

PREDESTINATION¹

RELATIVE TO THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE NOT IN THE BOOK OF LIFE; ALSO, RELATIVE TO THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD

By JAMES WELLS, MIINISTER OF THE CHAPEL. LONDON

E. PALMER AND SON, 18, PATERNOSTER ROW

1839

Price Sixpence

PREDESTINATION

1 Thessalonians 5:9

“For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

To know the will and understand the counsels of the Lord, are mercies truly great, mercies which none but the Lord can bestow, and which none but those whose names are in the book of life can possess. A true knowledge of God is associated with every other grace of the Holy Spirit; those therefore who truly know the Lord, will believingly receive his truth, will fear his name, love his salvation, seek his face, and walk in his ways, and will stand out a clear contrast to those who know not the truth as it is in Jesus. Those who

¹ Richard Schadle: This was taken from the Old School Particular Baptist Website at <http://particularbaptistlibrary.org/> it is under the heading for James Wells. I have made some minor corrections to this document, fixing some spelling, and formatting issues and changing the old English words to modern ones. The Old School Baptist site is excellent. It has a wealth of valuable material, please take time to visit this site!

know the truth are led by the Spirit of truth, knowing that the majority of men are led by the spirit of error; either indifferent concerning eternal things, or else, by a blind zeal, manifesting their enmity against the sovereignty of God in the eternal election of his people; but all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed, yes, even confounded, for he “works all things after the counsel of His own will,” saying, “my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” The deadening, intoxicating and capricious things of time and sense are passing away like the morning cloud and the early dew, and who in his senses, would look for shelter from that cloud which ensures no lasting mitigation from the killing heat, or who would look for permanent enjoyment from the effects of that dew which leaves the grass to wither before it grows up? Psalm 129:6 “let us therefore (says the apostle) who are of the day, be sober; putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation; for God has not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Let us then, the Lord enabling us so to do, follow up the contents of this scripture under the three following particulars,

1. The State of Man by Nature.
2. The Decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the Book of Life.
3. The Decrees of God relative to those whose names are in the Book of Life.

1. The State of Man by Nature. This is indicated by some being appointed to wrath, as none will be punished but sinners, and all by nature are sinners; yet some escape the wrath to come, and it is because Jesus has delivered them from the wrath to come, and they are appointed to obtain by him salvation; this is the way the Lord's everlasting arms are underneath them, and but for this, they would sink even as others.

There is one feature of man in his natural state, which I here intend chiefly to notice, and that one feature is helplessness. Man by nature is helpless, both as it relates to the law of God and to the gospel of God; the law demands of him all that perfection he had in the first Adam, but he is altogether an unclean thing, “there is none that do-good no not one,” the law is immutable, the sinner is helpless. And as to the gospel, “except a man be born from above, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;” and, “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned; and “without faith it is impossible to please God;” they that are in the flesh cannot please God, and no man can keep alive his own soul. The Father quickens whom he will; the Son quickens whom he will, it is the Spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing. How emphatically does the prophet describe in the following scripture our helplessness, “we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.” Here we are compared to autumnal leaves, dead fallen from the tree, and made the sport of furious winds, raised by him, who is the prince of the power of the air. And what is the use of these leaves? scarcely fit for the dunghill, the fire is their more proper place: man does not deserve a place even in this world, that fire which is unquenchable is his desert. “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.” Psalm 62:9. Who can revivify these dry leaves, unite them to their native tree, and thus save them from ultimate destruction!

Such is the helplessness of men in their fallen state, the soul as destitute of spiritual life as is the body of immortality: and as no human wisdom, power, or means, can prevent the body from returning to the dust, so no one can contribute one iota towards the salvation of his soul. We have destroyed ourselves, and in us is no help; vain is the help of man. And, even if it could be proved, that we did not by the fall lose all the holiness, righteousness, and goodness we had by creation; even if this could be proved, these remnants of original rectitude, could not assist in preparing us for the upper world, for Adam, was not fitted for the

celestial world, but for this world only. The saints are to enter heaven by the blood and righteousness of Christ, in the Spirit of Christ and in the love of Christ; no one mere, creature doing, or creature quality, can ever be admitted to mingle with the glories of Christ, he is all and in all. Man by nature is dead in sin, and is helpless, as to the law and gospel of God. Man is helpless also as to his body and his soul; he cannot prevent the death of the one, nor atone for the guilt of the other. Here it may be asked, does not this statement take away, or at least lessen human accountability? We answer that this statement does not lessen human accountability, and for this reason, that human helplessness does not originate in our creation state, nor in the law of God, nor in the gospel of God, nor in the providence of God. God is not the author of our helplessness; our helplessness originates in sin; our helplessness is one of the immediate effects of sin; the body is dead because of sin; the soul is dead in sin we are by sin without strength, and as our helplessness is an immediate effect of sin, it becomes in its turn a cause of sin. For man being helpless, he continues in some shape or other a willing slave to the wicked one; and to bring forward our helplessness as an excuse for sin, would be bringing one sin to excuse another: Adam laying lost his robe of innocence, was no excuse for his hiding himself among the trees of the garden, but an evidence of his guilt. Therefore, the reason our helplessness does not lessen human accountability, nor form any excuse for man, is, because helplessness originated in sin: we have destroyed ourselves.

This our helplessness is a truth of the Bible and realized in the experience of all who are taught of God; and a doctrine to be insisted upon, in order to show up the ravages of sin, and that the haughtiness of men might be brought low, and that the Lord's people should be encouraged, and free grace glorified. In proportion as human helplessness is denied, are all the truths of the gospel denied. Hence the doctrine of free-will has let in a train of abominations, which (as far as words can do it) turns the gospel of God upside down; putting down the sovereignty of the Creator, and setting up the (supposed) sovereignty of the creature; making void the decrees of heaven and resting matters upon the designs of earth; keeping back the perfection of the Savior's work, to make room for the doings of the sinner: degrading the Holy Spirit to a phantom, that man may be supposed to have power to serve (just as he chooses) God or the devil.

Certainly free-willers have done wonderful things! Cain was a free-willer, and of course he hated Abel's free-grace religion, and very piously dismissed him from the earth. Those who persecuted and slew the prophets were of the free-will tribe; so also, were those who crucified the Lord of life and glory: and the same tribe, as soon as they could, drove the apostles out of the world. Of this tribe too were the popes of Rome; Catholicism is free-willism in its slaughter-house dress. If the free-willers and duty-faith Calvinists of the present day, were left to the full influence of the doctrines of duty-faith and free-will, and had in their hands the power, they would be as great persecutors of the real children of God, as ever the Romish church was. Not that it is to be wondered at, that doctrines of devils should lead to devilish deeds; but by a kind and overruling providence, they are kept from the tendency of their own principles, and most of them ignorant of the tendency of the doctrines they advocate.

Let the doctrine of creature power be excluded, and the doctrine of human helplessness be brought in, or let the advocates of the one be contrasted with the advocates of the other, and then notice the difference of the position of each, together with the difference of the tendency of the principles of each. Those who contend for creature power, these persons deriving no absolute security from the ancient counsels and settlements of God the Father, cannot bring to him the glory of absolute and eternal election in Christ. These of course are not bound to give thanks that God has from the beginning chosen them to salvation; nor must they say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world;" nor

that “he has saved them and called them, not according to their own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given to them in Christ before the world began.” As they do not derive these things from the ancient settlements of God the Father, they cannot bring the glory of them to him, they must bring something else instead; but the Lord will say, Who has required this at your hands? And this their bond-service will be rejected, and they along with it. Again, as they do not derive absolute, unconditional, and eternal deliverance from the wrath to come by the mediatorial work of Christ, he cannot have from them the glory of being all in all, of being their fullness and eternal perfection; therefore, when they say, “Salvation is of grace!” and Christ will be crowned Lord of all! They contradict their darling principles of free-will and creature-power. The doctrines of free-will and creature-power are the abominations they hold in their heart; and the Lord looks on the heart, and it is no use to come with free grace on the lips while free-will is in the heart. They speak of peace, but war is in the heart.

Again, the doctrine of free will does not acknowledge the necessity of the sovereignty nor the invincibility of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the nature and tendency of the doctrine of creature power, are to rob immortal souls of the highest good, and God of the highest praise. How awfully delusive then is the position of those who advocate the doctrines of free will, creature-power, and duty-faith. But bring in the doctrine of creature-helplessness, and let men come to an experimental knowledge of their helplessness, they will then be brought low, and the Lord alone exalted: they will see and feel their need of the ancient settlements of mercy, the Savior’s finished work, and the sovereignty and invincibility of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's people know (at least many of them) what it is to try to do all that law and gospel command; and they go on trying and trying, until they find that their strength is perfect weakness: it is one thing to assent to the doctrine of human-helplessness, and another thing to feel it. Those who are taught of the Lord, learn that faith and repentance are gifts of God; and they learn also, that he that believes not cannot (living and dying in that state) be saved, and that except they repent they must perish and that there is no peace, no pardon or assurance enjoyed, without faith and repentance. The Lord humbles them by repentance and keeps them through faith: that is to say, the Lord brings them down under a sight and sense of what they are as sinners, makes them nothing and less than nothing in their own eyes; and he who has convinced them of sin, keeps them in the belief of what they are and of what he is. Thus humbled, made willing, and kept believing, they know from experience that before honor goes humility and that all their springs are in God. Nor can they rest satisfied concerning their destiny, until the Lord Jesus is made precious to their souls; and when they find him of whom Moses and the prophets did write and speak, they know it is because he has loved, sought, and found them. These deriving their salvation in the origin, mediation, manifestation, and continuation of it from God, very naturally from the sentiments and feelings of their hearts ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb and know that song which none can know but those who are redeemed from among men. Those who advocate the doctrine of conditional salvation, may ascribe salvation to God in word, but it is only in word, for their sentiments run another way; and except the Lord should grant them repentance, they too will go another way; “There is a way that seems right, but the end thereof is death.”

All men being dead in sin, under sin, possessed by sin, helpless through sin, and condemned for sin, if any are saved the Lord alone can save them. And he who saves some, could if it were his will save all; and, as some of our old divines have said, if He who alone can save does not save, how vain is the help of man, his inventions are worse than nothing, his rebellion impious, and all his works as a spider's web. After these few observations concerning our state by nature, let us notice,

2. The decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the Book of Life. The decrees of God relative to these may be said to be threefold, permissive, restrictive, and retributive.

1. Permissive. The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet: so that neither the fall of angels nor of men could derange his counsels, alter his thoughts, nor disannul his decrees; for his counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure. It was not his will to hinder the fall of man; and as it was not his will to hinder it, it was his will to permit it. The Lord permitted the fall because he would. Are we to suppose the Lord willed that the fall should not take place, and yet it did take place? That the Lord willed that none should harden their hearts to destruction, and yet men do harden their hearts to their own destruction? What! The Lord will that Adam and Eve should continue in paradise, yet is obliged to pass upon them the sentence of death, and send them out of paradise? Yes that the Lord willed that angels should not fall, yet they did fall? Willed that none among men should be lost, yet millions of men are lost? But you will say, if he has willed all these things, why does he yet find fault? But no, O man, who are you that replies against God! Are you wiser than God? Have you an arm like God? Is there an atom of dust you can call your own? Is not your soul, your body, and your breath, and all that pertains to you in his hands? And would you, impious worm, overturn the throne of the Almighty? You rotten moth, would you undertake to bear up the pillars of the earth? You poor insect, can you hold the wind in your fists, hide the waters in the hollow of your hand, and roll planetary worlds through immeasurable space? Place yourself, O man, by the side of these things, and see your own nothingness, and then approach your Maker; and see yourself nothing and less than nothing, and then ask if the ever living and everlasting God, is not to work all things after the counsel of his own will, then who is to instruct him? Who shall teach him knowledge, or say unto him, what are you doing? Forbear you, then, meddling with God; put your hand upon your mouth, and acknowledge that you are but as a beast before him.

Some have thought that decree and permission are one, but the truth is they are not one, the difference between the two is very great, so great that if we do not admit the doctrine of divine permission, we make God the author of sin. Let us try this matter. And in the first place, we have to ask by whose agency did sin enter the world? The answer is that it came by the agency of the wicked one, of Eve and of Adam. The wicked one forged lies; Eve and Adam received those lies. The enemy did not get those lies from the Lord, for the enemy is not only a liar, but the father of lies, and by his feasible, but false doctrine, Eve and Adam were led into sin. Sin does not emanate from the Lord, nor was it produced and propagated by the Lord; for the production and propagation of sin, were works, which Christ came to destroy; and he came not to destroy the works of God, but to destroy the works of the devil. Adam and Eve were commanded not to sin; this command they transgressed; but who and what, inclined them thus to transgress? The Lord did not; the law he had given did not; their consciences did not authorize them; nor was there a want of happiness, to authorize them to seek for something more than they then possessed. Now to say the Lord willed this, and at the same time to deny that he permitted it, would be saying, that the immediate cause of Adam and Eve sinning, was the influence of the will of God; and, whereas it was the influence of the will of the devil. But, by maintaining that man fell by creature agency, we can defy our adversaries to fasten upon us the stigma, of making God the author of sin.

These two things then are clear: First. That the fall took place by the conduct of the creature. Secondly, that the Lord permitted it. That is to say, he could have hindered it had it been his will so to do. There is but one reason that can be assigned why he permitted the fall, and that is, because he would: and let me tell you, that this is a reason quite sufficient for every honest enquirer. For in the first place, God is infinite in wisdom, so that he cannot err he is almighty in power, so that he cannot be repelled; he is independent of all, and

under obligation to none; he is glorious in holiness, and underived in all the perfection of his nature. He either willed that sin should exist, or that it should not exist; if we say that he willed that sin should not exist, why then we must say also, that the creature has reigned over the Creator he decreed one thing and another came to pass, so that his counsel did not stand, nor could he do all his pleasure. Here is infinite wisdom baffled, omnipotence overcome the eternal God defeated. Thus, by saying he willed that sin should not exist, we come at once into the chaos of Atheism. The systems of freewill-ism, duty-faith-ism, Roman Catholicism, Socinianism, and profanity, all originate in Atheism; for while the profane live as though there was no God, the systems above mentioned deny his sovereignty; these systems, are the abominations sheltered under a denial of the absolute sovereignty of God. So then to say that the Lord willed the fall should not take place, is to side with Atheism, Deism, duty-faith-ism, freewill-ism, Catholicism, Socinianism, and every other damnable system of the day.

The only way, therefore, to maintain the entire dominion of God, and, that he is not the author of sin, is to say that he permitted the fall, because he would. The Lord is spoken of in these two respects in the scriptures of truth. We are there told, that “he works all things after the counsel of his own will.” And that “he suffered (or permitted) all nations to walk in their own way.” So, that on the one hand, in order to maintain his dominion, we must admit that he willed the fall should take place; on the other hand, in order to maintain the character of God, as a God of untarnishable holiness, we must contend that the fall took place by creature agency, that the Lord permitted but did not influence the creature to sin. This is the way in which he “has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.”

Those who choose to charge infinite wisdom with folly, and the sovereignty of the Most High with tyranny, because he willed and permitted sin to exist, those who choose thus to strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and to rush in even upon the thick bosses of his buckler, those who choose to do this, must abide by the consequences of their conduct.

Although the Lord has willed that sin should exist and has consequently permitted the creature to fall; yet sin to him is infinitely hateful, and to us, to the last degree awful. His willing the existence of it, brings no reflection upon him, for where there is no law, there is no transgression. The dominion of the potter over the clay, is not as entire as the dominion of the Lord over the creatures he has made. If the potter can without any injustice, appoint one vessel to honor and another unto dishonor, how much more can he who inhabits eternity, will what he pleases! And to whom is he to be accountable? There is no God beside him! Who shall prescribe rules for him? Who shall enter into judgment with him? Who can say unto him what do you? For he does whatsoever he pleases in heaven and in earth, and in all the deep places, and is the confidence of all his people, “even to the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:” for them he has willed good things, and if his will could fail in one respect, why not in another? The fall made way for the eternal covenant of salvation. All things were made for, as well as by Jesus Christ. I therefore conclude that the Lord willed the existence of sin, that the fall took place by creature agency, that the Lord permitted it because he would.

As the decrees of God relative to the fall were thus permissive, so in the next place they may be said to be restrictive. Now as the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, they do not go on in sin by any influence from the Lord. Heaven forbid that we should for a moment indulge such a thought. If men had more opportunity, and more muscular and mental ability, they would go ten thousand times further in sin than they now do; they have in them latent seeds of, capabilities for, and inclinations to sin, which creature-power can never develop, for “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and

who can know it” But the Lord has fixed the bounds of their operations, which bounds they are ever aiming to pass, but they cannot perform their enterprise. I verily believe if the Lord were to leave the world one month entirely to the maddening operations of sin, that the world would be entirely depopulated: one month! aye, more likely in one hour. The Lord might well be called the PRESERVER of men. The very character of sin and Satan is to destroy, but the Lord God omnipotent reigns. The antediluvian world of ungodly men could not destroy Noah, nor hinder him from building the ark; the men of Sodom could not involve Lot in the destruction of the cities of the plain; nor could the nation among whom sojourned Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, destroy these apparently defenseless patriarchs; nor could Joseph's brethren put him to death, nor the Egyptian prison detain him beyond the appointed time; Pharaoh could destroy neither Moses nor the Israelites, nor could the nations around the wilderness destroy them; Saul could not put David to death, nor could Jezebel slay Elijah; Nebuchadnezzar's furnace could not injure the men of God; the lions shall do Daniel no hurt; the Jews shall not crucify the Lord of life and glory a moment before the appointed time; they could not (though they tried) go beyond nor frustrate the decrees and counsels of God. “He takes the wise in their own craftiness, and he that is proud he is able to abase.” Persecution shall not hinder the divinely appointed course of the apostles, but rather accelerate their march; pagan superstition shall not extinguish the religion of the Son of God; popish domination shall not deprive the saints of their life in Christ; nor shall the blind charity of the present day hinder the elect of God from knowing the truth as it is in Jesus. The wrath of man shall praise him, and that which would go beyond its bounds will he restrain.

Man then as a fallen creature, is in a great variety of forms, religious and irreligious, led captive by sin and Satan; and as the Lord permitted the fall because he would, so he restrains the ungodly because he will: he has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. These truths are of course offensive to a blind and self-conceited world, but those whose hearts, eyes, and ears the Lord has opened, believe, know, acknowledge, and bow to the solemn truth, that there is a people against whom the Lord has indignation, and that forever: that the Lord never loved them, never intended to save them, and has made no provision for them; they are appointed not unto salvation, but unto condemnation.

This leads me to the most awful part of the subject now before us, namely, that the decrees of God relative to those whose names are not in the book of life, are not only permissive and restrictive, but also retributive. Not one jot or tittle of his holy law can fail, so that those who are under the law must continue under the curse of the law, they will be punished according to the law. The law is holy, just, and good; they are unholy, unjust, and in every sense evil. In this state they must meet a God who is holy, just, and good; they cannot alter their state, and the Lord will continue holy, just, and good. Here is the creature standing altogether opposed to the law of God, and consequently to the God of the law; therefore, as the Lord abides by his holy law, they are condemned as being unholy, unjust, and evil; and as they have sinned personally they must suffer personally having sinned in soul and body, they must suffer in soul and body, having sinned against the Most High, they will by him be punished, his wisdom shall confound all their inventions, and bring them to their destined end; his justice will hold them as its prisoners, the majesty of his holiness will be to them as a consuming fire, his native goodness shall bring all their evil to light, his omniscience shall find them out, his omnipresence shall encompass them, his power shall bring them to judgment, and force them down to bottomless perdition, there to dwell in adamant chains and penal fire; his eternity will continue their distress, and his immutability render their anguish always the same.

The certainty of their punishment is founded in the immortality of the soul, and in the infallibility of the law of God. As there will be a resurrection of the unjust as well as of the just, we say that with the exception of the time the body is mingled with the dust, the whole person is immortal. It matters not what men may say

against our immortality, after all, the soul is still immortal; the opinions, sentiments, and speeches of men do not affect the truth, unbelief cannot make the promise, the precept, nor the penalty of no effect. God has not only constituted the soul immortal but has also so constituted it (that notwithstanding men are by their fall in Adam dead in sin, yet) that the most hardened infidel in the world is not always free from fear upon the subject. The soul is the restless inhabitant of the body, nor is any one object on earth, nor all combined, able to raise or keep the mind in a state of repose and satisfaction. There are two reasons upon which many of the learned among the heathen rested their assurance of the immortality of the soul, one its restlessness, the other its capabilities. They compared the soul in consequence of its restlessness to a butterfly; hence the Greek word *pseuchee*, the soul, means originally a butterfly, going hastily from object to object, and so does the mind. It had in paradise before the fall a settled abode, it dwelt with God in knowledge, love, holiness, and righteousness; but of all these it is now deprived. Having no true knowledge of God, no free love to him, no true holiness nor righteousness before him; having sinned it is driven out from his presence, and is become a wanderer in the regions of darkness, delusion, and death, aiming to work out imaginary worlds in which to reside: but, alas! whether it descend to mines of human wealth, send its anxious enquiries through the starry heavens, pursue the hidden laws of the universe, walk on the fairy ground of earthly pleasure, or aspire to poetic, military, or senatorial fame, or wrap itself in all the royalty this world can bestow, and having like Solomon all the charms of nature at command; yet after all, what is the unavoidable conclusion to which it must come? Will it be that it has in some of these departments found a river able, to satiate its thirst, a climate suited, altogether suited to its feelings, a space large enough for the full use of all its powers, associations every way desirable and united source of supply able to keep happiness in full tide. Are these the tidings it will bring of those scenes in which it has endeavored to rest? Let us ask of our fathers, and one will tell us that few and evil had been the days of the years of his life; another longing for the wings of more than a mortal dove, that he might flee away and be at rest; another pathetically saying, "I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should your servant be yet a burden unto my Lord the King," 2 Samuel 19:3,5; another assuring us that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Sin is the fire where the troubles naturally arise. In the realms of nature, the mind cannot rest; for in consequence of sin all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Thus is the soul as a wandering bird cast out of the nest; called by different objects, systems, and circumstances, a thousand different ways; yet none but the Lord can lead it the right way. The mind as to its destiny is lost, not knowing where it is nor where it will be hereafter. Thus, lost and deluded, wholly employing itself in things temporal, neglecting or wrongly directed in things eternal, how great is the misery of man; intoxicated with the wine of error, he is as one that lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lies upon the top of a mast. But the period is fast coming, when the mind neither of the sinner nor the saint shall wander anymore forever; all shall be stayed in God; one in his wrath, the other in his love. Let us here for a moment reflect upon the state of the soul reserved in chains of darkness, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Here it is fixed, all its sins and the wrath due thereto claiming and keeping all its attention; it cannot wander for one moment from what it then endures, almighty wrath holds it fast, and rends it as it were in a thousand pieces, yet it retains its oneness. God is against it forever, even forever and ever, and who can deliver out of his hand? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

All other matters to the lost will be as nothing, their punishment will be their all. And there appears to be two things, which those who are now in perdition dread. One is an increase of numbers: Let one be sent (said the rich man) from the dead, to warn my five brethren, lest they come into this place of torment." I do not believe this request arose so much from a pity to others, as the fear of increased torment among

themselves; as an increase of number must increase the horror of the shrieks, the groans, and blasphemies of the lost: devils believe and tremble, but Satan cannot love. The next, is the Day of Judgment, “are you come to torment us before our time?” the time when their punishment shall commence in its highest degree, when there shall be no rocks nor mountains to fall on them from the wrath of the Lamb.

The capabilities of the soul surpass its present conception, as four of the external senses of the body, are included in the one out of which they arise, namely, feeling. The eye is sensible of objects, the ear of sounds, the nose of scent, and the mouth of taste; yet none of these could exist without the sense called feeling, although feeling may exist without any of these, as none of these four is essential to life. As then all the senses of the body, may be expressed in the one word feeling, so all the capabilities of the soul, may be expressed in the one-word consciousness. What is knowledge? But a consciousness of beings, things, and circumstances. How far then, the soul is capable of extending in knowledge, none on earth can tell. What is love? but the consciousness of an object of desire, fear, the consciousness of an object of terror, the will, is a consciousness of choice and refusal, hope, of something attainable reasoning, reflecting, and contriving, all come to the same thing; for without consciousness, there could be none of these. The manifold powers of consciousness will be unfolded in another world; the exercise of these powers may, and is, by many circumstances of this time state obstructed, as in sleep, for instance, the exercise of these powers seems totally suspended, but then the existence of these powers is still the same, they are as to their existence indestructible. This is clear, both from the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, and the eternity of the joy of the righteous; neither of which can be without the immortality of the soul. As the saints will not be interrupted in the exercise of their powers or capabilities, so the lost will not be able to cease from exercising their capabilities, in receiving, enduring, and being filled with all that condemnation due to them, and which shall be inflicted by Omnipotence.

Think then of our state by our fall in Adam; our guilt, augmented ten thousand-fold by our personal conduct, standing opposed to God the Judge of all. The soul, restless, immortal, possessing unknown capabilities, progressing through a transitory world, and hurried out of the world by the pestilence of sin and death, and then to sink to a world of endless remorse, “where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.” This is the portion of those who live and die out of Christ; God is faithful to all his threatening as well as to his promises, none of his words can fall to the ground, “the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away.” Thrice holy is the Lord God of Sabbath, holiness is essential to the majesty and glory of God; hence, wherever there is sin, there are meanness and shame, so that those who are lost shall come forth, to everlasting shame and contempt. God never will set light by his own holiness, and until he does, there will be for the lost no hope. Never, never will he cease to show infinite, just and holy hatred to sin. What must be the wrath of a sin avenging God? You believers in Jesus, you followers of the Lamb, who can tell of one half of the gratitude, praise, and admiration you owe to him, “who has loved you and washed you from your sins in his own blood?” think of the sins for which he has atoned. The pit from which he has delivered the value of the soul he has redeemed: to you who believe, to you, surely, he is precious; he is the “unspeakable gift” of God your Father, he is the great theme of the Holy Ghost. God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is your God, and that forever he being for you, who can be successfully against you?

The decrees of God then, objectively considered are relative to them that are lost, permissive, restrictive, and retributive. In these truths, we see maintained the holiness, justice, and dominion of him, “who is God over all blessed for evermore.”

3. We now pass on to notice, the decrees of God relative to those whose names are in the Book of Life. The decrees of God relative to these may be considered as preservative, saving, and receptive; that is to say, they are preserved while dead in sin, salvation is theirs, and they will be at last received to glory. The two chief principles upon which these mercies run, appear to me to be, the love of God, and the great act of absolute election. For, if we take away election, then they are not the Lord's, nor consequently, does he stand engaged to preserve, save, and receive them to himself. And, if we take away the love of God, then he would not have made them his, for "behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God;" he made us his people because he loved us, and he does everything for us because we are his, and because he loves us. And, as the Lord's people are loved in Christ and chosen in Christ, so they are preserved, saved, and received to glory in and by him. The Lord, in the beginning (if I may use the word beginning), exercised towards his people great things; he fixed upon them great love, love infinite and eternal, taking them up into the unspeakably high and noble relation of sons of God; bestowing upon them an infinite gift, even his dear Son; and God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, entering for them into an immutable covenant of salvation, and eternal glory. Forever is his word settled in heaven; the fixation of his love, the great act of choosing, the gift of Christ, and formation of the covenant, were all according to infinite knowledge, consequently nothing unforeseen can arise; all the sins of the church, all the persons of the church, and all circumstances of all worlds, were clearly seen, fully provided for, and so arranged, as to be subservient to his own will; he purposes to preserve, to save, and to receive to glory all the objects of his love and choice; and in these things who can hinder him?

Our object then, now, is to trace these mercies, namely, preservation, salvation, and glorification. 1st. Preservation: and here, be it observed, that the love of God to his people is the same when they are dead in sin, as when they are in glory; his love to them is not augmented by anything he does for them, or by anything they can do for him, in truth they can do nothing, and all that the Lord does for them, is the consequence of his love to them; he gloried in them from everlasting, his delights were with the sons of men, even from everlasting, the Savior's goings forth for them were from everlasting, his mediatorial throne was fixed of old from everlasting, he loved his people before the foundation of the world (John 17:23,23); he loved them while dead in sin (Ephesians 2:4,5); hence they were his while dead in sin; he died for the ungodly. Founded in this love of God and covenant relation to him, is their preservation while in a state of nature, and is not this preservation a mercy essential to our welfare, a mercy for which we are constrained to be thankful, a mercy glorifying to God? Were we not when we knew not the Lord exposed to ten thousand deaths, were not our sins innumerable, some of our worst enemies to us invisible, have we not seen many of our fellow creatures around us fall into the arms of death, to all human appearance having no true hope, and without God in the world, is there not then something more or less, wonderful in the history of each one who is brought to know the Lord? How many have from necessity taken those steps, which they worked hard to avoid, and yet the very circumstances have proved in the Lord's hands, to be the means of bringing them to know him? So that even when they were dead in sin and were pursuing that by which they could not profit, the Lord was watching over them, preserving, and pursuing them for good, so that they can neither destroy themselves, nor can anything else destroy them; all their sins cannot provoke the Lord to withdraw his love from them, nor change his mind concerning them. When one creature sins against another, and persists in his ill treatment to his fellow creature, it is very difficult, if not impossible for the one who is ill-treated, to keep up in his mind the same affection, good feeling and good will towards the person who does the wrong; and especially if the person who is wronged, can do as well without the person who wronged him as he could with him: human love is a delicate flame, and if we throw much water thereon it will be very much weakened if not quenched, but the love of God, is love "which many waters cannot quench, nor can the floods drown it."

Scarcely will a man die for the dearest friend he has on earth, yet peradventure some would even dare to die for an earthly friend; but Christ died for us while we were enemies; he knew us when we knew not him; he loved us when we hated him; he preserved us when we would have destroyed him; he drank the cup of vindictive wrath for us, when we refused him a cup of cold water (John 4); he thought highly of us when we despised him; he carried us in his bosom, when our hearts were the habitations of devils; he longed after us, when we were saying, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of your ways." While he was fulfilling the law, we were fulfilling the desires of the flesh; while he was dying for our salvation, we were living in sin; while he was bringing in everlasting righteousness, we were glorying in our shame: yet none of these things could move him, he loved us still, nor all the sins of his people could abate his love, alter his thoughts, nor change his purpose. If he stood by us, then will he forsake us now? If there had been any danger of abatement in his love, or alteration in his purpose, surely it must have been when he had before him all the sins of his people, the curse of the law of God, the insults of men and devils, together with ten thousand things which he in his life and death endured. "If then he died for us while we were yet enemies and has reconciled us to God; if he died for us then, much more being reconciled, we shall he saved from wrath through him, "for the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." He is the house not made with hands, and around this house the floods can no more rise. Upon this house the rains can no longer descend, nor the mighty winds any more try to shake it; it is established forever, mercy shall be built up forever; the darkness is past, the true light now shines, nor can the curse which is removed ever again return. Jesus has died, and it is not needful that he should die again; death has no more dominion over him. The love and the salvation of God were essential to our preservation while in a state of nature; and because the Lord loved us, made us his, and provided salvation for us, he therefore determined to take care of us: and as his love, salvation, and relation to us, remained through all circumstances and seasons the same, we were preserved, and so will all whose names are in the Book of Life. They are, while dead in sin, treasures hid in the sand, sheep lost on the dark mountains of error, children though in foreign climes, not knowing their high relationship, nor noble destiny, nor the incorruptible inheritance awaiting them.

Let then those who know the Lord acknowledge, that it was because they were appointed to salvation, that they were preserved in Christ Jesus; that he was their security even when they were dead in sin. Take away this eternal security in Christ, and then those who know the Lord may ascribe their preservation to anything but the Lord. In a word, if there were no security then, there is none now, for what the Lord Jesus Christ is for his people now, he was before the world began. He was made a Priest by an immutable oath, and this his priestly office includes every other office which he sustains, as also the dignity of his person as a priest he was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but this sacrifice could not have put away sin, unless he were God as well as man, and man as well as God: no man can redeem his brother, yet without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. Christ was and is an almighty and eternal Priest, for his priesthood is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after "the power of an endless life." As a Prophet all the promises he uttered are rendered yea and amen by his blood. As a King he reigns over all the sins, circumstances, and persons of his people, by the infinite efficacy of his own blood. He pleads their cause with his own blood; they have by his blood, boldness to enter into the holy of holies by his blood they overcome all their enemies, in life, death and judgment. It is by the blood of Christ, that God in all the attributes and perfections of his nature is on their side God being thus for them, who can be against them? He is not on their side conditionally, but freely; not partially, but fully; not merely for a time, but from everlasting to everlasting. And if they cannot be lost while in a state of nature, how much the less when brought into a state of grace.

Those who deny or keep back the great acts of absolute election and divine predestination, have never yet experimentally known the truth as it is in Jesus; they have never yet known the good these great truths bring to men, nor the glory they bring to God. Do not these truths set forth the antiquity, freeness, and fullness of the love and salvation of God, in a way altogether suited to guilty and helpless man, and consequently glorifying to God? Every system that denies or keeps back the doctrines of election and predestination is an abomination in the sight of God. The advocates of such systems are false apostles, and their followers led by strong delusion, believing a lie, that they all may be damned that have pleasure in this their unrighteousness: but those who are the Lord's shall leave these wild tribes, come to Zion submit themselves to the righteousness and sovereignty of God, saying, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight."

Take predestination to eternal life from the man who knows and daily feels what he is as a sinner; take predestination from such a one, and he feels that he has no hope; for none of the doctrines of the gospel would be of any certain use without predestination. What for instance would be the love of God, if the Lord was not absolutely and unalterably determined that those whom he loves shall enjoy all the happy consequences of his love to them? What would election be, if the Lord were not determined that the objects of choice should have the Spirit of adoption? The atonement is infinitely efficacious in itself, yet what would it be to the people, if the Lord were not determined to bring them into the glory of it, and of all the doctrines of the gospel? Take away divine predestination, and all is uncertainty, confusion, and disappointment. "But I (said the apostle) so run, not as uncertainly; so, fight I not as one that beats in the air." He here alludes to the Olympic games (that is, the public festivals) of the Greeks and Romans, There were three ways in which those who ran at those festivals were liable to lose the prize: first, from want of strength; at that festival the youths may faint, and the young men utterly fall, "but those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up on eagles' wings, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" "as their days are so shall their strength be" "they shall go from strength to strength" "God is their refuge and strength, and they shall do all things through Christ who strengthens them" "they not fall short for want of strength."

Violating the rules of the race is another way in which they were liable to lose the prize. But in the heavenly race "if any man sin (and there is no man that sins not) we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, whose blood cleanses from all sin." When an heir of glory is overtaken with a fault, let friends mourn and lament, and let not the enemies rejoice, for though he fall he shall again arise, and though he sit in darkness the Lord will be a light unto him. Grace shall reign by power and by pardon, through righteousness unto eternal life.

The dishonesty of the judge was another means by which they were in danger of losing the prize. The judges of Israel were to receive no gifts, as a gift blinds the eyes. The Judge of all is a righteous Judge: "There is (said the apostle) a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give to me; and not to me only, but to all of them also that love his appearing." This crown of life and glory is bestowed as the reward of the Savior's work: He rejoiced as a strong man to run a race; He traveled in the greatness of his own strength; he beat down all his foes, outran all opposers, and laid hold of eternal glory for himself and his people. Many run, but they run the wrong way: they run to Sinai instead of Zion, they run in the broad roads of free-will and universal charity (falsely so called). These run not in the highway of eternal election in Christ, predestination to glory by him, eternal redemption, and justification by him. These paths of righteousness they have not known, on these high mountains of Israel they never walked. Many run, but one only, even the only begotten Son of God obtains the prize. His people and he are one, and he

has full possession of the prize; and because he arrived safe to the end, so uncertainly, Jesus their fore runner forever lives to make intercession for them.

There is one circumstance by which the candidate for the Olympic race became for a time a castaway; and it is to this the apostle alludes, when he says. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The candidates for the Olympic race underwent several weeks preparation, which consisted in abstinence and exercise; and if anyone violated these rules, he was called a castaway, and continued to be a castaway until the next festival, when he again came forward, and was allowed to run in the race. You see the import of this.

In the first epistle of the Corinthians, we have one cast away for a time for the destruction of the flesh, and in the next epistle we find him again received, for God never finally cast away his people which he did foreknow. Some of the most eminent saints of God have become for a time castaways and knew what it was to have broken bones. It is indeed a bitter thing to sin against God; no punishment on earth can equal to a child of God that punishment which is the natural consequence of inconsistency of conduct. Yet how great is the mercy of being chastised, "for as many as the Lord loves he chastens," and rebukes, gives them repentance, and makes them zealous for their honor as heirs of eternal life; "for the Lord will be glorified even from the border (as well as from the center) of Israel, and so all Israel shall be saved."

Take away predestination, and you dethrone the Almighty, render null and void the eternal covenant, bring the Savior's claims to nothing, and throw infinity itself into confusion: there would be no resting-place for either God or man. No other spirit than the spirit of the world will oppose the doctrine of predestination; it is a part of the song of the saved, that "the Lord God omnipotent reigns." The Lord is for or on the side of his people in all his attributes, and therefore in his immutability; and as he was and is abundantly willing to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, he confirmed it by an oath, making his own faithfulness the bond of this oath; which oath stands recorded thus, "I will bless." Here is no if, no peradventure, no conditions to be performed by the creature, for he (the Lord) swore by himself. "I will bless" is the language with which he goes through the whole plan of salvation. The fixation of his love was with "I will bless;" in election and predestination it was "I will bless;" in redemption, justification, sanctification, regeneration and final glorification, the language all through is, "I will bless" and there shall be no more curse, nor death, nor barren land.

It is to the heirs of promise only that this immutability of his counsel is so made known, as to make them feel their need of it, embrace the reality of it, and glory in the blessedness of it; and therefore, it is that there are but comparatively few who rejoice in that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. The Lord himself glories in his own immutability; that with him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, that he changes not, that his counsel is forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations; that he rests in his love, that he is of one mind and none can turn him; that none can hinder him; that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever; that of his kingdom there is no end. The Lord brings his people into such a state that they can have no hope without this divine immutability; knowing this, they are decided for it, and speak much of it: the eternal and immutable God is their refuge and strength, and very present help in trouble.

Under our present circumstances of mortality, change in many respects is essential to our progression and final happiness; but on the other hand, unchangeableness in God is essential to his glory and our good. The advocates of free-will would try to persuade us that they believe God to be immutable; whether they examine

what they do believe I must leave to themselves, but to say that they believe God is immutable, and yet believe that he once loved some whom he now hates, that he has thus changed in his love, and yet he changes not, is a contradiction too glaring to be received or long retained by those who are taught of God. The angels that are now fallen, he created and favored them until they sinned, but it is clear he never loved them, as he neither prevented their fall, nor made any provision for their deliverance. He favored the Jewish nation, so that there were thousands among them whom he never loved, nevertheless shared in the external favors of the Lord, and these favors certainly are called a favor which the Lord bare unto them, and the cessation of this favor is expressed in these words, "I will love them no more," Hosea 9:15. We cannot suppose this to be the same with the love he bears to his people in Christ Jesus; this was a cessation of favor without any change of mind. And if it should be here said that he loves all men conditionally, and that therefore when they sinned, he withdrew his love from them; well then, let us follow up this sentiment, and see if we can answer it, and put its ignorance to silence. Be it then remembered that the Lord foreknew who would sin, and if their sin did not hinder the setting of his love upon them, nor yet hinder the manifestation of it to them; yet that sin which could not hinder its fixation and manifestation, could and did hinder its continuation. This is making with a witness the Lord of Hosts go to war, without first considering whether he be able with a few to go against many, for he returns and leaves the creature not conquered. Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell; yet mortal man cannot be subjected to the almighty love of God, through which love saints are more than conquerors. He who built all things intends to build a house for himself yet is stopped in the work by the obstinacy of the materials. So, then mercy is not to be built up forever, but the gates of hell are after all to prevail. And instead of the top-stone being brought home with shouting's of "Grace, grace unto it," it may not be brought at all. In a word, if freewill-ism were true not one could be saved; "But the foundation of the Lord stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are his."

But here it may be said that the Lord knew that the Jews would sin his favors away, yet he bestowed those favors upon them. Well, let us examine this matter also. We begin with observing that the scepter was not to depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from among his descendants, until Shiloh came. This truth was made good, for the princely rod abode with the tribe of Judah through all their captivities, nothing could break nor bury the regular succession of generations, until Christ came in the flesh. Well then, the favors bestowed upon Judah answered the Lord's end so far. The ceremonial law was a shadow of good things to come, and the Jewish nation were the people chosen, among whom the ceremonial law should be until the good things should come; and those good things are grace and truth, which are by Jesus Christ. So that the ceremonial law, the Promised Land, and their national exaltation were temporary. What then is the conclusion? Why it is this that the ceremonial law, notwithstanding the sins of the Jews, answered the end for which it was designed.

The law was given to Adam, to make him and all men in him accountable to their Maker; and this end it answered, for man remains to this day an accountable creature. The ark was intended to save Noah and his family from the deluge, and it did save them. The mediatorial work of Christ is intended for the salvation of all whose names are in the book of life, and all Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation and shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. "The word of the Lord shall not return void but shall prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent." As then nothing could hinder the fixation and manifestation of the love of God, so nothing can hinder its continuation. The Lord does nothing in vain, men do many things in vain; but not so with the Lord, for "his counsel must stand, and he will do all his pleasure." His people have a kingdom, which cannot be moved. They have obtained this inheritance, being predestinated thereto according to the good pleasure of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will. And in proportion as we are sensible of what we are in our fallen nature, so shall we prize the

counsel of God, reject the inventions of men, and cleave to him who has showed us what is good, and has taught us to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him, who is “our God for ever, and will be our guide even unto death.” The Lord in preserving his people has preserved all the honors of his holy name, law and justice, holiness and mercy, truth and goodness, oath, and promise. The restitution of all things consists in establishing the claims of law and gospel; the law, and all the promises and precepts of the gospel, will shine out in their perfection in the final preservation of the saints. The Lord preserves his people according to the order of the everlasting covenant; and whatever calamities may overtake them in this world, they are safe in Christ. The Lord having determined to preserve his people, he abides by his determination, so that they are preserved forever.

We now pass on to the decree of God in salvation. Salvation is by the Lord Jesus Christ and is of grace. The reason why it is said to be of grace is because everything the Lord does in the salvation of his people, he does graciously; that is to say, what he does, he does freely and fully; not conditionally and partially, but freely and fully. Grace is a word applied to each person in the Godhead; the Father is the God of all grace, grace came by Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace. Therefore, it is by grace that the saints are what they are. All that was done in the ancient settlements of mercy, was done according to the riches of his grace; and you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that what he did was in the riches of his grace; and are not all the covenant relations of the Holy Spirit expressive of the riches of his grace? If he quicken the soul, it is because he will. Jesus is the life with which the Holy Spirit makes alive. This is the life the Father gave. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of light, liberty, peace, and joy. Jesus is the true light, the lawful liberty, the heavenly peace, and endless joy, which the Father has bestowed upon us.

There are, and will in this time state, be some little ones in the Lord's family, who, when the following question is put to them, are somewhat at a loss for an answer. Namely. That if there be an elect and they are sure to be saved, what necessity was there for Christ to die? Though it may seem easy to answer such a question, yet there are some of the little ones who are not always prepared with an answer. The answer then is, that there are two reasons why the elect of God could not go to heaven without the blood and righteousness of Christ, and the two reasons are, that God is just and holy, he consequently maintains an infinite hatred to sin, justice claims the rights of the law of God, here is holiness determined to show its hatred to sin, justice determined to uphold the authority of the law, and also here is mercy determined to have its objects, and the determination of each infallible; now then what is to be done; God loves his holy law, and is determined that not one jot nor tittle of that law shall fail; he loves his people, and is determined not one of them shall be lost; yet, they are by creation under the law, by nature dead in sin and children of wrath deservedly, even as others: yet they cannot be lost because the Lord loves them, and because they are his. As therefore he is just and holy, he is determined that even his own people shall not come from under his holy law without an atonement for their sins, and a righteousness for their persons; if they could be saved without the atonement and righteousness of Christ, then the holiness and justice of God could not have shone forth in our salvation, the Lord would not have kept his holiness and justice good, and failing in these two perfections of his nature, it would follow that he might fail in other attributes of his nature also; the truth is, God is as infallible in the law as in the gospel, there is no difference; here then are the two apparent opposites, namely, the Lord's people held prisoners under the law, and the law cannot fail, yet they must be saved, then said Jesus, “Lo I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight O God to do your will, yes, your law is within my heart,” he therefore comes in, and takes upon him all the guilt of their sin and all the wrath due thereto, and by his own arm brings salvation; so that the holiness and justice of God which stood against us in the law, in the gospel stand on our side, for truth and righteousness have joined with mercy and peace, and by our salvation the law of God is infinitely honored, mercy and truth meet

together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. The reasons therefore why we could not be saved without the great work of Christ, are because God is just and holy, which attributes are essential to his character as God over all blessed for evermore; for if he were not just and holy he must be unjust and unholy, and then he would cease to be God, as he would then be under the dominion of injustice and corruption. Then as God is just and holy, his people could not be saved without Christ dying for them; and for the same reasons, namely, that he is just and holy, not one of those whose names are not in the book of life can be saved, they are without hope, and without God in the world. Now as it is impossible for those to be saved for whom Christ did not die, so it is impossible for those to be lost for whom he did die; and as it is impossible to be saved without the atonement of Christ, so it is impossible to go to perdition with the atonement of Christ.

Because then the Lord is just and holy, his people could not be taken to heaven without the blood and righteousness of Christ; justice and holiness stood against there in their fallen state in the first Adam, but in Christ, not justice and holiness only, but mercy, grace, goodness, yes all the perfections of God are on their side, so that they have boldness to call God their Father, that is, when the holy Spirit is pleased to enable them so to do; and as they are appointed to salvation by Jesus Christ, it may here be asked, what it was that made the life and death of such a person as the Lord Jesus Christ necessary to salvation? The answer is, that the nature and order of things required it, for the Savior in order to act for others must himself be free, for had he have been no more than man, the law of God would have demanded of him as his personal duty all that he could have done; Adam could not obey for Eve, nor Eve for Adam, as neither could do more than his or her duty; now as the Lord Jesus Christ was and is God as well as man, and as though he has two natures, yet he is but one person, therefore whatever he has by nature as God, he has by right as man, and as he as God can be under no obligation to any above him, for there is none above him, so as God-man he was free from all personal responsibility, no law was ever made which he was to be under. I speak of him here, as it were apart from his covenant relation to his people; in a word, my object here is to show that he owed nothing for Himself, he was therefore perfectly at liberty to act for his people, he had no fault of his own to atone for, he owed no obedience for himself, such an High Priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners did the nature and order of things require; for if he owed anything for himself he must have attended to that first, as did the priests under the law. But we do not read, that Christ obeyed or atoned first or last for himself, therefore it is that, he came under the law for us, that he obeyed the law for us, that he was made a curse for us, made sin for us, was slain for us, he died for us, he laid down his life for us, all he did was for us; if he were not God as well as man, he could not thus be above all law, and consequently not at liberty to act for others. And who but such a Savior as this could deliver us, seeing that towards helping ourselves we can do nothing, so that his own arm brought salvation. He needed not his obedient life and atoning death for himself, therefore they are imputed to us; we were in bondage, he was free, and he determined that his people also should be free, he therefore took upon him their responsibility, and as will presently be shown, something more than their responsibility, he is the surety of the better covenant, he came into their law-relation to God, and eternally established by his life and death the law of God, and has brought in the law of love, of life, and of liberty; he has slain the enmity, destroyed death, removed the barriers of the grave, and proclaimed liberty to the captive; so that they shall be brought to dwell not in wrath, but in love; not in death, but in life; not in bondage, but in liberty.

We are accountable to God for what we were by creation; we were by creation, holy, just, and good: The Savior became surety not only to make his people holy, just, and good, but to make them holy, just, and good, in a much higher sense than they were by creation. The image of God in which Adam was created, fitted him only for an earthly paradise, and which likeness was destructible: but, the holiness, righteousness,

and goodness, which the election of grace have in Christ, fit them for a heavenly paradise, and are indestructible. Therefore, what they lost in Adam, will bear in value no comparison with what they have in Christ; so that they are not restored to what they lost, but raised to the possession of something infinitely superior to what they lost. They by sin took away their conformity to the law Christ has restored to the law for them a conformity to the law, which speaks out the holiness and majesty of the law, unspeakably beyond what here creature obedience ever could have done.

The law permitted Adam to continue in paradise on the ground of his continuing in his creation conformity to the law; but as Adam could not do more than his duty, he never could have raised himself higher by anything he could do. If then the holiness, righteousness, and goodness, in which Adam was created, entitled him only to an earthly paradise! If such the inflexibility of the law, that it could not permit Adam on the ground of his creation qualities any higher bliss! What must be the holiness, righteousness, and goodness, which entitle to the immediate presence of God? The law is the law of God, and the nearer we come to the open presence of God, the higher must be the qualities entitling us to this honor. The Israelites dared not so much as touch the mount on which the Lord descended, nor come near thereto. When Adam lost his conformity to the law, he was driven from paradise; and nothing but the obedience and blood of Christ, can bring us unto him, in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore. And his obedience and blood could not thus bring us to the height of Zion, if he were not God as well as man. Hence the apostle said, “feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.” And again, Christ is called Jehovah our righteousness no man can redeem his brother, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Here then are two, out of the many reasons, why it required the life and death of such a person as is the Lord of life and glory! That it was necessary he should be free from all personal obligation, that he may be at liberty to obey for others; and he could not be thus at liberty, were he not as God, self-existent; nor could he if he were not God, bring us from the depths of death to the heights of heaven; and not only so, but he by whom we are to obtain salvation, must be able to subdue all our enemies. Our enemies as it regards power, are to us destructive, and as to numbers, they are innumerable, and may be divided into two classes, the visible and the invisible. Nothing can be invisible to God our Savior; all things are naked and open unto him; and as to our enemies! He has broken their power, comprehended their numbers, defeated their stratagems, and overturned all their counsels. But who, and what are these enemies? These enemies are sins innumerable, fallen angels, a deceitful heart, false doctrines, men averse to the truth, temptations, and the last to be destroyed is death. The Savior has made a footstool of all these “kings and lords, which have had dominion over us;” and through him we shall do valiantly, for he it is that treads down our enemies. All his enemies must perish, but those who love him shall be as the “sun when he goes forth in his might:” The number of God’s elect, rendered the life and death of such a person as Christ, necessary to salvation. These, according to the law of God, are individually accountable to God: yet the Savior’s one offering perfects the whole, and that forever. If the Savior had not brought infinitely more honor to the law, than the whole of them (if they had not fallen) could have done they could not in his righteousness be exalted; but “the Lord does establish them forever, and they are exalted.”

Salvation is by price and power: The Savior’s atoning death, paid the price of redemption, brought in everlasting righteousness, finished transgression, made an end of sin; he went to the end of the law, terminated for his people all its demands, in a word, he has gone to the end of everything that could in any way obstruct the progress of his mercy in the salvation of his people. Many may be their perplexities, persecutions, afflictions, and infirmities; yet none of these things can separate them from the love of Christ,

nor withhold from them the mercies the Lord has intended for them. Every mercy they can possibly need, is included in the one-word salvation; and this salvation is in Christ and comes by him. All the promises of the gospel are yea and amen in him; the promises, which are made to him, include the salvation of his people. The Father has promised him, that his people should be willing in the day of his power;” that “he should have the Gentiles for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;” that “his name should be remembered throughout all generations;” that he should be exalted, extolled and be very high; that his enemies should be his footstool;” that “the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands;” that “he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied:” in these promises we have salvation. For it is according to these promises made to the great Head of the church, that we are made willing to be saved in the Lord's own way; the Lord himself becomes our portion, the Holy Spirit causing us to remember him, “whose name is as ointment poured forth,” and to exalt and extol him as Lord of all, and in his strength to tread down our enemies, and through him to prosper, and by him to be abundantly satisfied with the abundance of his glory.

Those who are taught of God, feel that they are but dust and ashes, that they are vile, carnal, sold under sin, helpless, shut up and have no might of their own; where this experience is, the great truths of the gospel become interwoven in their souls, mingled with their minds, and so entwined about their hearts, that they are carried away in their affections from earth to heaven, from sin to salvation, from this world to that which is to come; their hope is in heaven, they have no confidence in the flesh, but in the Lord they have righteousness and strength, life and light, joy and gladness, glory and honor: unto these things they look, for these things they seek, upon these things they live, of these things they boast, and by these things they defy death, hell and the grave. They thus put on Christ, walk in him, commune with him, and rest all their expectation upon his holy life, atoning death, and suretyship responsibility. His life is our justification his death is our redemption, our pardon, our health, our sanctification, our victory, and our peace with God our justification is complete, so that we are in this as well as in every other respect in him complete. Our redemption is complete, for he has redeemed from all evil, from all iniquity, and from all adversity. Our pardon is complete, for the Lord has forgiven all trespasses, he heals all our diseases, he cleanses us from all sin; the warfare is accomplished, peace is established, so that the Lord will work and who shall hinder him. God our Father goes on in the full tide of his love, the Savior goes on prospering in all the purposes of his heart, the Holy Spirit goes on in all his relations, opening up the scriptures to the heirs of glory: not one promise fallen to the ground yet, not one child of promise lost yet, not one disappointment in the march of mercy, the Savior's work is designed for no end which it does not answer; whatever it comes against it is sure to subdue, overcome and bring into subjection, for whithersoever it turns it prospers. It met the law of God, honored its precepts, endured, and went to the end of its penalty; it put away sin, destroyed death, overcame the wicked one, brought all circumstances into such a position, that all things to the heirs of glory must work together for their good.

Not that these things are either in whole or in part accomplished, by the work of Christ being brought forth by men; indeed, there are very few who bring forth this great work in its own order, for its own order is after the power of an endless life, independent altogether of the creature: therefore, it is when and wherever the Lord himself brings forth the work of Christ, that it shows its real power. When the Holy Spirit brought this great subject into our own hearts and minds, it made us feel that we were sinners, it gave us to see and feel that according to the law and threatening's of God, we were in a state truly awful; that we had been all our days deluded, that we had been resting in the inventions of men, guided by the reasoning's of the flesh, and were as ignorant of real vital religion as Hottentots. We were brought to know that all religion short of the Holy Spirit's quickening power would leave us were it found us. This power brought us into an abiding

concern about salvation, and though at times we seemed to grow careless, yet still there was the uneasiness at the bottom; the world could not content us, our doings could not content us, nor could anything within our reach satisfy us, yet nothing could destroy our anxiety, the root of the matter was in us, and this root is incorruptible, it is the root of David, the root of life eternal. When a man is brought into this state, he is severed from the world and that in the right way; for he is not severed from the world by external circumstance, worldly interest, or merely the unclean spirit going out! no, his separation is by the life of God in the soul! nor shall such a one (though one may try) ever rest, until he receives in the love and power of it, eternal election. He will find that the Savior's great work cannot be a resting place without election and predestination; that he can have no hope, unless the Holy Spirit carries on his work according to the laws of that covenant which is "ordered in all things and sure;" that there can be no assurance, but in divine immutability; nor can he be content to receive these things merely in the letter of them! If he does not participate in their power and preciousness, he is discouraged, cast down, and driven to his wits' end. And when we who know these things do enjoy them, we seem to be in another world, all the vileness of nature is subdued, the wicked one under our feet, our troubles forgotten, our sins forgiven, mercy rolling in like the waves of the sea, peace flowing like a river, our hearts leaping for joy, and as for him "who loved us and gave himself for us," he is so precious, that we seem as though we could suffer a thousand deaths for his dear name. his precious blood and righteousness: we sing of the one, we shine in the other. This dear Mediator is the gift of God our Father; Paul may well call this gift an "unspeakable gift." This is the experience that constitutes the real anointing of the Holy Spirit, "he who thus believed, has the witness in himself, and has set to his seal that God is true."

Jesus has thus gone on from age-to-age conquering and to conquer. Who can count the millions now in glory who were conquered by him, and also obtained victory through him? He turns enemies into friends and makes them love him more than ever they hated him. How suitable and how sweet will be the song, to

"Ascribe our conquests to the Lamb, Our victory to his death".

The Savior when on earth, did not make a second attempt to accomplish anything. Everything at which he aimed he accomplished; whether it were to cleanse the leper, heal the withered hand, subdue furious fiends, silence the elements, raise the dead, gather disciples, magnify the law, or atone for sin. Not one of all the things that were commanded by his heavenly Father failed, he did always those things which pleased the Father; this the Savior himself said, of this the Father bare testimony, saying, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus; he is the person by whom we were appointed not unto wrath but to obtain salvation. I have said the Savior accomplished everything at which he aimed; to this assertion there is a seeming (and it is only a seeming exception), and that is in his weeping over Jerusalem. But this matter I have shown up in my sermon on 'Reprobation and Election.' You will there see that this circumstance is no exception to the assertion, that he accomplished all that for which he came into the world. And is he less almighty now! Is he less interested in his people! Is he less pleasing and glorifying to God the Father! Is he not still to be made known by the Holy Spirit! And are we not driven out of every other refuge! Then he is our refuge, a refuge from which the Lord will not, and creatures cannot drive us. He himself undertook to be our security, God the Father intended he should become our security, and the Holy Spirit has testified (and we know that his testimony is true) that "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." Now then what is to hinder us from getting home, can anything hinder the Lord from bringing us there, Jesus has wrought salvation; "with him is mercy and plenteous redemption," he gathers us with his arm and carries us in his bosom, and his gentleness will make us great, his power, his providence, and grace extend to all our circumstances, none can deliver out of his

hand. All the purposes, promises, precepts, and persons that rest upon him are safe. God the Father first trusted in him for all the honors of his holy law and purposes of the gospel. This went on four thousand years after the actual existence of sin. No failure took place, for the apostle when speaking of the old testament saints says, "These all died in faith;" all died in faith, not one died in unbelief, they all died in faith. This is something like the good old-fashioned doctrine of "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed:" these are the "as many as the Lord our God shall call." These are born not of blood (not because their parents were religious), nor of the flesh (not of their own fleshly, falsely called free will), nor of the will of man (not of the will of others, not of their parents, of themselves, nor others), but of God." From him comes their salvation; and these will all die in faith, for these are the election of grace, and "the election has obtained it." Jesus is exalted, a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins."

We come now to the last part of our subject, which is reception to final glory: He "appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" The Savior is received to glory, and our reception to glory stands connected with him. He was received on the ground of his finished work with entire approbation, and that he may enjoy the reward of his work; so that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of the majesty on high:"

Our acceptance then is in the finished work of Christ: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and must give account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be bad:" Christ is made of God unto his people, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" these good things are brought into their hearts, and of these good things they shall give account. And those into whose hearts these good things are not brought, will have no real good deeds of which to give account, for "without faith it is impossible to please God;" "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" and everyone shall be rewarded according to his works. And if we are wise by the wisdom of Christ, he is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; we shall be rewarded according to these good works, for our righteousness is of the Lord. If I do not while on earth receive these things, I leave no authority to conclude that I shall be received among the ransomed of the Lord: for if I do not receive these good things now, I cannot give a good account at the last day, with these good deeds done in the body (the body here meaning the person) that is, wrought in the heart. Everyone thus favored will give account with joy and not with grief.

The Savior and the saved are received into glory upon one and the same ground, namely, his finished work. By this, his finished work, they will appear "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." His work is a finished work, and nothing can make it unfinished; it is spotless, and nothing can tarnish it; it is incorruptible, and nothing can tinge it with mortality; it abides the same in nature, extent, and purpose. Our entrance to glory will be honorable, and the Lord has said, "My people shall never be ashamed:" and although standing as we then shall in the presence of assembled worlds, and above all in the presence of infinite purity; yet it will not be possible for us to be ashamed, for there will be nothing of which to be ashamed, precious blood and glorious righteousness have overcome the whole. Such is the honor, glory, and safety we have by this salvation, that no fire can as we stand in him consume us, no rising billows drown us, no lightning-flash can reach this promised land, no yawning earthquake destroy us, no stratagem entangle us: "Let the earth be removed, and let the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea; what can destroy those with whom is the Lord of Hosts, and whose refuge is the God of Jacob."

The Lord received his people in the ancient covenant in the mediation of Christ, he receives them in regeneration and in death, and he will receive them at the last day; and in each of these acts their acceptance

depends exclusively upon the Lord, the life and death of Christ run through the whole. God the Father sanctified them by imputing to them the Savior's work; the Savior sanctified them, by finishing the work, which the Father gave him to do; the Holy Spirit sanctifies them by the fountain, which is opened for sin and uncleanness. The life they live is by the faith of the Son of God; he is their life, they walk in him, by him they will pass with safety through the valley of the shadow of death, by him they will rise from the dead, "He is the resurrection and the life," by him they will have an abundant entrance into the region of purity and bliss.

God the Father looks upon them in that completeness which he has bestowed, and in this completeness he holds them, and none can pluck them out of his hand; the Savior looks upon them, and holds them in his own comeliness; the Holy Spirit holds them in the one offering by the which they are forever perfected: and as long as the Savior's work remains valid, so long are they safe; and is there anything that can invalidate the obedience and blood of Christ? All the (so called) good things of this life are from two circumstances invalidated, first, because they are mixed with evil; and secondly, because they are of short duration. But neither of these things can be said of the work of Christ, "He is pure, without a spot," and he went to the end of the law, to the end of sin, to the end of death; the end is the end, and he dies no more, death has no more dominion over him. And will God the Father ever make light of the work of his dear Son? Will Jesus ever forget his own obedience and atoning death? Will the Holy Spirit ever cease to glorify Jesus? Shall we ever cease to need him? Will God ever cease to love? Can we ever cease to be his? Is there with him any variableness or shadow of turning? Is not Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever? Does not the Holy Spirit abide with his saints forever?

We are in receiving Christ Jesus transformed to his image. Conformity to his likeness consists in being of one mind with him, and his finished work is the true test by which we try ourselves; and if our experience has shown us the necessity of this his finished work, and we are brought to stand opposed to all that stand opposed to that; brought to receive him as our all and in all, and that he is to us somewhat precious; or, that all the purposes of mercy, and relations of the Holy Spirit; rest upon this foundation. He that thus receives Christ, receive the Holy Spirit; he that thus acknowledges the Son, has the Father also: but stand opposed to his finished work, and you stand opposed to every truth in the Bible. There is but one way in which we can be in a state of conformity to the law of God, and that is by the finished work of Christ. By this his finished work, the law is established, honored, and magnified; and the law has no more against the church, than against Christ himself. This conformity to the law is the gift of a Father's love, the work of a Savior's life and death, testified of by the Holy Spirit. It was the Savior's meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; and if we are rightly taught, this precious work will be our meat and our drink; its transforming power brings us to God, makes his love the element of our souls, so that we dwell in love, even in the love of God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This best, highest, and most noble of all dwelling-places, could not by us in the manifestation of it be inhabited, were it not for the finished work of Christ; it is this that removes every impediment, not a dog can (to any purpose) move his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

So, then we are appointed to obtain salvation by the finished work of Christ. By this work we are conformed to law and gospel, to God and conscience, and shall he sure to die in a good (not a bad) old age, full of riches and honor, and shall come to the grave as a shock of corn in his season. But without the finished work of the clear Mediator, we should be driven away in our wickedness; but complete in him, approved in him, accepted in him, we shall find mercy in that day. The glory of our reception, and to be with the Lord, we must die to know; we can only say, if what the Lord has already done, he has done so freely, so fully, and

so delightfully for the Father delighted in giving his dear Son, Jesus delighted to do the will of the Father, the Holy Spirit delights in testifying of Jesus; if what the Lord has done, he has done with irresistible willingness and pleasure, what will be the glory of meeting the Lord at the last day, all previous doings being a preparation for this great object? Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father?

The circumstances standing between this and that day are all known to the Lord. Many things take us by surprise, but nothing can take him by surprise. Nothing can separate us from him, nor hide us from him, nor lower us in his estimation, nor lay anything before him to our charge. May it be our happy lot to walk and commune more and more with him, “for he is our God for ever and ever and will be our guide even unto death.”

Finis