



MEANS

Elder Gilbert Beebe



This e-book has been republished electronically by Tom Adams for “A Sweet Savor” web-site. It is being distributed free of charge for the edification of those that are of like precious faith. My hope is that it will prove a blessing to you as much as it has been to me!

These were all published separately and to my knowledge were not ever compiled like they are here. I just thought it might be nice to have them all together like this.

Tom Adams

www.asweetsavor.info

Table of Contents

Number 1.....	4
MEANS.....	4
Number 2.....	12
MEANS.....	12
Number 3.....	18
MEANS.....	18
Number 4.....	25
MEANS.....	25
Number 5.....	29
MEANS ONCE MORE.....	29

Number 1

MEANS.

IT may be proper for us in replying to our correspondent to state our reason for the apparent neglect with which we have treated his former letters on this subject; and, first, we say candidly, we have not felt under any obligation to open our columns to the defense of doctrine in which we do not believe, and for the defense of which our paper has never been positively nor impliedly pledged, and of that character we hold the means doctrine, so far as we understand it to be.

2. It has been a matter of deep solicitude with us to avoid, so far as possible, needless and unprofitable jargon and contention, having already learned painfully that “a burned child dreads the fire.”

3. We have been able hitherto to fill up our columns with what we have conceived to be more profitable and acceptable matter.

4. Because that the great number of queries would require as great a number of replies, and the numerous passages of scripture of which brother Sperry demands of us an explanation, and the entire irrelevancy of the greater portion of them, to the points where he seems anxious to apply them, affords but a dim prospect of our being able to satisfy the mind of our worthy querist, or of stopping the gainsayings of arminians upon the subject.

5. And lastly, because we conceive that the means doctrine has been met and ably refuted by eminent brethren in the region where it has made its appearance in guise of Old School Baptist doctrine.

Our object, even now, is not a strife for mastery, nor the indulgence of a spirit of retort, but the hope of being able so to present truth and oppose heresy, as to be of some service to such honest inquirers after truth as may be confused and unsettled on the subjects involved.

Brother S. assures us that his object in stating his queries, and insisting on a reply, is not to elicit controversy, for he is not a believer in controversy. It is well he has informed us of the fact; for, from the circumstance of his pressing his queries on us, whom he knew to be at anti-podes with the means doctrine, and from the manner in which he speaks of passing the subject to brother Trott, whom he considers always ready to *fight, sword in hand*, we should certainly have suspected that our quiet and peace-loving brother was almost willing to risk a battle on the subject. But this may show us how liable we are to be mistaken. Brother S. wants no controversy; he don't believe in it; he only wants, and (pardon us) is determined to have a hearing.

We beg leave here to digress from the subject a moment, to say that w-e have several communications on hand on other subjects, and from various quarters, from brethren who are equally opposed to strife and controversy, and who are unwilling to allow us to suppress them when we know they will provoke unpleasant contentions. But to return to brother Sperry's letter, the next item of which charges *some divines among the Old Baptists, so called, of leaving the principles or doctrines maintained by our old standard writers of the Old Baptists order, and of introducing new theories, &c.* Who the implicated divines are, we are not told; but it is very natural to suppose that

those who contend that it is immediately and exclusively the work of God to quicken and regenerate souls, are intended; that the new doctrine lugged in, is that salvation is of the Lord. It would be cruel for us to think that our brother alluded to any but the apostles of the Lamb, as standard writers of the Old Baptist order, as no consistent, well-informed Old Baptist ever regarded any but inspired men as *standard writers* for the church of God. If our deductions, inferences, &c., are correct, our Correspondent charges those who hold with its that the giving life, to the dead is exclusively the work of God, with departure from the apostles' doctrine, and of bringing heresy into the church, defiling the temple of God, and exposing themselves to swift destruction. But as no controversy is designed, we must conclude that our brother does not wish us to controvert the charges, but allow them to pass uncontradicted, seeing that a defense of the accused *Divines* would involve controversy. But for himself, he chooses to examine the subject a little before he swallows the Campbell, or camel. It is difficult for us to conceive how a soul can be born again without *swallowing the camel* which we understand him to allude to, namely, that it is independently and exclusively the work of God to regenerate the soul. We appeal to the experience of every child of God, and where shall we find one who is not thoroughly convinced that there was no eye to pity, no arm to save; that all hope had fled, and all *means* had failed to bring relief to him in his distressed and distracted state and condition, and that when peace and pardon came, they came by the manifestation, by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ unto him as his Savior? If it be a *camel* to believe that God without the help of man or use of means commands light to shine out of darkness, shines in the heart of his redeemed, that he gives life to the dead, sight to the blind, hearing, to the deaf, and peace and salvation to the poor condemned and lost sinner, then that *camel* must be *swallowed*; or, to speak without a parable, the doctrine must be experimentally received or no man can see the kingdom of God. Whatever novelty brother S. may detect in the theory in which his brethren attempt to set forth this doctrine, the doctrine itself is as ancient as the salvation of poor lost sinners.

Brother S. assures us that he had addressed his queries to us as to a teacher in Israel, whom he anxiously looked to for an answer. Here again we were at fault, for we honestly thought from the manner of stating the queries that the design was rather to teach than to be taught, nor did this impression altogether vanish when our brother referred his queries to one more valiant and fearless than ourself; but "to err is human, to forgive is heavenly;" we hope our brother will consider it so. Those cases which brother S. reminds us of, that we have referred to brother Trott, were so referred, from a consciousness of his superior ability to do them justice, and not because we thought him ready to fight his brethren, or indifferent to their feelings; and in the case of these queries, after we have written all that time and circumstances will permit us, we shall probably leave ample room for brother Trott or any other brother to express their views Upon the subject. In noticing the queries, as they are very numerous, we shall be under the necessity of studying brevity.

Query 1st relates to a dollar which our brother says he has sent us for sister Jewett, for which he has seen no receipt. We have been in the habit of receipting all money received for her, and of applying it according to her direction; the dollar in question we have no recollection of, but as brother S. has sent one, whether it has ever reached us or not, we will hand one dollar to sister Jewett, on his account, and in her behalf thank him for the favor.

2. The second query, if so it may be called, has the form of a *reminiscence*. Brother S. remembers when Old Baptist preachers talked much about *primary and efficient cause*, and also of *secondary causes*, and so (ho we; but we do not recollect of even hearing them refer to any scriptural authority for making such distinction; and as we read of no such distinction in the good book, as having been

used by the *standard writers* of the New Testament, we are of time number who “hardly know what such language means.” We know of but one cause adequate to the production of life and salvation, and that cause is both *Alpha* and *Omega*, First and Last, Beginning and Ending, the Almighty. If our brother knows of another, or a *second*, he is welcome to it.

3. The third proposition has the form of a *challenge*, rather than of a *query*, and our querist takes firm ground, not of a pupil instruction without controversy, but of one whose mind is fully made up on the subjects involved. If the brethren can reconcile the difficulties which he has started with the theory of the anti-means party, he will submit, &c. Thus it seems he would task the anti-means party with means to use in his own conversion, and if he cannot be convinced without the use of means of his own appointment, he will not be converted at all. This is ultra ground; it is going the whole figure. But has he really determined that the Lord shall not convince him of error in any other way? Alas for such rashness! For our part we know of no *anti-means party* in the church of God. The church is a unit, one body, not a heterogeneous mass of factions, and although her borders may be infested with the retailers of heresy, she to whom the sacred name of church belongs has but one Lord, one faith, one baptism. She is called in one hope of her calling, and all her children are taught of God. Those who cannot bear her doctrine, though they may have a name to live, are dead, and belong not to her.

4. “The entrance of thy word giveth light.” A strange passage this to prove that God depends on means, or makes use of means in quickening dead sinners! What is the Word? How doth it enter? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This Word is eternal life, living and abiding for ever where it enters; and having entered, it is Christ *in* you, the hope of glory. In him (the Word which enters) was life, and the life was the light of men. Well might the Holy Ghost through the psalmist declare, “The entering of it giveth light.” But how does it enter? “God who commanded the 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.” – 2 Cor. iv. 6. The vulture’s eye cannot perceive the application of means, as they are called, in this. Reference is made to the creation of the world. What means did God use when he commanded light to shine out of darkness? Let there be light, he said, and there was light. He spake the word, and it stood fast; he commanded, it was it done. “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” – Isa. lv. 10, 11. Those who believe that God regenerates, quickens and communicates light to the dead, independently of means or second causes, ask for no stronger testimony than we have in the very text first quoted for the refutation of this glorious doctrine. We certainly should doubt the evidences of regeneration in any man who would tell us that the entrance of the word which giveth light, in the sense Of the text, was designed to mean the words of ministers or saints in preaching, warning or exhorting dead sinners. When, where and how has a dead sinner ever beer, enlightened but by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost? The natural or dead man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. – 1 Cor. ii. 14. God has hidden these things from them; and they cannot see the kingdom, nor the things of that kingdom, except they be born again. – John iii. 3, 7. That an interchange of ideas from one man to another, even in a natural or unregenerate state, may enlighten the natural judgment of man in theories of religion, and cleanse them externally like a washed saw, or purge them like a sickened dog, and leave them still with all their unclean propensities,

unchanged, to return to their vomit or wallowing in the mire, is not denied; and that the operation of means will produce mocking Ishmaels and carnal, graceless professors of religion, is very apparent; but the sons of God, the heirs of glory, are born of an incorruptible seed, by the entering of that word which liveth and abideth for ever. Nothing can be more clear than that they only who are begotten of God are the sons of God, while they who are begotten of means are the children of means.

5. The next text which we are required to harmonize with our view of salvation alone of God, is Heb. iv. 12. "For the word of God is quick [or life] and powerful," &c. If our correspondent had told us wherein he thought there was a want of harmony, we might direct our remarks to such difficulties, but for our life we can see no discord between this scripture and the doctrine we hold. If he has brought this text forward to apply to words which are preached, or articulation of sounds from the preachers' voices, he has greatly mistaken the text, as nothing could have been farther from the apostle's meaning, or more remote from the subject of gospel rest, on which he was treating. The word of God is vital, or quick, not the word of man. "It is the Spirit," says Jesus, "that quickeneth, the flesh, (or means,) profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," or quick. Now if brother Sperry has preachers out in Ohio who can speak life-giving words, words that are quick, or quickening, let them go on and raise the dead and cast out devils, and so demonstrate that they have the power which they claim; but let them not appeal to the bible, for that book bears testimony against their presumptuous pretensions, and stains the pride of human ambition. Let it not be forgotten that that word comes only from the mouth of God; and it comes not thence as the result of means, but it comes as comes the rain and snow. What means would brother S. propose to produce rain or snow? and if human means cannot produce an effect in nature, how shall they be effectual in things which are of a spiritual nature? His words are such as never man spake. No man's words can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, nor divide asunder the soul and spirit, but the word of God can, do all this.

6. "Is not my word like fire," saith the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" All that are born of God know that God's words are as represented in these figures, but they also know that man's words and man's means are nothing like these figures; hence this passage we use to prove the opposite of what is called the means doctrine, unless we can be made acquainted with some system of means by which we have power to cause God's words to be so spoken as to break the rocks, divide the seas, open the doors of death, and close the gates of hell.

7. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." But can men utter the voice of the Son of God? If not, how shall they use that voice as a means of saving sinners? Can that voice be uttered by any but him who called Saul, and who calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out? "I will cause my glorious voice to be heard, and will shew the letting down of my arm," &c., saith God. Will the admirers of the doctrine of means tell us whether that cause is what they call first or second cause? God will not only utter his voice, but he will cause it to be heard, and we confidently affirm that there is not another or a second power in heaven, earth or hell, that can cause the voice of God to be heard. We will say to brother Sperry in relation to this text, as Jesus said to the means using Jews, "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth," &c.; but what means does brother Sperry expect shall be used to produce either the utterance, or the effect of that voice.

8. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” Why so careful to keep back the other part of this text? “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,” and that exclusively of all fleshly power or means. Can the words of Jesus of spirit and life be spoken by any other than himself, or can others say to the winds and to the waves of the sea, “Be still!” and be obeyed?

9. “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through, the gospel.” – 1 Cor. iv. 15. This text being the only one that has the slightest appearance of favoring the means doctrine, requires a careful investigation. The grand question involved is whether Paul was contending that the children of God, as such, were begotten by him, that he had regenerated them, had begotten them by proxy, or whether he used the term in the same sense as that in which he speaks of fathers and mothers in the church of God. One thing is beyond dispute that is in this text; he claims to be the father of such as he said he had begotten. No begetting of his could make them the children of any other than himself, nor did he claim beyond this. He says that he begat Onesimus in his bonds, and in the same sense he claims Onesimus as his own son. In the same figure of speech he claims Timothy and Titus as his sons. Not that he claimed to have been the cause of their regeneration any more than he was of their election, or redemption. The Corinthian brethren had many, or might in Paul’s supposition have had ten thousand instructors in Christ Jesus; yet they had not in the same relation and figurative sense. He does not claim that he was the instrument which God had used in begetting them, or that his preaching had been an instrumental cause or means of their regeneration, for that would not have constituted them his children, nor him their father. To us the sense of the apostle’s words imply that their standing being like that of his own in Jesus Christ, by the election of grace, the redemption which is by the blood of Christ and the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, God had bestowed on him apostolic gifts, by which he was to occupy the distinction among his brethren of a father in the sense of the figure wherein he also spake of having travailed in birth for the distracted saints at Galatia, until Christ should be formed in them. – Gal. iv. 19 But, it will readily be perceived that travail had no allusion to their regeneration, as they had experienced that work long before, and the matter in which he travailed in birth for them, was that which formed the ground on which he called them his little children. As the children of God, Christ had been previously formed in them, they had begun in the Spirit, had run well, &c., but they had become disordered by heresy, the means doctrine had got in among them and had bewitched them, and the apostle travailed for them until they should be restored to gospel order. Those who can believe that even Paul can or could produce the quickening and regeneration of a soul, must be strangers to the work. We once held a public debate with an arminian Presbyterian preacher, who contended that Paul actually regenerated all the members of the Corinthian church, but we never expected to have lived long enough to hear the absurd and ridiculous assertion made by a professedly Old School Baptist.

10. “Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth.” – James i. 18. Instead of honored instrumentalities, the whole power of producing the conception and consequent birth of the children of God is in this text accredited to “His own will” alone, that is, to the sovereign, immutable will of God, which proves the position we have taken in the preceding item of our reply. In the sense in which they were begotten of God, they were not begotten by Paul. Perhaps the means renders will try to make some capital of the words “with, the word of his power,” construing the word of his power to imply instrumentality. One of two things must be intended by these words: “With the word,” they were begotten by the Father of lights, spoken of in the context. Christ is the only begotten of the Father; but as a begotten emanation from the Godhead, he is the life of his people,

head of his body, the church, mediator, &c.; as God he is self-existent, equally with the Father; but as the life and immortality of his spiritual body, he is the beginning of the creation of God, and the first born of every creature; and in this sense he only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, [not even by the magic Power of means,] whom no man hath seen nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting'. Amen. Now the one production of spiritual life w as what we understand to be the begetting of both the head and the body, so that if Christ as the Word is intended by James, the saints have a common origin with Christ their head, and both be that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Or, secondly, if by the word of truth we are to understand his word, as used Isaiah lv. 10, still there is no room for arminians to introduce a particle of means. The world was created by the same word. God said, "Let there be light." It was by the omnipotence of his word that all things came into existence, and we may with the same propriety talk of God's having used means in the creation, as in quickening his children.

11. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever." – 1 Peter i. 23. This is about the last text we would have expected to see brought forward to prove that the sons of God are born of such corruptible seed as means, works, instrumentalities, &c. How any enlightened christian can think that the words uttered by men are spirit and life, quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, that they are an incorruptible seed, and that they live and abide forever, is truly more than we can comprehend; and to believe that such is the case, requires a stretch of what is called charity, beyond our ability. Is it possible than any who are born of God can believe that the incorruptible seed is communicated by what they call second causes? That seed which results in a spiritual birth, must of necessity proceed from a spiritual source. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. It is so even in the unchanging laws of creation; to every tree and herb as well as to the animal creation God gave seed in itself for the propagation of its kind, but in no case seed in one tree or plant to produce those of another and different species.

12. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." What system of means men can make use of to bring the law of the Lord to act in the conversion of souls, is not stated; but if any is required it would contradict the plain declaration of the text, that that law is perfect; for that which is perfect cannot be improved or made efficient by something out of itself. Can the advocates of means tell us what means are used in putting this law in the inward parts of God's new covenant people, and writing it in their hearts? The law is itself the governing principle which controls the affections, desires, hopes and emotions of a heaven born soul. God himself imparts and implants it. No part of the work is left to depend on contingencies.

13. "He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Not by our preaching, nor by our use of means. What then is the gospel? It is the Power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. It is Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The gospel is the thing preached, not the preaching. Strange that the distinction should be lost sight of by any who have ever felt its power. The gospel calls all who are saved, but the preaching of it has no such power. It was often preached by Christ and his apostles where it only occasioned the gnashing of teeth; but time gospel itself never failed, whether preached or otherwise applied to the soul, to produce salvation perfect and complete.

14. “Ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you.” Shall we then understand that when our Lord speaks in the salvation of sinners, that he is only assaying to save them by the use of means? As well may we unite with the arminian general atoners and conclude that the shedding of his blood was a means used to endeavor to procure the salvation of sinners, and dispute what the Holy Ghost has said, that by his stripes we are healed.

15. “Thy word hath quickened me.” This is the very position occupied by those who deny the doctrine of means. His words they are spirit and they are life. His word, and nothing short of it, can quicken. He says unto the soul that is in its blood, Live, and that almighty word produces life, as when he said unto Lazarus, “Come forth,” or to the tempest, “Be still,” and there was a great calm.

16. “I had not known sin but by the law, and the law worketh wrath.” This is a very far fetched argument to establish the doctrine of means in producing life. The law working wrath is that which kills, but it cannot make alive.

17. “Look unto me,” (not to means,) “and be ye saved.” Who are called on to look, the living or the dead; those who have eyes, or those who have no eyes? The context says, “I said not to the sons of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain.” In calling his people to look to him alone for salvation, he gives the reason; for, says he, I am God and there is none else. It takes a God to save a sinner; if means could do it there would be no necessity to call on them to look away from means, and from everything else, to him who says in the same connection, “I am God, and beside me there is no Savior.”

18. “Preach the gospel to every creature,” (not only to the regenerate.) The words in crotchets are added. That the preaching of the gospel is ordained by Christ there is no doubt, whether the commission authorized the apostles to whom it was given to preach it to the old creation, or to every creature of the new creation, does not effect the present argument. It was to be preached, not used as a means for the regeneration of sinners. If the gospel, which is Christ, had not the power in itself without a system of collateral means, our Lord would not have prefaced that commission by a declaration, “All power in heaven and on earth is given into my hands; go ye, therefore,” &c. If part of the power were in the gospel, and part in means to be used, how could all power be in the hands of Jesus?

19. “So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth,” &c. How shall it be? “Like the rain, and like the snow,” and are they, are either of them produced by the use of means? What nonsense!

20. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.” That Jesus called, qualified, sent forth, and went with, and worked with his apostles with signs, &c., none will dispute; but that this display of his power and Godhead either says or implies that he is in need of means, or anything else to secure the great work of salvation, is denied.

We have noticed the twenty passages of scripture which were brought forward to sustain the doctrine of means, and find them all decidedly sustaining the opposite sentiment. And we have a right to believe that these scriptures are principally relied upon by the advocates of the means doctrine, or our correspondent would not have pledged himself to yield up the point if it could be made to appear that these scriptures were in harmony with what he calls the anti-means doctrine. If we did not know that, “It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” and that nothing short of divine power can deliver from the power of darkness, we should expect him immediately to give up

the point. But there are some other arguments with which the letter is closed, which require our notice.

It is not the word means that we object to, but the unscriptural use which is made of it, in dividing the honor of our salvation with what that word is used to signify. This is what grates upon our ear, for we are taught both by the word and by the Spirit, that salvation is of the Lord. But we can find no system of means appointed of the Lord to be used by men, in the use of which God has promised to aid, them in their efforts to save sinners. It would not, therefore, remove the difficulty to change the name. Retaining the heresy is what we object to. The name has often been changed, and under a multitude of names the abominable doctrine has been wrapped up, and its deformity partially concealed, ever since the days of Cain.

New Vernon, N.Y.,
September 15, 1846

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 2
Pages 666 – 680

Number 2

MEANS.

(Concluded.)

THE old stale arminian hobgoblin difficulty is brought to bear against the doctrine of salvation alone of God, that, if the means doctrine is not true, there would be no use what ever for preaching, praying, exhorting, or anything else. This is what all arminians consider a “knock down argument.” Old Cain saw no use for Abel to live any longer if his doctrine was approved of God, and the utility of the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, the preaching of the gospel, the prayers which are indited by the Holy Ghost, together with everything belonging to the order of the church of God is not only questioned, but absolutely denied by our correspondent, who virtually charges the head of the church with having instituted these things as useless lumber. May we not retort, Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God; that darest to denounce what he has appointed; and pronounce those things useless which have never been without their use among God’s dear children? Feeding the flock of God which he has purchased with his own blood, is denounced as useless, unless such feeding can be used as a means of making sheep. Prayer in which living souls hold converse with heaven, and breathe forth the desires, confession, thanksgivings, and adoration to God, is considered useless unless it can be made a machine for either raising the dead, or of so operating upon the unchanging God as to cause him to aid us in the regeneration of sinners. Exhortation which is enjoined on the saints, has no utility with those who hold the means doctrine; and finally nothing else, of any use whatever, if the opposite of the arminian stuff be true. Well, our correspondent may depend on it, the opposite of this heresy is truth that shall stand when heaven and earth shall be dissolved, and when time shall be no more, and if there are those who profess godliness who cannot love it, we bless God there are others who have been made, to love it and to live upon it.

Our correspondent is mistaken in anticipating that we wilt say that we hold to all such means for building up, establishing, and comforting new-born children. We deny the application of the term means to, the institutions of the gospel; they are gracious provisions for building, comforting and establishing the saints, but they are not the means of doing that or anything else. Means is the name for a sort of machine used by workmongers, by which they expect to set the grace of God in motion; but preaching the gospel of Christ, praying, and every exercise belonging to the gospel, are put in motion by grace. This is the grand difference; the means doctrine reverses the order of things so as to even place the institutions of christianity under the control of men. Men turn the crank, use the lever, the wedge and the screw of means, and heaven and earth obey. Our eating, drinking and breathing, are not the means of our living, but the effect; for if we were not alive before we ate or drank, we should never have the one nor the other. We wish to set our face against the sly, insidious, God dishonoring doctrine of God’s helping men to regenerate sinners, because it is untrue, and no lie is of the truth.

If our brethren in the west who have been led away with this filthy trash, only wish to express the idea that preaching, praying, &c., are appointed for the comfort, establishment, &c., of the saints, why do they raise so much clamor about it, seeing there are none who dispute such a position? But

from what we understand them to mean and to say, we can ‘make nothing more nor less of their doctrine than down-right arminianism. But hold! Here comes another query, viz.:

21. “Can you prove that God sends his Spirit in the one case and not in the other?”

We have already said we believe that God is both Alpha and Omega in all that he does in creation, providence and grace; we do not believe that he is second to us in any of his operations. Instead of sending his Spirit to second our motions in any thing, he, by his Holy Spirit, quickens dead sinners, unaided by men or angels; and by the same Spirit he raises up his ministers, and they are directed by his Spirit to preach, and all the “exercises of his children are produced by the Spirit,” which Spirit is uncontrolled, unbiased and unaided by them.

22. “Pray, what comfort or joy do the children of God enjoy from preaching, if God does not accompany the word by his Holy Spirit “ This is to us a hard question; for we know of no gospel preaching where the word is not administered in the Spirit. The preacher’s words may often be at random, cold, lifeless, and carnal, but such is not gospel. The work of the Spirit is not to warm up and enliven the cold, dull pratings of the minister; but the Spirit prepares the preacher, provides the message, gives the door of utterance, and at the same time prepares the hearers to hear, and their hearts to rejoice in the truth thus ministered unto them.

“If it is his good pleasure and will to send his Spirit with his word to comfort his children, why not send his Spirit with his word to awaken dead sinners?” The word which quickens dead sinner’s is itself spirit, and it is life; the testimony of those who have experienced the life-imparting power of that word comforts those who are prepared by the Holy Ghost to receive the testimony. But the testimony is one thing, and the thing testified of is quite another. The word testified of can quicken the dead and comfort the living, but the mere articulations of a minister’s voice can do neither. Sometimes the term “Word,” in the New Testament means Christ, as John i. 1; sometimes it means the quickening operation of the Holy Ghost, as where Jesus testifies, It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. In this sense the word is spoken of in connection with the regeneration of the saints. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of an incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. If brother S. only intends to be understood that God sends his servants to preach Christ, and at the same time sends his Spirit to quicken dead sinners, and qualify them to hear and profit by the word preached, we shall not differ; but if he contends that the preaching of the gospel by the ministers of Jesus is a means to procure the quickening operation of the Spirit, we must differ. Indeed the same Spirit that sends the minister of Christ, and enables him to preach the word, quickens the sinner, and qualifies the living saint to profit by the preached word. But one is not to be regarded as a means or instrumentality for procuring the other. Thunder is not a means for procuring rain, neither is rain a means for procuring thunder; yet God in providence often sends them together. The Spirit is not the means, but the cause of God’s ministers preaching; so neither is the preaching of the gospel the means, but the effect of the Spirit’s operation.

Again, our correspondent says, “God is not limited.” Certainly not as to power to execute his sovereign and eternal purpose, and therefore he cannot require means to aid him in the quickening of his redeemed people; but ye are not, consequently, to infer that he has no fixed and definite mode of communicating life to the dead; that he effects this, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, as sometimes through means, sometimes by means, and sometimes without means. He has revealed to us but one way of salvation, and that is altogether of, by, and through our Lord Jesus

Christ. The case alluded to by brother S. of the remark of an anti-means preacher would be more in point if the anti-means man had not involved the doctrine of *means* by his *if*. “There is,” says brother S., “but one way for every child, or heir of promise, to be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and that way is fixed in the eternal mind, unalterably fixed.” We understand him to mean that there is one way for each, or perhaps as many ways as there are children or heirs to be brought to know the truth; but while we admit there is or may be a variety of circumstances connected with the experience of the children of God, we contend that there is but one way, fixed, unalterably fixed, in the eternal mind, for bringing all the children and heirs of promise from death to life; and that one way is by immediately communicating life to them, without the aid of any intermediate cause, power, agency, means, or instrumentality whatever; and we are equally sanguine, with him, that God will not be frustrated in the accomplishment of his designs.

The allusion made to John Bunyan’s being awakened through a lewd woman is begging the question, for he has not proved that God did awaken or quicken John Bunyan through a lewd woman, or through any other name or medium than Jesus Christ, and we should be very sorrowful, while the testimony of Christ is before our eyes, that no man cometh to the Father but by him, to have brother S. prove that John Bunyan or any other person had received life and salvation through a lewd woman; at such proof heaven would be astonished, and earth would tremble. We do not dispute that after John Bunyan was quickened by the Holy Ghost, he might have received some of his first impressions concerning his sinful and lost estate from a lewd woman, or from any other circumstance; but at the same time it must be confessed that if he had not been previously, or at least simultaneously, quickened by the Spirit, the circumstances of the lewd woman would have passed without making any unusual impressions on him. The first thing seen or sensed by a living person cannot be the cause of his having life, but it is an evidence that he is alive.

Perhaps the most extraordinary passage in the whole letter of brother S., coming as it does from a professed Baptist, is this, “For to contend that God cannot, or *does not*, give faith until a man is regenerated and born again, is repugnant to the word of God.” Well, we do contend that God does not give faith to an unregenerate person. Faith is the substance of things hoped for; and what hope has a dead sinner? It is the evidence of things not seen; and what does the unregenerate man see? Without it he cannot see God. Without being born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. “Marvel not [O Nichodemus] that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” The unregenerate man is a natural man, and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And faith is one of the things of the Spirit of God; for the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, &c. If God gives faith to a sinner before he is regenerated, then faith is no evidence that a man is born of God; and what evidence can any person have that he is a child of God, if God gives it to unregenerate men? If this position could be established it would prove that faith is by no means peculiar to God’s children, and Abel may be in hell! The illustrious catalogue of saints mentioned in the xi. chapter to the Hebrews, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, &c., might after all have died and gone down to hell in an unregenerate state. If unregenerate men are the recipients of faith, all these may have been unregenerate men. If such a sentiment does not deny the faith, we know not what language can. Is it possible that a heaven born soul can breath out such doctrine?

In support of this position, namely, that God gives faith to men before they are regenerated, this text is brought. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that seek him." We have never met with even a professed arminian who would contend that the coming to God mentioned in this text had reference to the work of regeneration, much less that sinners must profess faith as a prerequisite to regeneration. The same text is prefaced thus: "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe," &c.

This text is in perfect harmony with the words of Jesus. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The whole epistle to the Hebrews was addressed to "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," and the whole theme of the inspired writer was to show the distinction between the legal dispensation of, carnal ordinances and its worldly sanctuary, and the dispensation of the gospel, and that the law was not of faith; its provisions were, the man that doeth the things enjoined by the law should live by them. But the righteousness which is by faith. speaketh on this wise, "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above; or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead," &c. Although under the old covenant of works, much was to be done of manual labor as a sort of means of temporal prosperity, yet under the gospel no means are to be used to bring Christ down, or to bring him up, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with, the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Now seeing that it is with the heart man believeth, we ask, is it with his old heart of stone, his unregenerate heart, that man believeth unto righteousness, or is it with his new heart and new spirit which God has promised to give his people? "He that cometh unto God." Does the unregenerate or the regenerated man come to God believing that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him? If, as brother S. contends, it is the unregenerate man preparatory to his regeneration, let us not forget that "No man cometh to the Father but by me." Hence, if an unregenerate sinner comes to God it must be by Christ as the only medium of access, for he is the only way. And if a sinner can have faith, and can come to God through Christ, without regeneration, to qualify him to see the kingdom of God, what need is there for regeneration?

We call on brother Sperry to turn to Hebrews xi. 6, and read his text, and with its whole connection, and then say if he himself believes soberly that unregenerate men can possess that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; by which the elders obtained a good report, and through which we understand the worlds were made by the word of God, &c. The allusion made to Paul's being sent to some places, and not suffered to go to others, shows he was subject to the government of the Spirit, and not that the Spirit was, through some magic power of means, governed by Paul. He was truly sent to places where God had *much people*, but he was not sent among them to use means for their regeneration. Philip was not sent to quicken and regenerate the eunuch; that work was performed by the Holy Ghost, and Philip was sent to preach Christ to him, and to baptize him. "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs." Feed the flock of God, is the commission; but the ministers of Christ are no where directed to make sheep, or to use means for increasing the flock of God.

"And what business, suppose ye, the apostle Paul would have amongst a parcel of dead sinners?" It was the business of the apostles to go where they were sent, and to tarry wherever the Lord commanded them to tarry; but if the Lord had intended to make it the business of Paul to regenerate the much people in that place, he would have told him so; but he was not so informed. The events showed that Paul was to preach the gospel, and "He that had an ear to hear, was to hear what the Spirit said to the churches." Paul had no ears to give to those who had none; but he had a message

for such as were, by the quickening operation of the Holy Spirit, prepared to gladly receive the testimony which he bore. If the preaching of Paul had been a means used for quickening dead sinners, why were not all to whom he preached exercised alike? Will not the same cause, under similar circumstances, produce the same effect? But Paul's preaching was invariably, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them that *are called*, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Until God called sinners from death unto life, gospel preaching was unto them a stumbling block, and foolishness, a savor of death unto death, far enough from being a means of quickening them. The allusion also to the vision of Ezekiel, of the valley of dry bones, is equally unavailing for the purpose of proving the efficiency of means. All these dry bones were the whole house of Israel, who say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore the Lord bade the prophet prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will – what? use the prophesying of Ezekiel as a means of raising you out of your graves? Not at all. Ezekiel was not to raise them, nor to help raise them; neither was God about to raise them through the means of Ezekiel or his preaching; but Ezekiel was to declare what God had said that himself would do. Say unto them, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. The Lord purposed, the Lord spake, and the Lord performed; and all that Ezekiel had to do, was what all God's ministers have to do – to testify of the grace of God, tell of God's purpose, of his promises, of his power, and of the deadness, dryness, inability and utter dependence on the life-giving power of their sovereign God. Strange that a professedly Old School Baptist should wish to divide the quickening power between God and means.

Having noticed, as we believe, every item of the communication of brother Sperry, we will say in conclusion, that we have endeavored to use great plainness of speech, without designing to employ one word of unkindness. We honestly believe, as our remarks will show, that the means doctrine, as it is called, is a heresy of no trifling magnitude. That it has been suffered in the all-wise providence of God to annoy the churches for the purpose of purging the Old School community of corruptions, for the trial of the faith of the saints, and that its final tendency will be to relieve our churches from excrescences which do not belong legitimately to the mystical body of Christ, we have no doubt. Many have attached themselves to the Old School Baptists, simply because they were opposed to the Popular institutions of what is falsely called benevolence, and not from a unity of sentiment with the primitive saints in regard to the doctrine of the gospel of Christ. If in any part of our reply our language should seem unnecessarily harsh or severe, let it be remembered that we have been urged by the author of the communication which we have received, to publish it. We have not sought for an occasion of controversy, but on the other hand held back until we were confident that our backwardness to go into the investigation was being construed by the means party into a tacit endorsement of their heresy. We sincerely hope that such of our brethren as have become bewildered with this mischievous means doctrine, may be enabled to compare it with the scriptures, anti with their own experience, and be no longer like children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Towards brother Sperry, as an old and valued correspondent and faithful friend of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, we entertain the kindest feelings and profound regard; but for the doctrine embraced in this communication, we feel unmingled regret that any of our dear brethren should be

captivated by it. May the Lord deliver them from all error, and lead us all by his unerring Spirit into all truth, for his mercies' sake. Amen.

New Vernon, N.Y.,
October 1, 1846

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 2
Pages 680 – 689

Number 3

MEANS.

IN this number will be found another letter from Deacon L. Sperry, on the subject of means, in which, after a deep conviction on his mind that there is not a shadow of difference between us on that subject, he proceeds to fill out three sheets of manuscript, in which he labors to prove that his position is right and that we are wrong. We presume that brother S. is the only reader of the SIGNS who, after a careful examination of his former letter and our reply, has come to the conclusion that there is no difference between us. We have either failed to write intelligibly, or he has failed to comprehend our meaning; for it was our design to express our unqualified dissent from the means doctrine, as stated and defined by him. But what seems truly remarkable is that after a thorough conviction, after reading our reply over and over, again and again, that we were agreed, that he shall attempt to prove that our views were in opposition to the testimony of the scriptures, and antagonistic of the experience of all the children of God.

The desultory manner in which brother S. has written his rejoinder challenges our ingenuity in framing a response. To notice every point in which he has laid himself bare to the lash of truth for castigation, would occupy more room than we have to spare. We shall only remark upon some scattering points and leave the subject.

He is confirmed in his first opinion, that the difference between the means and anti-means parties consists only in words. Does he mean to say that the doctrine of the two parties is identical, and only differently expressed? We are loth to rate his powers of perception so very low as to think this can be his meaning; for the words used by the means party, as defined by himself, show that they believe that God speaks the word of life in quickening dead sinners through good men and through bad men, through his preachers, and through the devil's ministers, thus using them as means or instruments in performing the work of regeneration, while every syllable of this is denied in the most unequivocal manner by the advocates of truth, called the anti-means party. Words are signs of ideas, and the words used by the two parties are signs which not only indicate a radical difference of sentiment, but positively affirm the existence of such difference. The means doctrine is as old as sin, and has been preached and practiced in our guilty world ever since the first transgression of our parents in Eden; while on other hand, the exclusive power of God to save sinners without any intermediate agency, instrumentality, or means what ever, has been clearly demonstrated from about the same period to all those with whom God has deposited the secret of the Lord. Light and darkness are not more opposite, heaven and hell are not further apart, than the doctrine of means, and salvation alone of God. We will not question the honesty of brother S. in his assertion; but we are bound to admonish our readers that in this very shape nearly all the heresies that have ever afflicted the church of God have been *sided in*. Error assuming to be truth, steals the livery of truth, and its advocates affirm that it is the truth, only differently expressed. This sneaking way of foisting in heresy should be promptly met and resolutely resisted by the soldiers of the cross.

Brother S. may have presumed too far upon our republicanism, which is not quite so elastic as to embrace all the doctrines which men have endeavored to palm upon the church of God, and wink at them because they are brought in by professed Baptists. True, brethren may interchange their views, and even differ in their judgment on many points without breaking fellowship, and a calm,

dispassionate discussion of doctrinal subjects may be conducted through our sheet to profit and edification. But the moment a Baptist, a Paul, or an angel from heaven, shall attempt to divide the work of salvation and ascribe any part thereof to works, good or bad, of men or of angels, that moment we feel the force of the admonition, "Let him be accursed."

As to standard writers, whatever may be the signification of the term in the Ashdod language, we still contend that inspired men of God are the only standard writers for the church of God. Webster defines the word *standard* to signify, 1, An ensign of war, a staff with a flag or colors; 2, That which is established by sovereign power as a rule or measure by which others are to be adjusted; 3, That which is established as a rule or model by the authority of public opinion, or custom, &c. While the latter sense may answer for all other sects, and their writers may be held as standards by them, if public opinion consents, the church of God cannot measure with a standard of public opinion; nothing short of that standard established by sovereign power will do for her. We read that when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard, &c. Is it likely that the Spirit of the Lord will hold up uninspired men, such as Sperry, or Beebe, or Gill, or Fuller, as a safeguard to the saints against invasion? Such standards might be easily taken by the enemy, and if taken, the cause is lost, and all who are represented by such standards would fall captive to the enemy.

Brother S. says he had hoped that we would have caught his idea in his emphatic declaration that he attached no power, influence or merit, to *means*, and that it possesses no procuring quality whatever. If he had left this frank declaration to speak for itself, without going on to add that he held the term *means* to be equivalent to the gracious provisions which God has made for the salvation of his people, we might have been satisfied. But his position taken as a whole says substantially, that there is neither power, influence, nor merit, nor procuring quality, in gracious provisions, or provisions of grace.

Now he is evidently as far from truth in attempting to divest the provisions of grace of power and merit as he is when attempting to enrobe his heathen deity, *Means*, with both. How then could we catch his idea. It would require unusual dexterity to catch an idea that shoots about so much at random; at one moment *means* is a name for a powerless phantom without merit or influence; and anon, it is an equivalent for gracious provisions, and so powerful and meritorious that God is himself dependent on it in quickening the dead. If he would have us catch such an idea, we beg he would hold it still in some place until we can lay our hand upon it.

It was not a mere change of names for the same things that we desired. The application of the terms gracious provisions to the doctrine of *means* is a prostitution of sound words to corrupt purposes. The provisions of grace, as we regard them, embrace a Savior provided, and in him the election, preservation, life, calling, regeneration, adoption, justification, and eternal glory of the church of God. The preaching of the gospel is also a provision of grace, but not a *means* of grace; and not as held by brother S., a kind of instrument, through which God speaks to dead sinners. The gospel of *means* may belong to dead sinners for aught we know to the contrary, but the gospel of God our Savior makes no address whatever to dead sinners; it addresses the living, the quickened, and them exclusively. It preaches glad tidings to the meek; it proclaims liberty to the captives; the opening of the prison to those who are bound. It is glad tidings of great joy; but what is its language to dead sinners? It is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; it is hid to them that are lost; for God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; and

babes is a term applied to children after they are quickened and born, but not before. It seems to be almost impossible for an arminian to understand that the quickening of a sinner is time forming of Christ in him. Christ only bath, and Christ only is immortality. He that hath Christ bath life, and he that bath not Christ is dead. That time communication of this life, this immortality to a soul is effected by the immediate power of God, that there is no medium in heaven or earth through which God the Holy Ghost communicates Christ to the dead sinner. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. After God has quickened a sinner, the gospel is good news, glad tidings, &c., but not before.

Brother S. reminds us of the old proverb, "The legs of the lame are not equal," for while he disputes our position, that the gospel is not preached where the Spirit does not attend the word, he asserts that the preaching of wicked men, and even grand imposters, who are destitute of the Spirit, is frequently attended with almighty power and yet he contends that man can do nothing only as God directs by bi Holy Spirit!

The simultaneous operation of the Holy Ghost in causing Peter to preach, and in pricking sinners in the heart on the day of pentecost, proves nothing in favor of the doctrine of means. It might be as plausibly argued that sinners being pricked in the heart was the means used to make Peter preach, as *vice versa*: seeing, as brother S. argues, these operations were simultaneous. For our own part we have no idea that their being pricked in the heart was being quickened hut it was evidence that the were alive, and being alive, by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, was what made them sensitive to the preaching of Peter; but if Peter's preaching was a means of giving life to the dead, or, as brother S. contends, if his words were in themselves spirit and life, the whole multitude who heard the sound of Peter's voice would have been effected alike. They could hear Peter, or Paul, or even the Son of God himself preach, without being pricked in their hearts, until God gave them life. We know nothing about God's bringing good out of evil, only that Job says it cannot be done; or that no one can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; but that God overrules all events for his own glory, and causes the wrath and wickedness of men and devils to subserve his righteous purpose, as in the case of Joseph and his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ, we have no doubt. It is a singular argument indeed, and one that we did not expect from brother S., that because God has spoken through his Sou, that if he does not now speak to dead sinners through men, he has lost his immutability! Does brother S. not know that God wrought in Christ many miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils ? Will he say that if God does not continue to perform these miracles through the agency of men, he is changeable God? We know that at sundry times, and in divers places, God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and that in these last days he has spoken to us by the Son, whom he bath appointed heir of all things; but it really shocks us to hear a brother say, If God does not continue thus to speak, he is a mutable God! Moses and Elijah were seen by Peter and John on the mount, transfigured and enveloped in the cloud, out of which the audible voice of God the Father was heard, saying of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." The law and the prophets were until John, but they have ceased to speak to our fathers. Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, has come; the government is now upon his shoulder, and his name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. He is to have no successor as the personification of God n speaking unto men. God evidently gives his ministers ability to preach the preaching that he bids them; but there is a wide difference between his speaking and their speaking. He speaks the word, and it stands fast; he commands, and it is done. But we know of none of his

preachers who have that power. When he says to the dead sinner, Live, the bands of death are loosed, and the portals of immortality are opened, and he that was dead comes forth.

Brother S. has reminded us that what God has joined, man is not at liberty to divide asunder; but let him be careful, and not unite in marriage parties where God has forbidden the bans. It would be a difficult matter for him to show that because God's ministers speak as the Spirit gives them utterance, that therefore the words of his ministers are spirit and life; that would illy comport with another part of the text, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Brother S's criticism on our remarks in reply to his perversion of the words, "He called you by our gospel," &c., is a failure, for we did not attempt an explanation of the text; we only showed that it could not apply as he had used it. Now, who were called by the apostle's gospel to obtain the glory of Christ, the living or the dead? Did Paul, or Peter, or James, or any other apostle call dead men to obtain the glory of the Head of the church? If so, when, where, and who? But in their preaching they thus addressed the saints: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." – Col. iii. 1. The glory which Christ has with the Father is what the gospel calls the risen with Christ to seek, and to obtain; but if the apostles ever called any who were not risen with Christ to seek or obtain that glory, the page on which the record is found is not in our bible.

Brother S. is not satisfied with our reply to the 17th item of his former letter, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." – Isa. xlv. 22. We showed by the context, that this command was addressed unto the seed of Jacob, and not, as brother S. says, to every creature indiscriminately. Does brother S. know that the seed of Jacob, spiritually understood, means the elect of God? If he does not, we refer him to Romans ix. 11-13; and that the elect are to be gathered in from the ends of the earth. If brother S. will prove that every creature without discrimination on the earth is called to look for salvation from God, we will prove by Rom. viii. 30, that whom he called, them he also justified. Their calling, no less than their justification and glory, is the immediate work of God. But brother S. used the quibble which is in the mouth of every arminian, "Many are called and few are chosen." We call this quibble, because it is garbled from a parable which our Lord spake upon a very different subject, and has no kind of allusion to the calling of sinners from death unto life. The nation of Israel had, in the sense of the marriage Supper, been bidden, but they were not the chosen people of God. Brother S. is evidently unwilling to be called an arminian; but his speech betrayeth him. There is scarcely an argument used by him in his two long communications that is not current among the most rotten kind of arminians. He says, "The proclamation of the gospel appears to be to all indiscriminately." And on the other hand, we affirm that no such thing appears, either from the gospel itself or from what he can establish by argument, and we hope he will just stick a pin in this place, and remember that there is a shadow of difference between us. If the proclamation of the gospel is indiscriminately to everybody, and brother S. says it is, if the above text from Isaiah means what it says, then everybody indiscriminately will be saved as sure as there is a God in heaven. For the gospel is a proclamation of complete salvation, of peace and pardon, of justification from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. It proclaims liberty to some captives, or to all captives; brother S. says to all the word of God says to the redeemed. The gospel proclaims the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Is it a general jail delivery, or is the prison Only opened to debtors whose obligations were canceled by the Son of God? "To everybody indiscriminately," says brother S. The gospel proclaims that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Brother S. says this is indiscriminately to everybody. Paul says its application is only "according as he bath

chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world,” The gospel proclamation is, “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Now will even the worshipers of Means pretend to say that this proclamation is to everybody?

He says that these passages are not the only ones he could bring. We know it. We have been familiar with the whole catalogue of passages relied upon by the arminians for over turning the system of salvation by grace alone from our youth up, and could rattle them over, if occasion required, with as much ease as a new light engineer of a front bench revival. But how awfully must the scriptures be perverted, and the truth of our God turned into a lie, or made to testify the opposite of what they declare, in thus garbling and misapplying their testimony. With our remarks upon the commission to the apostles he is also dissatisfied; he still insists on the application of his *generalism*. According to his theory, which he thinks is more orthodox than ours, the apostles were to preach the gospel to everybody, teach everybody to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded the apostles; and they were commissioned to baptize everybody. But did the apostles so understand, or so practice? By no means. They preached the gospel among the Jews and Gentiles; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, and those that believed were baptized. This included every creature belonging to the new creation, and no more. But brother S. has the apostles preaching to the men of Nineveh, Sodom, and to the antediluvians; not to either the old nor to the new creation exclusively, but to all indiscriminately! And upon this point he thinks the subject turns. Well, we are willing to rest it here. If the gospel is an indiscriminate proclamation to everybody; if it proclaims peace, pardon, salvation and eternal life to everybody, we must confess ourself ignorant of its application altogether.

He thinks it devolves on us, or on some good brother, to tell what purpose God has in causing his gospel to be preached. So far as God has made known to us his design we are ready to announce it: First, “It shall be preached for a witness unto all nations.” – Matt. xxiv. 14. Here we have one object stated by our Redeemer. Another design to accomplish is “To feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.” – Acts xx. 28. But if there be any scriptural authority for saying that God designed the preaching of the gospel to be used as a means through which to quicken dead sinners, it belongs to the means party to produce it.

We were not a little surprised to hear even brother S. say that our denying that the display of Christ’s eternal power and Godhead either said or implied that he was in need of means or anything else to secure the great work of salvation, was equivalent, in his opinion, to denying every ordinance and institution of Christ, and saying that they were of no use. We can conceive of nothing short of mental derangement that could lead him thus to speak; but in evidence of his total aberration, he attempts to shame the firmament above, and commands the very heavens to blush! Blush at what? Why, that it should overspread a person who denies that Christ needs means, or needs anything else, to secure the great work of salvation. We leave our readers to judge whether the blush does not belong somewhere else.

To the question whether anybody ever knew of a whole family’s being born at once, we answer, we have heard of a nation’s being born in a day, but we cannot perceive what connection this question has with the subject under consideration. His allusion to the blowing of rams’ horns around Jericho, so far from being the means of throwing down the walls, that brother S. more than half yields that point, and does not know that it caused the walls to fall. Neither do we; so we will let that argument pass for all that it may be worth.

We did not say that eating, drinking and breathing were not essential to the perpetuation of human life, but that they were not the means of our living; that is, they never produced life in a dead carcass; and as brother S. has tasked us with an experiment, we will requite his kindness by proposing to him the experiment on a dead body; let him stuff it with as much wholesome food as he can get down, and see if it will produce life, and if he fails in this experiment, let him give up the point, and own that eating, &c., are not the means of producing life. A quickened soul lives by faith upon the Son of God; but their so living was not the cause of, or means whereby they were made alive. We shall not attempt an explanation of Paul's meaning, where he said that he rejoiced that Christ was preached, notwithstanding some preached of envy, &c., thinking to add affliction to Paul's bonds. But to brother S's conclusion that God's Holy Spirit was, or is administered through the agency of ungodly men, we enter our unqualified Protest. Truly such a version of Paul's views does not very well comport with brother B's views, nor the views of any other person with whom we have ever had correspondence, except brother S. As to the experience of the thousands to whom brother S. alludes, if in harmony with that sentiment, we could not regard them as gospel experiences. Any spirit communicated to them through the envious preaching of ungodly men cannot be the Spirit of Christ.

He does not know why, in alluding to Ezekiel's vision, we skipped over the first ten verses. Did he suppose it was necessary that we should comment on every verse in the bible? But he says he thinks it is most clear to every common sense reader that God wrought through, or by the prophet Ezekiel, to the quickening and making alive those dry bones. Well, if so, we are not a common sense reader; for we did not know that there were any dry bones quickened, and much less did we imagine that God quickened any by or through Ezekiel. We understand the whole to be a vision which the prophet saw, and that in the vision God caused the bone to come to his bone, and the breath, not of Ezekiel, but of God to enter them. And God interpreted the vision to Ezekiel very differently from the manner in which brother S. has to us. "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel," not everybody indiscriminately. "Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves," not by or through Ezekiel's digging, "and cause you to come up out of your graves," &c. "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." And we ask if there ever was an instance where God has opened the grave of a poor dead sinner, brought him out of his grave, and put his spirit in him, and that quickened sinner did not know that it was the Lord, and not Ezekiel, that had spoken and performed it?

But after all that has been said, brother S. hinges the whole "jet" of the subject on the question, "Is it, or is it not, clearly revealed in God's word that God makes use of his gracious provisions, or instrumentalities (not men) in the awakening of dead sinners " If he means by gracious provisions, what he has been contending for, instrumentalities or means, there is nothing of the kind clearly stated in the scriptures; for in the quickening of the dead, there are neither means nor instrumentalities used; but if he means what God has provided, namely, life in Christ, election, predestination, calling, &c., which were provided graciously, none will deny that these provisions take effect when God communicates life to the soul; but that these are used as instruments, or as means of quickening the dead, is denied. His version of our admission is calculated to give a wrong impression; because we allow that the Spirit can and undoubtedly does sometimes quicken sinners, simultaneously with the preaching; he says that we allow that the word preached, and the Spirit and

power are simultaneous, as though we had admitted that it were always so, or more frequently so, than otherwise, which was not out intention. We hold that it can neither facilitate nor retard the work of the Holy Ghost. In his contrast between his views and those of arminians, he comes, in many points, upon the anti-means ground, and, as above, excludes men and means from all power; but still he contends that God exerts his power in the work of regeneration by or through men and means. So bewitching is this means doctrine that those infected can frequently contradict their own words without being aware of it. The very same arguments and quibbles generally used by arminians are used by brother S. in attempting to sustain his darling bantling, Means, and all that he has admitted of the opposite doctrine, or nearly all, has also been admitted by John Wesley and other famous arminians. He demands, If the saints are fed through the preachers, or by the preaching of the gospel, why not quickened and made alive through them? Strange confusion of language! If a shepherd can feed sheep why can he not make sheep? God has given us natural life through Adam, and life coming to us, by or through him, makes us his children; and if God gives spiritual life through his preachers, the medium through which we receive it must constitute us the children of the preachers; not of God. When children are born, no nurse who may be employed to feed them can change their relationship as children; but if God's children are quickened through an intervening agent, then is there an intermediate father between them and God, which must effect, if not destroy, their heirship. But he asserts that it is just as reasonable and scriptural that they should be made alive by or through preachers, as to be fed, after being made alive, by the preaching of the word.

This wild assertion is followed by a chapter on charity; but, although charity may cover a multitude of sins, it can not reconcile this absurdity with the truth of God, nor have we a charity cloak sufficiently broad to wrap it up.

In our former position, which brother S. seems inclined to controvert, we assert that the church of Christ is *a unit*, and we are sustained by Cant. vi. 9, Eph. 11, 1622, and iv. 4, with as many other scriptural declarations as he will be able to dispose of conveniently. He allows there may be in some churches those who agree in all the essential fundamental doctrines of the gospel; but will he tell us what doctrine of Christ is more fundamental, or of more vital importance in the economy of salvation, than that which asserts that life and salvation is of the Lord alone? Truly, we believe that all must come up to the scribe, and, as far as we are enabled, we shall hew to the line, and let the chips fly. He admits that Paul did contend that "Salvation is of grace, and not of works." This is the very point at which we are now at issue. We contend that salvation is wholly of God; and he is laboring to wedge in the rotten arminian notion of means. He says, "Paul did not contend about means." True, for that heresy was known in Paul's day by other names. None more boldly contended that the quickening of the dead was exclusively the work of God than Paul. The charge that he used means for quickening the dead cannot be proved; and the foundation which Paul, as a wise master builder, laid is the same that brother S. and all his means fraternity are laboring to overthrow.

New Vernon, N.Y.,
December 15, 1846

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 2
Pages 712 – 726

Number 4

MEANS.

“They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad.”

“Therefore, they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.” - Habakkuk i. 15, 16.

EULOGY.

O glorious Means! omnipotent in thy power, novel in thine appearance, and miraculous in thine effects. How greatly do the nations admire thee! The Scribes and Pharisees rejoice in thee. Work-mongers and Arminians bless thee! Deluded mortals put their trust under the shadow of thy wings! Ashdod and Moab are among thine admirers! Ishmael and Cain, with Esau and Goliah, are among thy mighty men! In thy praises the daughters of all the uncircumcised unite! To set forth thine excellency, the most popular, learned and influential clergy of modern times are zealously engaged! For thy service, Theological Colleges and Sunday Schools are greatly multiplied, and all who hate God and despise his salvation, and wantonly disregard his word, and do despite to the spirit of grace, are wont to bow obsequious at thy glittering shrine! Great is thine antiquity, and venerable thy hoary locks, for very age. Thine ancient wonders and thy mighty works of old, as with a sunbeam, record the history of thy demoniac renown.

No sooner had the light of heaven shone upon the new made works of God, in the morning of time, than thou wert there, even *thou*, and thy father, to teach the parents of our race the way to become as gods; and when their eyes were opened, and they saw with shame their nakedness, by thee a covering of fig-leaves was seasonably provided. To thee did Cain apply for reconciliation with the offended Majesty, from whom he had received his existence; and by the use of thee, O *means!* did he insult Jehovah, with an offering from the earth, then groaning under the weighty curse of God, - an offering which the Lord had not required at his unhallowed hands. And by the use of thee, his zeal waxed hot against the religion of his brother, who rejected thee. Yea, in his fiery zeal did he decree, in thy great name, the complete extermination of heresy from the new born world. A lasting monument of thy ancient works, was, at an early age, erected on the plains of Shinar, to stand coeval with the world, whereon, indelibly, thy name is written; and who, we ask, shall dare dispute that Babel's mighty tower was the production of means? To thee, the incestuous origin of Moab and Ammon most unquestionably belong; and he doth wrong thee, who this truth denies. And by thine ingenuity were good old Abraham and Sarah, with their bond-women, enlisted in the enterprise of hastening the fulfillment of the promise of the God of heaven. Ishmael also is thy son, and all his numerous offspring have received their existence through thine instrumentality.

O *means!* if thou wert dead, what pen of scribe could write a fair biography of thy deeds of fame? To frame new gods for Israel's fickle tribes, resort was had to thee. The borrowed jewels which once adorned the Hebrew women, quickly assumed the form and beauty of a calf, when Israel's mitred priest, in thy dread name, devoted them; and when amid the deafening shouts of all thy Hebrew worshipers, Aaron brought forth the god of means, how thou wert honored. To thy new gods, honors immortal were ascribed; and at the priest's protracted-meeting, held before it,

thousands of converts left the worship of the most high God, and bowed themselves to thee, and owned thy god as their deliverer from Pharaoh's cruel yoke; nor did this revival cease, until an *old school* Moses preached his antiquated doctrine in their ears. To fill the land with prophets such as Ahab loved, and kill the prophets of the Lord of Hosts, that monarch sold himself for thee. And in thy name, thy daughter Jezabel, with zeal unequalled, spread her table to sustain thy troops. By thee, the men of Egypt wrought their miracles in the presence of the king, until thy stock of wisdom and of power were overdrawn, to imitate the plague of vermin.

Turn back thine eye, O Means, to days of yore, and in the retrospect behold the heathen world filled with thy temples, swarmed by thy missionaries, and finally worshipping no less than thirty thousands of thy gods. Then turn thyself around, and from the climax of thy splendid Babel look to every high hill, and under all green trees, in Israel, and mark the chosen tribes, in wild devotion burning incense on altars of brick, offering to the Lord *swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things*. Yea, see them devoutly baking cakes unto the queen of heaven; all in thy use, and all to honor thee!

If, then, under the sable ages of the world, while the earth in darkness groped, thou wert the pride of princes, and the pillar on which the monarchies of nations learned, what art thou now? No sooner had the God of glory sent his Son into the world, than Herod came to thee for aid to slay the young child Jesus. To help him out, thy hands were stained with the blood of all the infant males, from two years old and younger, throughout his jurisdiction. To perpetuate the connection of church and State, and seal forever to the neck of Israel the yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to endure, the Jewish Rabbies had access to thee. In keeping with thy various transformations at that important period, thou didst profess a zeal for God. Then didst thou teach thy sons to swear that they had heard the holy Jesus blaspheme - that they had known him to break the Sabbath, eat like a glutton, and drink as a wine-bibber. They called him Beelzebub, and said he cast out evil spirits through the prince of devils; and to arrest the further progress of his doctrine, the earth was traversed, and the sea compassed, by thy missionaries of Pharisaic sentiments, to make one proselyte, who, when converted to thy craft, thou madest him more the child of hell than were the pious Pharisees. And further, if our recollection serves us, thou didst originate on one occasion, a tee-total abstinence society, in which no less than forty of thy sons not only pledged themselves to drink no wine or beer, but also bound themselves under a curse, that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Five times didst thou repeat thy forty stripes, in the case of Paul, as *means* to bring him into thy new measures; and once thou didst persuade him to shave himself, and be at charges. Poor Peter also used thee, to avoid the strong suspicions which attached to him, in consequence of the affirmations of a damsel. Judas, thy treasurer, held unshaken confidence in thee. He found thee useful in collecting funds to fill his bag; and through thine influence he was enabled at one time to lift a collection of thirty pieces of silver. It is true, thy disciple, Simon Magus, did not succeed when, for thee, he offered money for gifts of the Holy Ghost; but it is very evident that if Peter had really known that sinners were redeemed by silver, or with gold, he would not have sentenced the *money* with the wretch to perish. The money for thy service, would have been kept back.

Had the good Master approved thy doctrine as it is generally understood, and practiced by his professed disciples of the new school, so far from directing them to call upon the Lord of the harvest for laborers, he would have directed them to thee; and by thine aid, to rear up colleges, and Theological Schools, form National and State Societies, Missionary Boards, and to establish a thousand agencies in all parts of the land, to raise funds and inducements for pious, lazy young men,

to enter the vineyard. But oh! how unfortunate for the ante-deluvian world - for Sodom and Gomorrah - for Tyre and Siden, and for ill-fated Jerusalem, that the marvelous power to moralize and christianize the world were hidden from their eyes) and the refulgent blaze of thy glory reserved for this wonderful day of Means, in which our lot is cast.

The present is a day devoted to thy service, distinguished from all former time as the peculiar day of *means!* In the development of thy powers are brought to light the hidden things of dishonesty, and thou art known and acknowledged as the originator of all the popular modern religious institutions which claim the right to monopolize all the *benevolence* on earth. Thou art like a powerful *locomotive*, puffing, snorting, and letting off thy surplus steam, while thy thundering wheels, with sound of mighty power, makes nature tremble, and in thy train are found all the religious inventions of fallen man, drawn onward by thee with the most astonishing velocity. Thy splendid cars, bearing the names of every religious society under heaven - with the bare exception of the church of God - dash on with frightful celerity to consummate thy glory. To thee, the clergy of our day ascribe salvation; the pulpit and the press reiterate the sound that God has ordained eternal salvation through thy instrumentality; that thou art accessible to all men - that thou art even in the hands of all men, and if all will use thee, all shall be saved; and that the reason why any are lost is, because of their rejection of thy sovereign power to save. In the wonderful *march of mind*, characteristic of the present times, few, very few, are found who dare even pray to God for any blessing, temporal or spiritual, for time or for eternity, through any other name than thine. The name given under heaven and among men, whereby the apostle tells us sinners must be saved, sounds harsh, antiquated, obsolete and barbarous in the pious ears of those who admire thee. To justify the foregoing remark, we refer for testimony to the general language of what bears the name of prayer in every part of our land - "Lord, bless the means made use of for the spread of the gospel, for the revival of religion, for the conversion of the heathen, and for the evangelization of the world! Bless our Theological Schools, our Foreign and Domestic Mission Societies, our Sabbath Schools, our Bible and Tract Societies, with all other means made use of for the good of thy cause," &c. While on the other hand, sinners are taught to expect salvation through the use of means, and christians are gravely told that all their prayers to God to carry on his work and grace, to build up his cause and kingdom, to supply the walls of Zion with watchmen, to gather in his ransomed people, will prove abortive and vain, unless we apply ourselves to - *means!*

In the diversification of thy transformations, sometimes thou appearest as a mighty deity, having power to control the mind and will of the unchanging God, and causing him to forego his plans and adopt those which bear thy superscription; and when thou dost assume this god-like form, we are directed to depend on thee to aid us in persuading the Lord to convert our wives, our children, our neighbors, and the world at large - to bless our enterprises, and to give success to all our plans, and efficacy to all our measures. Anon, thou seemest like some *net* or *drag* by which the portion of thine advocates is fat and fall of marrow, and by which their meat is plenteous. Just as the silly fish catch at the angle .of the artful fisher, infatuated mortals grasp at thee; and like a net or drag, thou makest fat the portion of thy votaries, who, in return, with grateful hearts and willing hands, sacrifice to thee, and on thine altar burn their incense.

Before we close our eulogy, we would remind thee that all the numerous host of thy disciples have long applied to thee for aid to put down the Old School Baptists! and in thy cause they have not shunned to declare all manner of evil falsely against them, nor left a stone unturned; yet why have they not, with all thine aid, prevailed? Because that he is mightier who stands for his people, than

thou, with all thine armies. Hence, *means*, WE DARE THEE! Do thy worst, we dread not thy power. The God in whom we trust has set bounds to thy power, saying unto thee, as to the waters of the mighty deep, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." And even shouldst thou be permitted to wear thine ancient costume of prisons, racks and halters - of gibbets, flames and faggots, as christians trust in God they fear thee not. Put on, therefore, thy most terrific forms, and, as far as in the lies, blast our reputation, operate against our worldly interest, confiscate our property, and even drench the earth with oar blood, still we defy thee, still we refuse to have our portion made fat by thee; for unto us thy base reproaches are greater riches than all thy treasures. The God in whom we trust is able to deliver us out of thy hands - and if not, be it known unto unto thee, O *Means*, we will not worship thy gods, nor bow down to the images which thou hast set up.

NEW VERNON, N. Y.,
October 1, 1836

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Editorials Volume 1
Pages 321 – 327

Number 5

MEANS ONCE MORE.

IN our last number we called the attention of our readers to the subject of Means, and in a manner somewhat ironical, set forth some of the properties which means is supposed to possess; and for our eulogy we presume our Arminian neighbors will feel themselves greatly obliged. We are not willing, however, as yet to dismiss the subject of means, as we have somewhat further to say on this point, which we will endeavor to do in a more serious manner.

It has been reported by some, and believed by others, that we discard altogether the idea of God's using means or instruments for the accomplishment of his divine purposes. This charge is gratuitous and untrue. Although we do most positively deny the supposed power or efficacy of humanly invented means to facilitate the salvation of lost sinners, in the manner the doctrine is preached, believed and acted upon at the present day, we most freely admit, and firmly believe, that the all-wise and glorious God has appointed instruments by which he will accomplish his adorable purposes. This truth is clearly taught in the scriptures; but in the examples we shall give the reader will do well to mark the difference between the wisdom of God and the policy of men, in providing and bringing means into requisition. The unskillful management of man, as set forth in our last number, will form a striking contrast to the handiwork of God.

The first example we shall give of God's using means is that of the salvation of Noah and his family. (See Genesis.) The means made use of on this occasion was an ark; the plan, form and construction of which were all of God. He that was able to dash a thousand worlds to death at a word, and amidst the general calamity say, "Let Noah and his family be saved," chose to pursue a different course. No part of the work was left discretionary with Noah, but all must be done agreeably to the divine instruction Noah received from God. The plan of man to save the human race from a devouring deluge was to build a tower whose top would reach to heaven; but the means which God employed to stop the progress of the work of Babel was to go down and confound their language. The train of means which God employed to elevate Joseph, and to humble his ambitious brethren, were such as human wisdom would have thought the most unlikely to succeed. The jealousy of Joseph's brethren, their envy and hatred, their murderous designs, their avarice and treachery, their selling him into slavery, did not look much like means to bring him into power and subjugate his brethren. The unmerciful Ishmaelites were another link of God's appointed means; by an all-wise decree they were on the spot at the appointed moment; had they delayed their journey a few moments, Joseph had been no more. But when the murderers saw them, Joseph was raised from the pit and conducted down to Egypt, where he withstood the temptation of his mistress, was falsely accused, unjustly condemned, thrown into prison, miraculously brought forth therefrom, and finally raised to the government of Egypt. Good old Jacob did not seem to understand or like the means which God made use of in this case.

The means which God employed to rid his ancient Israel of a rebellious king was to send an evil spirit with a commission to, Go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all Ahab's prophets. These were ordained to persuade him to go and fall at Ramath Gilead; and that by lying to him, and saying that he should go and prosper, and the Lord would deliver Ramath Gilead into his hands. When the beloved Son of God was to fulfill all that was written of him, in law, and prophets, and psalms;

wicked men and devils were God's sword. In many instances we are told by the evangelists of what they did "that the scriptures might be fulfilled." When but a babe we see the Holy Child chased down to Egypt by cruel persecution; and being called from thence, he turned into a small city, that the scripture might be fulfilled; from the manger to the cross, his life is loaded with reproaches, abuses, blasphemies and insults, and all to preserve the sacred volume inviolate. At length against him both Herod and Pontius Pilate meet, with men of Israel and the Gentiles, "for to do whatsoever (God's) hand and counsel before determined should be done;" the heathen raged, and the people imagined vain things against the Lord, and against his Christ; yet all these things were God's chosen instrumentalities for the accomplishment of what his hand and counsel had predestinated. And when the dear disconsolate disciples, on their way to Emmaus, journeyed and were sad, because of what their Lord had done and suffered from the hand. of wicked men find devils, our Lord reprov'd them, saying, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written, ought not Christ to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" Heaven had ordained the accomplishment of all these things, and all requisite means for the accomplishment of the end were duly provided.

But ere we close our article on this subject, let us examine the means which God has ordinarily employed to facilitate the spread of the gospel ministry, not the making of ministers, nor the regeneration of souls, but the publication of the gospel. As the heavens are high above the earth, so the ways and thoughts of God do truly transcend the ways and thoughts of man. Let us contrast them. For the spread of what they call gospel, men form large, popular and moneyed societies, establish permanent funds, call into existence unheard of, unscriptural and uncalled for begging agencies, establish dignified executive boards, &c., to induce by hire or bribery such as are greedy of filthy lucre to enter their field and labor under their ecclesiastical dictation. But how different is the plan of God; the *means*, if we may call them so, which he employed in the primitive days of his gospel church was to let loose the powers of wicked men and devils upon his dear servants, to persecute, whip, imprison, calumniate and distress them; and he had previously given them directions, "If they make up for you a full purse and a splendid outfit in one city, take it and go as their hirelings to another"? Not exactly so; but these were his words: "If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another." Such were the means which the all-wise God employed, and so when it became necessary to start them out about their Master's work, there arose a great persecution, and the saints were scattered, and they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. It was persecution, under God, that took Paul to Rome, and John to Patmos for the benefit of the Seven Churches; and persecution has been ever since employed by the great Master in compelling his ministers to traverse the earth with the ministry of the everlasting gospel. But mark! while the enraged Jews were made subservient to the cause of God in wickedly and maliciously persecuting the ministers of Jesus, they themselves had their popular religious preselyting missionaries out in all the land and sea, under good pay and easy circumstances, even as are their successors in the pharisaical crusades of modern times.

Down through the dark ages of Pagan, Papal and Protestant persecution, God has overruled all their rage and malice, and brought it to bear upon his servants in such a manner as to make them the more active in preaching the word of God everywhere. It was persecution in Europe that brought the pioneers of the gospel ministry to our beloved shores; and when they thought to sit unmolested and secure under their gourds, and enjoy that social felicity together for which they had bidden adieu their native countries, and for the enjoyment of which they had crossed the mighty deep, God prepared a worm to gnaw the gourd - it withered, it died. Persecution then arose from the most

popular party, (Congregationalists,) and they were scattered and went everywhere as God directed their way in providence.

At some future time, we hope not far distant, we intend to give our readers a more full account of the persecution of some of the first Baptist preachers, who went everywhere preaching the word, when there was no golden wedges or Babylonish garments in the camp to induce hypocrites and nominal professors to reiterate the ancient petition, "Put me, I pray thee, into the priest's office, that I may have bread." Our dear brethren in the ministry who have labored in the gospel when Baptist ministers preached at the peril of their lives, when instead of loaves and fishes they were treated with showers of stones, with tar and feathers; and in not a few instances, like old Elder Morse, who preached the gospel laying on his back in a broiling sun, with his feet made fast in the stocks; and when preaching a short time before his death at an association, brushed back his venerable locks and showed the scars and wounds received in the service of Christ – having been stoned while preaching Christ to the people. It was this kind of treatment that often drove the old soldier of the cross from his own fireside to penetrate the newly settled wilderness; and as he went he preached Christ.

When in this manner God had sent and sustained his gospel ministers until he had by them raised up churches throughout our Eastern and Southern States, their enemies, finding that they could not exterminate them from the earth, changed their tone, and said, "Come let us all build together." They crept in unawares, *by peace and by flattery*, as Daniel says, and when once in, there was war in the camp; the old veterans of the cross became targets for the new lights to shoot at. Grieved and afflicted, they were by persecution compelled to retire from their flocks, *and being scattered, they went everywhere preaching the word*, while their ill-fated brethren amalgamated with the Ishmaelitic multitude of *new measure* converts, were left to go hungry, or like the prodigal, strive to fill themselves with the husks which the swine do eat.

Pastors by this description of means were furnished for the far West; hundreds from Virginia and other States went out to find a peaceful home where the cry of the panther, the growl of the bear, the howling of the wolf, and the yell of the savages, were to them less dreadful than the persecution from which they had retired. Here in the uncultivated wilderness, they little suspected that the *dandy cut* clergy of the older States would molest them; nor was there any danger until they had subdued it, and made it literally a fruitful field - when cities and villages were springing up, and when they had finished the ministry which God had intended by them in these places; then the flood-gates were opened, and their churches were soon inundated with young men from theological schools, who were sent over, not to escape from persecution, but under the patronage of the popular religionists of the East. Like lions let loose, they made it their business to divide and distress the dear people of God in the Great Valley. And even now the struggle is going on; the Pope, the world and the devil are all engaged in furnishing the Mississippi Valley with missionaries of their own manufacturing to supplant the Lord's ministers; and God is, we doubt not, even now suffering this war to go on, until by the use of these means he will drive his ministers into other destitute parts, and leave in their places ravening wolves to drive out all such as fear the Lord, and tremble at his word.

Finally, we write that we do know, and testify what we have seen; aye, and felt too, when we assure our readers that the ordinary means or instrumentalities which the Lord employs to remove his servants from one place to another is persecution in some form or other. When the Jews accounted

themselves (by their conduct) unworthy of eternal life, ho! the apostle turned to the Gentiles; for so had God commanded. Let down from a window in a basket, to avoid the murderous enemies of the cross, the apostle fled to another field of labor. But oh, how different with anti-christ's hirelings! Note the scores of young and old *clergymen* in almost every city in our States panting for the work; panting for the salvation of souls; panting for a call, an outfit, aye, panting for a respectable salary: but yet they stand idle in the market-place because no man has *hired* them; and yet their benevolent bowels yearn over the perishing millions whom they say are dropping into hell for want of their labors of love, while their sense of the incalculable worth of immortal souls often makes them ejaculate this prayer to Mammon, their god:

Oh for a thousands pounds a year,
That I may go and preach,
And loud proclaim to every ear
What I delight to teach!

Oh that our missionary board
More agents would employ!
And send them forth, the dust to hoard,
How I would leap for joy!

Oh that the halcyon days were come,
When all, both far near,
Would bring their earthly wealth, as one,
And say, "Lo! it is here."

Oh what a precious heap of gold,
All corban'd to the Lord!
For this my service shall be sold,
And I will preach the word.

My generous hands and liberal soul
Of cash shall grasp a store;
Then will I preach from pole to pole,
And cry, Give more! give more!

But oh! how painful to my eyes,
The cash comes in so slow;
I fear they'll all, to their surprise,
Sink down to endless wo.

Say, honest reader, is not this the very spirit of modern benevolence? Surely these are the men who claim an exclusive right to the title of benevolence. Persecution never did, and we are confident it never will, drive them into the work; they had much rather lounge in the cities than go moneyless into the field of actual service to labor. But the ministers of the Lord go at his bidding, and when they return, they return as did the seventy, saying, "We lacked nothing, even devils were subject to us through thy name."

NEW VERNON, N. Y., October 21, 1836.

Elder Gilbert Beebe, Editorials Volume 1, Pages 327 – 334

