

A decorative border of roses and leaves surrounds the text.

HARDY AND THOMPSON DEBATE

**A Discussion Relative to the Predestination of the Abominable Sins
of Depraved Men and Women and The Obedience and Disobedience
of the Lord's Believing Children**

BY
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AND
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Tom Adams

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J. B. Hardy



J. E. Wallaw

PREFACE

The great object impressing me that it is my duty to give this discussion to the Primitive Baptists, and to all who may be benefited by a careful perusal of it, is know to God, who is acquainted with the motives of all hearts. He knows that my design is to honor Him and benefit His pure-hearted people.

When I read Elder Hardy's extreme views in his editorial "FIRST AND SECOND CAUSES", I was impressed that it called for a reply that the advocates of truth could afford to withhold. I waited, hoping that some favored exponent of the true doctrinal teaching, assailed by him would meet his bold challenge. Failing to see a reply I ventured into the arena of discussion thrown open by him. I then hoped that it might be a kind, brotherly investigation, that truth might more extensively prevail without offense. But Elder Hardy evidenced that he preferred to indulge in sarcasm, ridicule and misrepresentations, which improper course should not prejudice the reader against the truths he opposes. Each should carefully seek for the scriptural truths set forth. And no one should allow blind prejudice to control, or unholy environments to bind him with the yoke of heresy.

"God is love", "God was manifest in the flesh" in the person of Jesus Christ. Prompted by love of righteousness He condemned unrighteousness, and righteously exposed the hypocrisy, deceptions and falsehoods of corrupt men. He called them hypocrites, "a generation of vipers", the children of the devil and liars. Paul wrote of some as grievous wolves, blasphemers, and that some would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy. Peter charged Ananias with lying to the Holy Ghost; and he said there would be false teachers among the true disciples, who would bring in damnable heresies. Love prompted them to expose and forcibly condemn hypocrites, deceivers, falsifiers and heretics, and to warn the confiding people of God to beware of them. We should conform to their worthy example, oppose error, expose deceivers, warn the sheep of Christ concerning the approach of presence of wolves and against men who speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them. And in all that we say and do love for the right, the good and the pure should be the motive that actuates us. Christ taught that His disciples should be wise like serpents and as harmless as doves. So we should endeavor to be faithful in allegiance to Jesus, our King. It has been my purpose to conform to the scriptural example given. Though, conscious of fallibility, my soul has been exercised with prayerful desire for spiritual guidance, that true wisdom might govern and our Father's name be honored and His people be served. May it be His pleasure to bless my effort to the lasting good of many.

To all Christians, who have imbibed the heretical views advocated by Elder Hardy in this discussion, I meekly say: You are responsible to God, and it behooves you to impartially investigate these pages, to renounce error and disconnect yourself from those who advocate it, and stand with those who contend for the true faith.

You cannot afford to hold to an unscriptural dogma that dishonors God, or to continue your relations religiously with those who propagate it. As we love you we plead for the sure way to permanent peace and fellowship.

Submitted to the pure in heart,

J. M. THOMPSON, Greenfield, Indiana, May 27, 1910

FIRST AND SECOND CAUSES

First Cause

Since we have been associated with Baptist lingo we have often noted their reference to first and second causes, both in speaking and writing, and of late the subject has engaged our mind with more weight than formerly. If we understand what first and second causes are, we accept the thought that things come to pass under the influence of first and second causes.

By the first cause we understand that God is meant; as “He is before all things and by Him all things consist”. God being before all things, signifies that at some remote period in the existence of God, He was the only being that existed, consequently whatever has existed since that period depended upon God for its existence. And as alleged, the acts of these dependent being depended upon their being brought into existence, then at this remote period, not only their being but their acts as well, depended upon God. Hence, He is said to be the FIRST CAUSE, as nothing could exist without Him.

But in becoming the great First Cause of all things, God did not do it blindly or without perfect knowledge of and purpose in the final issue of all the things and events which make their appearance in the entire universe. He actually foreknew and designed their existence, made a place for them in His infinite plan and appointed the time of the manifestation of each and every being and event, and so accurately did He time His plan that there has never been and can never be a miscarriage in the smallest detail of it. This great First Cause in counseling His own will and pleasure when He alone inhabited eternity, determined to create this world. He did not design that it should be a world of purity, and endure the disgrace and chagrin of disappointment because it was not and is not so. He perfectly foreknew and intended that it should be just as it has been, is now and will be.

This great First Cause was without a previous cause. All subsequent causes, or what is termed second causes, are the effects of some cause preceding them, so that all of the creatures and events of time constitute an unbroken chain of causes and effects, any one link out of which would have marred the whole chain. But with the First Cause it is not so. He is not the effect of something preceding Him (this is a truth that the finite mind cannot comprehend, neither can it comprehend God), neither are His acts from the first to the last induced, directed or influenced by any cause outside of Himself; if there should be then would He cease to be the first cause and would become a secondary cause.

One inspired writer says of Him, “He is in one mind and who can turn Him? And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth”. David said of Him, “Thy word, O Lord, is forever settled in the heavens”, and He said by the prophet, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure”. The mind of the Lord, the counsel of the Lord and the word of the Lord referred to in these passages are one and the same. The same mind He had before anything existed but Himself is the mind He has now; it had been established forever in the heavens, and it shall stand until all of His pleasure is accomplished. With these declarations of Holy Writ (and many others equally pointed) confronting us we must acknowledge that whatever God does for His creatures, to His creatures, or with His creatures, whether in providence or grace are just those things which He has eternally had in His mind to do, and not what He is caused to do by some influence outside of Himself. We are not unmindful of the fact that these truths meet with many objectors, but this is the only grounds upon which we can safely clear the

quagmire of Arminianism. So let us stick to our proposition that God is the First Cause and whatever proceeds from Him directly comes uninduced by anything save His will. This rules all conditionality out of the direct dealings of the Lord with His creatures. But where can we find a place for them? If God's acts are directed by His own mind, and His mind now is what it was before there was anything but Himself, and there was no cause outside of Himself that shaped His mind, how can we conclude that away down here in the evening of time the conduct of His creatures is directing His acts or influencing His course? Our exalted conception of the perfection of the High and Lofty One who inhabited eternity forbids us accepting the thought. We must conceive man on a higher plane of God on a lower one before we can concede that the latter is influenced by the former.

Second Cause

Now we come to consider what is generally termed "Second Causes".

We understand that second causes are those events which influence or produce any effect, being themselves the effects of some precious cause or causes.

Just here we desire to introduce what our English brethren said on this subject in 1693: "Although in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without His providence, yet by the same providence **He ordereth** them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently."

This quotation from the London Confession of Faith is in perfect accord with what we have said previously in this article, and also with what we purpose to say hereafter. That is in their relation to God, things come to pass immutably and infallibly. The events of time are as certainly and unchangeably fixed with God as His mind is fixed; and the very things that to us seem to be suspended upon the most uncertain conditions are as immutable with God as is His own being.

The following illustrations are in point here. In ancient times when the Roman Empire was in the zenith of its glory, an inveterate foe marched an army against the city of Rome. They planned a night attack and found the entire city slumbering; but as they scaled the wall, some geese were aroused and gave the alarm. The forces within the city were quickly marshaled and drove the enemy back and the city was saved. Since that time it has been a common saying that, "The cackling of geese saved Rome."

Here is a great event in the history of nations that seemed fortuitous and suspended upon the cackling of geese, and we reason if the geese had not cackled Rome would have been lost and the whole history of that empire from that time on would have been changed. This is one of those events which fell out according to the nature of second causes, and perhaps contingently in the relation of the event to the second causes; but our English brethren scripturally said, God ordered it to fall out this way. Then let us keep in mind that whether things occur necessarily, freely or contingently in their relation to the second causes, they occur infallibly with God. He has ordered that it shall be so.

But to illustrate again: When Paul was being carried bound to Rome to appear before Caesar's court, as they sailed, the Lord appeared to Paul and revealed to him that the entire crew and all passengers on

board would suffer shipwreck, and at the same time revealed to him that all of them would escape with their lives. But when the catastrophe came upon them and those on board were about to desert the ship, Paul spoke by inspiration and said, "Except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved". In this event it seemed that the salvation of all on board was hinged upon their abiding in the ship; yet the Lord had already declared unto Paul that they would all be saved. Here is another one of those second causes which God had ordered; and while it is true that except they abode in the ship they could not be saved, it was also a fact that God had ordered it that way, and all the powers of earth and hell could not alter it. Their abiding in the ship was immutable and their salvation sure.

In each of these cases cited, one historical and one scriptural, God had ordered them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, but because they fell out or transpired or was brought to pass under the influence of second causes, to which we look as the responsible cause of the event, yet we must not overlook the fact that the event was not therefore fortuitous, because God had ordered that these very conditions or causes should prevail.

The difference which we see in the effects of the First Cause and of second causes is not in the certainty or uncertainty of the effect, but in the manner in which the effect is reached, the avenue through which it is produced. A few more words and we are through.

Do the Spiritual blessings come to God's children in time as the product of the First Cause or as the effects of second causes? Let James answer: "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning". James warns us not to err, saying that they come from God, and he would also have us understand that in the bestowal of these good and perfect gifts that God is not varying as some would have us believe, teaching that our conduct toward God, which we may have either this way or that way as we list, decides the conduct of God toward us. But James says there is not even the shadow of turning on God's part in conferring these gifts.

We wonder sometimes whether all who use the term "Conditional Time Salvation" mean exactly the same thing by their expression. We do not use it, because we do not believe it is scriptural or in keeping with the Christian's experience. But lest we might accuse someone wrongfully, who does use the expression, we would like that they answer this question: Do you mean by "Conditional Time Salvation" that the children of God can by their obedience or disobedience to the commands of God at any specific time or on any occasion induce Him to act toward them in a way or perform on them an act that He had not previously determined to do? An answer, Yes or No, to this question would help me to place those who use the expression. But we are of the opinion that a direct answer will not be given, as it would endanger the craft to do so.

We must not desist; but some time, if the Lord will, we shall be pleased to write on the relation of obedience and Spiritual joys and comforts to First and second causes.

Yours to serve,
J. R. HARDY

REPLY BY ELDER THOMPSON

“NO”

“Do you mean by ‘Conditional time Salvation’, that the children of God can by their obedience or disobedience to the commands of God at any specific time or on any occasion, induce Him to act toward them in a way or perform on them an act that He had not previously determined to do?”

I see this interrogatory in an editorial in the Advocate of Truth, March 1, 1909, and I answer without the least hesitancy, No. I believe His foreknowledge was so perfect before creation, relative to every act of obedience or disobedience that His children have performed or ever will perform, that all of His acts toward them or on them were previously determined, that they were predetermined according to His foreknowledge of their obedience and disobedience, but not that He had predetermined their disobedience and predetermined to inflict suffering on them for doing what He had predetermined that they should do.

Brother Hardy, I carefully read your editorial that I refer to and have re-read it, and I trust you are willing to publish a rejoinder, written in the proper spirit. I have therefore engaged to give my views concerning God’s predestination, and to show where you are wrong in contending that God predetermined the wicked acts of men. I do so, not for controversy nor to simply gain a victory, but that the truth may appear on this subject for the conversion of many from what I deem a dangerous error, and that the Lord’s people who are divided over this puzzling question may become united and happy in sweet fellowship.

I believe God existed prior to creation, that He was the First Cause, and that nothing could exist without Him, and that He did nothing blindly, but had perfect knowledge of all results and the final issue of all things. But I object to your position that God appointed the time of the manifestation of each and every event, that He intended that every thing should be just as they have been, are now, and will be, that He has ordered that they shall be so. I believe that He appointed some events and the time of the manifestation of each, that He intended that they should be just as they have been, that He has ordered that they shall be so. I believe it because the scriptures teach it. I do not believe that God appointed the vile, beastly acts of debased mortals, all the shameful secret acts of self pollution, the awful crimes committed in the terrible abuse of noble girls, overcome by superior strength, crushed and ruined, destined to drag through a miserable future existence, the shocking murder of faithful, devoted wives and helpless children by brutal husbands and fathers, brutes by intoxication. No, dear brother, I do not believe that the Holy God, who is superlatively good, every predetermined, appointed, intended or ordered that the secret vices, the atrocious crimes against innocency and virtue, and all the appalling murders, etc., should be as they have been and will be. For Solomon says, “These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19). What God hates and is an abomination unto Him, I do not believe He predetermined and ordered that they should come to pass.

In proof of your position you quote, “He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth”. This being true, and then if your position was true, that He intended and ordered all the abominable pollutions and horrible crimes of degraded human beings, He certainly would be the author of all and the doer of all sin. He must have desired what He appointed, intended and ordered, and if that were all the events of time it included all the vile, brutal, horrifying acts charged to men. Or will you say that He appointed, intended and ordered events that His soul did not desire? If you hold that His soul desired all that He appointed, intended and ordered, and that He doeth all that His soul desireth, then you must hold that He doeth all the abominable things which He hates. Is He of one mind if He hates the abominable things and yet desires them and does them and it is His pleasure to do them? No, dear brother, God is not so contradictory in Himself as to desire things and take pleasure in doing that He hates and that are an abomination unto Him.

Bible revelation teaches that God is a sovereign, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, has never endured disgrace, chagrin or disappointment through failure to perform according to His counsel, and never will. In this I believe we harmonize, but the contention that God has fixed, by appointing and ordering, so that all the sin that has or will be committed had to be done, is wherein we disagree. The word “sovereign” as defined by Webster does not mean that the will and pleasure of the sovereign is always performed by his subjects. Neither do the scriptures teach that the wicked acts of men have been in accord with the will and pleasure of the Lord, but the very opposite. Paul, writing of the persecutions endured by his brethren by Gentiles and Jews, says, “Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God”, etc. (1 Thess. 11:15). So we have it plain that their wicked acts of persecution did not please God. Then His soul did not desire said persecution. It was not His will. Yet His counsel stands and He does all His pleasure, does all that is His pleasure to do.

It was the will of God in creation to make man a subject of law, as was evidenced when He gave him a law, saying, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it”. In every reasonable and just law the author’s will is expressed. So God’s expressed will was for him to not eat of that fruit. If it had been His predeterminate will that he should not eat the fruit he would not have eaten it. It is most unreasonable to say that God expressed in law His will for Adam to not eat it, if He had previously predetermined that he should eat it. As law is an expression of will by its author, it is evident that God’s law to Adam was an expression of His will. The evidence is that Adam acted contrary to God’s will and pleasure. God did not say, My counsel shall stand and all men shall do all my pleasure. While He does all His pleasure, all that He is pleased to do, wicked persecutors did things that did not please Him. Yet He has not ceased to be the great, unlimited Sovereign over all His creation.

I verily believe that whatever God does for His creatures, to His creatures or with His creatures, whether in providence or grace, are just the things He had in mind before time to do, and that He had in mind before time what His creatures would do. He had in mind to bless men when they obeyed Him, to curse vile sinners for violating His law and to chastise His children for disobedience. God, knowing before time what men would do, He knew what He would do for them, to them, or with them, relative to His promise to them in time. But His knowledge before time as to what they would do and what He would do to them does not prove that He appointed, intended and ordered all the mean, vicious and unspeakably indecent conduct of depraved sinners. And His children do not have to believe that He did, in order to escape the quagmire of Arminianism. They do not have to plunge into one quagmire to escape another, for they have the solid rock on which to stand. And concerning what our English

brethren said on the subject, Baptists differ as they do on the Bible. I prefer to consider what the scriptures say on the subject.

You quote the good admonition (James 1:16-17), in which he tells his brethren to not err. He had just told them that God did not tempt men with evil, and showed that their sins were not to be charged to God as a cause, that he was not a cause of sin. Then he tells them that every good gift and every perfect gift is from the Father of lights. He teaches that God is not the cause of sin, but is the source of every good gift and every perfect gift, and you, brother Hardy, should cease to contend for the thing that James condemns. And John's teaching condemns the erroneous theory that God is the cause of wickedness. He says, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world". I believe that every sin committed by men may be traced to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life as the cause. These must be second causes, or which you write, and contend that they are effects of a prior cause, which is God. If you do not, I have misunderstood you. If you do you are opposed to the passages cited. Many scripture passages have been misconstrued to give support to the hurtful theory.

It is the belief of all Primitive Baptists that all good and perfect gifts come from God and that God does not vary from the course that it was His mind before time to pursue, that all He has done or will do was in His mind to do. We believe it was His mind to bless His people according to the promises He has made that relate to their obedience, promises to bestow certain blessings when they obey that He will not bestow when they do not obey. And it was His mind to chastise them when disobedient as He would not when they were obedient. In His promises He made certain blessings (not all blessings) to rest upon their obedience, which blessings are all received in time by the obedient. By their obedience they are saved in time from the chastisement they would receive if disobedient and from all attendant evils that would befall them because of disobedience. The blessings enjoyed because of obedience and chastisement suffered because of disobedience by His children are all in time.

The benefits are all in time, therefore denominated "time salvation", and as the obedient are saved from things in time that they would not be saved from if they were disobedient, said salvation is denominated "conditional time salvation". And as a brother should not be made an offender for a word, the principle advocated being correct those using the expression should not be considered offenders. The expression "absolute predestination" should not be offensive.

While we do not believe that God predestinated that men should sin, we believe He did predestinate all that pertains to the eternal salvation of His chosen, elect people, and that it is absolute. See Webster's definition.

There is a salvation that does not reach into eternity that men have to do with, as seen in the following: "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine, continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16).

To say this passage teaches eternal salvation is Arminianism. It does teach salvation in time through the efforts of a man or language is meaningless. It was not to be done without the enabling grace of Christ, for He taught that without Him His people could do nothing that He required them to do. I have taught during my ministry that all the ability we have to obey any requirement of the Lord is direct from Him, and according to our present need. To say that we always act according to the ability He give us, and that when we do not act in obedience to His command it is because He did not give the ability, is to place the responsibility of our failure with Him. God forbid that I ever charge up my disobedience to

the Lord. Dear Brother, I am very desirous that we see eye to eye, and that the breach be closed which was caused by the advocacy of the predestination of all sin.

J. M. THOMPSON

REPLY BY ELDER HARDY

It is not in keeping with the custom of the Advocate of Truth to give place to such harangues as Brother Thompson's, but as there are some features in it that those claiming the name Primitive Baptist are not generally bold enough to affirm, we have varied from our custom to pass such by unnoticed, and have given it place in the Advocate that our readers may be informed as to just how far in the direction of Arminianism the conditionalists have gotten. Most of his article consists of the usual tirade against the supremacy of God, which is indulged in by unbelievers and the disputers of this world such as the apostles had to contend with when they preached that God hardened Pharaoh's heart that He might get honor to Himself, and that He had mercy on whom He would and whom He would He hardened. There has ever been antagonism in the human heart to the independence and supreme authority of God; and when they fail to support their theory by scriptural testimony or logical reasoning, they play upon the credulity of their readers and hearers by picturing dark and horrifying incidents by which they presume to arouse sympathy for their incredulous theory which denies the very existence of God. That old cry, "It makes God the author of sin", is as subtle as the arch enemy of God, and as false as the father of lies; and although this blasphemous charge has been refuted repeatedly, at the proper place in this article we will notice it again.

But first we desire to call attention to Brother Thompson's answer to our question as to the meaning of Conditional Time Salvation, which was asked in the March number of the Advocate 1909. The question was, "Do you mean by Conditional Time Salvation that the children of God can, by their obedience or disobedience to the commands of God at any specific time or on any occasion, induce Him to act toward them in a way or perform on them an act that He had not previously determined to do?"

Brother Thompson answers "No". If it does not mean this, then it does not mean anything. If the children of God cannot by their obedience or disobedience induce God to do anything to them except what He previously determined to do, what merit can their obedience have in procuring blessings from God? How can we contend that obedience is the cause of Spiritual blessings when we cannot perform any obedience which will induce God in the least degree to swerve from His eternal purpose in His dealings with us? How can a blessing be said to be conditional when God is bestowing that blessing is not influenced in the least by the conduct of His children, nor cannot be swerved a hair's breadth from His eternal purpose to bless? The obvious truth is, if our obedience does not serve as an influence in procuring our Spiritual blessings, those blessings are not to be considered as conditional upon our obedience.

But Brother Thompson saw the predicament his answer of "No" to our question would place him in, and in order to mitigate the force of the blow which he saw must fall on his conditional head, he plunged squarely into the Arminian position that God was guided in His purpose to bless by what He foresaw that man would do. He says, "I believe His foreknowledge was so perfect before creation, relative to every act of obedience or disobedience that His children have performed or ever will perform, that all of His acts toward them or on them were previously determined, that they were predetermined according to His foreknowledge of their obedience and disobedience".

We wish Brother Thompson had not presumed quite so much on our credulity, as he has engaged to convert us from a "dangerous error", and had given us at least one scripture supporting his position

instead of expecting us to accept it as the truth just because he said so. We do not believe his position is tenable, and while we do not presume to convert Brother Thompson, we shall assign our reasons for our belief.

1st. The Bible nowhere, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, says so or says anything that could be construed to mean such a thing; but on the contrary it says, “Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will”. Not that He works things according to what He foresaw man would do.

The Bible does not say that God foresaw how a good man would walk and determined to bless him accordingly, but it says, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord”.

The Bible does not say the Lord foresaw what course the king’s heart would take and therefore determined to deal with him accordingly; but it says, “The king’s heart is in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will”.

The Bible does not say, according as the Lord foresaw that man’s conduct would be, that did He; but it does say, “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places”.

The Bible does not say that the inhabitants of the earth are of such reputation in God’s account that the conduct of His children shaped His predetermination; but it does say, “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou?”

With a host of inspired witnesses and an array of scriptural testimony on one side and only Brother Thompson’s assertion on the other, it materially weakens the effects of Brother Thompson’s proselyting scheme which he is seeking to work on us.

The truth is, that knowledge, be it foreknowledge or after knowledge, cannot be more certain than the thing known. If future events are certain, and they must be before they are known with certainty, it would have been quite an accommodation to us if Brother Thompson had told us how they became certain, and upon what their certainty depended. That was one of the salient features of the article to which Brother Thompson offers to reply, and yet he let that point severely alone. It afforded more rough sailing for his egg-shell baroque – Conditional Time Salvation.

We will now examine his tirade against predestination.

Why did Brother Thompson take up the “vile, beastly acts of debased mortals”, “the shameful secret acts of self pollution”, “the awful crimes committed in the terrible abuse of noble girls”, etc.? Why did he not tell of the beastly acts of Joseph’s brethren in overpowering their weaker brother and ruthlessly plotting to kill him, and then heartlessly selling him into the hands of strangers to meet whatever might befall him? And then tell the readers that Joseph spoke by the Spirit of God and said to his brethren, “I am Joseph whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you preserve life”; but that he does not believe it, for if God had purposed to send Joseph to Egypt by this means He would be the author of sin, and therefore he believes Joseph was in a grievous error from which he needed converting. And then he might have told them that this Joseph said further unto them, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Genesis 50:20); and then confessed frankly that he was better informed about God’s business than Joseph, for if God had

meant for Joseph's brethren to have attempted to carry out their wicked and beastly designs, it would convict Him of approving the wicked acts of men and that would make God oppose Himself, for He commands holiness; and therefore Joseph was certainly wrong.

Why did he not tell of the malicious lie of Potapher's wife which caused the imprisonment of this helpless child? And then acknowledge that this was one of the links in the chain of circumstances which exalted Joseph to the position where he could fulfill God's purpose to preserve the household of Jacob; and yet tell us that God could not have embraced this wicked act in His purpose, for that would contaminate Him with sin. He might have told us that God predetermined that Joseph should occupy the second place in Pharaoh's kingdom to save life, but He must not embrace in His purpose the circumstances by which he is to attain to that position, for if any of those circumstances were attended by wicked designs on the part of those who performed them, then of course God would be the responsible cause of such wickedness, regardless of how worthy the end is which He accomplishes through the agency of these circumstances.

Why did he not tell of the wholesale slaughter, the robbery and the merciless butchery of the children of Israel by the wicked king of Assyria as recorded in the 10th chapter of Isaiah? and then tell us that while God said this consuming of Israel which was decreed should overflow with righteousness (Isaiah 10:22); yet he did not believe what God said about it, for it would be much easier in his estimation for God to be mistaken about having decreed the wicked acts of this king, than to escape the awful charge of being the author of sin, which of course must be the direful consequences if He decreed this consumption.

Then he might have told us, too, of the heart-rending scenes in Ramah, when Rachel wept for her infants which had been mercilessly slain by a heartless monarch, who preferred to see a wholesale slaughter of defenseless babes rather than suffer the uneasiness of some day being deprived of his kingship; or if he wished to create a scene, he might have related the blood-curdling incidents of the death of the sinless, self-sacrificing and innocent Son of God; the hypocritical betrayal kiss, the abominable lies testified to by a set of perjured witnesses in a mock court where justice was such an entire stranger that the judge on the bench delivered the following sentence: "Take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him", and then the shameful death inflicted upon this just person. But he should have told us that although the apostles lifted up their voices with one accord and said, "Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers we gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done;" yet it was a grievous error for them to say that God's hand and counsel determined what Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Jews did to Christ, a grievous error from which they needed converting; for to thus teach was equivalent to saying that these wicked things which were done to Christ were embraced in God's predetermination, and that would of course make God the author of sin.

We repeat our question, Why did not Brother Thompson select these Bible narratives, bearing strictly on the subject and clearly declared to have been embraced in God's purpose? Why ransack the English vocabulary to find adjectives descriptive of crimes in order to depict the awfulness of them, as though they were worse in their nature than these? Were there ever more heinous and more inexcusable

wickedness committed than plotting the murder of a defenseless and helpless brother, who is by reason of his youth much the inferior in strength of those who formed the plot? or killing innocent and helpless babes? or crucifying the sinless Son of God who never thought any unholy thought? If God could embrace the wicked acts of characters in all of these incidents or any of them in His purpose and yet not be the responsible cause of the act, nor become the author of sin thereby, why can He not embrace all the wicked acts of His creatures in His purpose and still not be the responsible cause of them nor the author of sin? To deny that some wicked acts were embraced in God's predestination, is to deny the plain and unmistakable teachings of the Bible; and to admit that some wicked acts are embraced in God's predestination convicts God of being the responsible cause of wickedness and the author of sin, or admits that sinful events can be embraced in God's predestination without Him being the cause of them or the author of sin. Now we will let Brother Thompson take an inventory of himself and see about what relation his position sustains to the Bible.

Brother Thompson's reason for preferring to introduce circumstances which are not recorded in the Bible rather than those which are is evident. There are multiplied millions of events, both good and bad, that no mortal can comprehend the purpose which God has in them, and by selecting some of these, it is much easier to make his readers believe that God had no purpose in them at all than it would be to select an equally vile incident where He had declared His purpose. So in order to give some semblance of truth to his contention, Brother Thompson selects a catalogue of these events which are horrible to think of, and then affirms if God purposed these events, He was the actual doer of them, and refers to the language in Isaiah 46:10 to prove his affirmation. Brother Thompson interprets the meaning of the language, "My counsel shall stand and I will do all of My pleasure", to mean that all that God is pleased with is just what He does Himself. The next verse contradicts this position too clearly for a man of Brother Thompson's intelligence to fail to see it. It says, "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country", etc. If God has no pleasure in anything except what He does Himself, then why does He call a man from a far country to execute His counsel? The ridiculousness of such a position is unthinkable. The evident truth taught by the language, "My counsel shall stand and I will do all of My pleasure", is that God will have His way, and His will and purpose is not to be set aside to make room or give place for the will of man. As He said again, "Many are the devices of the wicked; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand".

Brother Thompson tried to make the same play on the words of Job, "What His soul desires, even that He does". We would just say to this that God does do what His soul desires, and so does He make men do what His soul desires. We wonder if when Brother Thompson was making that exegesis of this scripture, he realized how it jeopardized his conditional theory. According to his position here, if God desires the obedience of His children, He must do their obeying. It is a potent fact that when men attempt to support a false theory by the Bible they are compelled to segregate the scriptures, and while they seemingly support one error, they cut off and disprove others which they contend are equally true. When a person is driven to the necessity of placing one construction on Bible language to prove one position he holds, and an entirely different construction on the same language to prove another position to which he holds, it is time to be a little suspicious of his positions.

We call attention next to what Brother Thompsons said regarding God's will and the law which He gave to man. He says, "If it had been His (God's) determinate will that he (man) should not eat the fruit, he would not have eaten it". So say I. And if it had been His determinate will that man should eat the fruit, what would have been the consequence? And what was the consequence? Brother Thompson must take one of three positions here: Either it was God's determinate will that man should eat the fruit,

or that it was His determinate will that man should not eat the fruit, or that God had no will in the matter. We understand his expression to be equivalent to disavowing a belief in the second proposition, and to accept the last is equivalent to saying that God's will in all future events which are affected by this incident is formed from and shaped by the act of man, and that a sinful act; and to admit the first position put Brother Thompson in the attitude of believing that God has embraced a sinful act in His decree. His mariner's compass will be necessary in this case for him to determine his location. We leave it to his own meditations.

Referring to what Brother Thompson has said about things not pleasing God, and about things occurring which God hates, we wish to call his mind back to a statement of his own. He said, "I believe God existed prior to creation, that He was the first cause; and that nothing could exist without Him, and that He did nothing blindly, but had perfect knowledge of all results and the final issue of all things. But I object to your position that God appointed the time of the manifestation of each and every event, that He intended that they should be just as they have been, that He has ordered that they shall be so". If God is the First Cause and nothing could have existed without Him, and He has never suffered defeat or disappointment, as Brother Thompson admits, how is he going to harmonize these facts with his objection to each and every event being just as God intended that they should? God either intended that they should be as they are or that they should be some other way or that they should not be at all. Which positions shall we take? Brother Thompson says he objects to our position that God intended that they should be as they are; then he must take the position that He intended that they should be some other way or that they should not be at all, either of which positions would necessarily argue that God suffered defeat and disappointment, which Brother Thompson says he does not believe. When a man claims to believe two opposite sides of a proposition, if we should happen to the misfortune to be converted by him, and we were asked what we believed, what could we answer? Nothing – and that would be it.

But to reason a little further: If God existed alone before creation, and nothing could exist without Him, can any one assign a good reason why He arranged His creation so that anything could exist that He did not intend should exist? He was perfect in wisdom and infinite in power, why did he not arrange so no objectionable thing could exist in this world? The only reason we know to assign is because He did not want to; infinite wisdom dictated that the greatest revenue of glory to God (the chief purpose of God in creation) would result from the order of creation and manifestation as it has been.

In the creation God had the undisputed privilege of arranging things just exactly to suit Himself, as there was nothing to interfere. In His creation and arrangement of things He certainly fixed it so it would turn out just as it has, whether He intended that it should be as it has or not; and we plead guilty to believing that He intended that it should be just as it has. One thing that confirms us in that belief is, the Bible teaches that a covenant was between the Father and Son before creation, in which every individual sin and every idle word and even all the thoughts of foolishness of all God's creatures remembered in this covenant were transferred from their account to the account of God's Son, and His righteousness was transferred to them; and Brother Thompson claims to believe this fact, and yet would insist that God did not intend that these sins which Christ was obliged to bear until He put them away in satisfaction to divine justice and an offended law, should ever be committed. The truth is, God intended that it should be as it has been, is now, and will be, and He fixed in His eternal plan a definite time for the manifestation of all things, and among other things He fixed it so that all sin and iniquity should come from the creature, and so the creature alone and not God would be responsible for sinful acts. Please do not overlook this fact in our position. God has so fixed things that he is not the author of sin

nor the cause of evil, and also has so hid His determinate counsel from His creatures that none of them are influenced in the least degree in their conduct by His counsel. Sin is dishonoring to God, offends His law and is justly punished by His justice; and yet we find the very acts which men commit when they sin are determined of God to result in His praise.

To illustrate, when God sent the king of Assyria against Israel with the charge to “take the spoil, and to take the prey, and tread them down like the mire in the streets”, God said, “How be it he (the king of Assyria) meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, yet it is in his heart to cut off and destroy nations not a few”. The wickedness was not put in the heart of the king by God’s decree, but it was already there. But listen, “Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom”, etc. Read the entire 10th chapter of Isaiah. This wicked king did the very thing God determined, but he was not moved in the least to do it by God’s decree; he was entirely ignorant of that, but was actuated by an evil motive to cut off and destroy. And here is the secret of it all. The physical act alone does not constitute sin, but the righteousness or unrighteousness of an act is determined by the motive prompting the act. If a physician causes his fellowman great pain and suffering and even death by the amputation of a limb in an effort to do him good, no one would condemn that physician of wrong doing; but if he causes him pain or suffering or death by amputating a limb in malice and with an intention of doing him harm, that physician is guilty of wrong. God has a holy and sinless motive in all that He does, in all that He causes to be done and in all that He allows to be done, and intends that each thing done shall redound to the praise of that holy and exalted purpose, and so it matters not how sinful and vile the act may be when performed by man with a corrupt motive, God’s motive and purpose in the act being most holy He is not and can not be chargeable with sin; and yet the very same act which He has appointed to issue in His praise and redound to His glory is a vile transgression on the part of the one who performed it, as his design was evil.

Brother Thompson insisted that we treat him fairly and print his article in full, and we have done so. We suppose he did his best and thought his effort unanswerable. The readers may now be the judges of that matter. We hope if Brother Thompson ever attempts a reply to this, he will be as fair as he requested us to be.

J. R. HARDY

REPLY BY ELDER THOMPSON

IT IS NOT ARMINIANISM

Brother Hardy, your charge that I plunged squarely into Arminianism is misleading. I trust that the intelligent readers of your paper are competent to judge what we write by the subjects we consider and what we say. I had under consideration the blessings God bestows upon His children when they are obedient that He does not bestow upon them when they are disobedient, and the chastenings He inflicts when they are disobedient that He does not inflict when they are not disobedient. I was replying to your question concerning the Conditional Time Salvation of the children of God when I made the statement that you say is the Arminian position. There was no reference in it to the acts of alien sinners, and no position was taken that eternal salvation depends upon acts of obedience by God's children. I had in view all the acts of God toward or on His regenerated children because of their obedience and disobedience and nothing more. I suppose this would be understood from your question and my answer.

That God does bestow blessings upon His people when they obey Him that He does not bestow when they do not obey Him, and that He chastises them when they disobey, but does not chastise them when they do not disobey, are facts so abundantly taught in the Bible that I do not believe you will dissent. So it is evident that God blesses His people because of their obedience and chastises them because of their disobedience, and His knowledge being infinite He knew before time that they would obey and that they would disobey, and as He is in one mind He predetermined to bless them when they obeyed, because of their obedience, and to chastise them when they disobeyed, because of their disobedience. The curse of God fell upon man because of his sin in Eden, and God knew before time that he would commit the sin and predetermined that the curse should fall on man because of the sin He foreknew he would commit. Do you accept this, or do you hold that God did not curse man because of his sin? Was the curse conditional, or unconditional? If you say it was not conditional, say whether you hold that any act is conditional because of a previous act. Because all acts are foreknown and certain, do you hold that there are no conditional acts? One act that depends on another act is a conditional act according to Webster. And as the act of God in pronouncing the curse upon man depended on man's sin it was a conditional act. Even so all the acts of God toward and upon His children because of their obedience or disobedience depends upon their obedience or disobedience and are therefore conditional according to our use of words. You surely will not contend that God would have cursed man if he had not sinned, neither will you say that He will chastise His people when they do not disobey, as chastisement depends upon disobedience, for chastisement is "Pain inflicted for punishment and correction". – Webster. If you admit that God's chastisement of His people is because of their disobedience, depends upon their disobedience, and is therefore conditional upon their disobedience, which seems too plain for intelligent denial, then you must admit that by obedience they are saved from the chastisement that He would inflict if they were disobedient. As all blessings because of obedience and chastisements because of disobedience are administered in this time state, salvation from chastisement conditional upon obedience is designated "Conditional Time Salvation". But if the expression "Conditional Time Salvation" will cause any weak brother to offend I am will that it be not used.

The obedience of God's children depends upon His grace bestowed upon them, not to force them to obey, but to enable them to obey. It is written, "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably". It is not grace that obeys, but God's children who are enabled by grace to obey. The work of grace is the enabling act and precedes their obedience, so there is no mixture of grace and works. The enabling act which is wholly of grace is not of works. Then in obedience grace is not obeying, but the child previously enabled by grace to obey does the obeying, for His commands are to His children. Then they are justly chastised for disobedience when they disobey, being previously enabled to obey. His people are enabled to obey more than they obey, therefore their disobedience is charged to them and not to the lack of enabling grace. If we lack anything we are to ask of Him who giveth liberally. So Paul admonishes, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need". It is grace to help, to enable, that we are to ask for, but not for grace to compel to force us to obey.

I do not desire undue advantage in this investigation. I want our positions to rest upon merit or fail because of demerit, and our treatment of each other to be brotherly. We should prove our sincerity by fair and kind treatment. I want to be converted from error to truth if I am in error. Is this your desire if you are in error? And to your statement, "We hope if Brother Thompson ever attempts a reply to this he will be as fair as he requested us to be", I reply, I intend to be fair with you, to write in a Christian spirit and not indulge in improper tirades, harangues, ridicule, sarcasm, unbecoming insinuations or deceptive proselyting, and you may publish this reply. My reference to the vile, beastly acts of debased mortals, secret acts of self-pollution, the terrible abuse of noble girls, etc., was proper, for they are all embraced in the theory that God predetermined that they should be committed. And it was my right to sue all the adjectives in our language descriptive of said horrible acts.

I will willingly examine the sinful acts to which you referred in your reply. Relative to Joseph, I am surprised that he is not understood. He said, "God did send me before you (not by you) to preserve life". "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity", etc. "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." God did not allow them to slay Joseph as they planned, or leave him in the pit to die. He did not let them accomplish their evil designs. Joseph did not say that God predetermined that his brethren should overpower him and ruthlessly plot to kill him, and then heartlessly sell him to strangers. He did not charge their wickedness to God, but spoke of what God did in sending him, and said it was not they that sent him. To say that Joseph meant that what they did God did is to charge their sinful acts to God, that they were only instruments in His hand with which to do His will. What God did was good and He "meant it unto good". The reader will see that I do not pretend to be better informed about God's business than Joseph was.

Why did you not prove that God predestinated that Potapher's wife should tell that malicious lie which caused Joseph to be cast into prison. There is no evidence that He did, in the narrative. Why did you infer that he did? To say God could not preserve the household of Jacob unless she tell that lie is to limit Him. Mordecai said that if Esther did not intercede for her people that deliverance should arise from another place. It cannot be shown that her lie was necessary, and it should not be charged to God's predestination as though He was dependent on her lie to save the people. He cannot lie and He hates a lying tongue.

What God did in sending the king of Assyria against that hypocritical nation that had decreed unrighteousness and had made widows and the fatherless their prey, was right, and the punishment

inflicted was right. There is no evidence in the account that God predetermined that the king should do a wicked thing.

God raised Pharaoh to kingship that He (God) might shew His power in overruling and thwarting him. The Bible account does not teach that God predestinated that Pharaoh should sin. Before it can be proved that God predestinated that he should sin, it must be proven that predestination of sin by God was necessary in order that men sin. This cannot be proven, and they who affirm that He did are required to prove their proposition. To say that the vile sins of men would not have been committed if God had not predestinated that they should commit them is to charge the responsibility of all the hateful sins of men to Him. It is to say that He was the beginner, first mover, hence the efficient cause of sins, the author of all the abominable sins of men. This may be branded as blasphemous and as false as the father of lies, but that does not prove that it is.

There is nothing in the prophesy, concerning Rachel weeping for her children that were slain by a heartless monarch, that gives support to your theory. If you say there is, give the scriptural evidence. Just to refer to it as you have is no proof that it applies to your theory of predestination.

Yes, the disciple said that Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever the Lord's hand and counsel determined before to be done. I do not believe the disciples were in a grievous error, but I believe you are, brother Hardy, for they did not say, "God's hand and counsel determined what Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Jews did to Christ". The passage does not say they did what they gathered together to do. Did they gather together to take His life? He says, "I lay down My life", etc. "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself". Did they intend to remove Him from the earth? Paul says that He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit. That His life was gone when the soldiers went to break His legs, and that the other two that were crucified were alive, was doubtless marvelous to the soldiers. But He laid down His life. They did not remove Him from the earth. I do not say just what the Lord's hand and counsel determined before to be done. The disciples did not tell what. But I do know that what is said in the 4th Chapter of Acts does not prove that God predestinated that beastly men and profligates of lowest type should indulge in all the detestable practices they do. And, brother Hardy, if you could prove that God's hand and counsel determined before what they did to Jesus, and that what they did was in order to the salvation of His chosen people, a means to that end, that would not prove that He predetermined that all the blood-curdling crimes and unspeakable secret sins of degraded mortals should be committed. It is only inferred that He did form incorrect views of certain passages and incidents, and from a false idea with regard to His sovereignty. If the sins of reprobates were foreknown and were certain to be, how did they become certain, and upon what did their certainty depend? You say this is a salient feature of your article. Well, I confess that it looked weak to me, for the fact that God foreknew that men would commit the sins they have and will commit evidences that they were certain. As they were certain to be and He knew it and has explained the introduction of sin through satanic temptation and lust, and nowhere teaches that they are certain because He predetermined that man should sin, it was unreasonable speculation that led to the belief that He did.

You say, "Brother Thompson interprets the meaning of the language, 'My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure', to mean that all that God is pleased with is just what He does Himself". My article in your paper, June 1, 1909, and the position that all God is pleased with is just what He does Himself cannot be found in it, as any reader may see who will carefully read it. I believe God is well pleased when His children bear much good fruit as branches of the true vine. And you should have replied to

my arguments or have confessed you could not, instead of charging to me a position I did not take. And I am astonished that you select Isaiah 46:10-11 as proof of your position. Cyrus, king of Persia, whom the Lord called a ravenous bird from the east, was the Lord's "shepherd", His "anointed", a "righteous man", and the Lord "raised him up in righteousness". Like David, he was a man of war to subdue the enemies of Israel; was named a ravenous bird because of his swift movements and victories, it seems, but I do not find that he was a vile reprobate, or that he did wrong, committed sin, in doing what the Lord called him to do. He, with his army, subdued the Babylonians, cruel oppressors of Israel. He gave direction and assistance and protection to the Israelites concerning the rebuilding of the house or temple of the Lord, and while they were engaged in building. (See Ezra 1:4, 7-11.) So in executing the counsel of the Lord it is evident that he did not sin. The Lord did His pleasure in calling Cyrus, and Cyrus did His pleasure in executing His counsel, but wherein Cyrus executed His counsel the doing is attributed to Cyrus. And I did not say "that all that God is pleased with is just what He does Himself". I said, "While He does all His pleasure, all that He is pleased to do, wicked persecutors did things that did not please Him". I had quoted from 1 Thess. 2:15, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they pleased not God". (The chapter in print was 11 instead of 2.) Brother Hardy, do you think you were fair in misstating my position and avoiding a fair investigation of the passage 1 Thess. 2:15?

You say, "Brother Thompson tried to make the same play on the words of Job, 'What His soul desires, even that He does' ". This is unfair. I made an argument that you failed to meet and that you will never remove. Then you say that God makes men do what His soul desires. I understand from this statement and your comment in your article, "First and Second Causes", on this subject, that He doeth what His soul desireth, will do all His pleasure, that you hold that He makes all wicked, brutal, sensual villains do all the abominable things of which they are guilty, for you say in your comment, "With these declarations of Holy Writ (and many others equally pointed) confronting us, we must acknowledge that whatever God does for His creatures, to His creatures, or with His creatures, whether in providence or grace, are just those things which He has eternally had in His mind to do", etc. If you do not hold that He makes all men do all that they do you should modify your statements. But if you do mean what your statements imply, your theorizing (void of proof) concerning God's "eternal plan", that He fixed it so that all sin and iniquity should come from the creature, and so the creature alone and not God would be responsible for sinful acts, contradicts your statements. If God makes men sin, and you say He makes them do what His soul desires, and sin was the subject you was considering, then man is not responsible. It is absurd to say that a man is responsible for a vile act and that God made him do it. If God makes men lie, steal, murder and outrage virtue, they cannot be responsible, but He does not make them do such things. Your statements are incorrect. God did not make the king of Assyria do sinful acts. He says, "I will send him against an hypocritical nation", etc. He was as Pharaoh, a man disposed to do as he did, and predestination or force by God was not necessary in order to his wicked acts.

Your illustration of the righteousness or unrighteousness of an act being determined by the motive, by a physician causing pain or death by amputating a limb does not relieve your theory that God predestinated all the sins of men and makes them do them, that He is doing His pleasure through their sins. Will you tell us how the illustration applies to sinners that die in their sins and will go into everlasting punishment? Does your doctrine that God predestinated that they should sin, do all the wickedness they are guilty of and then be punished eternally correspond with your illustration? How will you make it appear that according to your doctrine He is trying to do them good? He is just in their punishment in time, and will be in eternity, because their sins were not predetermined by Him, and He does not make them sin.

The words, “What His soul desireth, even that He doeth”, relates to what God does, and not what He requires His people to do, and my position relative to the passage in no way jeopardized my view pertaining to the obedience of His children. Your unjust criticism to the contrary falls without effect.

I do not have to take either of the positions you name with regard to man eating the forbidden fruit. I stated my position and it is strange if you failed to see it. I said, “In every reasonable and just law the author’s will is expressed. So God’s expressed will was for him not to eat of that fruit. If it had been His predeterminate will that man should not eat the fruit he would not have eaten it”. There is a great difference between His expressed will in law and His determinate will. Again your criticism is ineffectual.

In reply to your next entanglement, that God “intended that every [event] should be as they are, or He intended that they should be some other way, or that they should not be at all”. You ask, “Which position shall we take?” I take neither position, for they all are wrong. God being the First Cause, as the Creator of all created things, and that nothing of all His creation could have existed without Him, and that He has never suffered defeat or disappointment, does not require either position. He foreknew that unspeakable sins would be committed, and did not intend that they should be, nor that they should be some other way, nor that they should not be at all, but His expressed will in law is opposed to all sin. To say He could not foreknow that man would sin without intending he should, or that it should be some other way, or not at all, is to limit Him. And again your unjust criticism is of no avail.

Your speculation concerning God’s arrangement of creation to support your doctrine, contending that He intended in His arrangement that all things, vile hearts, base characters, and all meanness, should be as they have been and will be, seems to evidence that you realize that you cannot sustain your position by God’s word.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.” And the fact that there was a covenant arrangement that Christ should bear the sins of all the Father had given Him and put them away gives no support to your speculative theory. The covenant of redemption was that they should be holy, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy, but not that they should sin. Ephesians 1:4 teaches that it was because of God’s foreknowledge of their unholiness that they were chosen in Christ that they should be holy. God’s covenant of redemption did not make it necessary that they should be unholy. The claim that it did is very preposterous. How unreasonable the theory that requires such perversion of scriptural teaching! And, dear brother, you should see that you have been blinded by it and led to misapply portions of God’s word, and you should renounce the dangerous theory, that has sown so much discord among brethren, which thing the Lord “hates”.

Paul says that some women learn to be tattlers and busy-bodies, speaking things they ought not (1 Timothy 5:11-13). But your theory is that they ought, that God predetermined that they should, that He intended that they should, that it is according to His arrangement and that infinite wisdom dictated that the greatest revenue of glory to God would result from such manifestations. Again, Paul speaks of unruly, vain talkers, deceivers, who subvert whole houses, teaching things they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake (Titus 1:10-11). But your theory contends that they ought to do so, that God is working it after the counsel of His own will. James says, “Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessings and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be” (James 3:10), but your theory says they should be just that way, that God desires to have it so, and “that what His soul desires, even that He does”. Can’t you see that your teaching on this subject is contrary to the teaching of those inspired apostles? I pray that the Lord deliver you from such contradictions of His truth if according to His will. Bear in mind

Paul's plain statement concerning their persecutors (1 Thess. 2:15), "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God". And you ought not to teach that they did please Him. It is wisdom to acknowledge that you do not understand the passages that seem to teach contrary to the positive, plain teaching of those holy men. Remember, Jesus said, "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone" (Luke 11:42). They left the other undone, but they ought not.

J. M. THOMPSON

REPLY BY ELDER HARDY

THEN WHAT IS IT?

Brother Thompson complains that our charge on his position, that God foresaw the future acts of His creatures and therefore determined what He would do toward them, of Arminianism is misleading, and claims that his position involved only the conduct of God's believing children and not the alien sinner. We contend that the same principle obtains in any case. If God was influenced in shaping His course in dealing with men or even angels by what He foresaw men or angels would do, He is not the independent God that the Bible describes. It is not only repugnant to the dignity and essence of God to affirm that He is subject to extraneous influences, but is contradictory to the natural order of things. Brother Thompson, the way I see your position is this: God said, "I will make a world, and I see if I make man he will turn out bad and do what I tell him not to do, and that will cause sin and crime and a great many bad things to take place that I do not want to occur; and as a result of what I see man will do I am compelled to shape my plan for dealing with this creature, man, in the future". Pray tell us which is the dependent and which the independent party in this transaction. If God was influenced in arranging His plan by what He saw man would do, is it not clear to be seen that God is dependent upon the foreseen act of His creature, and that, too, a sinful act in many instances?

Besides this, how absurd and unreasonable the thought that infinite wisdom would plan a creation and infinite power execute one which would forever destroy the independence of the Creator! Why was it necessary for God to make a creature to which He must surrender His independence? The thought is absurd in the extreme. This is only a nice little theory born in the human mind and dressed up in pleasant words to make it acceptable to those who look upon it. There is not a syllable in the Bible to warrant such a theory, and Brother Thompson has not presumed to offer a line of Bible for its support. The Bible does not talk of God in that way, but says of Him, "I am God, and beside Me there is none else. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9:10).

If the theory contended for by Brother Thompson which we have been considering is not Arminianism, then what is it? It is not the doctrine of the Bible nor of the Church of Christ.

In reference to man as a creature under law we hold that the corrections and punishments which he receives as the penalty of the law are conditional; for every law having a penalty annexed for its violation is a conditional law; and while the law pays nothing for obedience to its demands, it threatens and inflicts punishment for its violation. So if a man could always live in obedience to the law he would get nothing from it for so doing, only he would be allowed to pursue his course in peace, and keep what he possessed. The law given to Adam was a conditional law, having a penalty, and when he violated it he received its penalty because of his violation. This is one of the things which God ordered to fall out according to the nature of second causes, and the conditionality of the transaction existed entirely between the law and the offender.

The children of Israel were under a conditional law, and the promises under it were conditional, because there was a penalty annexed for its violation. But national Israel never received a single blessing as the result of their obedience to this conditional covenant, for they did not keep it, and if it

had been replete with heavenly treasures and blessings to have been dispensed upon condition of their obedience, they would never have obtained one of them, for it is written, "They continued not in My covenant and I regarded them not, saith the Lord". And I challenge Brother Thompson or any one else to show where any man has ever received one blessing for obedience to a conditional covenant.

Now the new covenant is not conditional, there is a new covenant law, but no penalty; there are new covenant promises, but they are not conditional upon the obedience of the creature. This new covenant under which Spiritual Israel was said to be established upon contains better promises than the old covenant. But if the old covenant promises were conditional and the new covenant promises were conditional also, wherein does the new one contain better promises than the old one? They could be no better than the old covenant promises if they were both conditional; but of the new covenant promises it is said, "It is of faith that it might be by grace to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed". These blessings are not on conditional promises, but are established upon sure promises.

Brother Thompson seems to think that because we are blessed when we obey and are not blessed when we disobey that the blessings are therefore because of our obedience and this is the strongest argument in favor of conditionalism that can be adduced. If this were true, which it is not, it would not prove that the blessing was conditional upon the obedience. Brother Thompson has employed the same argument here to prove conditional time salvation which the Arminians use to prove that the preaching of the gospel is the means of quickening dead sinners. Like Brother Thompson they have no Bible for their position and therefore they reason it out this way: "Sinners are quickened into life when the gospel is being preached and therefore the gospel is the cause of sinners being quickened. It is a fact that sinners are quickened when the gospel is being preached and it is a fact that God's children are blessed when they obey, but because things occur at the same time is poor argument that one is the cause of the other."

Is it a fact that we are blessed when we obey and then only? We feel sure that Brother Thompson's experience contradicts this position. Brother Thompson, did you ever try to preach Jesus as the all-sufficient Savior of sinners and a present help in time of need, and then be compelled to grope your way in darkness for a week or perhaps a month that you could not embrace a single evidence that you had an interest in His mercy? Was this because of your disobedience? And when Jesus manifested Himself to you again in sweet mercy and your groanings were turned into rejoicing, did you feel at that time that the Lord had blessed you because you had been obedient? I trow not.

Job was said to be a man that feared God and eschewed evil, and yet none have ever been more sorely afflicted than he. According to your conditional theory Job was the most disobedient child of God in his time.

David was said to be a man after God's own heart, yet his experience was filled with threatenings, dangers and sorrows.

Jeremiah who seemed to live very near the mercy seat of Jehovah, exclaimed, "O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people!" In fact those who in all ages have lived the most godly and have seemed to be nearest in their meditations to the "Man of Sorrow" have given to us for our comfort and for our edification and instruction the most trying experiences.

Your conditional theory would have us believe that all such have been the most disobedient of God's people and therefore they missed many of His blessings. But the Bible supports their trembling hope in

contradiction to your conditional theory when it says, “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth”.

We are going to affirm that every provision in the new covenant is a blessing; and all that comes upon those who love God whether in obedience or in disobedience is a blessing and will ultimately result in their good.

Paul says, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby”. Whatsoever yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness is a blessing. God’s children receive many blessings in disguise. Again Paul says, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to His purpose”. Then everything is a blessing, whether we enjoy it or not, God has ordained it for our good.

Brother Thompson seems to overlook the fact that all of the elements that constitute true obedience is the gift of God; and the reason why the blessings of God accompany obedience is because God gives both. And while it is we that obey, it is God working in us effectual by His Spirit and causing us to obey, and while Brother Thompson does not like the idea of God compelling obedience, yet Paul said, “The love of Christ constraineth us”; and Webster defines constrain to mean “to compel or force; to urge with irresistible power, or with a power sufficient to produce the effect”. This we believe is true of all Spiritual obedience. But God is under no obligation to them to thus work in them, so when He leaves them to themselves He is not to be charged with their disobedience.

Now we turn to Joseph’s case. Brother Thompson seems willing to allow that God did predestinate to save much people alive, but he is not willing to admit that He predestinated the means by which that end was accomplished. Yes, God sent Joseph into Egypt and sent him by the means which He had predestinated to accomplish that end, and therefore there was no miscarriage in the plan. But why did Brother Thompson avoid the very scripture expression in this narrative which clinches the whole thing? Was it because it was detrimental to his position? Joseph said to his brethren, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”. Brother Thompson, in the expression, “But God meant it unto good”, what is the antecedent of “it”? Now don’t spoil your grammar in trying to bolster an error. It is too plain for cavil that what God meant unto good was the evil which Joseph’s brethren thought against him. So here is one evil thing in the chain of circumstances which leads up to the salvation of the household of Jacob which the Bible teaches that God did embrace in His predestination.

The lie of Potapher’s wife was the cause of Joseph going to prison, and Joseph being in prison was the cause of him meeting the king’s chief butler and baker, and this meeting and the incidents connected therewith was the cause of the king hearing of Joseph, and subsequently his being brought before the king and exalted to the second place in the kingdom. This is one of the links in the chain of circumstances which led up to the accomplishment of the saving of the household of Jacob. You, brother Thompson, admit that God purposed to bring Joseph to the throne of Egypt to accomplish this salvation. If God purposed that Joseph should come to the throne, did He purpose that he should come by the circumstances which he did come, or by some other circumstances? Or did God predestinate that Joseph should ascend the throne and leave the accomplishment of His purpose to chance?

The reason I did not prove that the lie of Potapher’s wife was predestinated was because it was so connected with this predestinated circumstance that it seemed to be too clearly true to need proving.

God could have preserved the household of Jacob without the lie of Potapher's wife or without Joseph going to Egypt or without the years of plenty or the famine if it had been His will to do so, but it was not His will to do so, therefore He ordered in His eternal counsel that it should be as it was.

We are surprised that Brother Thompson would attempt to justify the act of the wicked king of Assyria in butchering nations and robbing them of their earnings when his motive was conquest or greed. If what the king of Assyria did was not a wicked thing, why did God punish him for claiming to have accomplished it by his own power? Does God punish men for using their power to accomplish good things? The truth is clear in this matter; God's purpose in the king's act was to accomplish good, while the king's motive in the same act was evil.

If dodging the plain fact of Bible testimony was proof of the correctness of one's position, Brother Thompson would be a grand success. When he comes to the plain testimony in the 4th chapter of Acts where it is recorded that "Herod, Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles with the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done", he flies off at a tangent saying, "I do not say just what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done to Christ". This is plainly a dodge. The language is very plain. A ten year old school boy would understand that the language meant that God's hand and counsel determined before just what Herod, Pilate, the Jews and the Gentiles did to Christ, or that God's determinate counsel was a failure one of the two, and Brother Thompson must recognize this truth in the language. Here are the statements: God's hand and counsel determined before that something should be done to Christ at this time; Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews and Gentiles are gathered together at the appointed time to do what God's hand and counsel determined to be done, yet they were ignorant that God's hand and counsel determined it. Listen at the apostle: I wot that ye did it ignorantly, brethren, as did also your rulers, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Brother Thompson, your treatment of this scripture would lead one to conclude that you do not believe that God predestinated the crucifixion of His Son. I do not believe your effort to convert those you claim are in such a grievous error will have much weight with them when they see you try to wrest the scriptures from their simple meaning. If you theory will not stand before the plain teaching of the Bible you had better abandon it. We are admonished not to walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully. If Brother Thompson was a skillful in explaining the scriptures as he is in mystifying them we could soon come to an understanding of them. The simple meaning of this language is that all the things spoken by the prophets concerning Christ are to be fulfilled in this generation; and God has gathered Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Jews all together in one generation to accomplish the fulfillment of His glorious purpose. The Jews had been previously subdued by the Romans and all were gathered together for this great event. It was not a chance arrangement that Herod and Pilate are in authority, nor that the Jews are subject to the Romans. The apostles recognized the fact that what Herod, Pilate, the Jews and Gentiles did to Christ was just what God determined to be done; for they refer to the Psalmist's language which said, "Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing". The apostles seemed to point out the folly of men presuming that they had done more to Christ than God had determined to be done.

Don't think to avoid the force of this scripture against your position by intimating that those who crucified Christ did not kill Him. It is true Christ laid down His life and it is equally true that those who crucified Him were guilty of His death. Acts 2:23 says, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain". He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet He was crucified and slain by

wicked hands. Brother Thompson, this is getting the predestination of God and the wicked hands of men alarmingly close together, isn't it?

Brother Thompson says if we could prove that the things did to Christ were predestinated, etc., that would not prove all wicked things were predestinated. No, but it would prove and does prove that some sinful acts were predestinated of God without God being the author of sin; and if one evil thing can be predestinated and God not be the author of sin, then all evil things can be predestinated and God not be the author sin; and your charge that the predestination of all things makes God the author of all sin and responsible for all the evil in the world falls to the ground. This is the only argument you have ever been able to use effectively against the predestination of all things and it only affects those who do not understand the doctrine and when you surrender it you are disarmed. There is no argument in it only a misconception or a misrepresentation of this doctrine of the Bible.

We invite the readers to scrutinize closely the answer of Brother Thompson to our question, how did sinful events become certain and upon what did their certainty depend? He says, "The fact that God foreknew that men would commit the sins they have and will commit, evidences that they are certain". Now that is profound logic, and is certainly as clear an answer to the question as we ever heard a limited Predestinarian give. Their certainty then depends upon the foreknowledge of God evidencing their certainty. The certainty of an event depends upon the evidenced that it is certain.

Let's apply this logic a little further. The certainty of the world being created depends upon the evidence that it is created; the certainty that man will become a sinner depends upon the evidence that man did become a sinner; the certainty of sinners being saved depends upon the evidence that sinners are saved, ad infinitum. Don't tell us this is foolishness, we know it. Brother Thompson said he thought our question was weak and we presume he framed his answer according to his estimate of the strength of our question.

We claim our question is pertinent and unanswered. We still insist that it be answered. Knowledge of a thing cannot make it certain; it must be certain in order to be certainly known. You say sinful as well as righteous events were eternally certain; if so, upon what does their certainty depend?

Brother Thompson, we will ask you to go back and read again what se have said in our two former articles, the one on First and Second Causes and the one in reply to yours in the June issue of the Advocate of Truth, and see if you can find where we have affirmed or admitted that God coerces or influences men to do wickedly, or has ever approved a sinful act. Do not stop with those two articles, but search diligently all that we have ever written and see if you can find an expression from our pen that can be reasonably construed to mean such a thing. We deny the charge and demand the proof.

The fact is you have violated the rules of honorable discussion; you have charged upon us repeatedly what we have denied.

We ask in our former article that you not overlook the fact that we hold that God so arranged that "all sin and iniquity should come from the creature and so the creature alone and not God would be responsible for sinful acts". Again we said in this connection, "Sin is dishonoring to God, offends His law and is justly punishable by His justice". If Brother Thompson wished to tell what we believed, why did he not refer the reader to what we said we believed rather than try to prejudice their minds by a false charge? We shall endeavor to stay above this method of discussion. We just refer the reader back to what we did say; we have no apologies to make for it.

The reason we did not notice your reference to 1 Thess. 2:15 was because there is not an expression in it that in the least involves a difference between us.

We used the illustration of the physician amputating the limb, etc., to illustrate the fact that the motive which prompts an act and not the deed constitutes the act righteous or unrighteous. We then stated that “God has a holy and sinless purpose in all that He does, in all He causes to be done and in all He allows to be done, and intends that each thing shall redound to the praise of that holy and exalted purpose”, etc.

It is a fact abundantly supported by the scriptures that God uses sinful men and the devil also to accomplish His purpose, but that does not by any means convict God of sin, nor excuse man from guilt.

The wicked are said in the scriptures to be the Lord’s sword; but the limited Predestinarian is so afraid that God will wound Himself and desecrate His purity that they are striving to get His sword out of His hands. It seems they think it would be safer in the hands of the devil.

When Israel transgressed the commandments of God He said, “O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, the staff in his hand is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge”. But hold on, God, says the objector to predestination, if You send this wicked king down there and he does wickedly, You will be the author of sin. God reached out, so to speak, and opened the scabbard (removed the restraint which had hitherto prevented him from assailing Israel) and sends him down upon them and gives him the victory. Then listen at what the Lord said when He punished the king for claiming the honor for the victory: He says, “Shall the saw magnify itself against Him that shaketh it or the ax boast itself against Him that heweth therewith?” What! did God hold this king in His hand while he wrought this destruction in Israel? Yes, He was sufficiently concerned in this act that the chastisement which came upon Israel was His, while the wickedness accompanying the act proceeded alone from the king of Assyria. This chastisement on Israel which was from God was made to overflow with righteousness, while the wickedness of the king in the same act which resulted in the overflow of righteousness was punished by the Lord. This act of the king was not only purposed of God, but He gave direction to it and on God’s part the act was righteous because the motive was righteous, but on the king’s part the act was sinful and God punished him for it because his motive was sinful (Isaiah 10).

God bid Shimei to curse David, yet Shimei violated a plain command when he did so.

The Spirit of God has said, “The wrath of man shall praise Thee and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain”. God does not put wrath into the hearts of men, but He does give direction to that which He is pleased to allow men to give vent to, and He has ordained that it shall issue in His praise.

Brother Thompson says God did not intend the events of time should be as they are, nor some other way, nor not be at all; but adds God’s expressed will in law is opposed to all sin. This is only another dodge when the weakness of his position will not admit of his meeting the issue. Did not God have the events of time in His mind before He expressed His will in law? Webster defines “intend” to mean, “To set forward in mind; to regard: to fix the mind on”. Did not God have His mind made up as to the events of time before He expressed His will in law? If so please tell us how He intended the events of time should be, as they are or some other way. We know these questions are digging up your conditional system and that makes you hesitate and stammer when you are pressed to answer, but we insist that the truth come regardless of whose cob-pen falls before it. Neither will your feigned aversion

to limiting God afford you any protection from the force of our questions, which you seek to evade; why my brother the very position we have been trying to get you to abandon is limiting God.

Brother Thompson finally comes to the sinking place, where we have witnessed numbers of like conditional faith go down before him. When he gets to the point that his efforts to dodge the arguments mock him and he cannot answer them, the whole thing becomes a profound secret and belongs exclusively to God and should not be searched into by man, lest they might find out something God did not want them to know; and to cover his defeat he turns loose to pouring out venom against what he supposes to be the predestination of all things. Yes, Brother Thompson, secret things belong to God, but “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God”. And Jesus promised that this same Spirit should take of the things of God and show them unto us; and if you conditional brethren were led more by the Spirit of God and not so much by the spirit of persecution and bitterness against the truth of God’s sovereignty, you would doubtless have more of the sweet and comforting truth of God’s unlimited purpose and universal control over all worlds and all beings unfolded to you.

When God arranged the plan of redemption He embraced sinners in it. If He had not intended that there should be sinners He would not have made provisions for the redemption of sinners. The remedy was prepared before the disease came, but not before it was settled in the mind of Jehovah that it would come and just how it would come. Neither was He moved by what He foresaw man would do in preparing the remedy.

Brother Thompson, if God did not purpose that sin should be in the world, can you give an intelligent reason why He arranged His creation so it would come into the world? Is not the fact that God arranged His creation and has conducted His government in such way as to admit sin into the world evidenced that He intended that it should be in the world? And is not the same true of every event of time? And if God did purpose that all things should be just as they have been, who has the authority to call in question His wisdom in so doing? It is certain He could have had it otherwise if it had been His pleasure to have done so, but in some way which He has not been pleased to explain to us He has seen fit to have things as they are.

Brother Thompson shows a decided preference for replying to what we did not say and showing it to be unscriptural than for showing what we did say to be unscriptural, but in order to keep the reader from discovering his utter failure to reply to us, he must say something, and so he flies in on what we did not say. There is a whole lot that we did not affirm that is not scriptural, Brother Thompson, your whole limited and conditional theory for instance. Your reference to 1 Timothy 5:11-13; Titus 1:10-11; James 3:10; and 1 Thessalonians 2:15 does not disprove a single position we have affirmed. We ask now that our readers turn to Ephesians 1:4 and see if they can find even an intimation there that God’s foreknowledge of man’s sins was the cause of His choice of them in Christ unto holiness. This smacks considerably of Arminianism to us. We understand the Bible teaches that God’s eternal love for His people was the cause of His choice of them unto holiness and not what He foresaw in them. This theory takes the cause for God’s election of sinners unto holiness out of God and places it in what He foresaw in man. Then to pursue this theory a little further: it was man’s act that made him unholy and election then must depend upon the act of man, therefore election according to this theory is conditional. Again we ask if this is not Arminianism, then what is it?

J. R. HARDY

REPLY BY ELDER THOMPSON

“WHAT IS IT?”

Brother Hardy, you try very hard to make it appear that my position is Arminianism, but entirely fail; and then add, “If this is not Arminianism, then what is it?” Did you write this question to stir up prejudice in the minds of investigators to keep them from giving my answers, explanations and arguments fair consideration? It appears that you did. You must know that what has been held by Primitive Baptists to be Arminianism is the claim that the eternal salvation of sinners depends upon their voluntary obedience to God; and that the salvation of the Lord’s regenerated children through their obedience, when enabled by grace, as taught in Acts 2:40, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation”; and in 1 Timothy 4:16, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”; and James 5:20, “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins”, has not been held by Primitive Baptist to be Arminianism. To charge that it is is to charge that the teachings of Peter, Paul and James in the passages given is Arminianism. I do not believe you will so contend, as it is salvation in time that they taught, and depended upon acts of saints, it is no violation of language or scripture to call it “Conditional Time Salvation”. And in as much as it does not in the least effect or affect the eternal salvation of sinners, it is most unreasonable to put the brand of Arminianism on brethren who advocate true Bible teaching on the subject. The language in the passages forcibly implies that voluntary action was required; and it cannot be made to mean that in order to the salvation spoken of in either passage God must coerce or force the actor; for to be compelled as the ax in the workman’s hands would not be obedience, and they would not save themselves and others as taught in the passages.

You construe my view relative to God’s foreknowledge of the sinful acts of men and His predetermination to punish them because of the sins He foresaw they would commit, to teach that God was compelled to shape His plan for dealing with His creatures. This is a far-fetched conclusion, without fact to support it. God has never been forced to plan or act, according to my view. His plans and acts inflicting punishment were and will be according to His free sovereign will. He is independent in His arrangements and the consummation of them.

Your view, brother Hardy, contradicts Webster’s definition of “independence”, and the general use of the word. Webster defines “independence” to mean, “Free; uncontrolled; uncoerced; unconstrained; unrestricted”. A king commands, and when a subject disobey he punishes him because of his disobedience, and the king is independent in inflicting the punishment, although the punishment depended upon and was because of the disobedience of his subject. God is independent in punishing the disobedient, though He knew before time that they would disobey, and determined to punish some in eternity because of disobedience. You seem shocked at this position; but it does not seem at all “repugnant to the dignity and essence of God”, according to your conception, to affirm that He predetermined man should disobey His law and become depraved, and that some men should be guilty of most heart-sickening crimes, loathsome pollutions and shameful secret vices, and that they should die in their sins; that He designed that they should be just as they have been and will be; and that He determined before time to punish them with everlasting destruction for doing the wicked things He

predetermined that they should do, and that they would not have committed the awful crimes that they did if He had not predetermined that they should. This, so far as I can see, presents God in the attitude of a monster tyrant, in comparison with whom tyrants of earth are mild. How awful the picture! God, superlatively good, is made to appear in His plan to create man with the design and determination that he shall violate the good law He intends to give him and thereby sink his posterity into depravity, where He designed they should be, and that some should continue in villainous practices until death and that then He, their Creator, will consign them to the endless torments of hell for sins they had to commit as a result of His predetermination. How entirely irresponsible this unscriptural theory presents the doomed and finally damned! If it admits of any responsibility for the diabolical crimes committed it places it upon God. And be it known that belief in God as the independent sovereign over all His creatures does not necessitate an acceptance of it.

You challenge me to show where man has received blessings from God for obedience to a conditional covenant. You say that the children of Israel were under a conditional covenant and that they never received a single blessing as the result of their obedience to that conditional covenant. To prove this you quote, “They continued not in My covenant and I regarded them not, saith the Lord”. The Bible history of the children of Israel is a contradiction of your position and a sufficient reply to your challenge. See chapters 27, 28 and 30 of Deuteronomy. Here blessings are promised if Israel obeys the requirements of the covenant and a curse if they disobey. The first verse of chapter 30 reads, “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee; and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath drive thee”, etc. And they did call to mind the blessings and the curse and wept by the rivers of Babylon when they remembered Zion (Psalm 137). They did return unto the Lord and obeyed His commands, and He blessed them according to His covenant. Hebrews 8:9 is not opposed to these facts. When they continued not in God’s conditional covenant He regarded them not. But there were times when He did regard them and bless them because of their obedience. These facts are so fully authenticated, as you must know, that your challenge is a surprise. (See Joshua, 23rd chapter, especially verses 8 and 25.)

The new covenant (Hebrews 8:12) is not a conditional covenant. Its subjects are in heart a people unconditionally. He writes His law of love in their hearts and their love for Him and His service is involuntary, as Paul testified: “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God”. In voluntary obedience in active service it is different or there could be no disobedience, and exhortation to obedience would be mockery. Why exhort a pen to write? And if the saint in service to God is only in God’s hands as a pen in the hand of a writer it seems but sheer mockery to exhort him to obedience.

Your supposed reasoning by Arminians, that sinners are quickened into life when the gospel is the cause of sinners being quickened, does not illustrate my position. Revelation 3:10 presents my view: “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell on the earth”. Here Jesus says He will bless the obedient because of their obedience. This is positive proof of blessings bestowed upon the Lord’s obedient children because of their obedience. This is all I have contended for on this question relative to blessings from God because of the voluntary obedience of His children. David, Jeremiah and others were thus blessed.

I do not hold that we are never blessed of God only when we obey, and I have not advocated such an idea. Neither do I contend that there is no darkness nor sorrow for the obedient Christian. Job was not the most disobedient child of God in his time according to my view. God had a wise purpose in

allowing satan to afflict him; a lesson was necessary that he realize his dependence and God's omnipotence and omniscience. I have written not one thing that militates against the. You misapply the theory I contend for, and oppose, as it were, a straw man of your misguided imagination.

I believe that each provision of the new covenant is a blessing. And I have not overlooked the fact that the ability to obey, love prompting to obedience, yea, every qualification necessary to enable the child to obey is a blessing of grace, which God bestows; and His grace is given without any consideration of merit on the part of the recipient.

You should prove your assertion, that God gives the obedience of His people, if possible. Paul's statement, "For the love of Christ constraineth us", does not teach that Christ forced them to obey. He speaks in the preceding verse of being beside themselves or being sober, and whether they were beside themselves or sober it was the love of Christ that constrained them – not that they were compelled to render active service.

You say everything is a blessing. Has blessing no opposite? Is a curse the opposite of a blessing? Are opposites the same thing?

You seem to fear that I may spoil the grammar of the sentence, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good". Be assured that I will not intentionally change the grammatical construction. The antecedent of "IT" is found in the preceding verse: Genesis 50:19, "For AM I in the place of God"? "AM" is italicized to show that it is a supplied word, not in the original text. Mathew Pool, reputed a scholar and commentator of unexcelled ability, says in his Annotations, "The words may be very well rendered, am not I, under God, i.e., subject to His will, a minister of His providence". So I get the sense of the passages to be, that Joseph was in that place, or position, as a servant of God; sent by Him, as seen in Genesis 45:5, 7-8. He was in that place, not as sent by them, but as sent by God. "God meant it unto good ** to save much people alive." God meant what unto good? He meant that Joseph should be in that place or position, as His servant to save much people alive, and therefore sent him there. But, preceding, "God meant it unto good", is italicized to show it is not in the original text, and is a supplied word. Supplied words are correct in some places, as seen by the context, but in some places they are not correct, as the context shows. So Joseph was in the position God designed he should be in to do good, and he meant it unto good. But as for his brethren, they thought evil against him, but they did not send Joseph there. God says they did not. To sustain your theory you will have to show that the thought of evil is the antecedent of "IT", and that God meant that they should think the evil; that He predetermined that they should. It will not admit that He just allowed them to think evil; but your position is that it was fixed by God before creation that they should have evil thoughts against Joseph.

I will apply your fine turn to evade the galling fire of truth against your citadel of error to your rendering of this passage. Your position here is that their thoughts of evil were fixed by God; that they would not have had such thoughts if He had not fixed by predestination that they should. So you have God responsible for the wicked motive in their hearts. You say, "In His creation and arrangement of things He certainly fixed it so it would turn out just as it has *** and we plead guilty to believing that He intended that it should be just as it has". Then you must believe that God fixed it that the basest of men should have the evil motives and wicked thoughts that result in the most "heart-sickening" crimes. Then who is responsible for the motives to wickedness? Your position says God is; that He has so fixed it or such motives would not be in the hearts of men. With all your denials and statements that "God so arranged that all sin and iniquity should come from the creature will not lift you out of your awful dilemma, for if God arranged that all sin and iniquity should come from man, the creature man cannot

be responsible, and as there is responsibility attached to sin, your view unloads it upon the holy Father in heaven, instead of placing it on Satan and man where the Bible places it. How awful it is to charge that God arranged and fixed that the black brute in human form, who in hiding, waited for the coming of that harmless, virtuous white girl some years ago in Texas should be black in heart with vile motive and commit the fiendish crime, for which his body was mutilated and burned! God forbid that I accept such theory, and I pray that He deliver others from it.

I affirm that your theory justifies the most villainous men in their acts. For to say that God predetermined, arranged and fixed that men should do all wickedness; that He makes men do what His soul desires; that He does the villainous acts with His creatures, as the workman wields his tools in constructing a building, is to justify all villains in what they are compelled to do. This justifies Potiphar's wife in her shameful course. How erroneous! how erroneous!! your theory is. Can't you see that it is wrong and renounce it? Do you sincerely believe that it is not "repugnant to the dignity and essence of God?"

I will not attempt to divine the secret purposes of God concerning Joseph's ascension to the throne; I will leave that to those who are given to speculation and divination concerning unrevealed things, which belong to God only.

My position concerning the king of Assyria is unshaken. I repeat that there is no evidence in the account given that God predestinated that the king should do a wicked thing. I did not say the king did nothing wicked, neither that his claim was not wrong, for which God punished him.

Brother Hardy, you insinuate that I handled the word of God deceitfully in commenting on Acts 4:26-28. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." It is honestly believed that said passage has reference to the delivering of Jesus, as in chapter 2, verse 23; that God's hand and counsel determined that He should be delivered, and that Herod, Pontius Pilate, etc., gathered together to deliver Him, so that they gathered together to do what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. They desired to deliver Him. When His Father withdrew His protecting power He was delivered. This is the view of one of our ablest investigators. But it is reasonable to admit, I think, that the event is shrouded in mystery so much as to make it difficult to reach an entirely satisfactory conclusion. But it is evident that God did not predetermine that they should do the very thing that He would be displeased with. And Paul says of the crucifixion of Christ and the persecution of His people, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they pleased not God" (1 Thess. 2:15). But you, Brother Hardy, try to toss this passage, so damaging to your view, out of your way. You cannot do this, for it disproves your theory of the predestination of sin. How they could do what God predestinated they should do and not please Him is beyond the reach of human comprehension. You cannot harmonize it with your view and therefore try to toss it out of your way, if I have to be charged with dodging, wresting scripture passages, walking in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully, etc., because I cannot accept your unscriptural position. I will bear it, and try to pray for you as our suffering Savior did for His persecutors when He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

I surrendered nothing on Acts 4:26-28. I did not admit your position, and you know I did not. Then why claim that I had?

Though it may seem to you that Acts 2:23 gets God's predestination and the wicked hands of men alarmingly close together, it does not teach that the wicked hands delivered Jesus, or took His life. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, but not by wicked hands.

Your pleasantry and ridicule in your reply to my statement that, "The fact that God foreknew that men would commit the sins they have and will commit evidences that they were certain, I regard as very unbecoming in scriptural investigation. This does not say that their sins certainly depend upon the foreknowledge of God evidencing their certainty", as you try to make it appear. The careful reader will see that it does not. Your endeavor to obscure my "logic" will fail with intelligent readers.

Your views, as I understand you, as to how sinful events become certain and upon what their certainty depended was, that God desired that they come to pass; that He so arranged and fixed that all wickedness should be, that it made it certain to be, that He predetermined that wicked motive should be in the hearts of men, and that they should commit the most degrading sins that disgraced humanity. It is not surprising that an advocate of such an abominable heresy should not want too many descriptive adjectives used in showing its awful deformities.

I have complied with your request, i.e., have read again your former articles; and I find that what I gave as your position is correct according to the wording of your statements. As you say, it is false and a violation of the rules of honorable debate, I will reproduce some of your statements and let your readers judge. I will first say that you have repeatedly charged Arminianism to me regardless of my denial. Have you adhered to the rules of honorable debate? Is it according to the rules of honorable debate to indulge in ridicule and sarcasm and make charges of deception, etc.? Have you stayed above improper methods? I think not. I find in your former, the following: You say of God's creatures, "Their acts as well depend upon God." Speaking of creation of all men you say, "He perfectly foreknew and intended that it should be just as it has been, is now and will be." You further say, "All subsequent causes, or what is termed second causes, are the effect of some cause preceding them, so that all of the creatures and events of time constitute an unbroken chain of causes and effects". Again, you say, "We must acknowledge that whatever God does for His creatures, to His creatures or with His creatures, whether in providence or grace, are just those things which He has eternally had in mind to do, etc." Concerning all things that come to pass you say, "He ordered them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently". "He has ordered that it shall be so." And concerning second causes you say, "God had ordered that these very conditions or causes should prevail". So internal corruption, base motives, evil thoughts and abominable conspiracies being second causes you hold that God ordered that they should prevail; and that all the fearful casualties and atrocious crimes that result from these corrupt second causes He ordered that they should fall out as they have and will fall out. You have put this strong. Does God order that they shall be; that they shall fall out, shall come to pass, and yet not the author of them? Webster's first definition of author is, "The beginner, former or first mover of anything". So if God determines and orders the second causes, He is the author of them, but as He does not He is not the author of sin and wickedness. No, He is not the cause of desperately wicked hearts, vile lustings, disgraceful conduct and brutal practices. Your theory is wrong in charging those hateful things to Him, which He "hates". And again your contention in your first reply is, that God purposed that Cyrus should execute His counsel, and that Cyrus acted wickedly in executing God's counsel; that God was pleased with what Cyrus did; that it was His pleasure. And this is the application you make of the quotation, "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure". Then your application of "What His soul desired even that He does", and that Cyrus was in God's hand as a saw in the workman's hand in doing wickedly, that God made him do wickedly, makes plain your

teaching and shows that your position presents God as the author of wickedness and sin and the principal actor in sin. You also admit in said article that you hold that God intended that every event of time, therefore all wicked acts, should be just as they occur. You say, “In His creation and arrangement of things He certainly fixed it so it would turn out just as it has, * * and we plead guilty to believing that He intended that it should be just as it has”. While you claim to believe said monstrous things you have no scriptural proof that they are true – just speculative think so without a “thus saith the Lord”.

Seemingly, in order to tone down your awful extreme and make it measurably plausible and acceptable, you say, “He (God) fixed it so that all sin and iniquity should come from the creature”. But you failed to make it more plausible. How false the charge, that God “fixed it so that all sin and iniquity should come from the creature”. And you say, “The wickedness was not put in the heart of the king of God’s decree, but it was already there”. But you teach that God ordered that it should be so, and why say it was not there by His decree? Your statements are contradictory. You further say, “This wicked king did the very thing God determined, but he was not moved in the least to do it by God’s decree * *. And here is the secret of it all. The physical act alone does not constitute sin, but the righteousness of an act is determined by the motive prompting the act”. This ingenious fine-spun theorizing is gauzy, for it stands opposed to your theory that God predetermined, arranged, ordered and fixed it so that all sin in motive and act should be just as it has been, is now and will be. To teach that sinful motive is a second cause, a product of the first cause, which is God, and then try to escape the odium that attaches to the position is not right.

The quotations I have given from your articles, your statements and arguments, I give as my reason for the charge that your theory lays the responsibility for all sin and sinful acts upon God, making Him the author of all sin. And when you teach as you do, that God is using men, as the ax and saw in the hand of the wielder, in the terrible wickedness enacted in this world, you not only present Him as the author of sin but as the principal actor; and you place the sinful motive which precedes sinful acts with Him. This places God as the sinner and men as irresponsible instruments in His hand with which to commit the sins He hates.

How did Shimei curse David? “And thus said Shimei when he cursed, come out, thou bloody man”, etc. He did not use profanity, as shown in the passage. You will not be able to show that Shimei sinned when he cursed David. To say that he sinned and that God told him to sin is to say that God authorized him to sin. Which is the worse, one that authorized a sinful act or the one that commits it? Shimei obeyed God and obedience to God is not sin. Do you believe his obedience to God was sin? If you do not why did you use it?

“The wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.” This should be construed according to the context in the 76th Psalm, which shows that God allowed or suffered enemies of Israel to prevail until Israel was humbled, and then He restrained the wrath of their enemies. “In Salem * * There brake He the arrows of the bow * * to save the meek”, etc. When Israel was humbled, became meek, God was praised. On this subject you say God allows men to give vent to wrath, but that He does not put it in their hearts. Yet you hold that He ordered it and fixed it before creation that it should be, that wrath should be in their hearts, for wrath is embraced in the “all things” that you say were so ordered and fixed. Then agreeable to your position that He makes men act, using them as a saw in the workman’s hand to do wickedly, there is no consistency in saying He “allows” them to vent their wrath. While you hold to that dangerous theory you should be fair and say that God designed that wrath should be in men’s hearts and so ordered and fixed it that it had to be there, and

that He so controlled them as instruments that they had to vent their wrath. Your view places the responsibility for wrath being in the hearts of men, with God. And the word “allow” relative to their villainous practices does not belong to your theory in this investigation. But if you do not mean what your statements teach you should cease to write and talk on the subject until you comprehend the force of the words you use, that do teach what I have charged. You say God did not put wrath in the heart, and you also say “He has seen fit to have things as they are”. These statements are conflicting. Tell us how wrath came to be in the hearts of the enemies of Israel if it was not through the arrangement of God that it should be in their hearts? If it was not there by His ordering and fixing it so that it should be there your statements have been wrong, and they surely have been.

You ask, “Did not God have His mind made up as to the events of time before He expressed His will in law? If so please tell us how He intended the events of time should be as they are or some other way”. This is a strange question when I did not say that God intended the events of time should be as they are or some other way. You seem bewildered. “Should” in the statement is a word of great force. Your conflicting statements seem to indicate that you do not understand its force. The Bible does not say that God’s mind was so made up. “Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever”, etc. (Deut. 29:29). Paul’s statement quoted by you does not contradict this statement. There are secret things that belong to God that have not been revealed to you, brother Hardy, or you would know all that God knows. But some get wise above what is written. They claim special revelations, as did Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet.

Your unkind thrust against my brethren as bitter persecutors recoils about the exponents of your dogma. And further, your charge that I have tried to dodge your argument is not correct.

You say, “If He (God) had not intended that there should be sinners He would not have made provisions for the redemption of sinners”. How do you know that God intended that there should be sinners? The Bible does not say so. Have you had a special revelation that He did? And how do you know that He was not moved by what He foresaw man would do in preparing the remedy for sin? Was this also a special revelation to you? Do you hold that God prearranged that men should sin that He might provide for their redemption? Will you dodge these questions?

When you give scriptural proof that God arranged His creation so sin “would” come into the world, that He intended that it “should” be in the world, I will try to give an intelligent reason why He so arranged when He did not purpose that sin should be in the world, or I will frankly confess I cannot. Your question on such speculative theorizing is wholly unfair. You cannot prove the basis of your question true. Again you must prove that God purposed that all things “should” be just as they are, wrath and vile motives in men’s hearts and that they practice corruption, before I answer your question that follows your assumption that He did. You say that “in some way which He has not been pleased to explain to us He has seen fit to have things as they are”. This is an admission that one secret belongs to the Lord, and that He has not revealed to you the way that He has not explained why things are as they are”.

After some effort in your closing paragraph to divert investigators from your statements and my exposure of their fallacy, you say, “Your reference to 1 Timothy 5:11-13; Titus 1:10-11; James 3:10; and 1 Thessalonians 2:15, does not disprove a single position we have affirmed”. In these passages Paul and James say that wrong doers did things they ought not. You say God predestinated, ordered, arranged and fixed it before time that all events should be as they have been, are now and will be. What they did, but ought not, were events that you say God designed and fixed that they should be as they

were. Did God arrange, order and fix that events should come to pass that ought not come to pass? I say those passages are opposed to your position and disprove your extreme theory. You cannot harmonize them with it, therefore, your effort to toss them out of your way. I believe intelligent readers will see that your position can't be true according to those passages. The idea that God predetermined, ordered, fixed and designed that they should do as they did, when they ought not, is too preposterous to be accepted. Potiphar's wife ought not, should not have done as she did. David should not have had Uriah killed to obtain his wife. Peter should not have denied Christ and cursed and swore. That vicious black demon in Texas should not have outraged that noble white girl; no, he ought not. Brother Hardy, what do you say about it? That they ought to have done as they did, or that they ought not? If they did as God predetermined, ordered, designed and fixed that they should, then ought they or ought they not to have done as they did? I hold that they ought not to have acted as they did, and that God did not predetermine, order, design or fix that they should. You should handle these passages, answer my questions and arguments or yield. And you should not accuse me of dodging your arguments and dodge my arguments on those passages as you did.

You seem to not understand Ephesians 1:3-5. Verses 4 and 5 teach that God chose people in Christ before the foundation of the world, having predestinated them unto the adoption of children. Or transposed we read it, "Having predestinated, elected, us unto the adoption of children. He chose us in Christ that we should be holy", etc. So God having predestinated, i.e., elected them to be children by Spiritual adoption, and His foreknowledge comprehending their future involvement in unholiness, He chose them in Christ that they should be holy, chose that through Christ as Mediator their sins should be put away, their souls be regenerated and their bodies be spiritualized, and they be presented faultless, holy before God.

J. M. THOMPSON

REPLY BY ELDER HARDY

It has been a distinguishing characteristic of those who opposed the truth in every age of the world when they exhausted their arguments, they misrepresent the position they oppose and try to overcome its force, rout its advocates and win the approval of the hearer or reader by covering up the truth and charging consequences, which they seek to present in as repulsive manner as possible, which is evidently done with the motive to prevent a fair consideration of the truths which they oppose. Brother Thompson is not an exception to the general rule. This has been his tactics, as the thoughtful reader must know. To resort to such methods is only an evidence of the weakness of the theory advocated and the lack of ability of the one who indulges in it to make a better defense of his position against the one he opposes.

We have turned aside from our custom to pass such tirades by unnoticed in the Advocate of Truth, because Brother Thompson's first article was out of the ordinary and we felt sure, and yet feel sure, that if there is a man contending for Conditional Time Salvation and opposing the predestination of all things who can defend his position by Bible, J. M. Thompson could do it; but since he has been unlimited in space in three attempts, and has utterly failed to either prove the position he has taken or to disprove by the Bible the one we have maintained, we see no necessity to prolong the controversy and especially when he has flatly refused to answer our questions or meet our arguments for no obvious reason than to do so would be demoralizing to his theory.

But before we close this investigation we wish to again state our position on the subjects treated, that the reader may more clearly comprehend the truth of the Bible, from which we should not allow ourselves to be frightened by calumny nor vile misrepresentations. The odium which Brother Thompson would have you believe rests upon predestination, is only the hallucination of a disordered brain, which has been racked and enfeebled by the blighting, yet infatuating, effects of the Conditional innovation which was filched from the temple of Arminians by the Kirklands, Todd and Company, who have long since shown their converts the way back to the fountain whence this dismal doctrine came.

There are a few points in Brother Thompson's article which we shall take up in their order and consider.

Our charge that Brother Thompson's position is Arminianism seems to be rather galling, and if we cannot prove that it is true we will retract. By consulting Webster for the definition of Arminian, to whom Brother Thompson has referred quite often, we have this as the first tenet: "Conditional election and reprobation, in opposition to absolute predestination." Is Brother Thompson guilty or not guilty? He affirmed that sinners were chosen in Christ (elected) that they should be holy because of God's foreknowledge of their unholiness. In other words, God looked down into time and foresaw that man would be unholy and because of (or conditioned upon) what He foresaw He elected some men to be holy. If this is not conditional election we are at a loss for a name for it, and we presume Brother Thompson will not deny that it is in opposition to absolute predestination. Then according to Webster, Brother Thompson's position is clearly Arminian. It must be remembered that Arminianism does not embrace just eternal salvation upon conditions of obedience by the creature. That is only one tenet of Arminianism.

We did not charge Arminianism upon Paul, James and Peter, nor upon what they taught, but upon what you contended for contrary to what they taught.

Peter said, “According as His (God’s) divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”, etc. (2 Peter 1:3). If the blessings that attend obedience pertain unto life and godliness, Peter says God’s divine power hath given them unto us, and if they were given unto us, they were not procured by our labor. Paul, James and Peter did not teach anything contrary to this, but Arminianism does. James said, “Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:16-17). God does not vary from His eternal purpose to bless (bestow good and perfect gifts upon His children) nor even have the shadow of turning because of what His children do, and Paul, James and Peter did not teach that He does, but Arminianism does teach that God is influenced in His conduct toward His children by what they do. The shadow is not the thing itself, but only the appearance of it; and James would not have the brethren err to that extent that they would even believe that God appeared to change in blessing them with good and perfect gifts. If your conditional theory does not teach that God changes in fact, it is still an error which James did not tolerate, for it does teach that there is an appearance of turning in Him to bless or chastise His children upon conditions of their acts.

As to the scriptures cited, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation”. “Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”, and “Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins”, when they can be interpreted and understood in the light of the language of Jesus, “Without Me ye can do nothing”, and “The Son can do nothing of Himself”, and “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the work”; and of Paul, I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”, and “I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed”, and, “Where is boasting them? It is excluded. By what law, of works? Nay, but by the law of faith”, and “it is of faith that it might be by grace to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed”. We say when those scriptures can be understood in harmony with these, all conditionality or creature merit is excluded from their interpretation. We see in them the teaching of Jesus, “I am the vine and ye are the branches”. The branches cannot bear fruit of themselves. And while the fruit is borne and manifested on the branches, the vine furnishes all of the elements of fruit bearing, so the fruit cannot be conditional upon the will of the branches. The class of scriptures first referred to tell us what to do and the latter class tells us how it is accomplished. It is not what the children of God do that determines the conditionality of the benefits they receive in the Christian pathway, but how that doing is accomplished. Is their obedience of themselves, or is it of faith? Paul says if it is not of faith it is sin. I believe in exhorting God’s children to love and good works when God directs the exhortation, for He has ordained this very means to lead His children to fulfill His will, and such exhortation is always effectual.

Yes, we certainly hold that if what God foresaw in man was the cause of Him predetermining what He would do toward man He could not act independently in shaping His plan, for then He was guided by what He foresaw in His future conduct toward man and not by His free and sovereign will.

Your theory of God’s dealing with future events is ridiculous in the extreme, is mere child’s play. That a man of your ability would attempt to support such a clap-trap theory astonishes us beyond expression.

The absurdity of the thought that God, Who is infinitely wise and possessor of all power determined to create this world and all things in it, determined just what kind of creatures He would create, but He dare not determine what those creatures shall do or some little insignificant atom of His creation will arraign Him on the charge of being the author of sin. So lest He be so fearfully arraigned He did not determine in His infinite mind what this creature man should do, but just looked down into time and saw what man would do and then got busy, so to speak, and arranged a plan to meet the conditions as He saw they would be. (God, deliver us from charging Thee with such absurd folly and weakness.) If God had not determined all the acts of all His creatures, pray tell us who unfolded the events of time and spread out the map of the universe before Him that He might know what would take place?

Brother Thompson revolts at the thought of God predetermining the events of time, but he utterly fails to show a basis for their certainty. He says the fact that God foreknew the events of time evidences their certainty; but the fact of their certainty must exist before there can be any evidence of their certainty; so in order for God to know or give evidence of the certainty of the events of time, their certainty must first be determined. There is absolutely no escape from the position that the events of time must be predetermined in order to be foreknown, and to predetermine them is to previously decide that they shall be (do not get scared at the word “shall”, we will show you some “shalls” before we get through).

When the certainty of the events of time was determined that God was the only being that existed will not be denied by Brother Thompson, then it necessarily follows that He must have determined them, or there was a necessity existing in the things themselves by which their existence and course was determined. This is Fatalism pure and simple, and denies the creation and government of God. According to a logical and unanswerable course of reasoning there is no escape from the doctrine of the predestination of all things only in theory of Fatalism. We prefer to believe that God rules and that His infinite wisdom has given and does give direction to all the events of time, and as the inspired Paul has said, “Works all things after the counsel of His own will”, and makes “All things work together for good to them that love God”.

Brother Thompson seems horribly shocked when we say God’s purpose embraces sinful acts of men, but will affirm with complacency that God foreknew all the sinful acts of men, even those horrible deeds which he so delights to depict. He does not seem to realize that the foreknowledge of all things involves the same complications when weighed in a human balance that the predestination of all things does. If God foresaw that all of these awful things you have described were going to be committed and was present and had the power to prevent them and did not do it, would not every human tribunal judging Him according to man’s judgment, convict Him of being guilty of the crime? Then why charge such fearful consequences upon the purpose of God when it would be equally just to charge the same consequences upon His foreknowledge? Again you admit that before God made man He knew perfectly that he would do all of these awful things which you are so elaborate on; can you give an intelligent reason why God made such a being as would do those things? Why did it not make Him an angel, and never allow him to be subjected to temptation? Or why, after He made man and placed him in the garden, did He not exclude the serpent and prevent the transgression and all subsequent sins? Can you find an intelligent answer to these inquiries, which naturally arise in the thoughtful mind, which is worthy of the being and character of an infinite God? Or will you attempt to quench the spirit which leads the hearts of God’s inquiring children to contemplate the greatness and wisdom of His stupendous plan by which He is to receive a revenue of glory from all His creatures from the least to the greatest? My dear brother, infinite wisdom is at the helm, giving direction to the events of time and controlling

them for the accomplishment of a grand and holy purpose of the Creator, or the whole thing is the work of chance, which would render the story of creation of a hoax and the government of God a fairy tale.

You recount certain atrocious crimes as though they were worse in God's account than others; or was your motive in so doing to play upon the weakness and ignorance of men and women, to intoxicate their minds with blood-curdling atrocities so they would give less consideration to the basic principles upon which this investigation should be decided? Do you realize the weakness of your position so sensibly that you must frighten the Lord's children by recounting outrages on society and charging that our position makes God the responsible doer or approver of such, that you may make a better showing among men? If such is your design may God forgive the folly of your heart; however we desire to hope that you are not thus affected. Nothing is further from the position we hold than that evil can come from God or that He approves of or is pleased with sin as such, or that we hold that it ought to be committed. This we have repeatedly stated.

As to the various sins which you labor so hard to make look frightful, they are no more an insult to the justice of God and no more damning in their effects in God's account than thousands you and I have committed; for the least offense against God's righteous law unatoned for would damn forever the man whom the world considers the most upright. All men are on an equality in God's sight when themselves alone are considered; the most self-righteous and pious is no more with God than the vilest prostitute. You and I, brother Thompson, are not one whit better in His record than the highwayman, the rapist or the base profligate. True our lives are not so demoralizing to society and we occupy a more exalted place in the estimation of men, but man's goodness does not recommend him to God, they have all sinner and came short of His glory.

Brother Thompson says the predestination of all things "presents God as a monster tyrant, in comparison with whom tyrants of earth are mild". This is what unbelievers have said of the doctrine of the Bible in every age, hence your arraignment is not new. The objector in Paul's day entertained about this same opinion of God when Paul said that He (God) had mercy on whom He would and whom He would He hardened, for he said, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who hath resisted His will?" But Paul did not think this arraignment of God sufficient for him to renounce the doctrine, and so without any apology for what God had done, he replied, "Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" And so is ours to you.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Can you harmonize with your human standard of justice the act of God in visiting the transgressions of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations? Can you conceive how God could turn the heart of the enemies to hate His people and to deal subtly with His servants (Psalm 155:25), without violating your high sense of justice? Can you believe that so good a being as God would require at the hands of one generation all the blood shed by their forefathers for four thousand years? And if you should see this language in the Bible as spoken by Jesus Himself, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them

shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city” (Matthew 23:34), would you believe that God had predetermined that these “serpents”, this “generation of vipers” should actually do this killing and persecuting, or would you think “shall” was too strong a word to be used in this connection? When God said by the mouth of His servant David, “Many shall be purified, and made white and tried”, did He express what He had predestinated should be? We anticipate an affirmative answer. But when in the same verse He uses similar language, saying, “But the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand”, it would in your estimation be most damaging to the holiness of God to say this too was an expression of His predestination. Read the 11th and 12th chapters of Daniel. The word “shall” occurs 151 times in these two chapters and in a large majority of cases is telling what sinful men shall do. Our best authors on language say that “shall” used in the 2nd and 3rd person expresses determination. So in two short chapters God has expressed His determination of future events 151 times and many of those events the actions of sinful man, and yet Brother Thompson, posing as a Bible scholar, denies and ridicules the idea that God has embraced the wicked actions of men in His predestination: says if He should do so He would be a “monster tyrant, in comparison with whom the tyrants of earth are mild”.

But let us counsel the divine record for the extent of predestination and the eternal fixedness of things: God says of Himself, “Remember the former things of old; for I am God and thee is none else: I am God and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand and I will do all My pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9-10). Webster says “declare” means “to make clear or plain”. Then God made clear the end from the beginning and the things that are not yet done. He did not merely foresee future events, but established the certainty of them, which must have been done to make it clear that they would transpire.

Brother Thompson says he objects to our position that there is an appointed time for the manifestation of every event to time. It is said in Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven”, and then proceeds to enumerate a long catalogue of things that have been purposed that there is a time appointed for, viz: to be born, to die, to plant, to pluck up, to kill, to heal, to break down, to build, to weep, to laugh, to mourn, to dance, etc. Again it is said by the apostle Paul in Acts 17:26, that God “hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell upon all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation”. God has not only determined that men should dwell upon all the face of the earth, which clearly proves that He did not intend that they should forever dwell in the garden of Eden, but He has also determined the times which He had appointed for them to dwell on the different parts of the earth. Men who object to this position only find themselves objecting to God’s own declaration. Isaiah 45:18 says, “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited”. Brother Thompson can you work your philosophical mind up to the point where you can conceive of a God of infinite wisdom making a world and determining that it should be inhabited and yet not determining what kind of beings should inhabit it, whether good or bad?

Brother Thompson’s hopeless effort to obscure the simple language in reference to the abduction of Joseph into Egypt and the crucifixion of Christ does not strengthen his position any, for after all of his labored effort to revise the translation and mystify, the truth remains the same, that Joseph did say that what his brethren did, and thought was evil, and was, so far as they were concerned. God meant unto good, as a means to bring Joseph to the exalted position in Pharaoh’s kingdom where he could save much people alive; and that what Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Jews did to Christ was what God’s

hand and counsel determined before to be done. The Bible does not need translating so much as those who disbelieve what the Bible teaches. Brother Thompson affirms that “Joseph was in the position God designed he should be in to do good”. Now will you, Brother Thompson, assume the ridiculous position that God designed that Joseph should be in that position and yet did not determine the means by which he should be brought there? But your position, Brother Thompson, and manner of asserting that God sent Joseph there seems to argue that every one is excused for the part they took in the matter except God, and one would think from your remarks that God was wholly responsible and actually performed every act in bringing Joseph to the throne in Egypt, and we know, from the Bible history of the event, that many wicked things were connected with it and were potent factors in accomplishing the proposed end. This position entralls you in a worse dilemma than the one you are seeking to convert us from; as your seeming contention that God alone is responsible for the incidents affecting Joseph’s trip, not only charges the consequences of the evil acts connected therewith upon God, but would make Him the actual doer of them, while our position is that the sinful events were performed by evil men without any knowledge of fulfilling a wise purpose of God or without being influenced in the least by Him or His purpose, and that in so doing they sinned and are justly punishable for their sins, and yet God determined that every event connected with the whole affair should be performed as the means by which Joseph should be brought to the place to save much people alive. God did send Joseph to the second place in Pharaoh’s kingdom, but He did it by controlling the acts of sinful men and women, and making their sinful act accomplish His holy purpose. He did not send him there by performing all of the acts which brought him on his journey.

Brother Thompson seems to not be able to comprehend but a single thought at a time. He does not seem to know that eternity and God’s eternal purpose existed before time creatures; that a fixed and definite plan existed before it was put into execution; that God was perfect before anything was created. Brother Thompson, can you not distinguish between predestination and the fulfillment of that predestination? Between God’s plan and the execution of that plan? Yes, we believe God predestinated, purposed, decreed, designed, settled, fixed (and if there is any other word which can express it any stronger or clearer we accept it too) in His infinite plan of this universe every creature and every event and appointed a time and place for and the manner of the manifestation of each of them; and so accurately did He time His eternal plan that it is as impossible for there to be the slightest miscarriage in the minutest detail of it as it would be for God to cease to be. “The Lord of hosts hath sworn saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (Isaiah 14:24). But while God did predestinate and fix these things in His infinite mind and plan in eternity, it does not necessarily follow that He must now put evil in the hearts of men, nor influence them to do that which they are commanded not to do. The Bible abundantly teaches that God acted intelligently in His creation as well as in His government, and to act intelligently He must act according to a previously devised and perfected plan. God’s ways and judgments are unsearchable and past finding out; and while He teaches us in His word that He works all things after the counsel of His own will and makes them work together (not separately) for good to His people; He also teaches us that all sin and evil emanates from an evil fountain and not from Him who is infinitely holy. And if we fail in our short-sightedness to fully understand the way God takes, we should not be so irreverent as to charge Him with tyranny.

If it can be shown that predestination is an active force which brings things to pass, then Brother Thompson’s criticism of our position might be in point; but if it cannot, all of his tirade must go as the chaff befog the summer breeze. Predestination has never been used by those who believe it to convey such an idea, neither will the definition of the word admit of that construction, and it seems to us to be

bad taste for those who do not believe the doctrine to insist that those who do believe it teach what they deny and what the words they use cannot be made to mean according to the best authors on language. In fact Brother Thompson insists on the word meaning something for us that he will not dare admit it means when he uses it himself. Let us see: Brother Thompson says God predestinated to glorify sinners in heaven, but does Brother Thompson believe that sinners were glorified in heaven before time? Certainly not. Then predestination did not glorify them, did it? Can we say that predestination is the cause of their glorification? We think not. If predestinating sinners unto glorification had been all that was ever done for them, how many would have been glorified? If we say none, then we remove the basis of all of Brother Thompson's arraignment of the doctrine of the predestination of all things; but if we say all who were predestinated, then we ask, if predestination would have accomplished that, why must Christ suffer, keep the law, die and rise the third day, ascend to glory and return again? All of His work as well as the work of the Holy Spirit is superfluous and vain if predestination is causative, as the opposers of predestination charge upon us as believing. It is difficult for a man to argue a false theory very far without getting his wires crossed. The truth is, predestination is not causative. As we see it, the predestination of God is the decision of His infinite mind regarding all the creatures and events of time; or the stupendous plan of the entire universe stretching through time and embracing all time things, in conformity to which all events transpire. This plan was perfected in God's unchangeable mind before time, and none of His creatures know any part of this plan only as it is unfolded in His providence or as He reveals it unto them, therefore they cannot be influenced by it in their conduct. God has revealed to us in His word that in the development of this infinite plan He does some things which He has predestinated, and some things are brought to pass under His influence and by His authority, while other things embraced in the same plan, which He has said shall come to pass, are done without His influence and authority and against His expressed command. The Lord sent Moses unto Pharaoh on various occasions with the express command, "Thus saith the Lord God, let My people go", yet He emphatically declared of Pharaoh, "But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt" (Genesis 7:4). Who will say that Pharaoh did not fulfill God's purpose in refusing to let the children of Israel go, and at the same time disobeyed a plain command from God? We suppose Brother Thompson would brand God as a monster tyrant for hardening Pharaoh's heart, but we are glad his revilings will not change the order of heaven's divine arrangement. If man's goodness was in the least meritorious, then he might have just grounds for complaint if he did not receive what he regarded as good treatment; but when his condition by reason of sin and his conduct are so utterly vile and profligate that no temporal calamity could even approach an adequate compensation for his sins, it is shocking to think that such a creature could so forget as to offer such an insult to the dignity of the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, by the use of the epithet "tyrant", regardless of what He should see proper to do with His own.

Brother Thompson insists that we answer as to whether men ought to do what the Bible says they "ought not" and what the laws of the land forbid. This we cheerfully will do. In the language of inspiration we will say, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man". Man is a subject of law, a rule of action given to him by which his conduct is measured, and by which is the knowledge of sin and without which there is no transgression. It is his duty to render perfect and perpetual obedience to the law and is justly punishable for its violation. The law exercises dominion over men, but infinitely above the law is the dominion of Jehovah, Who makes the chief authorities on earth acknowledge that "the heavens do rule" and that "He (God) doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" for says Daniel, "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by

the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whosoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17). For which Brother Thompson would call Him a tyrant, and class those who reverently bow to the divine will with Joe Smith; but we shall not be found complaining at this, for one who would defiantly fling the epithet of tyranny in the face of the God of the whole earth could not be expected to do less to those who would honor and adore Him than to tauntingly class them with hypocrites and immoral persons. But in the language of Paul, “None of these things move me”. We still delight to hold up the ensign of truth and exalt the mighty God Who is great in goodness and good in greatness, fearing neither the taunts of words nor the frowns of the multitudes. We are not alarmed when men assault the mighty character of God or His eternal truth, or when they hurl their bitterest invectives at those who advocate His cause. If every other trace of the passage of these heralds of divine truth through the ages past was obliterated, the spasmodic outbursts of reproach and calumny heaped against them by those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof would be sufficient to identify them with those who in the dawn of Christianity were chosen and faithful and true. May this blessed truth find an abiding place in the hearts of all true believers that “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth”.

This correspondence is now closed so far as the Advocate of Truth is concerned.
J. R. HARDY

REPLY BY ELDER THOMPSON

THEY MISREPRESENT GOD

Elder J. R. Hardy evidences conscious defeat. In closing his last reply to my arraignment of their unscriptural dogma, that all the corruption, vileness and horrible sins perpetrated by depraved reprobates are results of the predestination of our holy Father in heaven, he says, “This correspondence is now closed so far as the Advocate of Truth is concerned”. This he did after asking questions and introducing new scriptural passages and arguments. To be fair this made it obligatory that he allow me the right to reply. But he did not want me to reply. He had omitted about one-fourth of my last article, and after leaving out so much that he realized was destructively against his false position and statements he had the temerity to say, “but since he has been unlimited in space in three attempts, and has utterly failed to either prove the position he has taken or to disprove by the Bible the one we have maintained, we see no necessity to prolong the controversy”, etc. How untrue this statement! For I had not been unlimited in space, when he had left out about one-fourth of my third article, and for him to say I had been – what must the reader think of his statement? Will he claim that the God of unchangeable purity and truth predestinated that he should make this statement, that God had fixed it so he had to say that I had been unlimited in space in three attempts, etc., when I had not been? Will he contend that God designed that the wicked motive should be in his heart to so misrepresent the facts and that He used him s a saw in a workman’s hand is used when he wrote the statements and then that he falsely charge that I had misrepresented him? It is in harmony with his false and dangerous dogma to so plead. Will any of the Lord’s pure hearted people be any longer deceived who read the facts in this pamphlet, with prayerful desire to know the truth? They are plain and should convince the deceived that Elder Hardy knows that he is defeated, that his theory is unscriptural.

The bold, offensive and blustering manner exhibited in his last reply, and his palpable misrepresentations show his desperation as he flounders in the quagmire of overwhelming defeat. For this reason he sarcastically affirms that my brain in disordered, racked and enfeebled; that the Kirklands and Todd filched from the temple of Arminians the view of Conditional Time Salvation that has so greatly damaged my brain. Yet it is well known that what I have advocated and have proven, relative to salvation in time, because of obedience by God’s saved and believing people, has been believed and advocated by our people from the teachings of Christ and the apostles to this present time. But Elder Hardy reviles God’s precious truth by charging that it is Arminianism, and thus he misrepresents its true origin.

Then he misrepresents my position on Ephesians 1:4-5. The position I took was that God having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, that is, He having unconditionally elected that we should be spiritually adopted and thus be made children, not because of good or evil performances on our part, but wholly sovereignly on His part, just as He chose Jacob to possess the greater blessing without reference to the good or evil that he would do, that then foreseeing, as He by infinite omniscience did, that we would be unholy through involvement in sins He chose us in or through Christ, as Mediator, that we should be holy. It was not because of His foreknowledge of our involvement in sins that He predestinated us unto the adoption of children, elected us to be children; and I did not intimate that foreseen unholiness was the cause of this predestination, i.e., election. The

predestination unto the adoption of children in the passage cited is antecedent to the choice that in or through Christ they should be holy. So there is no Arminian conditional election in my position, and it is because Elder Hardy is blind to the truth if he does not see there is not.

The Elder (Hardy) boldly asserts that the worst crimes are not more an insult to the justice of God than milder offenses, and that we are not better in His record than the base profligate, but as he failed to prove his assertion and cannot I have nothing in it that this discussion requires that I refute. I suggest that he try to harmonize it with what Jesus said about blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; with what is said about the sin that we should not pay for, and with the saying of Jesus, that it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for some than for others.

Elder Hardy falsely charges as follows: “Brother Thompson says the predestination of all things presents God as a monster tyrant, in comparison with whom tyrants of earth are mild.” The reader can see that I did not say what his statement asserts that I did, that his statement is untrue. I said, “It does not seem at all repugnant to the dignity and essence of God, according to your conception, to affirm that He predestined man should disobey His law and become depraved, and that some men should be guilty of most heart-sickening crimes, loathsome pollutions and shameful secret vices, and that they should die in their sins; that He designed that they should be just s they have been and will be; and that he determined before time to punish them with everlasting destruction for doing the wicked things He predetermined they should do, and that they would not have committed the awful crimes that they did if He had not predetermined that they should. This, so far as I can see, presents God in the attitude of a monster tyrant, in comparison with whom tyrants of earth are mild”. I did not say that God is a monster tyrant if his horrid position, as stated, were true. I said, “So far as I can see it presents Him in the attitude of a monster tyrant. Why did the Elder (Hardy) so shamefully misrepresent me, of whom he says, “My dear brother”, in his last reply? His misrepresentations and abuse seem to contradict his expression and gives it the savor of hypocrisy. And all that he says in his reply in false charges and insinuations, that I in any way called God a tyrant, or a monster tyrant, is beneath the dignity of a gentleman and is void of truth and principal. I do not believe God predestinated that he should do so, or that thee will be the least revenue of glory to God because of his very disreputable course.

Reader, please note that Elder Hardy virtually admits that my statement of his position is correct; that he holds that God designed that some men should be just as they have been and will be, vile, brutish wretches, guilty of terrible vices, that He so predestinated and fixed it, and that they should so continue and die in their sins, and that He determined to punish them forever for doing the wicked things that He predestinated that they should do, and that they would not have done so if God had not predestinated that they should do them. This he virtually admits as his position by charging that I said God was a monster tyrant, when I had stated his own position and said that so far as I can see his position presents Him as a monster tyrant. Elder Hardy, you should blush with shame.

The Elder (Hardy), commenting on 2 Peter 1:3, says, “If the blessings that attend obedience pertain unto life and godliness, Peter says God’s divine poser hath given them unto us”. Elder (Hardy), the all things that pertain unto life and godliness precede life and godliness and are in order to life and godliness, while the blessings received because of obedience follow obedience. They do not pertain unto life and godliness. And what I hold does not teach that there is the least appearance of turning with God in His blessings or chastenings. I teach that it was from eternity in His mind to bless His people when they obey and to chastise them because of their disobedience.

“Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee”, and “Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins”, Elder Hardy, interprets by, “Without Me ye can do nothing”, and “The Son can do nothing of Himself”, and “The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the work”, and of Paul, “I labored more abundantly than they all yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”, and “I will not dare to speak of those things Christ hath not wrought by me”, etc., and where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law, of works? Nay, but by the law of faith”, and “It is of faith that it might be by grace to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed”. My reply: First, they could do nothing without Jesus enabled them by grace; second, the Son was enabled by the Father to do what He as the Son did; third, the Father that dwelt in the Son did the works to which Jesus alludes. To interpret the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself”, etc., and similar passages relating to the obedience of the Lord’s children by saying, “The Father, He doeth the work”, would teach that God does what he commands them to do and what they are exhorted to do. I do not believe that God obeyed the exhortation of Paul when Timothy did what Paul exhorted him to do. If the Elder (Hardy) can prove that God did what Paul exhorted Timothy to do, he can prove that God obeyed Paul’s exhortation. This he cannot do. But this he must do to prove his contention true. Fourth, Paul labored, yet not by his own ability, but with the ability received through the enabling grace of God. This may be explained according to the correct interpretation of Romans 7:20. Paul did do that he would not. He says he did. Then he says, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me”. Yes, Paul did what he would not, but it was because of the promptings or power of the law of sin in his members. He was responsible, else there is no responsibility in wrong doing by the Lord’s children. Fifth, Paul would not dare to speak of any of the things which Christ had not wrought by him through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God. He gave all the glory to Christ for the mighty signs and wonders which were by the Spirit of God, as did Peter and John when the cripple was healed. Sixth, Romans 3:27-28 has reference to justification by faith in Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice for sins, and has to do with eternal salvation. Elder Hardy misapplied the passages by quoting them to support his opposition to Time Salvation.

The Elder (Hardy) says God has ordained exhortation as a means to lead His children to fulfill His will, and it is always effectual. But he did not tell us how he knew that it was always effectual. We do not accept his assertion.

The Elder (Hardy) pretends to be astonished “beyond expression” because I object to his position, that God determined that men should do all the despicable, low, degrading sins of which they have and will be guilty. His splutter and extravagant expressions were only for effect on minds that can be swayed by bluster. He knows that a very large majority of the ablest advocates of the doctrine of God’s sovereignty and grace have and do hold that provision was made for redemption from sins, because of foreseen sins and that they have not and do not now believe the soul-withering heresy he contends for. His pretended opposition to charging folly and weakness to God is of no force when he charges Him as the instigator, cause and principal actor in committing all the horrible sins of men.

He asks, Who unfolded the events of time and spread out the map of the universe that God might know what would take place. How silly this question! He needed not that anyone should. Neither did He have to predetermine that men should have wicked hearts, vile motives and practice abominable crimes in order to foreknow that they would. The Elder’s (Hardy) logic is that God had to plan, arrange and fix it so that hearts should be desperately wicked, filled with vile and vicious motives, and that their hands

should shed innocent blood, and that they should revel in secret vices, swear, lie and steal, or He could not have foreknown that they would be so vile and guilty.

Elder Hardy tries to shift fatalism from his fatalistic theory and fasten it on me. Webster's first definition of fate is, "A decree or word pronounced by God". His second definition is, "A fixed sentence by which the order of things is prescribed". Fatalism he defines thus: The doctrine that all things are subject to fate, or that they take place by inevitable necessity". He defines fatalist thus: "One who maintains that all things happen by inevitable necessity. This is the doctrine enunciated by Elder Hardy. He is a fatalist. He holds that God decreed all things and fixed it so that they must of necessity come to pass. I do not so hold, neither do I believe there was a necessity existing in the things themselves by which their course was determined. The Elder's (Hardy) logic is spurious. He prefers to believe God gives direction to all the events of time; that He works them all after the counsel of His own will. So he misapplies Ephesians 1:11. He quotes, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will", and fails to quote, "That we should be to the praise of His glory", which is inseparably connected and to be considered if we get the true import of the passage. What all things did God work that they should be to the praise of His glory? Did Paul mean that God worked the secret vices of sinners, that His children had no knowledge of, that they should be to the praise of His glory? No. There are many events in this world, the flights of birds, motions of animals and fishes and beastly acts of abandoned men and women in darkest dens of infamy that Paul had no allusion to in the passages quoted. God is not working them together for the good of His people. It was the all things under consideration that Paul alluded to, as in Romans 8:28: With Christ He will freely give us all things, all things promised to us in and through Christ, but not all the abominable and terrible things of time and eternity. A right division of the word of truth is important here.

In answer to questions relative to God's foreknowledge of sinful acts that He could have prevented and did not; and why He did not make man an angel and never allow him to be subjected to temptation; and as to whether I can find an intelligent answer; and as to whether I will attempt to quench the spirit that leads to a contemplation of God's stupendous plan? I will say, It "seemed good in His sight" to create man as He did, very good, and to govern him by law, and not by compulsion, concerning His commands. Therefore, He is just in not hindering men who violate His law. I would kindly persuade His enquiring children to avoid unscriptural speculation, and to not be deceived by shrewd men who seek to apologize for their dishonorable and unholy conduct by claiming that it is the result of God's predestination. I would insist that wherein they fail to harmonize certain scripture passages with the pure character of God, that they attribute their failure to their lack of understanding. I would tell them to reject what Elder Hardy calls God's stupendous plan, for which he has found no scriptural support and never will. They do not have to believe in a hoax, nor a fairy tale, when they disbelieve the Elder's (Hardy) false position, that God is giving directions to rapine, murder, lying and sensual vices.

The Elder (Hardy) is worried because I correctly represent his theory by recounting "blood-curdling atrocities", and would appear to think that I do it to intoxicate weak and ignorant minds, and insinuates that my motive is impure. My purpose is to expose the hideous deformities of his putrid dogma, that misrepresents and dishonors God and sows discord among brethren which is abominable to God.

He says, "Nothing is further from the position we hold than that evil can come from God or that He approves or is pleased with sin as such, or that we hold that it ought to be committed". I would willingly accept this statement if his statements and arguments did not contradict it.

Elder Hardy asks, “Can you harmonize with your human standard of justice the act of God in visiting the transgressions of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations”? No. Does this prove the predestination of sin? No. I take the divine standard.

I do not know how the Lord turned the heart of the enemies of His people to hate them (Psalm 105:25). He may have done so by blessing His people. Christ divided members of households by blessing some with His grace, which caused offense.

Another question: “Can you believe that so good a being as God would require at the hands of one generation all the blood shed by their forefathers for four thousand years?” I believe that all the righteous blood from the blood of Able unto the blood of Zacharias came upon that generation of vipers who killed, crucified and persecuted the Lord’s servants; but I do not believe that God predetermined that they should kill, crucify and persecute His servants because Christ said to those vipers, “Ye shall kill and crucify”, etc. “Shall” is used in a declarative way, and not to express that it was God’s predetermination that they should do wickedly. “Shall” is used in a declarative way, and “shalt not” in a commanding way without expressing redetermination. Examples: “Ye shall hear of wars”, etc. (Matthew 24:6); “But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. I understand the passage (Daniel 12:10), “Many shall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly”, is a statement of things that would come to pass, expressing the fact that they were going to come to pass. I do not understand that “shall” in either expression implies predetermination. I believe God had predetermined the purification of the many, but do not believe that “shall” was used in the passage to express predetermination. The language does not compel such construction. I do not believe that God predetermined that the king should speak marvelous things against Himself (Daniel 11:36), but that “shall” is employed to express that he would and no more.

If Elder Hardy had used the auxiliary “should” in a way that his statements would not fix the responsibility for sins upon God, there would have been no controversy between us on this subject. As he puts it, there would have been no corrupt sinners with vile motives, committing horrible crimes, if God had not willed, designed, predetermined and fixed it that it should be so, just as it has been and will be. Therefore there is no escape from the conclusion that his position places all sins to God’s account, presents Him as the author, “the beginner” – Webster. I do not accept his implication of God, who is superlatively good, in the sins of reprobates; but I did not say He was a monster tyrant if the Elder’s (Hardy) representations were correct, and he knows I did not.

We have surprisingly illogical theorizing by the Elder (Hardy), teaching that God had to establish the certainty of events to make it clear that they would transpire. How erroneous! God foreseeing events and declaring that they would come to pass made it clear that they would transpire.

Concerning Isaiah’s statement, that God formed the earth to be inhabited, I can conceive of the infinite God making a world to be inhabited without determining that people should be bad to inhabit it. He commanded man to multiply and replenish the earth before he had committed sin. He was not commanding man to sin; so man could have obeyed the command, could have multiplied without sinning. Sin was not necessary to multiplication.

Elder Hardy, writhing under odium that attaches to his position, that God predetermined that Potiphar’s wife should basely lie on Joseph, tries to shift it to my position. He says we know that many wicked things were potent factors in bringing Joseph to the throne”, etc. This he has failed to prove. I hold that

God is in no way responsible for the wicked acts of Joseph's brethren or Potiphar's wife. Joseph's emphatic statement (Genesis 45:8), "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God", should be sufficient to silence all opposition. And the Elder (Hardy) seems to yield a point and says God did send Joseph, but that He did it by controlling wicked acts and making them accomplish His purpose. His contention was that Joseph's brethren thought evil against him, but God meant it, their evil thought, unto good. But I do not believe God meant their evil thought unto good. If God brought Joseph to the throne by controlling wicked acts, then those acts uncontrolled by Him would not have brought him to the throne. So it was not their acts that brought him to the throne, but God's control of them, according to Elder Hardy. Now considering all that he has said on this, there is not an iota of proof that God predestinated sin.

The Elder (Hardy) would have his readers believe that I am very ignorant; that I can only comprehend a single thought at a time; that I do not know that eternity and God's eternal purpose existed before time creatures; that a fixed and definite plan existed before it was put into execution; that God was perfect before anything was created. I do not believe the Elder (Hardy) can comprehend more than a single thought at a time. Concerning his gratuitous insinuations of my ignorance, I have to say that I have written not one thing that seems to convey what he attributes to me, and I believe he attributes to me, and I believe he knew I had not, and that he knew his statements were untrue when he wrote them. What more have we reason to expect from a man who teaches that all his wicked acts were predetermined by God and that He will receive a greater revenue of glory because of his wickedness.

It is but reasonable that I should treat with silence the questions that follow his ugly insinuations, intended for an insult.

After teaching that God so fixed it in His eternal plan that all detestable sins should be committed he says, "But while God did predestinate and fix these things * * * in eternity it does not necessarily follow that He must now put evil in his heart", etc. This is no relief to his dark theory, that God predetermined and fixed in His eternal plan that evil should be in their hearts; that evil would not be in their hearts if He had not predetermined and fixed it that it should be there. It would be no worse to put evil in their hearts than to fix it that it should be in their hearts, for that would cause it to be in their hearts. What a shame! that an intelligent creature of God should attribute a thing so unholy and unjust to Him.

The Elder (Hardy) reasons that predestination is not an "active force which brings things to pass". But his teaching is that there would have been no sins committed, no evil in the hearts of men, no evil motive, if God had not predestinated and fixed it that it should be so, which presents the predestination of God as the prime cause of evil in the hearts of men, of their base motives and of all villainous conduct. This is what I am opposing.

I have not advanced the idea that things predestinated before time to be, actually transpired before time. Therefore it is not pertinent to ask, "Does brother Thompson believe that sinners were glorified in heaven before time?" God's predestination will be the prime cause of the glorifying of saints in heaven, and so it is with all that He predestinated. Yes, we can say that God predestinating that they shall be glorified will be the prime cause of their being glorified. Then how erroneous is the following: "If predestinating sinners unto glorification had been all that was ever done for them, how many would have been glorified? If we say none, then we remove the basis of all of Brother Thompson's arraignment of the doctrine of the predestination of all things; but if we say, all who were predestinated, then we ask, if predestination would have accomplished that, why must Christ suffer, keep the law, die

and rise the third day, ascend to glory and return again? All of His work, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit, is superfluous and vain if predestination is causative”, etc. I presume that this blind reasoning is original and not borrowed from the works of Johnathan Edwards. I might ask, If Christ’s suffering for sinners is all that ever has or will be done for them, how many would be glorified? If we say none, it would prove, according to the Elder’s (Hardy) reasoning, that the sufferings of Christ is not and will not be a cause of the glorification of sinners. This is not true; for His suffering is a cause why they will be glorified, then predestination can be and will be a cause, but not the only cause of their glorification. But if we say all for whom Christ suffered will be glorified, then I ask, why the Holy Spirit’s work and the resurrection, according to the Elder’s (Hardy) reasoning? But his reasoning is erroneous and he has proven his statement true, that it is difficult for a man to argue a false theory very far without getting his wires crossed. So the truth is that predestination is causative. Predestination is a cause of salvation, for without it there would have been no salvation. The atonement of Christ is a cause; and the Holy Spirit’s work is a cause, because in the absence of either there would have been no salvation. “That which is the occasion of an action; that by reason of, or on account of, which anything is done” is a cause according to Webster. Therefore, the basis of my arraignment of his dangerous dogma, remains, for his reasoning is that sins are committed by reason of or on account of predestination.

The Elder (Hardy) says, “If man’s goodness was in the least meritorious, then he might have just grounds for complaint if he did not receive what he regarded as good treatment”, etc. That is not the question in this discussion. It is his position that God predestinated and fixed it that some should never possess any goodness, but that their condition by reason of His predestination should be “so utterly vile and profligate”, even unto death, that He will consign them to endless perdition. According to the Elder’s (Hardy) position, were those doomed souls allowed to speak, they might truthfully say: We would never have sinned, but would always have done right, had it not been that our Creator predetermined and fixed it so we had to be vile and mean and have impure motives and commit all the heinous sins we have, and now we must suffer eternally for doing what we could not avoid doing because of His predestination, His “stupendous plan”, fixing it so that it had to be just as it has been with us. Where would justice be if this, the Elder’s (Hardy) theory, were true? I can see no justice in it. It is erroneous.

At last the Elder (Hardy) made a feigned attempt to answer me as to whether God predestinated and fixed it that those people should do what Paul and James say they “ought not”, that “ought not so to be”. His weak effort was made that he might seem to reply. Why did he omit my arguments on those passages? It seems evident that he did not want the readers of his paper to see them. I asked, “Did God arrange, order and fix that events should come to pass that ought not come to pass?” He did not answer. His view that God predetermined and fixed it that men should teach things they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake is abominable. No wonder that he tries to avoid the real issue.

He must see that his position is contrary to the Bible or he would have published my arguments and questions on those passages (Titus 1:11 and James 3:10), and would have replied in a way worthy a disputant. To prove that men ought not to sin he quotes, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man”.

Can it be the whole duty of man to violate God’s predestination, to thwart His designs and overturn His stupendous plan? For man to have kept God’s commandments, according to Elder Hardy’s position, would have defeated His predestination, thwarted His designs and overturn His stupendous plan. And

yet, floundering in the quagmire, he inconsistently reasons that man ought to have so acted that God would have been defeated; that man ought not to have sinned, when, as he holds, sins were necessary that God's predestination be fulfilled; that if men had not preached for filthy lucre's sake, which they ought not, and his forced statement agrees to this, then God would have been defeated, His stupendous plan would have failed, agreeable to the Elder's (Hardy) heresy.

Fie! fie!! how weak his extreme! Yes, we believe God does according to His will, that none can stay His hand, or have right to say, What doest thou? and that He ruled in the kingdom of men and as He raised up Pharaoh that He (God) might shew His power, so he set up over the kingdom the basest of men. But He did not purpose that they should be base and so fixed it that they had to be just as they were and do just as they did. And I would not call God a tyrant for what He did in any way. Elder Hardy knows well that I did not. His false charge was his own fabrication without any foundation.

There is no place of mercy in the system advocated by (Elder) Hardy and associates. There is no wisdom or truth in the position that God purposed, predetermined and fixed it that a man should be a great sinner, used him as an ax to commit sin, and then say that He was merciful in forgiving the sins that He had forced him as an instrument to commit.

The Elder's (Hardy) sickening, repulsive theory is that God predestinated that some parents should unmercifully beat their helpless children for doing what He predestinated they should do; that some parents should provoke their children, and that they should curse them; that many little boys should chew tobacco, smoke cigarettes and swear; that all places of vice, prostitution and lowest sinks of sin should exist, and that boys and girls should be allured, coaxed and forced into them; that even young men should engage in the white slave trade, in which defenseless girls are stolen from their homes and against their pleadings, their heart-broken protestations, are put under the control of women fiends, to be dragged into awful shame and ruin, regardless of their pitiful cries, that cannot reach their distracted mothers; that these things would not have been if God had not predestinated that they should come to pass.

He, seeing how that the Lord's pure-hearted people that they have deceived, who are reading this discussion, must see the error of their position and how unscriptural it is, the Elder (Hardy) tries to prevent legitimate conclusions by claiming that nothing is farther from their position than that men ought to sin.

To teach, as he has, that God predetermined that men of lowest type should be just as they have been and should do just as they have done; that He designed and fixed that it should be as it has been, and that it is for His glory that they should be as wicked and brutal in nature as they have been and be guilty of the diabolical crimes enumerated and many others that are as distasteful and then try to shield their position from the awful odium that justly rests upon it by claiming that they do not hold that men ought to do such things, is incongruous in the extreme. Such inconsistency is no jewel. What? God predestinate that such vileness and sins shall be in order to His glory and then they say that they ought not to be? How dare the Elder (Hardy) say that men ought not to do what God determined they should do in order to His own glory. If men ought not to do what will bring a greater revenue of glory to His name, as the Elder (Hardy) insists that base sins will, then it follows that God ought not to have that greater revenue of glory. And if He should not have the greater revenue of glory that the Elder (Hardy) talks about as the result of sins, it also follows, according to His scriptural character, that He did not predestinate the corruptions and wicked acts of men.

God's foreknowledge of an event, that it will come to pass, cannot be a cause of it coming to pass; and necessity for an event to come to pass cannot arise from His foreknowledge that it will come to pass; and foreknowledge that an event will come to pass cannot of necessity compel that it come to pass. A prophet foreknowing that an event would come to pass cannot be a cause of it coming to pass, and no necessity that it come to pass can arise from the foreknowledge that it will come to pass, and cannot of necessity compel that it come to pass.

The weakness of the claim that all sins were necessary in order that the atonement be made and that God's mercy be manifested in the salvation of sinners, is apparent when it is held that the first sin committed made necessary the atonement by Christ. What need for all subsequent sins? Even if it could be proven that the first sin was necessary, which has not been done, it could not be proven that all subsequent sins were necessary in order that the atonement be made by Christ.

Yes, it is believed that Adam's sin made necessary the offering of Jesus, the greatest display of divine mercy; then upon what hypothesis of reasoning can it be claimed that all other sins are necessary? Why hold that God predestinated and fixed it that men should be foul-mouthed and be guilty of all slimy-tongued vulgarity and awful profanity; that He who is infinite purity designed that men should speak all manner of vulgarity. And to teach that all vulgar expressions and vulgar acts were necessary; that their necessity arose from God's predestination that they should be just as they have been and will be, that they would not have been if He had not predestinated that they should be, and that He is working all after the counsel of His own will – oh, shame, shame for such teaching! Let saints of the most High and Holy God reject it.

The Elder (Hardy) complains that I teach that God is dependent on man, which is incorrect. He says God would have been defeated if man had not sinned. Was God dependent on man's indulgence in sins? If He did not cause man to sin, did not make him sin, then according to the Elder's (Hardy) reasoning He was dependent on man's sinful act to carry out His plan of salvation through Christ. This being untrue it is positively certain that the Elder (Hardy) is wrong relative to God's dependence on His children for obedience, unless He forces them to obey or does the obeying Himself. In his use of the passages, "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the work", and "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me", he teaches that God obeys for His people and that grace obeys for them. But the truth is that grace enables His people to obey and so they are told to ask for grace to help, to enable them to acceptably obey. Because of the obedience of Timothy he saved himself and others. This was not eternal salvation. To say it was is Arminianism. It was time salvation, or salvation in time, and because of, or conditioned upon his obedience. This well established fact can never be successfully controverted. It will remain while the word of God remains. The Elder (Hardy) says it is Arminianism.

Our faithful brethren in Texas have been sarcastically stigmatized as Arminians by the extreme Predestinarian leaders because they advocate this. Yet those extremists have opposed non-fellowship resolutions; have protested against bars. Do they want to live with Arminians? They do according to their contention, or they are not sincere in charging our brethren with Arminianism, I do not believe they are sincere. With false charges and insinuations they have gone beyond endurance.

Elder F. A. Chick, in *THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES*, February 15, 1909, advocates the predestination of all events, and says it is an infinite joy to all who are cut off from "vainglorying", etc. This is an insult to Primitive Baptists who do not believe that there is a necessity arising out of Deity for the shameful acts of men; that He fixed it in heaven by predestination that they should commit abominable sins. To

deny his position is not to deny the “attributes of unchangeability and of infinite wisdom”, etc. He illustrates absolute predestination of sin unto eternal destruction by one man pushing a little child over a precipice, and God’s permissive decrees of sin by another man seeing a little child running toward the precipice and not try to save it from destruction. He correctly illustrates their dangerous doctrine, but he fails to correctly illustrate the view we hold. God wisely chose to govern by law and not by force, else He would have given no law to man. His illustration of their awful dogma presents one horrid aspect of it; God pushing man into sin, into the dark dens of infamy and into the gratification of base, sinful lustings, and then consigns them to eternal destruction for doing what He predestinated they should do and that He forced them to do. He misrepresents God, dishonors His holy name. I have no desire for church fellowship with those who hold this unscriptural doctrine until they renounce it. It teaches that God forces men to preach for filthy lucre’s sake when Paul says they ought not.

I exhort deceived and captivated children of God to come out of this Babylonish confusion.

I recognize that Elder Chick and some others who have disseminated this heresy are men of God, but they are heretics, and have been scripturally admonished, I believe, and they should be rejected by sound Baptists until they see their grievous error and renounce it. It has been the cause of much painful regret. We have been much grieved because of the hurtful heresy, causing alienation and division. We want peace and true fellowship to abound among the Lord’s pure-hearted children. This can never be while some are advocating this and other alienating heresies.

This is a dark day, beclouded with errors, and it behooves true believers to stand firmly together, and to unflinchingly support each other in scriptural opposition to the errors that menace our peace and dishonor the name of our God. May our trust be in the Lord that He will sustain us; that He will give us grace for our day and trials.

Submitted in love,
J. M. THOMPSON

APPENDIX

BY ELDER J. M. THOMPSON

I will give additional thoughts on Acts 4:27-28(27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.), for this passage is depended on more than any other by some extremists to prove beyond question that God predestinated sin. And it may be that this has not been and cannot be explained to the entire satisfaction of some who are seeking for the truth relative to the predestination of sin. If it cannot be understood by honest inquirers in any other way than that God did predetermine that those wicked men should crucify Christ, and that it was necessary that they commit the awful sin in order to the eternal salvation of the Lord's covenant people; that their sinful act was a means in the salvation of ruined souls, yet with such a view it is unreasonable to hold that all vile sins that can have no relation to the salvation of sinners and can in no way benefit the Lord's people, were predestinated to come to pass. When Paul says that deceivers subverted whole houses, "teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10-11); and James says, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10), it is most unreasonable to hold that God predetermined that deceivers should teach things **they ought not** so to be". It is evident that Elder Hardy saw this when he evaded these passages and my arguments in my second article, and did not publish my reference to them in my third article, and did not answer my arguments.

I question as to the willingness of Primitive Baptists to admit that the wicked acts of those who gathered together to do what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done were in order to the salvation of sinners. Think of it – their wickedness a **means** to that end? I have believed that Jesus saved His people from their sins without, and independent of the acts of men, good or bad. And I believe it will puzzle the advocates of the predestination of sin to explain how the wickedness of men was a means or instrumentalities of men. I believe the passage is susceptible of scriptural explanation without admitting that the vile act of murdering Jesus, God's innocent Lamb, was predestinated by God.

His soul was made an offering for sin. He said in the garden, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death". Isaiah said, prophetically, that, "He hath poured out His soul unto death". He laid down His life – no man took it from Him. He was both High Priest and offering. He offered up Himself (Hebrews 7:27). He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14). The typical high priest took the life of the offering and Jesus, through the eternal Spirit as High Priest, laid down His life – made the offering. He was the antitypical High Priest.

David, in Psalm 2:1, speaks of those who gathered together against Jesus as having imagined a vain thing. If they imagined a vain thing when they "gathered together, for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done", they must have failed to accomplish what they vainly imagined they would do; failed to do what they gathered together to do.

Elder W. T. Fowler, in his comments on Acts 2:23; Luke 22:22; and Acts 4:27-28, says, "Christ having become the surety for His people, the law demanded satisfaction at His hands; hence God determined

that Jesus should make the offering for sin, since the law held Him responsible for the sins of His people. But instead of Christ being executed legally by the law He was crucified by a mob, the Jews taking the law into their own hands, saying, "Let His blood be upon us and our children; hence the expression, 'Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.'"

"Now I will give an illustration of how I understand the subject. A man is condemned by the law and the penalty is death, but before the day of execution arrives a mob takes the prisoner and kills him; their crime is as great as it would have been had they killed an innocent and uncondemned man. So it was in the crucifixion of Christ. He knew no sin of His own, but He took upon Himself the sins of His people, and the law demanded His death in payment of the debt He had assumed, and it was the payment of this debt that was "determined", and not the manner in which He was put to death. Christ said, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do'. This shows that, while the law demanded His death, it was a crime to put Him to death, executing the law themselves. * * *

"Acts 4:27-28. Now I want the reader to notice particularly that the text says, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done'. If it had said, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before FOR THEM to do', absoluters might have somewhat to boast of, but it doesn't read that way. * * * What was determined to be done? I say it was the crucifixion or death of Jesus as a penalty for a violated law in the room and stead of His people; but I will surrender the question if any man will prove by the Bible that God determined for those mentioned in the text TO DO IT. * * * While a violated law demanded satisfaction at the hands of Jesus as the surety of for His people, those people who were gathered together had no legal right to execute it."

Brother Fowler is correct in saying that it was a mob that crucified Jesus, and that what they did was illegal. Jesus, as High Priest, legally met and satisfied the demands of the law when He laid down His life. And remember that He said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18).

The following passage ought to be sufficient proof to each intelligent and candid person that God did not predestinate the murderous acts of the slayers of Jesus: "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophet, and have persecuted us; and they please not God", etc. (1 Thessalonians 2:15). For if God had determined before that they should murder Jesus in order to satisfy His righteous law and save His people from its endless curse, He surely would have been pleased with the deed. But as He was not pleased with what they did, it evidences forcibly that He did not predestinate that they should murder Him. That He was delivered for our offenses (Romans 6:25) we know, and that the Lord delivered Him (Romans 8:32) we know, and that He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14) we know; that He laid down His life Himself, no man took it from Him. These facts we have, and they should suffice regardless of vain speculations of men. Reject them, renounce them, and let us live in peace and true fellowship.

As Elder Hardy disclaims that he holds that sin ought to be committed, and that nothing is further from his position than that sin ought to be committed, then he must hold that sin ought not to have been committed; that Adam ought not have sinned; that Joseph's brethren, Potiphar's wife, Judas Iscariot and those wicked murderers who crucified Jesus ought not to have done the wicked things they did. Then according to his reasoning he holds that God's design, purpose, stupendous plan and predetermination, concerning sin, according to his presentation, ought to have been thwarted; that His whole arrangement ought to have failed; that the omniscient and omnipotent Creator ought to have been defeated. This is the absurd theorizing, pursued by the Elder (Hardy), that has involved him in this inextricable dilemma.

I have pity for Elder Hardy and for all that are entangled in the meshes of his deceptive net. I have pity for all the churches that are under the deadening influence of the blighting theory. I, therefore, urge that our people be active in putting this pamphlet and other valuable productions that show the fallacy of their unbiblical contention into the hands of the dear children of God who are blindly following wily, designing leaders. And I request the full address of any that are deceived and are not able to purchase the pamphlet, or that will not because of prejudice that I may send it to them free.

Address all communications to:

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(NOTE ADDED by Hoyt D. F. Sparks, December 21, 2011: The above booklet records the written debate between Elder J. R. HARDY, a Predestinarian Primitive Baptist, and Elder J. M. THOMPSON, a conditionalist Primitive Baptist. According to the knowledge we have today concerning the disputes and battles among different factions of the Primitive Baptists, the information contained in this pamphlet will not reveal anything new. Elder Thompson published this pamphlet in 1910, and it can only be assumed that the writings attributable to Elder Hardy are a correct transcription. (I do not know if Elder Hardy also published a pamphlet.) Since Elder Thompson published this pamphlet without Elder Hardy's involvement in the publication, Elder Thompson wrote with great liberty in support of his opinion, especially in his last comments and the Appendix, in which he appears to have felt he was at liberty to write without fear of being countered by Elder Hardy; and Elder Thompson did greatly write wherein he twisted and misrepresented in his method of interpreting the Scriptures. The above pamphlet is being distributed again as another historical document surrounding the battles within those who proclaim to be Primitive Baptists; and not as an endorsement of the writings by Elder Thompson. The writings by Elder Hardy are of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus.)