments upon ungodly men and nations before that final day. Without sin's having entered into the world, none of these displays of God's righteousness, holiness, justice, and His wrath and anger against all iniquity, sin, unrighteousness and unholiness would be demonstrated as it has been, now is, and yet will be in this creation-system as we know it. "With God all things are possible," Christ said, and had God so willed and ordained it, He could have demonstrated His glorious attributes in some other way. But all speculation about how it might have been is useless and vain when we are given to understand that the way things are is exactly the one and only way God in His infinite wisdom and counsel saw fit to have it; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I agree with the correspondent, then, that if God did not predestinate sin, it would not be here; "for who hath resisted His will (Romans 9)?" More to the point, God would not have predestinated sin if it were not framed by His wisdom, for His purpose, counsel, and eternal will (Ephesians 1.11).

Whatever does not serve His purpose, He restrains: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain (Psalm 76.10)." The one other place the Bible refers to **the wrath of man** is James 1.20: "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we see (if we are given the eyes to see it) that there are some things that do *not* work the righteousness of God, but they praise Him, none the less.

Sin was originally the product of the devil, not of God, but even the devil could not have sinned if he had been kept by the same grace of preservation that keeps the Lord's saints from falling; God, in His eternal wisdom, arranged it thus. That work of the devil was according to God's eternal purpose, so that in His own good time He might destroy it with all its hateful effects, while He saves His people from those effects.

The other side of that coin is the answer to this question: "What, then, was God's purpose in manifesting the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?" John gives the answer:

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil* (1 John 3.8)." Had God willed otherwise, there would have been no works of the devil for the Son of God to destroy. If a tomcat or two can keep snakes out of a garden, don't you agree that the God who created gardens and snakes and tomcats could keep a serpent out of His own garden, if that had been His intent?

I agree with our correspondent where the Scriptures say of Christ, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4.11)." We are given sufficient Scriptures for us to say it is the Lord's good pleasure, at some time yet future, to destroy the works of the devil out of His creation.

None of these things "makes God the author of sin."

Second, the brother says, “*some articles I have read would lead one to believe that Adam had a free will.*” He does not say he read those articles in *The Remnant*, but it seems as if he would imply this magazine is where he read them. Why else would he bring up this topic with me without also bringing up whatever other source he might have had in mind, if there were another source?

If he read those articles in other magazines, we cannot answer for them. However, if we at *The Remnant* have published anything that implies Adam had a free will, I would like to know exactly what, when, and where it was, so that we might address and attempt to correct our poor way of expressing ourselves. You see, I do *not* believe the Scriptures teach that Adam had, or any human being has, or ever did have, a free will, either before or after the fall. I would not knowingly print anything anyone has written advancing the notion that any man has or ever did have a free will.

Third, our correspondent says, “*Mr Pink also said that God never tempts man. May I ask then who does tempt us! ...He taught them to pray ‘and lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil.’*”

Brother (I address the correspondent directly), since you asked, **Mr. Pink got his doctrine from the very Book you mention: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man (James 1.13).” Your Book you mentioned says God does not tempt any man.**

You ask who tempts us? Go again to your *Book* you mentioned: Christ was tempted of **the devil** (Matthew 4.1). He was tempted by **the tempter** (Matthew 4.3). He was tempted of **Satan** (Mark 1.13). Christ was tempted of **the devil** (Luke 4.2). That is who tempted Christ. Who tempts *us*, you ask? “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed (James 1.14).”

Our correspondent says, *He taught them to pray ‘and lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil.’* That is not what the *Book* he mentioned says. *The Book* says, “And lead **us** not into temptation, but deliver **us** from evil: (Matthew 6.13)” ; “And lead **us** not into temptation; but deliver **us** from evil (Luke 11.4).”

A major problem we observe nowadays in understanding and “interpreting” the Scriptures is the

casual way some of the brethren handle, or rather mishandle, the Scriptures. In his two-page letter, our correspondent never once correctly quoted one single verse of Scripture. Not a one. Compare *Man deviseth his way in his heart but God directs his foot steps* with Proverbs 16.9: “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.”

“*Man cant [sic] put one foot in front of the other with out Him.*” Compare that with what—Psalm 37.23? Jeremiah 10.23?

Compare *For we know that all things work together for those who love Gog [sic!]...* with “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8.28).”

I doubt that our correspondent really meant to say he loves **Gog**, that archenemy of **God** destined for final destruction, but that is what he wrote. Who is to know what or whom a correspondent loves, other than by what he says? When someone takes the time to write me such a pointed two-page letter, who am I to tell him I think he did not mean exactly what he said?

One of the serious problems we face today is the casual, careless attitude that substitutes misquotes, feelings, imaginations, flippancy, fiction, and fantasy for the Scriptures and the doctrine and gospel of Christ. People write casually in the name of their God and give no evidence they even read over what they have written. Are the gospel of Christ, His doctrine, and His Scriptures so unimportant?

The Scriptures are the infallibly inspired word of God and are our only rule of our faith and practice. They are not to be paraphrased, approximated, or taken lightly. This has always been a cardinal Baptist principle, or at least it has been until late in the twentieth century. But paraphrasing, approximations, and misquotes are all the correspondent has given us to prove his important points.

“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, **nor handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God (2 Corinthians 4.2).”

Without his actually coming out and saying so, it is evident that our correspondent wishes to *strongly imply* that it is God who tempts people to sin (*May I ask then*, he says, *who does tempt us! ...He taught them*

to pray “and lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil.” *Who then tempts us...*).

Again, we must point out that Christ did not teach them to pray “...lead **me** not into temptation but deliver **me** from evil.” He taught them to pray, *lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil*. When it comes to quoting Scripture to prove a point, a misquote is no quote at all.

There is a distinct difference between tempting one and leading one into temptation.

Illustration: Parents might lead a child past a candy-counter on the way to the grocery-store’s check-out lane; they have led the child into temptation but have neither tempted him nor desired to have him tempted.

This is a totally false illustration. It is given here only because it is so common in carnal thinking. There are many who, lacking the spiritual gift of **discernment**, would unquestioningly believe it is valid, especially if a preacher says it from the stand or if they read it in a magazine they trust. Arminians and Conditionalists love such an illustration, but it is weak and extremely deceptive, based as it is upon human reasoning. Why? For one thing, the parents probably “foreknow” the child will be tempted, but, like the Arminian-Conditionalist god, they are powerless to do anything about it. For another, the parents leading the child in the example *cannot* work *within* the child’s mind, heart, or will; but God can and does work therein, whether it be the innermost being of a saint or of a reprobate.

The Scriptures on God’s sovereignty over evil are actually much stronger than that! In Psalm 141.1, David is praying: “A Psalm of David. LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.” In verse 4 of this prayer he prays, “Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity.” David would not have prayed under divine inspiration, “Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works...,” if it were not within God’s sovereign prerogative to incline the hearts of men to evil things, to incline them to practice wicked works, if such suits His sovereign will and purpose. “He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants (Psalm 105.25).” “...and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people [Israel] (Exodus 14.5).” “...hear me, that this people

may know that thou art the LORD God, and that *Thou hast turned their heart back* again (1 Kings 18.37).”

“For the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel (Ezra 6.22).” Here, God turned the king of Assyria, who was usually the enemy of Israel, to favor those whom the Assyrians usually hated. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21.1).”

“Surely after that I was turned, I repented (Jeremiah 31.19)”; Ephraim repented after he was turned, not before.

These Scriptures are stronger than even our correspondent would put it, but they do not say God is the fountainhead of evil.

The Lord walks a finer tightrope than man can stretch for Him. Notice, pay attention, to *exactly* how Lamentations 3.31-33 is worded: “For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he **cause grief**, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For **he doth not** afflict willingly nor **grieve the children of men.**”

God causes grief, Jeremiah says, but *He does not grieve* the children of men. There is a difference between *grieving* someone and *causing* someone’s *grief*. That is perhaps too narrow a difference for any man to explain or to understand, but it is a valid difference nonetheless, a distinction the Scriptures tell us exists.

In much the same way of distinction, as I see it, there is an equally valid distinction between God’s leading someone into temptation (or inclining their heart unto evil) on the one hand, **which God’s word says He does**, and on the other hand, His actually tempting them, **which His word says He doesn’t**, or His being the source of their evil, **which His word says He isn’t**. He does not tempt anyone, and He is not the source of their evil. “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed (James 1.14).” That is just as predestinated as all the rest. David and Bathsheba was every bit as predestinated as David and Goliath. If the Lord does not preserve us, even the most godly saint, even the archangels or the highest cherubs around God’s throne are bound to sin. In every way, salvation is of the Lord, and, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not (Lamentations 3.22).”

ADDITIONAL SERIOUS PROBLEMS

I have a few serious problems with anyone who either says or implies that “God is the author of sin.”

1. One problem with that blasphemous position is, one who believes God tempts anyone needs to clearly **explain from the Scriptures how God could tempt either saint or reprobate when He says, “God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man** (James 1.13).”

2. Another problem—Scripture tells us:

(a) Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8.12, 9.5);

(b) God is pure light: “keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of 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**; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen (1 Timothy 6.14ff); and,

(c) Righteousness is associated with light, then, but, in contrast, sin is associated with darkness: “And the light shineth in **darkness**; and the **darkness** comprehended it not (John 1.5).” “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (John 3.19f).” “...when thine eye is evil, thy body also is **full of darkness**. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not **darkness**. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light (Luke 11.34ff).”

(d) But John says of God, “This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and **in Him is no darkness at all** (1 John 1.5).”

Therefore, with these considerations, anyone who says or implies that “God is the author of sin” needs to clearly **explain how darkness could proceed from the God in whom is no darkness at all**.

(e) The God we profess to worship is light; “God is light.” Why, then, would not the deity of the “*God-is-the-author-of-sin*” advocates be darkness?

(f) Now if your God is the God of darkness, and he dwells in you, and you dwell in him, consider the

words of the Light of the world: “**If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness** (Matthew 6.23)!”

3. One more serious problem: “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good (Genesis 1.31).” For God to be the author of sin, He must have taken something that was very good, which includes everything He made, and made it bad. What good thing would you say God corrupted, when did He do it, and how, and why? You must give us the Scripture for it, because that is what we are supposed to go by as our source and rule of doctrine, faith, and practice.

Rather than continue, for now I give way to the following article by Elder W. W. Hudson on the subject of “Predestination.” In it, Elder Hudson again documents the historic position we have repeatedly set forth, that the great Predestinarians of the past (such as Jerome Zanchius, Augustus M. Toplady, John Gill, Elder Gilbert Beebe, and countless others), vigorously deny the error of saying God is the author of sin.

Then, we will begin a short series by Elder Stanley Phillips, entitled, “The Determinite Counsel and Foreknowledge of God,” in which Elder Phillips documents the same truths for which we have tried to contend in this reply to our correspondent.

—C. C. Morris

From “More Work for Mr. John Wesley,” by Augustus M. Toplady

I affirm again, that God is the creator of the wicked, but not of their wickedness: he is the author of their being, but not the infuser of their sin. It is most certainly his will...to permit sin: but with all possible reverence be it spoken, it should seem that he cannot, consistently with the purity of his nature, the glory of his attributes, and the truth of his declarations, be himself the author of it. Sin, says the apostle, entered into the world by one man: meaning by Adam. consequently, it was not introduced by the Deity himself, though, without the permission of his will and the concurrence of his providence, its introduction had been impossible. Yet is he not hereby the author of sin so introduced.

PREDESTINATION

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 pleasure (Isaiah 46:9-10).

It is a mystery to even think about God. We cannot see the Lord. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).” “And he (God) said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live (Exodus 33:20).” The Lord showed Moses his back parts (see Exodus 33:22-23). We think of this in our experience during severe trials when we did not know which way to turn, but the Lord delivered us. “And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them (Isaiah 42:16).” “When thou passest thought the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee (Isaiah 43:2).” Think about it. Have you traveled that pathway? You look back and can thank and praise the Lord who delivered you out of the trials and afflictions that you experienced.

We think of the three-one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. “I am in the Father, and the Father in me (John 14:11).”

“Declaring the end from the beginning.” This covers all events from the beginning of time to the end of the world. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen 1:1).” Not in the beginning of God, because the Lord is an eternal God. “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. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. (Psalms 90:1-4).”

The following Scriptures testify of the eternity of Jesus, the Son of God:

“When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; (Proverbs 8:24-30).”

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted an his hand to heaven and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, **who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and sea, and the things which are therein**, that there should be time no longer (Rev. 10:6).”

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him (Col. 1:16).”

Job said: “His hand hath formed the crooked serpent (Job 26:13).”

“The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (Proverbs 16:4).”

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things (Isaiah 45:7).” We quote from John Gill:

God is the author of, even of all prosperity of every kind, which this word includes: evil is also from him; **not the evil of sin**; this is not to be found among the creatures God made; this is of men, though suffered by the Lord, and overruled by him for good; but the evil of punishment for sin, God’s sore judgments, famine, pestilence, evil beasts, and the sword, or war, which latter may more especially be intended, as it is opposed to peace: this usually is the effect of sin...moreover, and afflictions, adversities, and calamities, come under this name, are of God....(Emphasis supplied)

“Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil (Job 2:10)?” Again, we quote Gill:

“As all good things temporal and spiritual, the blessings of Providence, and all natural, though **not morally evil things**, even all afflictions, which seen, or thought to be evil, come from the mouth of God, and are according to his purpose, counsel, and will; they are dispensed by the hand of God, and should be kindly, cheerfully readily, and willingly received, the one as well as the other.” (Emphasis supplied)

“Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it (Amos 3:6)?” On this text Gill says: “...which is **not to be understood of the evil of sin, of which God is not the author**, it being contrary to his nature and will; and though he permits it to be done by others, yet he never does it himself, nor so much as tempts men to it. (James 1:13,14). This may be interpreted of the evil of affliction of judgment, is by the order and appointment of God, and is inflicted by him; thus evil, as well as good, comes out of the mouth and hand of the Most High, and he creates the evil of adversity, as well as make peace and prosperity.”

Lamentations 3:37-38 says: “Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?” We quote from the late Elder Gilbert Beebe:

“To us it has been a comforting thought that God has set the bounds of our habitation on the earth, and the number of our months is with Him, and our days are appointed to us as the days of an hireling, who cannot pass His bounds; but what assurance of safety would that afford, if He has left murderers and blood thirsty men or devils unrestricted by His predestinating decree? To our mind, either everything of nothing must be held in subjection to the will and providence of God. Even the wickedness of ungodly men is restricted by predestination, so that ‘the wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain.’ For death and hell can do no more than His hand and counsel have determined shall be done. **Does this make God the author of sin?** Or, in other words, does this make Him a sinner, or **charge on Him an imputation of impurity?** **By no means.** Against whom is it possible for God to sin? Is He amenable to any law above Himself? If so, by what law can He be indicted, in what court can He tried or convicted?

How preposterous! It is His eternal right to do all His pleasure, ‘Nor give to mortals an account, or of His actions or decrees.’” (Emphases supplied)

We quote from Jerome Zanchius in his book, “Absolute Predestination”: “Sin has a place in this world, which it could not have if God willed otherwise; for who hath resisted His will? (Rom 9:19). No one can deny that God permits sin, but He neither permits it ignorantly nor unwillingly, therefore knowingly and willingly... (1)... God’s permission of sin does not arise from His taking delight in it; on the contrary, sin as sin, is the abominable thing that His soul hateth, and His efficacious permission of it is for wise and good purposes. Whence that observation of Augustine, ‘God, who is no less omnipotent that He is supremely and perfectly holy, would never have permitted evil to enter among His works, but in order that He might do good even with that evil,’ *i. e.*, over-rule it for good in the end. (2) That God’s free and voluntary permission of sin lays no man under any forcible or compulsive necessity of committing it; consequently **The Deity can by no means be termed the author of moral evil**, to which He is not, in the proper sense of the word, accessory, but only remotely or negatively so, inasmuch as He could, if He pleased, absolutely prevent it.” (Some who believe that God is the author of sin are caught in the snare of the devil. See 2 Timothy 2:26—WWH)

Let us quote Genesis 45:5-8: “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither but God.” Please carefully consider these words of Joseph: “God did send me before you,” and “It was not you that sent me hither, but God.” Think about that.

At this point, we quote Gen. 50:20: “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.”

To sum up the matter concerning the Scriptures quoted: The Lord overruled the evil of Joseph’s brethren in their selling him as a slave to the Ishmaelites,

for the good of saving the lives of many during the seven years of famine.

We know the predestination of God covers all events. Let us consider this: When Joseph was in prison he was blessed to interpret the dreams of a baker and the butler who both were in prison with him. The events took place as Joseph had interpreted: The chief butler was restored to his butlership again and the chief baker was hanged. Do you believe the Lord directed the chief butler to forget Joseph (See Genesis 40:1-23)? If the chief butler had remembered Joseph, then the King of Egypt would release Joseph from prison. What would then happen? Think about that.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Matt. 10:29-30).” This Scripture proves that the predestination of God covers all details and does not leave the matter up to man for any help.

The following Scripture gives a good example of the predestination of Almighty God: “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them: and they shall afflict them four hundred years (Genesis 15:13).” This shows that the children of Israel would be in Egypt under bondage four hundred years. All the events in Joseph’s life were decreed or determined by the Lord, which led to final result that the children of Israel would be in bondage to the Egyptians.

The Lord used Moses to deliver the children of Israel from the Egyptians. Before Moses was born this command was given by Pharaoh: “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive (Exodus 1:22).” The male babies were killed when Moses was born, and they were also killed when Jesus was a baby. This Scripture shows the foreknowledge and predestination of God many years before Jesus was born: “Thus said the Lord; a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not (Jeremiah 31:15).” Please read Matthew 2:16-18 to see where this would come to pass at the appointed time: “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, accord-

ing to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

Jesus said: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world (John 18:37).” God predestinated the death of His Son before the beginning of the world:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the dragon, mentioned in verse 4], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8).”

“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (Acts 2:23).”

“For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done** (Acts 4:27-28).”

There is a great comfort in considering this Scripture: “That in the dispensation of the **fullness of times** he might gather together in one all things in Christ, **both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him** (Ephesians 1:10).” “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. **But now we see not yet all things put under Him** (Heb. 2:8).”

In closing, let us consider this expression in Isaiah 46:10, “the things that are not yet done.” This has reference to events that God has purposed or predestinated or foreknew that has not yet come to pass. “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power (Acts 1:7).”

May the Lord bless the truth and pardon the error.

—Elder Woodrow W. Hudson, Jr.
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THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

By
Elder Stanley C. Phillips

FORWARD:

In the separation of the Old School Primitive Baptists from the Conditional, or Old Line, Primitive Baptists, (1900-1940) most of the issues centered around the doctrine of predestination and the relationship of God's sovereignty to the origin and existence of sin. It is granted that here and there one could find a traditionalist having a head-knowledge of the doctrine that insisted God was the author of sin; however, this position was not that of the overwhelming number of Predestinarian Old School Primitives. Repeatedly, they denied (and still must rebut) the false charges lay against them by the progressive Old Line Primitives.

In 1900, a large assembly of Progressive Primitives met at Fulton, Kentucky to solve ecumenical and doctrinal problems dividing them from each other. In the doctrinal agreement, the whole assembly endorsed the revision of the Old London Confession of Faith, which revisions were inserted in footnotes to The Confession. Below, we cite selected paragraphs of The Confession, and their footnotes to that section.

"1. God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will, freely and unchangeably, **all things whatsoever come to pass**; yet so as thereby is God **neither the author of sin nor hath He fellowship with any therein**, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears His wisdom in disposing **all things**, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree," (Chapter III, Paragraph 1). The Old Line Primitives' footnote is: "This clearly distinguishes between God's attitude to sin and His attitude and relation to holiness. A failure to make this distinction has been a fruitful source of division and distress of our holy cause, and a failure to so distinguish between God's permissive and **overruling decree of sin** and His causative decree of holiness will ever cause distress and confusion among our people [meaning, conditional Primitives -ed.].

This distinction is expressed in the last clause of Section 4, of Chapter V: "Which also He most wisely and powerfully **boundeth and otherwise ordereth and governeth** in a manifold dispensation to **His most holy ends**; yet so as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God," etc. [This is the very position held too by the Predestinarian Old School party, and today, denied by the Old Line Primitives.] They wrote: "We believe that God is perfect in wisdom and knowledge, knowing **all things both good and evil from the beginning that would take place in time. That He is a Perfect Sovereign over all things, and that He absolutely and causatively predestinated all His works of creation and eternal salvation of His elect.**" [The Predestinarian party will agree with the statement, but does not see need to qualify it as they did in the statement "and eternal salvation of His elect". They will leave the statement as the London writers stated it.]

"1. God, the good Creator of all things, in His infinite power and wisdom, doth **uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least**, by His most wise and holy providence, **to the end for which they were created**, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy." The Old Liners reject this, since many of them do not believe in Divine Providence. They footnoted this, saying, This, "should not be construed to mean that God directs and governs all creatures and things *in all they do*, so that He brings to pass *all their acts, both good and evil*." It is difficult to understand how they are able to explain the acts of Judas, Herod, Pontius Pilate together with the Jews and Gentiles when they fulfilled all the Scriptures had foretold should come to pass in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, all of whose acts "were bad." Sadly, today, many, many of the Primitive Baptists deny these aspects of God's absolute sovereignty over all things.

The following scriptures are given as a foundation for our discussion on the relationship of God's decrees, council, determinate counsel, foreknowledge and absolute predestination of all things, whereby God is not the author of sin.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2: 23).

"For to do whatsoever Thy hand and counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

"- being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (Hebrews 6:18).

"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: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

"- and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6: 13).

An analysis of the above texts demonstrates the following things quite clearly: God's **counsel** is **determining** of all things. It is **immutable** or unchangeable. It is established in a council between more than one constituent parties of the Godhead (*the counsel of peace shall be between them both*, which necessitates a "council" to establish it). It is **infallible**—it shall come to pass. It makes use of **means**, or **instrumentalities** (*the man of the east that executes it*). It is connected to God's **foreknowledge**, which fore-knowledge is knowledge of all things beforehand. At the least, that much is evident from the above selection of Scriptures.

On a practical level, when a soul is made to know and feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin and his total lack of ability to save himself, and thus is made to cry out to God to have mercy on his poor soul, how does predestination benefit him directly? Isaiah records, *"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"* (Isaiah 65:24). There is an *absolute and certain rendezvous* between the hearing, the answer, and the call. How can He do that, unless He has **foreknowledge** of that call, and has in fact, ordained it in His own **eternal counsel**? And how *"can they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?"* If we ascribe any part of salvation to predestination, then we are forced to acknowledge that even the smallest and most minute details of it are embraced in it.

There have been many individuals, and many ways, these individuals have used to destroy the doctrine of God's foreknowledge of all things, and/or His determination of all things. The above texts can stand alone to refute any such attempts of an unregenerate mind. The plain, or self-evident truth, is, that God's determinate counsel, foreknowledge, and predestination are *inseparable* entities of the divine Mind, and are inclusive of all things that have, are, or ever will exist. While some charge the above as being "Calvinism," it is just as much the position of "Hypercalvinists," "Augustinians," and Thomists alike. Basically, it is the truth of the Christian faith, even if denied or disputed by some called "Christians." It is the foundation principle of chapter three of the major Christian confessions of faith in America. This is the topic, then, of this short treatise.

(To be continued, the Lord willing)

LIFE IN ABUNDANCE

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10.10)."

For many years we have heard this text used in support of the false doctrine of conditional time salvation. According to the position held by the followers of Conditionalism, if a child of God will perform such and such works of obedience he will receive his rewards and blessings and will enjoy a wonderfully abundant life. If you work for God he will pay you.

However, if the seeker of truth will examine this scripture within the context in which it lies he or she will discover the intended meaning of our Lord's parable. Chapter Ten of John records the account of the teaching of Christ that he is the Good Shepherd of his sheep. Within this context and meaning is found the true intent of the text under consideration.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that

entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10.1-5).”

Recorded in the previous chapter is the rebuke of Christ to the Pharisees for their treatment of the blind man whom Jesus had healed of his grievous affliction. This was characteristic of these men who would shut up the kingdom of heaven from men. “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in (Matthew 23.13).”

This parable was intended to demonstrate the true nature of these self-righteous men and to display the character of Christ and his love and care for his people.

“This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them (John 10.6).” Like so many of us today, these people did not understand the true meaning and intent of the words of Christ to them. Without a blessing from the Lord above, none are able to comprehend the spiritual truths of God.

Jesus Christ is the door of the sheep. None but sheep enter in through the door and sooner or later, according to the eternal purpose of God, they all shall enter in that blessed door.

Well may we say that it is through this gracious door the saints enter into the presence of God the Father and are enabled to partake of the gracious blessings of their inheritance stored up for them in Christ their Savior. It is through this door that all of the blessings of grace are manifested to them.

The sweet access and seasons of joy they experience in the presence of God are because of this door. The manifestation of their election and adoption, of their justification and sanctification are made known to them through this open door of grace. The felt sense of pardon, or the manifestation of the removal of the guilt of sin (if only for a season), is enjoyed by the children of grace through this sweet avenue opened for them by grace.

“All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them (John 10.8).”

Christ is referring to those false prophets and teachers of the people who were not authorized of God to speak to or lead the people. Those Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and false messiahs that had come before him to deceive the people are those of whom he speaks.

From the time in which Christ tabernacled on earth down to the present day, there have been false spiritual leaders. Though on occasion the elect can be led away by deceivers, many are not given to be snared by such lying men.

God is faithful to preserve his elect children from much that the world considers religion. This is of what Jesus speaks when he says his sheep did not hear them. Most of the little children of grace do not listen to the well-known popular evangelists, or religious leaders of the present day.

They do, however, hear and heed the voice of their beloved Savior, the door by whom they are given freedom to pass in and out of green pastures, and have access to cool refreshing waters. Sometimes in and sometimes out, these are the spiritual experiences of the children of God. None partake of these things except the sheep of his flock.

Not only does the Lord declare that he is the door or gate of the sheep, but he informs us that he is their shepherd as well. Just as the shepherd watches over and diligently cares for his poor stupid beasts, who cannot even find pasture for themselves, Christ lovingly cares and provides for his people.

The Good Shepherd is the Protector and Preserver of his sheep. Sheep are largely defenseless animals by nature and must be carefully maintained by their caregiver. Christ refers to the false prophets and leaders of the people as thieves and declares that they are extremely dangerous to the flock. “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...(John 10.10).”

Even as he declares the dangers of false religious leaders, he asserts that he has come to provide them with a life that is rich and extremely full in nature and duration. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10.10).”

The fulness of the life that Christ gives is of a spiritual nature and is only for the elect. Only the sheep receive the life of Christ in them. This life in the Spirit produces an abundance or overflowing of graces manifested in their daily manner of living. This spiritual life of Christ within the elect is the source of

all their acts of devotion and obedience. It is truly the sweetest of blessings from God.

“...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2.20).” The time here on earth is filled with many afflictions, disappointments, pains, and much grief for the children of God. Through all of the distresses of life the children of grace are made more than conquerors through Christ. For in him we have hope, and we are saved by hope (Romans 8.24).

It is Christ our Good Shepherd that gave his life for his people that through his completed and finished work upon the cross his people might be the recipients of Divine love and favor. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5.21).”

Sinners have but one hope, and that is in Jesus Christ the Savior. Though life here in time is full of doubts, fears, and burdens Christ through the power of his Spirit, enables us to press on and not to faint. We look for something more while dependent upon the promises of God. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15.19).”

While we sojourn here in the world the children of God are enabled from time to time to lay their burdens down at the feet of their Master. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you (1 Peter 5.7).” When the burden becomes too much for us to carry, and the weight far too heavy for us to bear we must from necessity lay it at the feet of our Savior. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11.28).”

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16.33).” The abundant life with which the children of grace are blessed consists not of what can be touched, tasted, or seen, but of “...righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14.17).” If a child of Jehovah is blessed with these spiritual, intangible graces, the obstacles of this present life are more easily overcome.

With Paul we may one day be blessed and enabled to say, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith (2

Timothy 4.6-7).” Yet the saints continue to look “...for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2.13).” At the present time we know nothing as we ought, but only live in that precious hope.

The hope of the children of God lies in their Savior, Christ the Lord. He is their Good Shepherd who knows them and watches over and cares for them, as his precious loved ones. The hirelings or false religious leaders are the enemies of the sheep. When trouble rears its ugly head and perilous trials press down upon the children of Christ, that false prophet will flee and abandon the little sheep for they were never his. He was not sent by God to them, but came of his own accord or by Satan’s bidding to do harm to the sheep of The Lord’s pasture by preaching false doctrine and dead works to them.

This may sound like so much foolishness to those who have never endured the vain jangling of a pastor whose interest was not for the congregation, but for his own selfish ends. When the Lord removes such a one from his position and replaces him with a true and faithful soldier of the cross, one of the Lord’s own choosing, then the difference between the two becomes clearly evident. The world has no substitute for a God-called and qualified minister of the gospel.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10.15),” he said. The Lord Jesus does indeed love his children to such a degree that he gave himself as a ransom for them. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2.14).” It is for this cause that the children of God hate sin and iniquity, and love and desire righteousness and true godliness.

Many of the self-righteous Jews to whom Christ spoke would not hear him and thus could not understand those sweet spiritual truths that flowed from his lips. His words of love distilled upon those who hated him as bitter gall in their hearts. They hated him the more and would take up stones with which to kill him. “10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you (John 10.26).”

There could be no clearer explanation of the text under consideration than what the Lord gave himself. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they

shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one (John 10.27-30)."

When the sheep of the Great Shepherd hear his voice as he speaks life to those dead in trespasses and in sins, they are never the same afterwards. They begin walking on a path in a way they know not, as they are led by the Spirit. This path may take them through many perilous lands that are full of snares, pitfalls, and ravenous beasts. Down through the valleys they journey, and across great mountaintops they tread, following the voice of their beloved wherever he may lead them.

Out of every trial he delivers them, not once but many times without fail, for he is their Shepherd and they are his beloved sheep. Their enemies are terrible yet familiar to them. Sin, self, Satan, and the world all join hands and contrive to defeat the little child of grace, but their God is greater for, "...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8.28)." This is abundant life in this present world.

Yet it does not end here in time when these bodies are laid in the grave, no matter what form the grave may take. The duration of that life that Christ gives has no end, and only increases in quality as we cast off this body of sin and death. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7.24-25)."

For those quickened into spiritual life by the power of God, who hate their sins and yet are fully aware of their sinfulness, which trust in and hope for the final deliverance from sin and misery, this world holds no charms. If not for the sweet peace and comfort that Christ gives they could not endure the tribulations of life. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14.27)."

As the children of grace live and travel through this world, they are aware that they are not of this world and therefore should not be partakers of the iniquity of this present evil age. They are painfully cognizant that they often commit acts of sin and disobedience to the revealed will of God and are brought to repentance

by the kindness and mercy of their heavenly Father. They receive the rod of correction, knowing that it is for their instruction, and leads to spiritual growth and maturity here in time. All the while they look for a heavenly city whose builder and maker is God. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11.10)."

The saints in every age, "...which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," know themselves to be pilgrims and strangers in a strange land. Their citizenship is of another country and they look and hope for their heavenly home.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11.13-16)."

By the grace and mercies of God through the finished work of Christ, we hope for the time when we may enter into that heavenly city and inherit that life which is so rich in quality and duration without end. Surely if any of the saints enter into that sweet rest it will be by the priceless worth of the glorious works of the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

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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.

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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 deprav-

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

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

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

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

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

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

11—The separation of church and state;

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

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

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

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