

THE TIE THAT BINDS

A Study in Predestination

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHERS:

A gentle warning! This little book should not be read as a routine doctrinal dissertation. Its usefulness will be overlooked if *The Tie That Binds* is weighed only to be sanctioned or rejected. This book deserves more than the skeptical eye of an intransigent reader. It is worthy of the wholesome charity accorded all works of men who seek the good of fellow believers and the glory of the Lord.

Are there flaws in this book? Certainly there are. Brantley appears to have written with a heavy heart. The message of free grace and predestination, a message that shaped all his thinking, had been commonly ignored by most. With such personal attachment to the doctrines it is natural that some prejudices would appear in the body of his commentary.

There is, however, a lustrous golden thread interlaced throughout this book which, in our opinion, ties together a number of priceless truths. Brantley called it “*The Tie That Binds*.” So enthusiastically did Brantley appeal to these truths, that not only were their resplendence enhanced, the few scattered blemishes are rendered insignificant by comparison.

The major theme of this book appears to be predestination, but with a little reflection one can see that predestination is only the thread that knits believers with resignation to God's will, peace, joy, love, and a host of other spiritual fabrics.

May the mantle of charity be bestowed upon both this book and its author. We believe the reader will accordingly find ample to bring rejoicing to his soul.

We know little of Cleve Brantley other than what he has revealed in *The Tie That Binds*. What he has revealed we have felt attracted to. Should a reader be repulsed by some objectionable expression we suggest they offer the family of God something better.

The Publishers

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PREFACE

Predestination is the law of the universe. It is why things are what they are and do what they do. Everything has design. This cannot be accidental. It is planned. It is predestinated.

Man is born. He lives. He dies. But he is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth as a flower and is soon cut down. He flees as a shadow and continues not. The only demonstrable destiny he has or is able to determine is the grave. He has no choice but to die.

Still, so far as he is able, he exercises his will and seeks his destiny. He worships his so called free will. He puts his faith in his choice even though he knows he has no choice. He knows he must die. That is his only choice and he knows it. Yet he asserts with William Ernest Henly that he is the master of his fate and the captain of his soul and thanks whatever gods may be. This he does even though he knows it to be untrue. The philosophy of free will is that of lost and ruined men. It is man's natural religion.

Man's destiny lies beyond the grave. Only God then can determine that destiny. Once a man lies down in death, only God can say whether he shall rise again. The choice is God's. Man has no choice. He can no more choose to rise from the grave than he can choose not to be born or not to die.

The argument here presented is by no means exhaustive but it is conclusive. It is based on thus saith the Lord for there only is our destiny revealed. We look in vain for any clue elsewhere.

There is nothing here for the atheist, the infidel or the unbeliever. To them we have no word to say. For them there is no gospel. God has predestinated that the wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget Him.

To the elect here is the finest of the wheat. Here is the pure blood of the grape. Here is food designed to strengthen your life and put marrow in your bones. Here is both the sincere milk of the word and the strong meat of doctrine. Here is manna from heaven. Here is the voice from heaven's throne. Here is eternity open to your sight.

Here is God upon His throne high and lifted up. Here the saints can be joyful in glory and sing aloud upon their beds. Here is the Sovereign God from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away and there is found no place for them.

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all the saints. Praise ye the Lord (Psalm 149:6-9).”

This is exactly what predestination does. It magnifies God and debases man. It is the high praises of God to the saint. It is a two-edged sword to the sinner. Be careful how you grasp it. It is sharp on both sides. Predestination

“Lays in the dust life's glory dead,
And from that ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.”

Free will is responsible for every evil in the world. All sin is the result of free will. All crime springs from free will. Free will is why Cain slew Abel. Free will is behind all murder, adultery, covetousness, theft. Men steal because they believe in the philosophy of free will, which philosophy is a denial of the right of private ownership of property. Free will is responsible for all war. Free will has produced the political and economic ideologies of Socialism and Communism. Free will has produced every false religion.

Predestination is the antithesis of free will. Free will is the doctrine of the sovereignty of man. Predestination is the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. The philosophy of predestination is the cure for all the world's ills. If believed it would solve all racial problems, rid us of all oppressive human government, abolish tyranny and war. Predestination is our only salvation in any realm. It is the tie that binds.

“Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name (I Chronicles 29:13).”

THE TIE THAT BINDS

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow, and to his girdle (I Samuel 18:1-4).”

Fair-eyed David was the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse. He was a comely lad, prudent of speech and a valiant warrior. A musician of exceptional skill, he played the harp “cunningly.” Sweet singer of Israel, poet without a peer was David, whose psalms are manna to the hungry soul to this day.

Of the eight sons of Jesse, David was chosen of God to be king of Israel. Anointed at Bethlehem in the midst of his brethren by Samuel the prophet, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him (I Samuel 16:14).” Because of his musical skill, David was called to play in Saul's presence. “And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him (I Samuel 16:22, 23).” Such is God's choice, His providence, His power over evil spirits and even such an inanimate object as a harp.

Later there was war with the Philistines and Goliath, the Philistines champion challenged the whole army of Israel. None would meet him. To a man they were all afraid. Well they might be, for Goliath was a giant whose height was six cubits and a span, ten and a half feet tall. What ordinary man can fight such a giant? But Goliath made a fatal mistake. He defied God, and the man who defies God has already sealed his doom. Whom will God choose to execute this blasphemer? David. But David is only a youth, a stripling probably not more than half as large as Goliath. David may well have been the smallest man on the battle field. But God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. David will go in the strength of God, and he who goes in God's strength is no ordinary man, he is invincible, be he ever so small and weak.

There is no strength but God's. All human strength is but exaggerated weakness, and all human knowledge is but elaborate and exquisite ignorance. Man without God is nothing. “What is man, that thou art mindful of him (Psalm 8:4)?” “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance (Isaiah 40:15).” What is a drop compared to all the waters in all the seas? What is a small dust compared to all the earth? The original is far more emphatic and startling. The original language has it that man is not so much as a drop or a small dust, but “quasi,” some little thing toward it; something not genuine but a mere appearance. As the apostle has it, “For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (James 4:14).” Not a vapor but “quasi,” a mere appearance and that only for a little time. “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity (Psalm 62:9).” Vanity is the lightest thing that can be named, it is a mere show without reality. Yet all men together are lighter than this. “All nations before him are as nothing; and are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity (Isaiah 40:17).” Without God, man is less than nothing. “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of (Isaiah 2:22)?”

In the final reckoning, man is of no account, of no consequence at all. But it seems that we must die to learn this lesson. Today man is praised by every voice, while God is cursed in the same breath. Man is exalted and God is blasphemed. Our civilization, so called, is sick with a sickness unto death. The times are out of joint; all things are backwards. We are revolted and gone. The worship of God has fallen into disrepute and the worship of man is the thing of the hour. In olden time, in the assemblies of God's people, God was praised and "prayer was want to be made" - a sweet expression meaning literally that prayer was at home. But in the churches today, prayer is not at home. Prayer today is an outcast, an orphan; a homeless angel who begs her bread where she may and finds but scant hospitality in the earth. From the altar where once the sacrifice was offered and prayer ascended like sweet incense, there is now heard only the raucous voice of the praise of men. The fire that once burned upon the altar, consuming the bloody sacrifice, is now ashes, cold and gray. O earth! Earth! Earth! Hear the word of the Lord. Our only hope is that we shall come to see that man is nothing and God is all, Christ is all! When we shall realize that the pride of our heart has deceived us, then perhaps, we shall again encompass the altar with tears, stain it with the blood of our broken hearts and praise God alone in the humility of faith.

Why is David calm and unafraid in the face of this fearful foe, while all around him are veteran warriors, tried in the crucible of many a fierce conflict, who has acquitted themselves bravely and honorably on many a field of battle, but who now stand trembling and afraid? What made the difference? David feared God. The man who fears God has nothing else to fear; but the man who fears not God is the abject victim of every fear, and is therefore a craven coward. Bravery is moral, not physical. Mere physical bravery is blasphemy and always suffers defeat. Moral bravery, on the other hand, is worshipful, knowing that the only real strength and valor comes from God alone. Only the fear of God can make a man truly brave and only such bravery is victorious. Such a man always says, "By strength shall no man prevail (I Samuel 2:9)." But, says he, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea (Psalm 46:1,2)." "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid (Psalm 27:1)?" "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Hebrews 13:6)."

"Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary (Isaiah 8:13-14)." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning [margin - principal part] of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding (Proverbs 9:10)." "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence (Proverbs 14:26)." "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death (Proverbs 14:27)." "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil (Proverbs 19:23)." "For he that feareth God shall come forth of them all (Ecclesiastes 7:18)." "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God (Ecclesiastes 8:12,13)." "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matthew 10:28)."

Fear is the strongest emotion we know and it plays a far more important role in our lives than does reality. Reality scarcely moves us. We become inured to reality. Because it is commonplace, reality excites in us no sense of wonder and awe. We are complacent before the commonplace. We ignore reality; but no man can ignore fear; no man can be complacent when fear seizes upon his heart, no man can be unconcerned in the presence of fear.

Fear is the supreme emotion, out of which all emotion rises. Fear is an integral part of all emotion,

passion, thought and action. Always, in all things, we are motivated by fear, we are governed by fear. Account for it how we may, fear attaches to every facet of our nature, every circumstance of life, every thought, word, action, deed. No man escapes fear. Men talk about freedom from fear as though they could attain it. But the fact remains that men are never free from fear because such a thing is impossible.

There is fear, and there is fear. There is the fear of man, and there is the fear of God. These are entirely different. The nature of fear is according to the object of that fear. "The fear of man bringeth a snare (Proverbs 29:25)." But, "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Who does not see the difference? The fear of man is a craven thing. It paralyzes men, causing apprehension, distrust, disquiet, trepidation, terror, panic, and dismay. The fear of man is the opposite of the fear of God; and the fear of God is the antithesis of the fear of man. What is the fear of God? The fountain of life, the source out of which life issues. The fear of God is life's one fountain, the one spring where life's thirsts may be quenched. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant (Psalm 25:14)."

The fear of God is the secret of life, the one key to the whole mystery of the universe. Not only so, but it is an integral part of all evangelical experience. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (II Corinthians 7:9-11)."

Such is the apostle's description of repentance. One of the Greek words translated repentance in the New Testament, literally means a change of mind. Because men fail to comprehend the" total significance of this word they have founded a completely false doctrine of repentance upon it, one that is almost universally accepted by modern Christianity. Repentance does not mean that men simply change their minds. As a matter of fact, no man can change his mind. Men can and do change their opinion, but only God can change men's minds. Men may change their fancy or the object of their eye, but not their mind. The expression, "they changed their minds (Acts 28:6)," is in the original, "they changed," nothing more.

Repentance has nothing to do with opinion. Repentance has to do with life. We do not reason to repentance. We are not educated to repentance. We do not think to repentance. Repentance is moral, not intellectual; spiritual, not mental. There is no mental process to repentance. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8)."

What then is repentance? It is total regeneration. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19)." "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts (Hebrews 8:10)."

We sorrow to repentance. It is not just any sorrow that works repentance, but godly sorrow, or as the margin reads, a sorrow according to God - a sorrow from God, the consequence of His dealing with us - a sorrow wrought by God and not by ourselves. The apostle says in effect, it was not I that made you sorry, it was not the world, it was not yourselves; it was God, for you were made sorry after a godly sort and sorrowed in a godly manner. Repentance is not man's work. It is God's work and His alone.

Men repent after regeneration, not before. "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth (Jeremiah 31:19)."

Those who do not fear God have not repented of their sins, nor have they believed to the saving of their souls. "There is no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:18)." This is the infallible mark of unrepentant and unbelieving souls. The fear of God in men is sure evidence that they are regenerate, and have repented, and do believe. Said the repentant thief on the cross to the unrepentant one, "Dost thou not fear God (Luke 23:40)?" "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Hebrews 11:7)." In both cases, one of repentance, and one of faith, the moving cause and motivating factor was the fear of God. The fear of God is the fountain of life, the source of all things that pertain unto life and Godliness. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; it has a definite relation to life. There can be no life without it.

Where is the fear of God today? Is this not what is wrong with us? Is it not the whole story? It is. We, of the present generation, are so enamored with the idea of our own importance and so taken with the philosophy of the dignity of man that we no longer fear God. We have therefore cast off all restraint, broken all bounds and trespassed all divine law. We are presumptuous, self-willed, unruly. We are on the verge of total ruin because we no longer fear God.

Irreverence is the characteristic of the hour, and is the one word that accurately and truthfully describes the attitude of the modern church. In the ancient churches there was a vacant chair in which no one dared sit; and they always counted one more than their visible number. The person for whom the chair was reserved, and the unseen presence counted, was God the Holy Ghost. Such is now regarded as superstition totally unworthy of sophisticated minds. Sophistication will yet kill the present generation. Men go to church today to patronize God, not to worship him. The majority of church going people, judging from their attitude, believe that in attending church they are conferring a great honor upon God. Church attendance is an excuse for a fashion parade and a show of pride. Men go to church to be entertained and amused. They insist that the preacher be a good mixer, an entertainer, a consummate actor and a pulpit clown. That preacher who dares to declare the gospel of Christ is considered hopelessly out of date and woefully behind the times. Said Jesus Christ, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you (Acts 1:8)." The only power the church can possibly have is the power of holiness. How is the church to have this power? "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (II Corinthians 7:1)."

There is no substitute for holiness and it can be perfected only in the fear of God. Poor church! She has fallen into the snare of the fear of man. She has laid aside her fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, and donned the scarlet robe of the harlot. She seeks to please men. She loves the praise of men more than the praise of God. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls (James 1:21)."

The one needful and essential thing in the church of Jesus Christ is the fear of God. Everything else is superfluous, and not merely unneeded and unnecessary, but a superfluity or naughtiness, and outright wickedness. The church has but one Lord. "Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men (I Corinthians 7:23)." "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10)." Those who please men cannot

please God for “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15).”

Today the church serves men, pleases men, fears men. She has lost her courage, strength, hope and faith. She is a moral weakling and a craven coward. Why? Because she fears not God. Not only does the modern church not fear God, she even chides the few who do fear Him. Proudly she says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (I John 4:18).” Thus she seeks, not only to shame those who fear God; but also tries to make God a party to her irreverence and responsible for it.

There is no fear in love; that is, no fear of man, no tormenting fear, no spirit of bondage, no cowardly fear, but there most certainly is the fear of God. Perfect love is perfect fear. Love can never rise higher than fear, adoration, awe, veneration, dread and worship. In fact, it is impossible to worship without fear. Christ is ever our example, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:7-9).” The fear of God is the fountain of life for it is that fear that compels our obedience, wings our prayers, inspires our faith, perfects our love and anchors our hope. This is the tie that binds for, “They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations (Psalm 72:5).”

The fear of God delivers from all other fear. “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4).” Perfect love casteth out fear, ergo, perfect fear is perfect love. Wouldst thou be made perfect in love? Then seek the perfect fear of God. Through that fear comes deliverance from our fears and therefore perfect love.

The fear of God is the perfect bond. It will hold in the dark valley of death. Those who fear God will, in death's hour, be able to say with perfect confidence, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).” Comfort - the word means to hold together in strength. In death we shall be weak; in our last sickness we shall grow weaker and weaker until at last we grow too weak to draw another breath; the death dews shall gather upon our brow and we shall paler grow into colorless death; the light in our eye shall fade in inchoatic darkness; weaker, paler, stiller shall we grow in that helpless weakness and languish into complete stillness and strengthless death; down shall we go to the “land of darkness and shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness (Job 10:21,22).”

What then! Yea, friend, what then? “And, he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness (II Corinthians 12:9).” In the complete weakness of death we shall have the complete strength of our Savior and be comforted, held together in strength, omnipotent strength, not our own but God's; we shall traverse the dark valley of death, as Jacob, leaning upon the top of God's staff. (See Hebrews 11:21.) Thus with our staff we shall cross over Jordan and not be divided but become two bands, angels, and men redeemed by blood. (II Samuel 1:23; Genesis 32:10.) We shall be ruled, comforted, held together in strength in the hour of death by the “rod of iron,” which from the divine side is the unbending, inflexible purpose and omnipotent will of God, and from the human side is the fear of God. (Psalm 2:8,9; Revelation 2:27; 19:15.)

“Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with

iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow up out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 10:33; 11:2).”

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).” “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me (Jeremiah 32:38-40).” “And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant (Ezekiel 20:37).”

What is the bond of the covenant? “I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.” Will the bond hold? How long will it endure? “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever (Psalm 19:9).” How strong is this bond? “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil (Hebrews 6:17,19).” God's counsel and oath are immutable. Because they cannot change, the bond of the covenant holds. He confirmed it by an oath. He made salvation absolutely sure. He interposed himself:

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed his precious blood.”

Men who do not fear God can neither serve nor worship Him. “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling (Psalm 2:10,11).” “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple (Psalm 5:7).” “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28,29).” “Let us have grace.” What grace? The grace of fear. This grace is essential for our God is a consuming fire and the only way we can serve Him acceptably is with reverence and godly fear. Is the god of the masses today a consuming fire? Do men serve that god with fear? Hardly. Today men's hearts are failing for fear of looking after those things that are coming on the earth, but whose heart fails for the fear of God.

But, men say, that is legalism, all that belongs under the law and to a bygone age. We are told that under the gospel dispensation we need not fear God. Men say, God is love, the gospel is grace, therefore we need not fear God. Thus men betray their utter ignorance of the nature of both love and the gospel. Love is not a weak sentimentality or a maudlin emotion. Love is justice, judgment, righteousness, law. Love is not one passion but all passion in one. Love is a flame, a consuming fire.

Is that which is preached as the gospel today really the gospel? “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountain of waters (Revelations 14:6,7).”

The gospel is urgent. The angel flew. He flew in the midst of heaven. The gospel is from heaven and is centered in the throne of God. The gospel is the epitome, the sum total of all the attributes of God. It is everlasting. It did not originate in time. It originated with God and lives in eternity with Him. Like salvation, the gospel has no beginning nor ending. The gospel evermore has been and evermore shall be. It was preached to the antediluvian world. (See I Peter 3:17-20.) It was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). It has always been preached. What gospel? There is but one. The law is the gospel and the gospel is the law. They are not two separate things. Neither can be without the other. What did the angel say? Fear God! This is the very first word of the gospel! It is synonymous with the first word Jesus preached and that word was repent! What said the angel next? Give glory to God! Why? For the hour of His judgment is come, not coming, it has already come. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15)."

The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, futurists and dispensationalists notwithstanding. He serves no useful purpose who announces a gospel to a coming age. The gospel is now and there may very well be no coming age. Time may cease any moment. We preach a present gospel for the present moment to the present generation. Like David, we can serve our own generation. (Acts 13:36.) But we cannot serve our own generation by preaching a future gospel, a postponed kingdom and a disappointed Lord; by these things we can serve no one. "Now is the judgment of this world (John 12:31)." The judgment of the great white throne is only the consummation of the judgment that even now is, yea, the judgment that has ever been. God is not limited by time. He is eternal and so are all His acts. His gospel is everlasting and so is His kingdom. When God sets up a kingdom in time He does so only because He has already set it up in eternity. When He saves a soul in time it is only because He purposed it in eternity. The Lord reigneth. There is no moment of time in which He abdicates His throne. There is no atheistic spot of ground in the universe. God rules all things absolutely in every moment of time and eternity.

The everlasting gospel is the gospel of present judgment, present repentance, present faith and a present kingdom. It is the gospel of present salvation from present sin for present people. It is everlasting; past, present, future. Dispensationalists have divided time into ages as though God worked sometime right handed and otherwhile left handed. This is a palpable error. Like Himself, God's purpose changeth not. It is the same in all ages. Dispensationalism ignores the past and has no present. It has no answer to the burning question of present need. It is only a fanciful dream without any basis of fact.

The gospel is present reality for present need. It preeminently inculcates the fear of God. It invokes the worship and glorification of God as the chief duty of man. It demands that God be acknowledged as creator and sovereign Lord of the universe. What a commentary upon modern preaching! Where is the pulpit who thunders out the fear of God and His absolute sovereignty? This modern gospel of church programs, tithing, materialism, will-worship and a human choice that dictates to God is not the everlasting gospel. It is another gospel which is not another, but a perversion of the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6,7). "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8)." It is evident from Acts 13:16, that the apostle Paul regarded those who fear God as the only subjects of gospel address who would respond. Certainly it is true that only "unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings (Malachi 4:2)." "And if ye call upon the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear (I Peter 1:17)."

Being enabled of God, David slew Goliath. "He that feareth God shall come forth of them all." The outcome was settled before the battle was joined. "And when Saul saw David go forth against the

Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite (I Samuel 17:55-58).”

“And it came to pass (I Samuel 18:1).” How often we come upon this expression in Scripture and how often in the course of every day events are we compelled to use it. Things do come to pass and this is an every day experience with us all. Why do things come to pass? This is the basic question of life.

God is sovereign in all His ways. All human ties, bonds and relationships are divinely appointed and formed. God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass and nothing else can or does come to pass. “Who is he that sayeth, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not (Lamentations 3:37).” God has predestinated all according to His purpose and worketh all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:3-11). It is not man's choice but God's will that determines events. “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. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28-30).”

It is impossible to mistake the meaning of this Scripture. It is useless to argue about it. Men are saved according to God's purpose and nothing else. “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 (II Timothy 1:9).” “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).” “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18).”

“Whose son art thou?” The son of Jesse. What Jesse? Jesse the Bethlehemite. Who determined that fact? Who gave this particular son of Jesse those characteristics of soul and traits of character that made him David? What choice had either Jesse or David or anyone else in this matter? None. David had no choice about being born. None of us do. Jesse had no choice as to whether his son would be a wise man or a fool. No parent does. David - the name means beloved. God alone determines whether any child shall be beloved, lovely, or unlovely. This is a hard doctrine; who can hear it? Men do not make themselves. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no self-made man. This is a profound truth and one which we must come to know or else we shall be forever ignorant of the true meaning of anything.

Why is David the son of Jesse, and not just any Jesse, but Jesse the Bethlehemite? You say, this is mere accident of birth. Is it? “Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew (Job 3 8:28)?” Is God actually the Father, the source of all things; and does that fatherhood extend to the rain and all things whatsoever, even the pearly drops of dew? Then there are no accidents of birth or otherwise.

Who determines that we are born to particular parents, at a particular place and a particular time? This is the case and none can deny it. Why were we not born hundreds of years ago or wait hundreds of years, why live now? Why are some born to poverty, others to wealth; some in a palace, others in a hovel; some to one lot in life, some another? Why are we born at a certain spot on this earth and not another? Why be born at all? Do we each have a particular life all our own to live amid particular circumstances, at a definite time? Is our life ordered by a sovereign God who controls all things, or are we the victim of blind, relentless fate? Are we in the world for a reason, or is our presence here accidental? The exponent of free will cannot answer any of these questions because he has no

sovereign God.

“Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth (Job 7:1).” “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die (Ecclesiastes 3:1,2).” “My times are in thy hand (Psalm 31:15).” “The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar out of the dunghill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail (I Samuel 2:6,8,9).”

“By the grace of God I am what I am (I Corinthians 15:10).” This is everlastingly and unequivocally true. This is the doctrine of predestination stated in the simplest terms. Ponder this statement well. Any man who believes he is what he is by the grace of God believes in predestination. Every man must admit that he is the product of the sum total of everything that ever happened to him; in other words, we are the product of our experience, account for that experience how we may. Predestination is a fact, not a theory. No amount of unbelief or denial of this truth will change the fact of predestination. We are predestinated. That is a fact and a fact of experience. If the doctrine of predestination were contrary to human experience, in other words, if it were not a fact, the opponents of the doctrine might have a point. But no man can successfully deny fact or explain it away. We may ignore a fact, but we cannot contradict a fact with any degree of success.

By the grace of God we are born white or black, red or brown. By the grace of God we are born now instead of some other time in the world's history. By the grace of God we are born to or attain any particular station in life. By the grace of God we are born rich or poor, high or low, better or worse. It is by the grace of God that we are born at all; and it is by the grace of God that we continue to live. “Not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world (II Corinthians 1:12).” “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue to this day (Acts 26:22).” “Which holdeth our soul in life (Psalm 66:9).” “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind (Job 12:10).” “And the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified (Daniel 5:23).”

It is an indisputable fact that all men differ though they be wonderfully alike. Brothers differ as witness Cain and Abel. Twins differ though they appear identical. All of Jesse's eight sons differed and so do all our children. All men are different. What made one of Jesse's sons Eliab and another David? Why this marvelous individuality among men? Science cannot explain it, man's wisdom cannot account for it. Organically all are alike and because of this science is forced into assuming the absurdity and fostering the falsehood that all are alike. To account for the difference man's ingenuity has coined the word personality, which word expresses only part of the truth. Personality is the product of individuality. What does make all men different? Is it not quality of soul? Where does this come from if not from God?

What makes our children different from other children, and what makes our children dearer to us than others? We say, they are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, blood of our blood. True. But this is not why our children are different nor why they are dear to us. In this respect they are no different than other children. Men do not differ essentially in blood, bone and flesh; they differ in quality of soul. (See Acts 17:26; I Corinthians 15:39.) Why are our own children different and why are they so dear to us? They are kindred in soul. This is the only true brotherhood of man. The only true kinship is the kinship of souls. This is why some people are dearer to us than others. Our souls are knit together. All other bonds may be broken but this tie holds forever. This is the tie that binds.

There is a field in which all men,
However humble in birth or position,
Still may achieve renown;
The kinship of souls and divine intuition,
Though scorned by the world as a worthless birthright,
Bequeths a magnificent crown.

All men are not brothers. They alone are brothers whom God has made so. Brotherhood is spiritual. "Whose son art thou?" Let us hear the supreme word. "Saying, what think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions (Matthew 22:42-46)."

This settles the whole thing. This resolves all the questions of life. Here is the explanation of the whole mystery of relationship both human and divine. David calls Christ Lord in spirit! "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 12:3)." Here then is the relationship that settles all, both for time and eternity. This is the fellowship of the Spirit, the kinship of souls, the tie that binds.

Why knit Jonathan and David's souls together? Such a thing is humanly impossible. No man can knit his soul with the soul of another; only God can knit souls. We may knit socks, sweaters and various articles of clothing; we may weave cloth, metal and material things, but there our knitting ends. Man's hands are far too clumsy to knit the delicate threads of the soul and even if he could do such knitting, the soul is of such precious nature that it could not be entrusted in his hands for man corrupts, pollutes, defiles and taints all that he touches, even the air that he breathes and the ground he walks on.

You say, my soul is mine and I will do with it what I please. I beg your pardon! That soul is not yours nor is it in your power to dispose of it. "God is the Father of all spirits (Hebrews 12:9)." "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4)." God has never relinquished his title to the soul of any man. We have our souls by right of stewardship, not ownership. God has the ownership and the disposal. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord (Proverbs 16:33)."

What man can touch a soul? What man can see the delicate threads of the soul well enough to trace the warp and woof? This thing is out of man's hands, thank God! We have a common and very graphic expression that will help us here. "Tend to your own knitting." Is this not our whole trouble? Do we not try to do God's knitting for Him? Hands off! God will do His own knitting.

Can a man not knit his soul with the soul of Jesus Christ if he choose? Absolutely not. Why? Because no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. He must be kindred in soul. His spirit must be one with the Spirit of Christ. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9)." Who can form this union of spirits, this knitting of souls save He who is the Holy Spirit, the sacred bond, the final, sure, one and only everlasting seal? "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13)." "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Corinthians 1:22)." "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit (II Corinthians 5:5)."

When God knit Jonathan and David's souls together, cannot that tie be broken? No. But Jonathan is destined to die in the battle of Gilboa! Will his death break the bond? No. How will his Death affect

David? He will grieve. He will mourn. He will know bitter anguish and lonely sorrow. He will say, "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women (II Samuel 1:25,26)." "My brother Jonathan." Even in death! But Jonathan is not his brother at all. He is not even a relative! Ah, how is Jonathan David's brother? Their souls are knit together!

How unlikely this was to happen. David was a shepherd lad, a son of poor parents of no earthly fame or renown. Jonathan was a prince, a king's son, born to nobility and wealth, even luxury. How unlikely that they should meet, and meeting, become brothers, friends! Who controls such meetings? Who forms such relationships? How is it that the moment Jonathan sees David he loves him as his own soul? How is it that he loves him so much that he literally gave him the shirt off his back? Why is it that Jonathan will defy his own father, risk shame and disgrace, even death, for David? What is this thing for which Jonathan will break every tie of flesh and blood and stand against his own family, incurring their displeasure and wrath? What is it that impels him to brave the scorn and contumely of the whole world, stand with David through thick and thin, in peace and war, for better or for worse, by day and by night, as long as life shall last? Their souls are knit together! This is the one foundation of all true friendship, kinship, fellowship, relationship. This is the tie that binds.

Why will a lad choose a maid, and she choose him, and hand in hand they will stand together at the holy altar, and in firm unhesitating tones repeat the solemn vows, promising that forsaking all others, they will take each other for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in poverty or wealth, and will love, honor and cherish each other as long as they both shall live? What keeps them together through all adversity, causing them to cling to each other in spite of their many faults and imperfections, binding them together in all their ways through all their days? What is it that holds even when their pathway is lightning struck and thunder riven? What is it that holds in sorrow's deep sea, through oceans of tears, in troubles dark and lone, and burdens heavy enough to sink the whole world; that binds even closer in death's sad and pale presence, reaching across the deep grave where they lay their own child, offspring of their love and dearer than life itself?

What is it that after the long years together, when the shadows lengthen and the light grows dim, when death sits enthroned on the wan and fevered brow, causes them to plead with dying breath, do not separate us now, lay us side by side and let us be in death as we were in life, together? Why this dying plea to sleep together in the dust, to be together in the cold and silent tomb? Do they not know indeed that this tie can never be broken? Does not such a wish anticipate the resurrection? Does not such love span all worlds?

Charity "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth (I Corinthians 13:7,8)." Why stand weeping when death comes as though all were gone and all were ended? Death is not an ending. Death is a beginning, an exodus, a departure to fairer worlds on high. We lose nothing in death. Death is a far better state than life. To die is gain. Death is not separation in the sense of loss. Death is perfect peace, perfect rest and perfect union. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest (Job 3:17)." Death can never separate us from those we love. Why? Our souls are knit together! Who ties that bond? How strong is that bond? Can death sever it? Or hell? Or anything? Or everything? Ah, "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it (Song 8:6,7)." "A most vehement flame." Then, "Even in our ashes live their wonted fires." Love is eternal, love is divine; love can no more be destroyed than can God. Love is the tie that binds and holds forever.

That family circle that God has joined,
Through chill death here may be broken;
But it meets again in a better land
Where the hearth nevermore is forsaken.

Yes, friend, love is the holy bond that binds in life and in death says,

Each day, side by side we have lived in our life,
God grant it shall be in our dying,
By His loving grace locked in tender embrace
Thus depart this world, and no crying!

United in life, still united in death,
In the grave and heaven's bright morning,
Let us leave the world as we lived in the world
Together, with no pain of parting!

You say, that is pure sentiment. So it is. It is also pure fact. Are marriages really made in heaven? Yes. Who married Adam and Eve? Was that union divinely appointed and formed? Did not God take Eve out of Adam's side, near his heart? "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:23,24)." She shall be called "Ishshah" for she was taken out of "Ish." The Hebrew "Ishshah" means wife, every wife, woman, every woman that is a wife. "Ish" means husband, every husband; man, every man that is a husband. These words are variously translated in the English Bible but always, as here, they carry the spiritual meaning "Ish" being translated the spiritual man at least once. What is the significance? Spiritually speaking, it means that every wife is taken from every husband's side and is therefore heart of his heart and soul of his soul. God's words are spiritual and we should not and must not attach carnal meanings to spiritual words. We rob ourselves and impoverish all mankind by attaching small meanings to God's great words.

"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Matthew 19:4-6)." This is true marriage. Husband and wife are not two people; they are one. Their souls are knit together and, henceforth, they are in interest and destiny one.

Marriage is a divine institution. Divorce for any reason is not right. No court in the world has the right to grant divorce. "What God has joined together let not man put asunder" is the decree from the highest court from which there can be no appeal and it forever forbids any court the right to grant divorce. But, you say, divorce is legal. That does not make it right. Many things are legal that are not right. All the laws of men are made for the primary purpose of legalizing wrong doing. Man cannot legislate a righteous law. Man can legalize wrong but he cannot legislate No law of man is right that does not embody the law of God, for God's law alone is righteous and every righteous law in the verse is His.

Those who regard marriage as a divine appointment will never be in divorce courts for they will have neither reason nor occasion be. "They say unto him, why did Moses then command to give writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so (Matthew 19:7,8)."

“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4).”

Marriage without divine sanction is nothing more than legalized prostitution, whoremongering, and adultery. Practically all the evils that beset the present day home is the result of entering into marriage without divine consultation and sanction. This is the prime factor behind all juvenile delinquency and in all probability the greatest single reason for all crime. Certainly it is the one great reason for the heartache, sorrow and woe in the homes of children of men. In this area, probably more than in any other, we seek to do God's knitting for Him. Let every man be warned whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Any marriage, or any covenant of man whatever, entered into without divine sanction is doomed.

God knit Jonathan and David's souls together. Death did not sever that bond. Grief, anguish and sorrow did not break it. Will time? Jonathan is dead. Will not David in time forget? Will not the swift passing years erase the memory of Jonathan from David's heart? No, friend. Sixteen years has Jonathan been sleeping in his grave when David says, “Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake (II Samuel 9:1).” “For Jonathan's sake.” Then David has not forgotten! Do you ask why? Hear the sweet answer. Their souls are knit together. “Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.” He loved his neighbor as himself; a thing none can do until God knits their souls together. Such love is timeless. Such love is reciprocal. It is impossible to love someone as your own soul without that love being returned. Such love is spiritual. It is a union of souls which nothing can sever. Such love is charity.

“Charity never faileth.” She is the fairest of the angels. Charity is humble. In any circumstance, charity says, “Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” In every trial and exigency, charity says, “not my will, but thine, be done.” Charity is no free willer, she believes in no choice of her own, no will of her own; she trusts a sovereign God. Charity does not behave herself unseemly. She is not easily provoked. She is unselfish and unassuming. Charity “rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep.” She thinks no evil. She is content. Charity condescends. She bends. She stoops on hovering over the cradle, the sick bed, the dark trouble, the anguished sorrow and the lonely grave. She is the angel of mercy and comfort. Charity bears all things as the roof bears the storm. She blesses and curses not. Charity abides. Once having taken her abode in the soul, she never leaves that dwelling. Charity is no child of time, no native she of the unregenerate heart or this dark earth. Charity is of God's own giving, the love knot of God's own knitting. Charity is the perfect bond, the tie that binds and holds forever. “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:14).”

Have we charity? In our homes, our churches, our business, our life, have we charity? This is the burning question. It is the only question. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing (I Corinthians 13:1-3).”

Without charity we are nothing and what we do profits nothing. Charity never fails. Without charity everything fails. It is possible to have all the gifts here mentioned and not have charity. Awful possibility! Is this not what has happened to us today?

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not

that thou art wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17).” There can be no doubt that this is the true condition of the church today. This is not man's judgment. It is the appraisal of the church's Lord. He whose eyes are as a flame of fire has rendered this verdict. Incredible, you say. It is even more incredible than you think. It is true. Ah, dark, dark mystery, how is the gold become How is the most fine gold changed! What blasphemy is this the church to rise up in the face of her Lord and say, I am rich! is not only incredible, it is impossible! The church can never be rich. She is bought. She is a purchased possession. The price? “To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).” The church is God's - God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. He, the divine God, bought the church with His own blood; she owes Him all, she is utterly dependent upon God, without Him she is nothing, has nothing and can do nothing. How then can the church be rich?

“And as for thy nativity, in the day that thou wast born thy navel wast not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out into the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou was in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live (Ezekiel 16:4-6).”

Pride and piety are mutually destructive. Only “By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life (Proverbs 22:4).” Thou fool! Thou poor, blind, miserable, wretched fool! Thou blind mole, burrowing in the earth, tunneling in the darkness; thou to whom the light is as death, calling thy burrows castles, thy heaped up mounds of dust, riches! “Evil pursueth sinners (Proverbs 13:21).” “Sorrow tracketh wrong as echo follows song, on, on, on!” Do not men reap what they sow? Where now is your accident? Where now is your accidental world, thou atheist? The Lord reigneth. You thought that was a mere phrase of the poet, a trick play upon words by the preacher; you will yet learn that it is the truth.

“Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” Increased with goods - of what kind, of what value? “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches (Proverbs 13:7).” What are goods? Nothing. Right cannot be pluralized. Seek good, not goods. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. It is quality that counts, not quantity; possession, not possessions. Besides, from whence came thy goods, or anything thou hast? “What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it (I Corinthians 4:7).” Wretched, poor, miserable blind, naked church! “Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged (Isaiah 51:1).”

What was thy beginning? An unwashed infant cast out into open field, unwanted, polluted and dying in thine own blood. You say, the church is the salt of the earth, the light of the world. So it is. But thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all! Who into thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live? Who salted thee thou mightest be the salt of the earth? Who washed thee from filthiness and cleansed thee from the pollution of thine own blood? Who clothed thee with the garments of his own righteous-swaddled thee in fine linen, pure and white? Who placed the crown of purest light upon thy head that thou mightest be the light world, a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid. What if the salt hath lost its savor? What if the crown be fallen from thy head, eye be evil, thy whole body be full of darkness? “If therefore light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness (Matthew 6:23)!”

You had not thought of that. You say, that is unthinkable, that impossible. But it is not only possible, it

is a fact, it is now even Thus saith the Lord.

“The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their musick. The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim (Lamentations 5:14-17).”

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting: Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isaiah 1:1 1-18).”

“And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Herein lies the tragedy of all tragedies, we do not know our true condition. “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider (Isaiah 1:3).” It is God's people that know not and consider not. Knowing not, we care not. Why is it that we do not know? There are none so blind as they who will not see. We love to apply the Scriptures to others but we will never allow that God is speaking to us. There are those who will read these lines and say, that is all past, it was spoken to Israel in a bygone age and therefore has nothing to do with us. Thou fool! No word of God is past. “That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past (Ecclesiastes 3:15).”

How many sermons we hear upon the text “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” and always the Scripture is applied to alien sinners! But the Scripture has nothing to do with alien sinners, it has to do with God's people. It is not others but you to whom God speaks. Thou art the man! The word “though” is emphatic; your sins are as scarlet, your sins are red like crimson; not other people's sins, yours. There is no doubt about it. No man has correctly read the Bible who has not seen that every word is addressed to him. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; whom I am chief (I Timothy 1:15).” I am the chief of sinners. That is the faithful saying; accept it as your own, make it your own. Read the Scriptures and see sin in the first person, singular.

Most men do not believe they are the chief of sinners. They believe they are the chief of saints. This is the peril of every man the extreme peril of the churches today. Dispensationalism is almost universal among the churches in our time and its teaching, its whole tendency promotes this self righteousness. The dispensationalist thinks the Scriptures are to be divided. Did not Paul counsel Timothy to divide the word of truth? The dispensationalist confidently affirms that he did. But Paul said no such thing! What he did say was “rightly dividing the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).” Between dividing and rightly dividing is a difference longer than the earth and broader than the sea. To divide is to separate into parts. To rightly divide is not to separate into parts at all, but to obtain the correct quotient! To rightly divide is to gain the right answer! The Scriptures cannot be divided, cannot be broken. (John 10:3 5.) The Bible cannot be separated into parts. Part of the Bible is not the Bible. Because men divide

the word of truth, separate it into parts, they cannot gain the proper quotient and the right answer. To begin on a false premise is to be wrong all the way. Dividing the word of truth is a false premise and those who do so are wrong everywhere.

Why are we so taken with goods? Why are we so enamored what we call riches? Do we not know that these things are nothing, that they all perish with the using, that they shall all one day be burned? What of that day when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth and all its works be burned up? Was not Wordsworth right when he wrote:

“The world is too much with us;
Soon and late
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers”?

And is it not true that:

“All the wealth of the world, all its gold and each jewel
Molten in the fires shall be,
The circumambient flame for which all will be fuel,
All elements, yea, even the sea?”

Because we think he said it all, and said it better than we can, we pen here the words of Geoffrey Chaucer, 1340-1400:

“Ballade of Good Counsel”

Flee from the crowd and dwell with truthfulness:
Suffice thee with thy goods though they be small:
To hoard brings hate, to climb brings giddiness;
The crowd has envy, and success blinds all;
Desire no more than to thy lot may fall;
Work well thyself to counsel others clear,
And truth shall make thee free, there is no fear!

Torment thee not all crooked to redress,
Nor put thy trust in fortune's turning ball;
Great peace is found in little busy-ness;
And war but kicks against a sharpened awl;
Strive not, thou earthen pot, to break the wall;
Subdue thyself, and others thee shall hear;
And truth shall make thee free, there is no fear!

What God doth send, receive in gladsomeness;
To wrestle for this world foretells a fall.
Here is no home, here is but wilderness:
Forth, pilgrim forth; up, beast, and leave thy stall!
Know thy country, look up, thank God for all:
Hold the high way, thy soul the pioneer,
And truth shall make thee free, there is no fear!

Therefore, poor beast, forsake thy wretchedness;
No longer let the vain world be thy stall.
His mercy seek who in his mightiness
Made thee of naught, but not to be a thrall.
Pray freely for thyself and pray for all
Who long for larger life and heavenly cheer;
And truth shall make thee free, there is no fear!

(Modern version by Henry Van Dyke)

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, and that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent (Revelation 8,19).”

Here are the riches the church so desperately needs in this hour. But she cannot have them without repentance and where is the church that is willing to repent, or even sees any need to repent? It takes zeal to repent. It takes courage to repent. It takes fear to repent. It takes need to repent. It takes the Holy Spirit to repent. But alas! The church only has “goods” and among all those goods there is not one thing that leads to repentance. She has gold but not the kind she sorely needs. We do not need the gold of earth, we have found and shall find that such “gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire (James 5:3).” “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matthew 6:19-21).” What we need is not earth's treasures but the gold of the sanctuary, the gold tried in the fire of God's holiness, the gold of the just weight and the true balance.

What is God's complaint against us? God says He has nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Him (Isaiah 1:2). He says, “How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them (Isaiah 1:21-23).” Is this true? Can it be that God is mistaken about this?

Poor church! She offers her multitude of sacrifices, burns her incense, meticulously observes her new moons and sabbaths, calls her assemblies on the slightest whim, spreads forth her hands and makes many prayers. With what result? God says that even her most solemn assemblies are iniquity! He hides His eyes from her spreading forth of hands and will not hear her prayers. And the church wonders why. With her hands full of blood, she wonders why. She says, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and wonders why her prayers are unanswered! She judges not the fatherless, pleads not the cause of the widow, neglects and despises the poor, and idly wonders why her many prayers are unanswered; forgetting all the while that this is no accidental world, that a sovereign God rules the universe on strictly just and moral principles, and that it is irrevocably written, “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, shall not be heard (Proverbs 21:13).”

“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies (Isaiah 59:4).” “And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in street, and equity cannot enter (Isaiah 59:14).”

“There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man (Luke 18:2).” This is the whole truth about every judge of every court in the world. There is no justice among men because there is not a just man upon earth. Why did the judge not d man? Why was he unjust? He feared not God. This is the unbroken testimony of both Scripture and experience. But, alas, in this hour will listen to either?

The times grow worse. Evil runs rampant. Dark clouds gather. Perilous times are upon us. “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant (Isaiah 24:4,5).” “Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth (Isaiah 24:17).”

The grim specter of war hovers constantly. Nations rise against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms. The earth is torn by earthquakes and devoured with pestilence. Injustice and evil are the order of the day. Why?

“Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth (Isaiah 5:8)!” “Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope (Isaiah 5:18).” “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.... Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink (Isaiah 5:20-22).”

“Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion.” “Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches.” “That drink wine in bowls.” “For ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.” “Ye which rejoice in a thing of naught.” “Ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, Saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit.” (Selections from Amos, chapters 6-8.)

“They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us (Micah 3:10,11).”

“For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul (Isaiah 3:8,9).”

This is a vivid and accurate picture of our society today. Experience confirms the fact that these Scriptures are applicable to us. Comment is unnecessary. The world is more thoroughly corrupt today than at any time in its history. Society is dissolute in all its segments. Nothing has escaped corruption; individuals, homes, churches, schools, business, government; all is corrupt. The reason? We do not fear God. This is the sorry state to which the preaching and doctrine of the modern pulpit has brought us. The philosophy of the moderns that we live in an accidental world, that God is subject to man's whims, choice and will, is completely atheistic and can only make infidels of its believers. In the necessity of the case, such a philosophy is bound to lead any society embracing it down the path of dissolution, corruption, injustice, immorality, and finally to the pit of hell. Where else can it lead? How else can it end? If God is subject to man's choice and will, we do live in an accidental world, and verily man has no god but himself; if any man is saved, it will be an accident. Eventually, under such a philosophy, man “casteth off fear, and restrainest prayer before God (Job 15:4).” Prayer is the breathing of the soul. When men cease praying, they stop breathing, and when they stop breathing they die.

Predestination is the only basis and hope for society. If predestination were believed, if the doctrine that all human ties, bonds and relationships are divinely appointed and formed, were universally received, it would revolutionize the world. And unless we shall receive it, civilization as we know it is doomed. It must be evident to any man who thinks, that unless any human tie or relationship he may have is divinely appointed and formed, there is no possible reason to regard any such tie or relationship as sacred, nor can he conceive that he has any duty in maintaining such a relationship. Predestination is the only ground of duty as well as the only ground of faith. The accidental world is the world of the atheist, not the world of the Christian. No man is a Christian who believes in an accidental world. Predestination is the heart and soul of all Christian teaching, all Divine providence. It is the one reason for all things and the bedrock of Christian hope.

All human ties, bonds and relationships are divinely appointed and formed. The doctrine is true whether anyone believes it or not. But what a difference it would make if it were believed. It would solve the world's problems and resolve every difficulty of human relationship. It would create an ideal world where all men would dwell together in peace and harmony.

There would be no broken homes. Divorce courts would be unknown. Children would obey their parents in the Lord because it is right. They would realize that God has given them their particular parents and placed them in their particular home, and so would honor their father and mother, and it would be well with them, and their days would be prolonged (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). "That thy days may be prolonged ..." an expression meaning not simply to live to a ripe old age, but that each day is prolonged, each day is filled with wonder and bright with the glory of God, each day is "as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deuteronomy 11:21)."

Parents would love their children. Fathers would "provoke not their children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4)." Parents would realize that their "children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward (Psalm 127:3)." "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt see the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord (Psalm 128:1-4)."

The doctrine of predestination, if it were believed by the church, would revitalize the church. They would realize that church membership, like all other human relationship, is divinely appointed and formed. There would be no envy, jealousy or strife in such a church. They would recognize that they "are the body of Christ, and members in particular (I Corinthians 12:27)." Individuality would again prevail in the church and the sickly socialism and Godless communism of the modern church would disappear. Churches would again realize that "the body is not one member, but many" and would cease trying to make all their members alike in every detail, and forget their unscriptural and unrealistic concept that the church is some kind of a mass man in which all individuals must lose their freedom and identity. There is no room in the modern church for individuality. That man today who dares assert his individuality and contend for religious freedom is certain to incur the displeasure, if not the wrath, of the church, and he will be censured, or excommunicated, or made to feel the displeasure of the church in a thousand other ways.

Individuality has been lost in the church as well as elsewhere. The autonomy of the local church is gone even from those who profess to have it. We now have, in our churches, a system of super ecclesiasticism where conventions, associations, boards, hierarchies, or individuals rule the local church and consequently the individual members of the church. The right of private judgment is denied to all. This

is a system of tyranny, wholly unscriptural, under which the individual is ruled, not by his own conscience or the laws of God, but by the arbitrary laws of sinful men who seek only their own aggrandizement. Under this system, the individual must do as he is told or else. He must conform in both opinion and conduct. He cannot think for himself. He is denied the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. It is thus that the modern church has brainwashed its members. Woe be unto that individual today in any church who opposes the official line and dares to be what God made him, an individual. Individual liberty and religious freedom is nowhere more lost than in the modern church where today it is practically unknown.

“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him (I Corinthians 12:18).”

Church membership is a relationship divinely appointed and formed. God has set the members every one of them in the body and appointed each his function and endowed each one for that particular function. There is no elite, no ruling class in the church. “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren (Matthew 23:8).”

Like everything else, church membership and position in the church is predestinated. “And he saith unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father (Matthew 20:23).” Prepared - made ready before, thus foreordained, predestinated.

Is everything predestinated? Yes. “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).” No new thing - no accident. Here we are plainly told that what is to be, will be; and what is not to be, will not happen. This is the doctrine of predestination and this is the tie that binds.

Opponents of this doctrine tell us that if predestination is true, man has no responsibility. The opposite is true. If predestination is not true, man has no responsibility. It is because predestination is true that man is responsible for his actions, which is why men reject the doctrine. The man who does not believe in predestination can always find an excuse for his sin. He blames it on accident, circumstance, or whatever. But we are warned about this. “Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error (Ecclesiastes 5:6).” Error - wandering, hence chance, accident; this is the meaning of the Hebrew word.

Predestination is the only basis for the responsibility of man for it is the only reason why things happen as they do, why causes have effects, why actions produce consequences, why men reap what they sow. In fact, predestination is the law of the universe. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit (Matthew 7:16-18).”

Why is this true? Why do we not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Because thorns do not produce grapes, thistles do not produce figs. Why not? You say, that is the law of nature. If you were religious enough, you would say it is the law of God. But call it what you will, there is a fixed and inexorable law that determines that thorns produce thorns, thistles produce thistles, grapes produce grapes, figs produce figs; and from this law nothing deviates. That is predestination. Trees produce after their kind because God has so fixed it and for no other reason. What is true in the natural realm is true spiritually. Predestination is the only reason for anything, and if predestination is not true, there is no reason for anything.

What a price we pay for the rejection of this doctrine! Because the church today rejects the doctrine of predestination, socialism prevails in the church with its countless attendant evils; not the least of which are men aspiring to the pre-eminence to offices and functions to which they are not divinely called and for which they are not divinely endowed. Consequently, men lord it over God's heritage, the people are tyrannized and oppressed, made to subscribe to a creed, which they neither understand nor believe, they are thoroughly subjected to the programs of men, under which their only privilege is to pay. Under this system of dictatorial communism, taxes are levied upon the members in the form of tithes and this is called giving. Tithing is thought to be the greatest thing any man can do; whereas the truth is that no one has given anything who has only tithed; the only ones who have ever given anything are the poor widows who have given their two mites. Those two mites are infinitely more than all the tithes combined, more than all the riches of all the wealthy. But where is the church today that is content with two mites? And where is the man who sees he has given nothing until he has given all?

Churches today oppose the divine order. They are not content with their lot. They are not content with such things as they have. They are not content to perform their divinely appointed function. They are not content. They fight and war for the preference of men, the honor and praise of men. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They are not honorable. They have forgotten that honor comes from God alone; that the one function of the Christian church is to glorify her Lord. They are interested in what they call making progress and this means acquiring material possessions. This, they think, is progress. So materialistic is the concept of the modern churches, and so enamored are they with the love of money, that many of them made surveys to determine the financial standing of each individual in their community before soliciting them for membership and unless they come up to a certain economic standard they are not invited to join. Other churches wait until the individual has joined before making their survey; but once the financial standing is known, certain quotas are levied against the individual and he is expected to contribute a certain amount. If he does not give as much as the powers that be think he should, woe be unto him.

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scriptures, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors (James 2:1-9).”

“And have need of nothing.” But Christ was outside that church! Blind they were indeed. “Without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5).” The Laodician Church is the church of today. Rich, increased with goods, thoroughly materialistic: yet, with all their wealth, all their goods, all their numbers, all their prestige, all their respectability, all their influence, the church without Christ can do nothing. Nothing? Nothing! Let the church acknowledge that Christ is indispensable, that He is sovereign, that He is head over all things to the church. It is written, “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy (Psalm 147:11).” It is also written, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm (Jeremiah 17:5).”

Specifically, men cannot choose apart from Christ. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you

(John 15:16).” Yet, as a matter of fact, they had chosen Him! The record is clear. Jesus Christ had called each one of them and each elected to follow Him. What then is the meaning of our Lord's emphatic statement? Whose choice was first? Why does any man come to love God? “We love him because he first loved us (I John 4:19).” We chose Christ because He first chose us. Again, whose choice was determinative? Man's choice rests in God's choice. Man's choice depends upon God's choice. Man's will is subject to God's will. Man wills because God wills him to will.

“There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand (Proverbs 19:21).” It seems that we cannot learn this. Devices are purposes, plans, thoughts, choices. The counsel of the Lord is His purpose, plan, thought, choice; in a word, His will. God's will, that, and that only, shall stand.

God does no violence to man's will. He leaves men free to choose. As a matter of fact, men cannot help choosing. He chooses every day. He chooses in every realm. He chooses in salvation. Nevertheless, God controls man's will as surely as He controls the stars. It is here that men stumble and fall. Because God leaves men free to choose, they delude themselves and imagine that it is their will and choice that brings things to pass; when, as a matter of fact, man's will has never determined one single event in the world's history and never will. God's will alone determines events and brings them to pass. It is true that men do act according to their choice, will, intellect, and reason, but this is not the whole truth. The whole truth is that every event, circumstance, opportunity, happening, thought, good or bad, that influences and motivates man's choice is foreordained of God.

Sovereignty is the prerogative of God alone. Man is God's creature. There is no such thing as an independent creature. There is no such thing as a free creature. Of necessity, all created things are totally dependent upon, and absolutely subject to, their creator's will. If God is the creator of this universe, He is sovereign over it; and if He is not sovereign of the universe, He is not its creator. This truth is self evident to all honest minds. To deny God as sovereign is to deny Him as creator. To deny Him as creator is to deny Him as Father. To deny Him as Father is to deny Him as Savior. The denial of God's sovereignty is, in essence and fact, the complete denial of God. To deny God is to proclaim the utterly unbelievable and absolutely impossible absurdity that man made himself, that he came from nowhere and goes nowhere, that he lives and dies without purpose or reason, that his thoughts and actions have no meaning whatever. To deny God is to propound the thesis that the universe is without cause, reason, purpose, meaning, destiny, or hope.

The sovereignty of God is absolute. To acknowledge this truth is at once to acknowledge that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, that nothing else can come to pass, that predestination is a fact, that God does rule in the kingdoms of men, that all human ties, bonds and relationships are divinely appointed and formed; and that our salvation rests solely, fully, and only in God's election, that salvation is by God's grace and His grace alone, that no part of man's salvation is of himself either in origin or execution.

Where men got the idea that man's will is the all determining factor or moving cause of his salvation is hard to see. Certainly they did not get it from the Bible. To those who accept the Scriptures as final, the question is forever settled. There is not one □ Scripture in all the Bible that even implies, let alone declares, that man's will is in any way, to any degree, the cause of his salvation. On the contrary, the Bible declares that God's will, not man's, is the cause of his salvation. “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13).”

Men are not saved by the exercise of their will. They are not saved by their decision or choice. The opposite is true. Men are saved by renouncing their will and resigning their choice. In a word, they are

saved by denying themselves, their will, choice, way, thoughts, lives, motives, nature, all. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts (Isaiah 55:7)." "And he said unto them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it (Luke 9:23,24)."

But, some object, man repents, man believes. Certainly so. Then whosoever will may come. Absolutely. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)." The question is, who believes? Who are the whosoever? There are two whosoevers. There is the whosoever will save his life and whosoever will lose his life. Which are you? "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God (I John 5:1)." Men are born of God before they believe, which is why they believe. Repentance and faith are not causes of salvation but fruits of it, evidences of it. They are inseparable graces wrought in our hearts by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22,23)." Not one of these things does the alien sinner have. Though it be extremely distasteful to men, nevertheless let the truth be stated. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Romans 9:16)."

As long as any man retains the least vestige of his own will, choice, and way, he is not Christ's for "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:24)." "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9)."

What is the Spirit of Christ? Was He self willed? "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (John 4:34)." "Because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me (John 5:30)." "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me (John 6:38)." Hear Him in Gethsemane, in the hour of greatest extremity, when He was sore amazed and troubled, when His soul was sorrowful even unto death and His agony such that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground; how does He then pray? "Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done (Luke 22:42)."

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offerings and burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:5-10)."

"In the volume of the book it is written of me." The quotation is from Psalm 40:7. The Hebrew word there translated volume means roll, the entire roll, hence volume. The Greek word here translated volume means head or front, a scroll rolled up, bound and sealed. The word means the head of a pillar, the superscription on the top of a pillar that tells the meaning of that pillar; the heading or title of a book or scroll that tells the subject of that writing; the key to the whole matter or the why of it all. "In the volume" - at the front - in the middle - at the back - in the beginning, throughout the continuing, at the ending.

What is written in the volume of the book? "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "By the which will we be sanctified." Is this the whole writing? Absolutely. Nothing else is written anywhere and this is written everywhere. This is the writing, the whole writing of both the Bible and nature. This is the one

subject of both, the one reason for, the whole meaning of, the entire universe together with every event, good and bad. This is the seal, the tie that binds. Compare Revelation 5 and Isaiah 29:11-24.

Christ denied Himself. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (I Peter 2:2 1)." How marvelously simple and plain! What example? "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously (I Peter 2:23)." He committed Himself, His will, choice, all. His will was the Father's, He did not seek His own. He chose to forgo His choice, He deliberately chose not to choose.

"Not my will, but thine, be done." Christ's will was against the suffering! Can He then choose not to suffer? No! Such a thing could not possibly be. Why not? Because in the volume of the book, in the front, on the back, sealed with the sevenfold seal of God's perfect will, throughout all of time and eternity, it is written of him, and therefore foreordained and predestinated, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." We state it reverently; Christ suffered against His will with His full consent! This is the perfect example of how the sinner is saved, the perfect illustration of what the old Puritan and other divines were ever wont to say, namely, the sinner is saved against his will with his full consent!

The sinner's will, far from saving him, is the thing that damns him. It is his will that keeps him from Christ. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:40)." You will not come. I call you to Christ now, but you will not come. Every voice in the universe, including your own conscience, calls you to Christ, but you will not come. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17)." But you will not come.

Why will you not come? Because "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him (John 6:44)." You cannot come. It is not in the power of man to come to Christ of himself. No man can make himself willing. You will not come. You are unwilling and unless God shall make you willing, you must remain forever unwilling. Sinner, you are in the hands of the omnipotent God. You are lost. You are undone. You are in hell now. You are in torment. You are on the brink of a larger hell of everlasting torment from which there is no release, none, never! You are without Christ, an alien to the commonwealth of God's Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise without hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12.) You are Christless, Godless, homeless and hopeless. And you will not come! You cannot come. You are lost. You are lost without remedy. You have no choice. Friend, you are lost!

What can you do? A great many things. You can join the church. You can be baptized. You can quit your meanness. You can turn over a new leaf. You can go softly. You can make a profession of Christ. You can attend church regularly. You can bestow your goods upon the poor. You can live what men call a good moral life. You can tithe and pay the preacher. You can act pious and say prayers. You can read the Bible. You can be honest with your fellow man. There is plenty you can do.

When you have done all that you can do; what will all your doing avail? Nothing. In all your doing there is one thing you will not and cannot do. You will not come to Christ. You cannot come to Christ. You cannot save yourself. Your friends cannot save you. No power on earth can save you. Nothing can save you. You will not come to Christ. You are lost. There is no hope for you. What you do, anything you do, only makes your case worse. Everything you do will only serve to salve your conscience and lull you into a sense of false security. No matter what you do, it will only serve to harden your heart. You cannot come to Christ. You are lost.

You must be drawn and that of the Father. There must be a putting forth of the divine will before any

man becomes willing. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Psalm 110:3).” “In the day of thy power” - the putting forth of the divine will. The rest of the verse reads, “In the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.” It is not that men come part of the way and God meets them. It is not that men are willing to some degree. The willingness is altogether of God. “From the womb” - the birth - the eyelids - the dawn of the morning, from the earliest stirring, from the first faint ray of light, yea, before the light - from the dew - the dew that falls while all is still dark - all, all is of God and nothing is of man. Salvation, my friend, is of the Lord.

“And the king said, Is there not yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet. And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel in Lodebar. Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am? - So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and he was lame on both his feet (II Samuel 9:3-8; 13).”

“Is there yet any left of the house of Saul?” Only one. What is his name? Mephibosheth. What is the meaning of that name? A shameful thing. Where dwelleth this man? In Lo-debar. What place is that? A place of no pasture. What is his condition? Lame on both his feet. How did he come to be lame? He was lame from a fall. “And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame on his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth (II Samuel 4:4).”

Sweet, sweet gospel! Do you hear the glorious strains? This is the everlasting gospel for it is the everlasting truth of every man. Our name is Mephibosheth - a shameful thing. O my soul! This is you! Lame on both feet - no wonder you will not come to Christ - you cannot walk - you do not have a leg to stand on! You have no excuse. You are dead. You are a dead dog! “A living dog is better than a dead lion (Ecclesiastes 9:4).” “For to him that is joined to the living there is hope.” If you were a living dog, there would be hope. But you are a dead dog! You are “Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom God rememberest no more (Psalm 88:5).” An untimely birth is better than you. You came into the world with vanity. You shall depart in darkness and your name shall be covered with darkness. (Ecclesiastes 6:3,4.) You are a shameful thing. You dwell in a barren wilderness, void of life, and life-giving sustenance. Time is against you. You can only grow worse. You are dead and still dying! There is no hope.

But wait! There was a covenant made. It was made before you, Mephibosheth, was born! It was a covenant of souls, not a covenant of words. It was an everlasting covenant. Souls were knit together. It was a divine covenant. Souls were knit together. It was sealed with an everlasting seal. Souls were knit together. It was bound with an unbreakable tie. Souls were knit together. It was a covenant of life. Souls were knit together.

Ah, Mephibosheth, shameful thing though you are, lame though you are, dead dog though you be; you are included in this covenant! You see, shameful one, this was a covenant of love. Souls were knit together. This was a covenant of election. Souls were knit together. Are you not kindred of Jonathan?

Are you not Jonathan's son? Then you are included.

“And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul (I Samuel 20:17).” Caused him to swear again by his love to him. Swear what? “And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not: But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth (I Samuel 20:14,15).”

Mephibosheth's destiny was settled before he was born. He was included in the covenant before he had any being. He was brought into the bond of the covenant when David sent and fetched him from Lo-debar. Men looked at Mephibosheth when he dwelt in the wilderness and said, poor Mephibosheth! He has nothing. He should be king. All the lands and wealth of Saul should have accrued to him. Instead, David is king. It is thus that men question God's choice. It is thus that men charge God with unrighteousness. It is thus that men become atheistic and believe in an accidental universe. Ask men why Mephibosheth is not king, why he is lame and penniless, and they say, Oh, poor fellow, he is a victim of circumstances, he had bad luck, he was very unfortunate, he had an accident, he fell and became lame! It is thus that men bow to their gods of circumstance, fortune, luck, chance and accident.

But take another view. Mephibosheth is brought into the palace and caused to eat at the king's table continually. All is restored to him. He is cared for. Why? Because a covenant was made before he was born! Then his fall and resulting lameness and helplessness was no accident at all! His trouble was his salvation. He saved his life by losing it. His curse was his blessing. “As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come (Proverbs 26:2).”

In God's decreed economy
There is no causeless curse,
Nor ill by chance, unwittingly
That plagues the universe.

Was our destiny settled before we were born? Were we included in the everlasting covenant before we had any being? Did God elect us in eternity or do we elect ourselves in time? Here we have nothing to do but preach the word.

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psalm 139:14-16).”

The construction of the language here is beautiful and to the devout mind unmistakable. Two entirely different words are here translated “substance.” The first, in verse fifteen, means bone, strength, body. The Hebrew word translated “substance” in verse sixteen is “golem” meaning embryo - substance yet unperfect - embryo yet unformed-essence not yet in being. The word translated “continuance” is the Hebrew word for “days.” Here David literally said that God saw his being or essence and wrote the whole of his being or essence, body and soul, in His book, before he had any being or essence; and the writing was so complete as to minute details as to include even what days his being or essence should be fashioned!

The hairs of your head are all numbered (Matthew 10:30). Your birthplace is recorded (Psalm 87:6). Your steps are all counted (Job 31:4). Your days are determined. The number of your months is with God. He has appointed your bounds that you cannot pass (Job 14:5). You can change nothing. You

cannot make one hair white or black. You cannot add one cubit to your stature no matter how much thought you give to the task (Matthew 6:27). Stature - the word has to do with length as well as height. You cannot add eighteen inches to your life's journey! The day of your death and the way of your death is as surely fixed by the God of heaven as is the decree He gave to the sea when He said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed (Job 38:11)." This was all written in God's book before you had any being. This is the tie that binds.

What will God do? He will do exactly what He pleases. He will do what He has purposed. "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back (Isaiah 14:27)." "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places (Psalm 135:6)." "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth (Job 23:13)." "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations (Psalm 33:11)." "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated (Romans 9:10-13)." "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth (Romans 9:18)." "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:11)." My friend, you are in the hands of the sovereign God and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. You have no hope but His mercy.

God has decreed in Himself, from all eternity, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass. By the decree of God some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ. These men and angels thus foreordained and predestinated are particularly and unchangeably designed and their number so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. This definite number, chosen unconditionally to salvation by God the Father were given to God the Son to redeem and these, and no more, are those for whom Christ died and rose again. These all, and no more, are brought to repentance and faith by God the Holy Ghost. The names of all these, and no more, were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

"Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)." "Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (Revelation 17:8)." "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20)." "Whose names are in the book of life (Philippians 4:3)." "Are" not written. "Were" not written. Their names are not written in time because they were not written in eternity. There is no escaping this truth. Men cannot write their names in heaven. They cannot inscribe their names in the Lamb's book of life. That book is in the hand of God. It is written within and on the backside, or outside, and sealed with seven seals. The writing is all done. There is not one blank spot in the book where any name may be written. Only Christ can open the book. Only He knows whose names are written there. No man can elect himself for no man is worthy. Furthermore, no man has any choice in the matter. The choice is God's and His alone.

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found

worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof (Revelation 5:1-5).”

In the covenant between Jonathan and David, Jonathan gave his all into David's hand. He entrusted, not only his own life, but the life and welfare of his house, his family, his offspring, his seed, after him. In the covenant of redemption, God the Father chose a definite number to salvation, not for any good or cause or merit in them, or foreseen in them, but of His mere mercy and grace and because He set His love upon them. These He gave into the hand of His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for them, atoning for their sins, making perfect satisfaction to the Father for them, as it is written, “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; [deaths! The word is plural] because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied (Isaiah 53:9-11).”

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him (I Thessalonians 5:9-10).” Who appointed us to obtain salvation? God. We did not and do not appoint ourselves. How are we appointed to obtain salvation? By Jesus Christ. Then it is by no merit that is or can be in us, but by Christ's merit alone. This is salvation by grace.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gayest me to do.” “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gayest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gayest them me; and they have kept thy word.” “And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” “And the glory which thou gayest me I have given them.” “And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” “For thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:1,2,4,6,10,22,23,24.)

David sent and fetched Mephibosheth. All the means of reaching the palace were provided by David and none by Mephibosheth; so all the means of our salvation are provided by God, foreordained by Him, and none of the means are supplies by ourselves. Mephibosheth met no condition, David took him as he was. He took him for Jonathan's sake and for no other reason. Our salvation is unconditional. There is no condition for the sinner to meet. All the conditions have been met in Christ and we are saved for Christ's sake and not for our own. No fitness was required of Mephibosheth. None is required of the sinner. Sinner, come as you are.

“Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power.

Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh.

Come ye weary, heavy-laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him."

Mephibosheth had no choice. The choice was David's. We have no choice in salvation. The choice is God's. You say, how did Mephibosheth know he was chosen? He was sent for. How do we know we are elected? By our calling. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called (Romans 8:30)." "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 2:13,14)."

How delightfully and thoroughly does the Spirit-breathed word here set forth the truth! Believers are here addressed as brethren, beloved of the Lord! The first thing God did for His people was to set His love upon them. Because of that love, God chose them. He chose them from the beginning, from the foundation of the world! He called them by the gospel. The means used was the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. They were chosen in eternity. They were called in time. The call was effectual for it was a call to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sanctification of the Spirit, from the Spirit, by the Spirit, the third person in the triune Godhead. Sanctify - to devote, hence to set apart - to make both willing and fit, to make holy - the new birth. Belief of the truth - belief from the truth, by the truth - faith imparted by the truth. What was of man? Nothing.

You say, suppose Mephibosheth had not come. He had no choice. He had to come. He was sent for by the king. How can a cripple resist the power of the whole kingdom? "Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou (Ecclesiastes 8:4)." Besides, he was willing. You say, suppose the sinner will not come. He has no choice. He must come. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light (Genesis 1:3)." Suppose the light had not shined! "For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6)." Will all the elect come? Every one. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:3 7)." Will you come to Christ? Then you are elected. Do you believe in Christ? Then you are elected. Are you called, effectually called, irresistibly called? Then you are elected.

Do you have a real desire to be saved, or do you merely desire to escape the consequence of your sin? The common desire of all men is to escape hell, to escape the consequence and punishment of their sin, but this is no desire to be saved. The desire to be saved is not common but uncommon and only the elect have it. The desire to be saved is first of all and above all a desire to be saved from the practice of sin, a desire to be holy and a desire to do God's will not matter what that will may be. It is a desire that rejoices in "Hope of the glory of God. And not only so but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not

ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us (Romans 5:2-5).”

The real desire to be saved, which only the elect have, is here set forth most delightfully and accurately; and it is sharply distinguished from the common desire to escape punishment. Those who have a genuine desire to be saved glory in tribulation, are patient under trial, welcoming the hardship of experience, grounding all their hope in that experimental tribulation and unashamedly rejoice in it all, not in the hope of their own glory but in the hope of the glory of God. Such a hope is born of the love of God and can come from no other source. The common desire to escape punishment does not spring from love of God but love of self. It springs from the fear of punishment, not from the fear of God; it is not a hope of the glory of God, but of the glory of self.

How many professing Christians are patient under trial? How many glory in tribulation? Will you hear the Scripture? In God's book we read of a fearful beast of whom it is said, “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (Revelation 13:7-10).”

Need we say more? Indeed, what more can be said? How plain it is that those who only desire to escape the consequence of sin are hastening on to that place where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. How plain it is that the common desire to seek the easy lot and avoid tribulation and trial is not of God. How plain it is that the names of all such are not written in the Lamb's book of life. On the other hand, how plain that here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Which desire have you?

Some of the old puritan divines used to say that if their suffering in hell for all eternity would glorify God, then they would gladly suffer in hell. Very few believed them. I believe them. What is this but a prayer that God's will may be done? What is it but an acceptance, final and complete, of the sovereignty of God, an acknowledgement that His appointment, no matter what it is, is right? Do we have this spirit? Are we, first of all and last of all, seeking the glory of God? Whether by life or death or even by suffering the torment of the damned, are we seeking to glorify God?

Predestination is our only hope. There is no other path to salvation. “Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel (Jeremiah 3:23).” “Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help [salvation] of man (Psalm 60:11).” Too long have we listened to the vain babblings of men which only increase unto more ungodliness. Too long have we been carried about by the vagary winds of the doctrines of men. Too long have we been deceived by the cunning craftiness and sleight of men. Let us now speak the truth in love. “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain (Psalm 127:1).” Unless God does the work, the work is not done. Unless God saves the soul, the soul is not saved. Unless God predestinated us, we have no destiny. Unless God has chosen us, we shall never choose Him. Unless salvation is by grace and grace alone, there is no salvation. Unless salvation is eternal, it, like us, will die and perish in time. We are predestinated. We are included in the everlasting covenant. We are redeemed by blood. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).”

“Make you perfect.” The word means to set your bones. Yes, Mephibosheth, you are lame on both your feet. David can do nothing about that. But behold, a greater than David is here! Behold, under His touch the lame man shall leap as the hart, in His presence the dead spring to life, the tongue of the dumb breaks forth into singing, the blind see out of obscurity, the deaf hear the words of the book, they that erred in spirit come to understanding and they that murmured learn doctrine. (Isaiah 29:18-24.) Behold God's Son, Jesus Christ, whom God has anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, comes forth from the ivory palaces of heaven to fetch thy soul from the wilderness, the place of no pasture. He is fairer than all the children of men. Grace is poured into His lips. All His garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia with which He binds up thy wounds and makes thee glad. He comes forth with great majesty. He rides prosperously. He is coming to bind thy soul in a bundle of life, to knit thy soul to His. (Psalm 45.) Here is what happens.

“The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.” “He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: he did fly upon the wings of the wind.” “He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.” “He brought me forth also in a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.” (Psalm 18:5,6,9,10,16,19.)

All is changed when Jesus comes to your soul. The wilderness is glad and the desert blossoms as a rose. Waters break out in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The parched ground becomes a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. In the habitation of dragons, the dragons of sin in the swamp of your heart; where they once lay shall be a grassy court with reeds and rushes, a veritable garden of delights where sweet flowers bloom. In salvation you obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing flee away. (Isaiah 35.)

When God knits your soul with the soul of His Son you “Shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” In your poor and barren life, “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (Isaiah 55:12,13).”

Are David and Jonathan's souls still knit together? Yes, friend. In that knitting of their souls there was another soul knit. Hear beautiful Abigail as she speaks to David under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. “Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling (I Samuel 25:29).”

Who binds us in this bundle of life? Let Amos, the lowly herdsman of Tekoa, answer. “It is he that buildeth his stories [ascensions or spheres] in the heaven, and hath founded his troop [bundle-same word as in I Samuel 25:29] in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord is his name (Amos 9:6).”

When God knits souls He knits them together with Himself. We are bound in a bundle of life with the Lord our God. The Lord our God - God the Father - God the Son - God the Holy Ghost - One in Three - Three in One - Triune - the threefold omnipotent cord that cannot be broken - the tie that binds and holds forever - and holds in life! Bound in a bundle of life - bound with the living God! He cannot die! Neither can we! Forever bound together in a bundle of life with the Lord our God! His tender love shall bind us closer and closer, and still closer.

“Till our souls are lost in love
In a brighter, brighter world above.”

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).”

Sinner, as one dying thief to another dying thief, I ask you, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds. We are dead dogs. It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. Truth, Lord. Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. But only living dogs eat and we are dead dogs. Behold, Lord, we speak out of the ground and our speech is low out of the dust; we whisper out of the dust of our grave of sin, Lord have mercy upon us sinners! Lord be merciful to me a sinner! Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place and when thou hearest, Lord, forgive!

Thank God for predestination. Without it we could never say, Amen. The word Amen means, let it be so, it shall be so, it is so. Amen means predestination! So does every word of certainty in the human tongue. Without predestination we could have no word of certainty in our speech, we could never say Amen to our prayers. In fact, we could not pray! Without predestination nothing would be certain, nothing! Because of predestination, everything is absolutely sure. Predestination is why the sun rises, why the stars shine, why the flowers bloom, why the birds sing. Predestination is why we live. It is because of predestination “That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of the Amen, and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of the Amen (Isaiah 65:16).” (The word “truth” in this Scripture is the Hebrew Amen.) It is because of predestination that Jesus Christ is the “Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God (Revelation 3:14).” (The Scripture does not mean that Jesus was created and is therefore a creature, on the contrary, it means that He is Himself the creator, the beginning or source of creation. Compare John 1:1-3.)

Because of predestination, we shall reach heaven and our home with God. Our souls are knit together. We are appointed (predestinated) once to die. (Hebrews 9:27) But we are also appointed (predestined) to rise again and not only so but to ascend to heaven. One of the words translated knit in the Bible means to ascend.

“But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4: 13-18).”

Time hasten. The ages roll on. Everything moves as God has foreordained. Soon the sun of our life shall set and that forever. We shall press a dying pillow. A faintness shall seize our heart, a dimness obscure our vision. Tremblingly we shall draw our latest breath. Still shall we lie. Gone shall we be. A cloud of sorrow shall envelop the hearts of those that love us. Tears shall blind their weeping eyes. Sadly that one who loved us best will plant a kiss on our cold, cold brow. Tenderly they fold our still,

still hands across our stiller breast. Gently and with solemn tread they bear our lifeless dust to its final resting place. Down in the cold and silent tomb we shall lie. Till the heavens be no more we shall not awake nor rise from our sleep. That is inevitable. That is certain. That is predestinated.

But hush, my soul! Eternity beckons. Another hour is also predestined. A mighty angel shall come down from heaven. He shall plant one foot upon the land, the other upon the sea. Lifting up His hand to heaven, He shall cry with a loud voice and swear by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no more. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets (Revelation 10:7)."

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (I Corinthians 15:51,52)."

We shall rise. The trumpet shall sound. It is foreordained. It is predestined. It is fixed. It is certain. It is sure. It is final.

We shall meet. It is predestined. It is certain. It is sure. It is final. Our souls are knit together. We are bound in a bundle of life with the Lord our God. All shall meet whose souls God has knit together. Fathers, mothers, children, wives, husbands, sons, daughters, friends, brethren; all shall meet. David and Jonathan, David - beloved - Jonathan - God is given - Beloved God is given!

And meeting we shall part no more. It is predestined. It is certain. It is sure. It is final.

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended (Psalm 72:18-20)."

Amen and Amen. Foreordained and Predestined and this is our final word.

Cleve Brantley

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