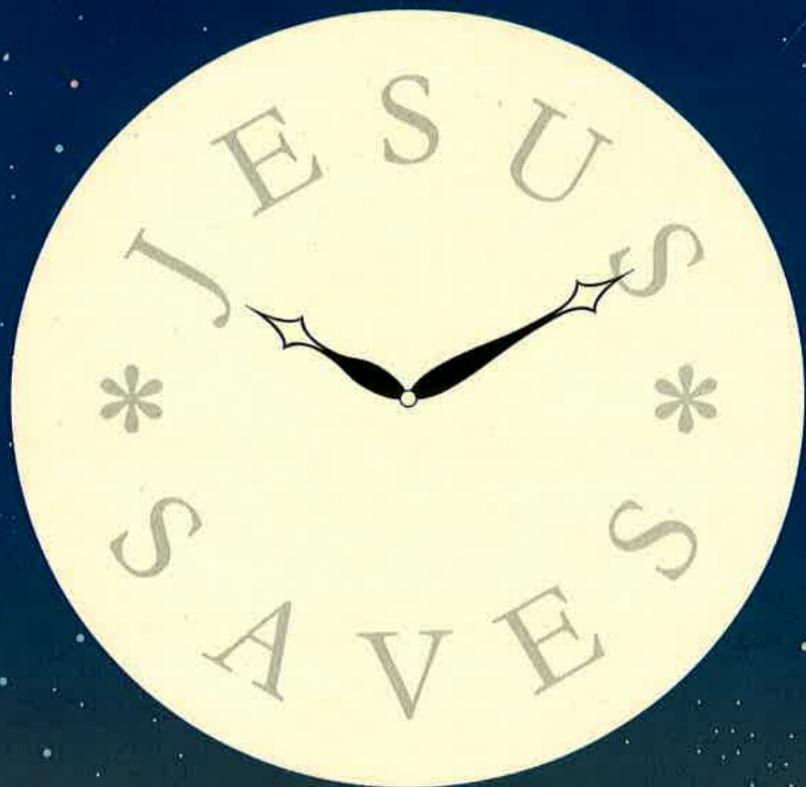


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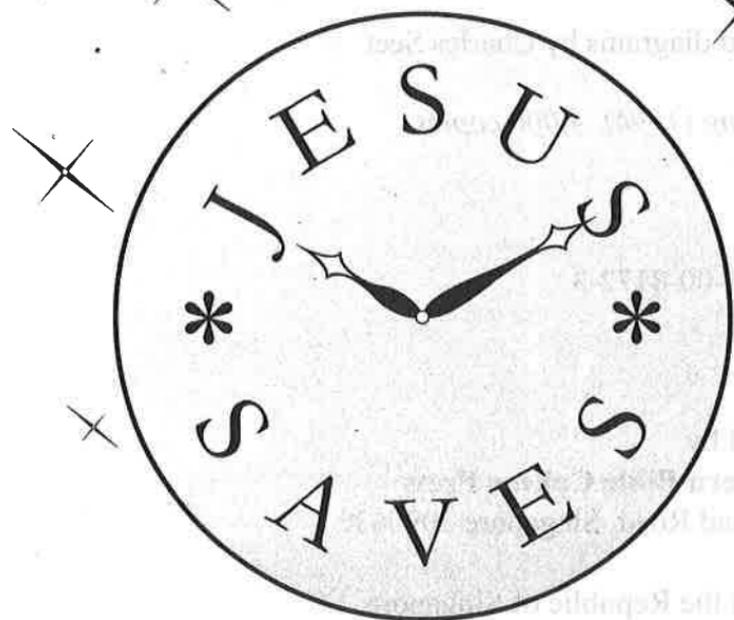


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SEVENFOLD
WILL OF GOD

Timothy Tow

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Timothy Tow

The Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God

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WILL OF GOD
SEVENFOLD

Timothy Tow

*To my brother
Dr Tow Siang Hwa
in association
with "Awana"*

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PREFACE

The treatise on the Sevenfold Will of God delivered at the Awana Bible Conference, September 3-7, 1990, is the crystallisation of many years' teaching theology at Far Eastern Bible College. One principle drummed into the ears of my students is that they must apply the deep things they have learned of God to their lives.

In order that they might know what is God's Will for their lives, yea, even in mundane day-to-day matters, I have put together its various aspects into the figure of a clock. The easy-to-know part of God's Will is represented by the moving hands over its face. The hard-to-know part is represented by the mechanism inside the clock.

With the addition of "God's Holy Law," and "How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word?", two messages preached at the Sunset Gospel Hour, Calvary B-P Church on His "Preceptive Will," plus another message on "The Way to Success in the Christian Ministry," and with an Appendix of six chapters of the Westminster Confession relevant to this study, including the Shorter Catechism for easy reference, this booklet is presented to the Christian public. If by careful perusal of this treatise with the help of the Confession and Catechism, the Reader "will understand what the will of the Lord is" (*Ephesians 5:1*), this publication will not have been made in vain.

Timothy Tow
FEBC, Singapore
September, 1991.

*Spiritual
Awakening
at*

 *Awana* 

Spiritual Awakening at Awana

by Lim Meng Kean

As I waited for the 7.45 am K.L. - bound train, my heart was strangely warmed. I was thankful to God for having provided me with a ticket and accommodation even though I had signed up after the closing date. ... We arrived safely at Awana Country Club at 5.00 pm. Thank God for journeying mercies.

After a hearty dinner, we were welcomed by the camp commandant, Rev Stephen Khoo. Here, we met some 279 people from various B-P Churches and a few non-B-P churches.

On the whole, the programme was a balanced one providing "solid" spiritual food and fellowship. The days began at seven with Morning Devotions led by Dr Steele and thereafter corporate prayer.

The highlight of the camp was the daily lectures on the book of Hebrews by Dr Peter Masters. Running concurrently, the children's programme provided supervision and spiritual nourishment for the young while their parents were at the lectures. In the afternoons, Mrs Masters conducted one-hour classes to the S.S. and Jr. Worship staff, followed by recreation. Our pastor took over the pulpit in the evenings.

Dr Tow Siang Hwa, in his opening message, "Occupy Till He Come," challenged the congregation to expect great things from God. He added that, in order to materialise this desire, one must first *discipline* one's life, pray and wait upon the Lord, seek His will and submit to it. He also impressed upon us the urgency to walk in holiness and with spiritual discernment in these endtimes of apostasy.

We often looked forward to attending Dr Masters' lectures on the study of Hebrews. Although these sessions lasted 3 hours, we were kept awake with his interesting pedagogical style and numerous teabreaks. His approach was methodological yet devotional. Oftentimes, he spent many minutes elaborating on the meaning of particular words. Through it, he has taught us

to savour the richness of God's Word. An epistle very appropriate for these last days, Hebrews sounds out loud warnings to Christians not to harden their hearts and to take careful heed of God's Word. Through these sessions, I've been much challenged to seriously reassess my relationship with Christ and check if I'm born again. A deacon told me that he had never learnt so much before!

In the evenings, our Pastor expounded on "The Seven-fold Will of God." The technicalities of distinguishing the different aspects of God's will were shown to us. For example, writing this testimony is part of the cooperative will of God. Pastor was unusually light-hearted in his messages which made listening easier.

As we made our way downhill after the close of the camp, I thanked God for the many lessons learnt which hopefully will not remain just as memories of the Awana experience but as strongholds to increase my faith in the tides of future challenges.

I fought back tears of repentance and regret. Never have I fallen so low since my conversion 4 3/4 years ago. Yes, I've been a teacher with the Children's Choir and an active member of YAF, yet, dare I say that I've been a changed person after having known the LORD Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour? Of course, my life ought to be and has to be renewed (*II Cor. 5:17*)! But will I be able to face the many challenges ahead of me? I have no confidence in myself, but there is confidence in God (*Ps. 27:3*). Haven't I a Counsellor who provides heavenly solutions for earthly problems? May God fill me with a godly conscience that I may continue to live with eternity's values in view (*Ps. 90:12*), work out my salvation with fear and trembling (*Phil. 2:12*), run the race with patience, and be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in work of the Lord" (*I Cor. 15:58*). Amen.

*The
Clock
of the
Sevenfold*

 *Will of God* 

THE CLOCK OF THE SEVENFOLD WILL OF GOD

(Enlargement of two messages preached at the Awana Bible Conference, 3 - 7 September 1990)

TEXT: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation." (*Psalms 40:5-10*)

Introduction

Every Christian who loves the Lord loves also His Law, His Word. Like David, a man after God's own heart, he can say, "I delight to do Thy Will, O my God: yea, Thy Law is within my heart" (*Ps. 40:8*). To do His will is to obey Him, which was David's shining filial piety vis-a-vis the dark self-will of Saul. Though Saul outwardly was a religious man, because of his self-will, he was forever condemned. Samuel said to Saul, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (*I Sam. 15:22*). Will-worship, no matter how earnest it may be, being counter to God's Will, is "as the sin of witchcraft" (*I Sam. 15:23*). Calvin calls it "an abomination" to the Lord.

The supreme example of doing the will of God is set for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. How often would we hear Him say,

"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (*John 4:34*). "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (*Jn. 5:30*). His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, thrice-repeated, "not as I will, but as Thou wilt," throbs in the heart of every devout Christian. Our Lord, now weak in the flesh (*Matt. 26:41*) to do His Father's will, comes under great stress. Nevertheless, He prayed for strength, and through prayer gained He the strength to do His Father's will. Peter delighted to do His Master's will, but he failed because he did not look to Him when the testing came. We also delight to do God's will, but in times of persecution, can we say we will fully obey to do His will?

In times like these, we may not know which way to turn, to run or to stay. This is the plight of the thousands of Westerners now bottled up in Kuwait and Iraq. While their Governments advise them to stay and wait, some have escaped to freedom in Saudi Arabia. However, one Englishman was killed in the attempt. What would Christians do in such an ordeal as this?

We have a specific example for such a situation in Acts 21:10-15. Agabus prophesied of the apostle Paul that arrest awaited him in Jerusalem. Luke his companion tells how he and the other disciples "besought him not to go up to Jerusalem," but Paul insisted to go. "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." From the sequel to this episode, we agree it was the Lord's higher will for Paul to face arrest in Jerusalem. God's will might lead us to the Cross of martyrdom. Are we prepared to obey to do His will?

In order that we might understand how God's will operates in our lives, we will study the various aspects of His will by a graphic presentation in the figure of a clock. As the face of the clock and the moving hands tell the time, here is a presentation of plainly knowing the will of God. As the mechanism inside the clock is complex to the layman, but not to the clock-maker, here is that presentation of the Lord's Higher Will that we should

discover by a deeper study of God's Word. Systematic theology is the key to the deep things of God, and Reformed Theology is closest to the truth of God's salvation plan.

Insofar as this writer is concerned, he has put the seven aspects of His will under seven heads, viz., I. Directive; II. Cooperative; III. Punitive; IV. Preceptive; V. Permissive; VI. Desiderative; VII. Decretive.

What "time" is it on the clock of God's will for your life? If we study it clockwise we will not only see how easily God's will can be known, but also have a clearer perception of His Higher Will, His eternal decrees made before the foundation of the world which the world knoweth not! What are the decrees of God? Answer: The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory, he hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass. (Shorter Catechism Q. 7 & A.)

The decretive will of God determines present-day events, yea, even to the preservation of little birds and the hairs upon your head. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. 10:29,30). The moving hands over the face of a clock are sustained by the power inside the mechanism of the clock. The outworking of God's providence meshes with His decrees.

I. Directive

The revelation of God's will is progressive. Before the Bible was written, God came to man in theophanies, appearing as a Man to man. The encounter of the three heavenly visitors with Abraham, eating the sumptuous meal laid before them ere the Lord confided in Abraham what He was about to do to Sodom, is well known to students of the Old Testament (Genesis 18). God appearing to Abraham, whether by vision or theophany, to

direct him in the way he should go, is only one of the many appearances He had made to the Patriarchs. And when these holy men of old received God's direction, without a doubt to do His Will, they obeyed, yea, even Abraham, who left his home country though not knowing where he was to go (Heb. 11:8). For, he walked by faith, and not by sight. For his quick obedience to do God's will Abraham received the honour of being called the "Friend of God" (II Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23).

Does God come to us in theophanies or visions today? Does God direct us today by speaking in our ears as He did to Samuel (I Sam. 9:15)? As we will soon see how we have advanced along the road of God's Progressive Revelation, having now the Bible, His Written Will, we must reject the claims of Charismatics today who profess in frequent hearing voices and seeing visions. I have read in a magazine published by the Charismatics of one who claimed God had spoken to him audibly to fly from one Malaysian city to another, and after arrival, the Lord told him again to continue his itinerary to a third city and thereafter to his final destination. Neil Babcox, author of *A Search for Charismatic Realty: One Man's Pilgrimage*, in which he testifies his error in receiving God's Word directly and proclaiming "Thus saith the Lord," related the misery of how a young pastor told a young lady in his congregation that God had spoken he was to marry her. Succumbing to such high-powered claim this young girl married the pastor. But they were divorced in a matter of weeks. This proves the fallacy of claiming direction from God by hearing a voice or seeing a vision, as acknowledged by the erstwhile Pentecostal pastor.

Let me advise young ladies of Charismatic churches. If any young man should propose to you because he claims to have received a directive from God, may you reply him squarely: "But as for me, I did not hear Him tell me to marry you last night, nor this morning." We repudiate the claims of over-enthused but misled Christians to hearing voices or seeing visions of God. These are their own hallucinations, like those that came upon

self-deluded prophets in Jeremiah's day: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord" (Jer. 23:16). The Bible further says, "Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." (Jer. 23:31,32)

But, while we repudiate these modern seers of visions and hearers of voices, we must not be swung to the other extreme of absolutely shutting out the testimonies of great men of God who have been specially called, like Saul on the Damascus Road. This is Wang Ming Tao's position in his stand against Charismatics in his younger days, yea, even now in his ninetieth year. This position is expressed in my translation of his 1934 article on "The Charismatic Movement in the Light of the Bible," which is a chapter of the book *Wang Ming Tao and Charismatism* by the same author. Dr Peter Masters, in the Foreword to this book, observes as follows: "Wang Ming Tao does not take the cessationist position held by many of us, namely that the revelatory and sign gifts passed away with the apostles. Nevertheless, his arguments are weighty and powerful, and the more worthy of attention on account of his own early pentecostal beliefs."

One great stalwart in the past generation who was used of God to win several hundred thousand souls to Christ in China and South-east Asia was Dr John Sung. Under his ministry I came to the Lord, yea, even to consecrate my life to full-time service. One testimony I constantly heard from the lips of the doctor was his conversion experience on 10th February 1927 in Union Seminary, New York. Recalling 10th February 1927, which is recorded in Leslie Lyall's biography of John Sung, *Flame for God in the Far East* p.33, this is written of him:

Then on the evening of February 10th light broke on the darkened soul. He saw all the sins of his life spread out before him. At first it seemed that there was no way to get rid of them and that he must go to Hell. He tried to forget them, but he could not. They pierced his very heart. He searched in his trunk for his neglected New Testament and began to read it again for the first time for months. He turned to the story of the Cross in Luke XXIII and as he read the story came alive. So vivid was the sight of the Saviour dying for his sins that he seemed to be there at the foot of the Cross and pleading to be washed from all his sins in the Precious Blood. It was to him a vision as clear as the one the Apostle Paul saw on the Damascus road. He continued weeping and praying until midnight. Then he heard a voice saying, "Son, thy sins are forgiven," and all his load of sin seemed to fall at once from his shoulders. A feeling of intense relief came over him and he leapt to his feet with a shout of 'Hallelujah!' Forgetting that it was midnight and that others were sleeping, he rushed out into the halls of the dormitory, shouting and praising God for deliverance The morose brooding Chinese student with whom his classmates had become familiar appeared the next morning as a changed man

I can also retell the story from the Biography of Sadhu Sundar Singh, apostle of India, who was invited to preach before European kings and governors, how he was saved from suicide by a vision of the crucified Lord that soundly converted him from Hinduism to Christianity, and how he gave up a rich inheritance to preach Christ barefoot all over India and Tibet. His India-wide testimony and visible conversion experience is disseminated today by the film "Journey to the Sky," a Ken Anderson production.

With the conversion testimonies of these two modern Oriental saints, we cannot, sitting frog in our own well, deny greater things of God that have occurred on wider spiritual horizons. Nevertheless, we are not to expect direct revelations of God to us in our day-to-day livelihood like the misguided Charismatic claimants. We must advance on the road of God's Progressive Revelation to His Church.

Now, while a young Christian just saved from heathenism may not easily determine what is God's will in a certain situation, e.g., in the matter of marriage, he may find God's direction by consulting his pastor or elder. Like Abraham's servant being directed by his God-fearing master, as we will see below.

II. Cooperative

Having been assured of the Lord's direction for our life, and we seek to do His Will to the best of our ability, He will surely bless us and lead us to good success. This Divine help we call the cooperative will of God.

A classical example of the cooperative will of God bringing success to our endeavours may be taken from Genesis 24. Here, as we have just said, we see Abraham commanding his eldest servant to go to his own country to find a wife for his son Isaac. When the servant came to Abraham's people, but being a stranger in a foreign land, he prayed for two things to happen as a confirmation from the Lord: "And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master" (verse 14). Sure enough, Rebekah, the daughter of Abraham's brother, came upon the scene and did exactly as the servant had prayed. At this the servant bowed and worshipped the Lord. "And he said, Blessed

be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of His mercy and His truth: *I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren*" (verse 27).

How many a time in the course of our service to God have we not met with such good speed and success? Coming to Awana this school vacation, I am sure there are a good number who can also testify of the Lord's provision and arrangement. That is the testimony of Sister Lim Meng Kean in her preliminary report on the Awana Conference. Who knows some Issac might not find his Rebekah here?! (*Prov. 18:22*). In finding a life-partner we surely need God's help. How? When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us (*Matt. 6:33*).

The story of Ruth, how she forsook her people and country to follow Naomi to her hometown in Bethlehem and how she was led of the Lord to the field of Boaz, is well known. And was this not love at first sight, by the Cooperative Will of God? Read the exciting events in the first day of their lives in the barley field:

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art

athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel; under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. (*Ruth 2:5-14*)

Today we have matrimonial problems in our Church. Many have difficulty finding a life-partner. What is the pastor's advice? As I have just cited from Matt. 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; (like Ruth who declared to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God...") and all these things [including life-partners] shall be added unto you." Attend Church regularly, faithfully, serve God best and He by His cooperative will will do the rest! Remember what the old servant of Abraham said at sight of Rebekah: "I being in the way, the Lord led me."

Nevertheless, what I say here is a general rule. Marriage, being one of the deep mysteries of life, has exceptions. Jesus

says there are some who would rather remain single for the Gospel's sake (*Matt. 19:12*). For further enlightenment read Paul's dissertation in I Cor. 7 which is 40 verses long!

Now, the cooperative will of God that prospers us along life's way may not work according to our near-sighted wish, but rather contrary, so as to fulfil His higher purpose. This we can learn from Paul as he forges on in his Second Missionary Journey. Twice during this journey, as he would go via Asia and afterwards through Bithynia, the Holy Spirit forbade him. He was channelled rather to Troas. Here, in a night vision, he saw a man of Macedonia standing on the other side of the sea praying him to "come over into Macedonia, and help us" (*Acts 16:6-10*). Now, here is Luke's testimony of God's cooperative will working in Paul's behalf, "and after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came *with a straight course* to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis" (*Acts 16:10-12*).

In the early part of my journeyings, I went through a similar experience. After the Lord had turned me around from going to study Law in London to China rather to study Theology, I came midway to Shanghai, purporting to go onward to Chungking in West China where I was accepted as a student. From Shanghai to Chungking by river boat would entail another 2,000 miles. With my aunt's objection and simultaneously coming into contact with Dr Chia Yu-Ming, principal of the Seminary in Nanking, I was re-routed to Nanking, only 150 miles from Shanghai. From Nanking the Lord led me to study in the USA. This He did in the fall of 1947, two years before Mao took over all of China. As I look back on this part of life's mysterious wanderings, I can assuredly say I was led to higher ground by the cooperative will of God. Yea, God had snatched me from the mouth of the Red Chinese Dragon.

There are students from 14 countries now studying at Far Eastern Bible College. Almost all of you are here at this Awana

Conference. Did you drift into FEBC by chance, or was it the cooperative hand of God that led you, yea, even in providing for your travel and support? Can you say with Abraham's servant, "I being in the way, the Lord led me"? Have you thanked the Lord for His goodness and loving kindness?

III. Punitive

Every servant of God must be attentive to the Master's command. To take lightly His Word and to question Him is death. Let us learn a lesson from the story of Balaam in Numbers 22-24. Balaam was a Gentile prophet. He was asked by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse Israel who were a threat to Moab as they gathered to enter the Promised Land. When Balaam brought up the matter to the Lord, he was told not to go with the king's emissaries nor curse Israel at all.

When Balak sent more honourable princes to Balaam, offering the prophet more rewards, Balaam brought the matter before the Lord again, being motivated by his lust for gain. He should never have done that. God, having spoken once, Balaam should have heard, with his two ears, twice (*Psalm 62:11*). God, who is unchangeable, immutable in His character cannot be influenced like fickle man (*Num. 22:19*) to do otherwise than what He has already said. Since Balaam was moved by material gain, he had set his heart to go to Balak. To serve him right, the Lord said "Go" to him, this not to his promotion, but punishment. We call this His punitive will.

Sure enough as he set out on his donkey, God's anger was kindled against him, "because he went." The angel of the Lord stood as an adversary against him. The donkey, in order to avoid the angel with sword drawn, crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. This she did three times, whereupon Balaam began to beat his beast "but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet"

(*II Pet. 2:16*). When the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, he cringed before the angel, who chided, "Thy way is perverse before Me." For going against God's will, Balaam was ultimately punished with death (*Num. 31:8*). Though the Lord said to him, "Go," it was rather this: "Go and die!"

We have a New Testament counterpart to Balaam. It is Judas. Though Jesus did His best to save him, his mind was set to betray his Master. So the Lord said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly" (*John 13:27*). Judas, by selling his Lord for 30 pieces of silver, ended up on the gallows, and when he fell to his death, his bowels burst to his further condemnation. O the severity of the punitive will of God! What a warning to us, the story of Balaam and the betrayal of Judas.

Let us also learn a lesson from the operation of God's punitive will upon Church leaders today. That Jim Bakker the Charismatic TV evangelist is sentenced to 45 years' imprisonment for fraud, embezzlement and sex offences should be a further admonition to the whole Christian world. Rightly has Pope John XXIII said, "A little sin committed by a priest is greater than a big sin committed by a layman." "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (*Luke 12:47*).

In the light of what we have discussed above, there is a passage of Scripture that baffles the understanding of many Christians that finds a solution under his Punitive Will. It is the Word of God to Isaiah "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (*Isa 6:9,10*). This very Scripture is quoted six times in the New Testament — *Matt 13:14,15*; *Mk 4:12*; *Lk 8:10*; *Jn 12:40*; *Acts 28:26,27*; *2 Cor 3:14,15*.

Under what circumstances is this Isaiah passage quoted? If we look at the Matthew passage, it is by our Lord after telling

the parable of the Sower. Matt 13:10-16 reads, "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears, are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."

The key to the above passage is found in v.12, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." The disciples who believed their Master readily understood the moral of the parable, but those who rejected our Lord's teaching understood not e.g. the Pharisees and scribes,, whom Jesus denounced as "blind guides of the blind" (Lk 6:39). Since they rejected Jesus, Jesus rejected them. Having turned their eyes from the Truth to Darkness, they became blinded, which served them right. They were rightfully judged. May we not call this "judicial blinding"?

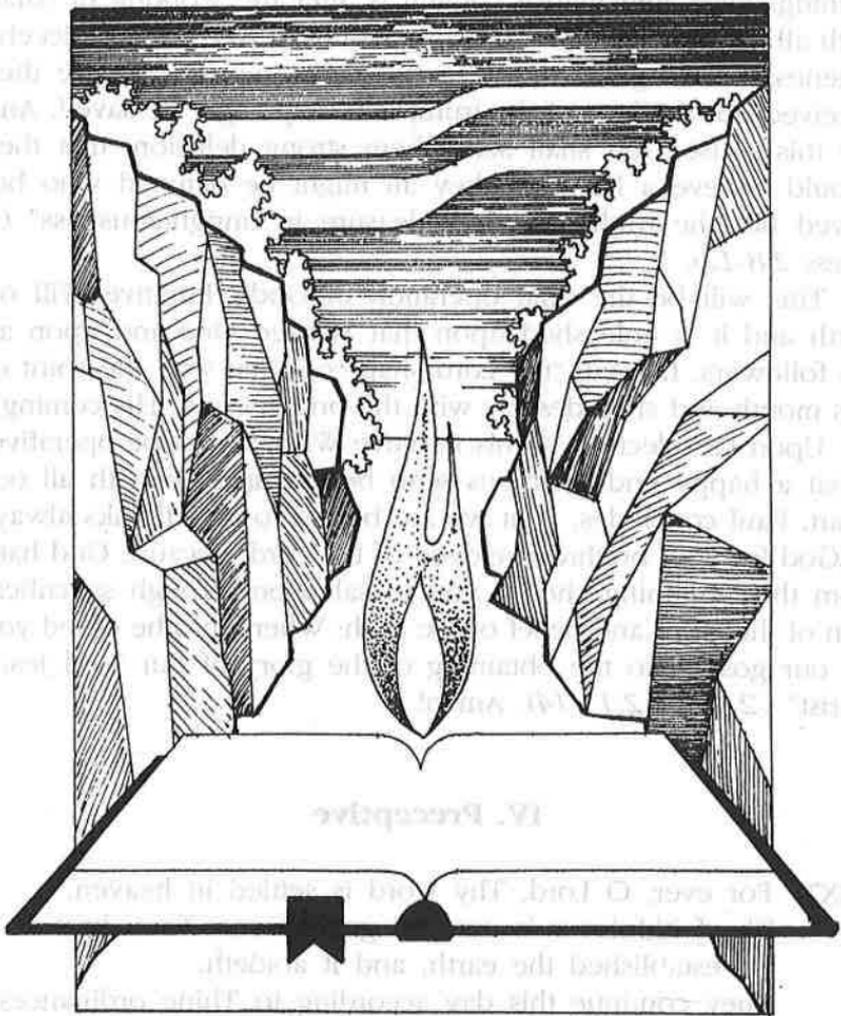
When men turn away from God to worship idols, "professing themselves to be 'wise' they became fools" (*Rom 1:22*), Paul denounces them flatly, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness...for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections" (*Rom 1:24-26*). This rejection of the reprobate surely comes under His Punitive Will.

A classical example of rejecting God time after time so that

one is rejected by God is the case of Pharaoh versus Moses. "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said" (*Ex 8:15*). Then follows the record of Pharaoh's heart that it "was hardened" when the magicians said to Pharaoh "This is the finger of God" after they lost out in their contest with Moses. It is after Pharaoh has hardened his heart repeatedly that the record introduces a new phenomenon, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for *I have hardened his heart*, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord". The New Testament commentary by the pen of St. Paul on God's hardening Pharaoh's heart reads: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth... What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." (*Rom 9:17-18,22*).

Since Pharaoh had hardened his heart, God justly hardened his heart further in what Calvin calls "judicial hardening". Pharaoh is justly punished for his stubborn unrepentance. Pharaoh is stewed in his own juice. This obviously comes under the Punitive Will of God. And we have many other examples in the Old Testament of God's hardening the hearts of the reprobate, such as the punishment of Sihon, king of Heshbon. "But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day" (*Dt 2:30*).

In the last days, and these are the end-days in which we live, "Perilous times shall come" (*2 Tim 3:1*). "And then shall that



**The Word of God (His Preceptive Will) is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path (Ps 119:105)**

Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 *Thess* 2:8-12).

This will be the final operation of God's Punitive Will on earth and it is unleashed upon that Wicked One and upon all his followers. Indeed, "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming".

Upon His elect ones, this Punitive Will will not be operative. What a happy ending for us who believe in Him with all our heart. Paul concludes, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 *Thess* 2:13-14). Amen!

IV. Preceptive

TEXT: For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.
Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
They continue this day according to Thine ordinances: for all are Thy servants.
Unless Thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.
I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me.

I am Thine, save me; for I have sought Thy precepts.
The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will
consider Thy testimonies.

I have seen an end of all perfection: but Thy
commandment is exceedingly broad.

O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.
Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser
than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy
testimonies are my meditation.

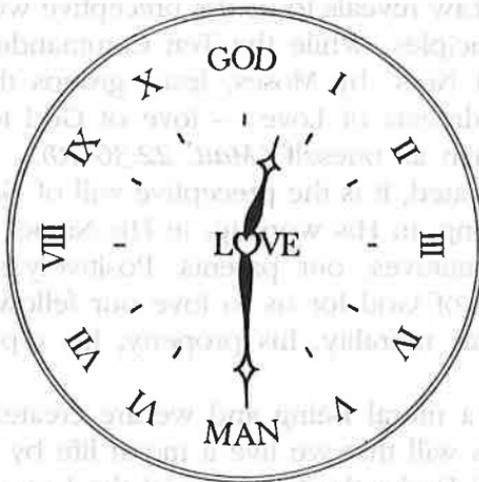
I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy
precepts.

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might
keep Thy word.

I have not departed from Thy judgements: for Thou hast
taught me.

How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter

The Clock of the Preceptive Will of God



Love is the fulfilling of the Law — Rom 13:10

than honey to my mouth!

Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

(*Psalm 119:89-105*)

The ultimate of God's progressive revelation to His Church is that revelation committed eventually to writing. At first God spoke to the patriarchs by oracles and visions. In the course of time, God's Word was put down in parchment and ink, and now by the printed page. First, by Moses in the giving of the Law, then by the writing prophets, and finally by the apostles. These writings total 66 Books, to make up our Bible. We reject the books of the Apocrypha which the Roman Church and the Ecumenicals put at a par with God's Word.

The synopsis of the Law given by Moses is the Ten Commandments. According to the Jews, the first Five Commandments teach us our duty towards God and the second Five Commandments teach us our duty towards our fellowmen. These we call precepts. The Law reveals to us the preceptive will of God under Ten Great Principles. While the Ten Commandments are given in "Thou Shalt Nots" by Moses, Jesus groups them under two great commandments of Love — love of God to the uttermost and love of man as oneself (*Matt. 22:36-40*).

Positively stated, it is the preceptive will of God that we love God in His being, in His worship, in His Name, in His Day and in His representatives, our parents. Positively stated, it is the preceptive will of God for us to love our fellowman in respect of his body, his morality, his property, his reputation and his prosperity.

As God is a moral Being and we are created beings in His image, it is His will that we live a moral life by the light of His preceptive will. Under the teachings of the Law we have a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. This light by His

precepts shines so brightly before us that one wrong step or transgression of God's Law is clearly seen so that we are without excuse. In fact these precepts are engraved in our hearts so that we know within ourselves the difference between right and wrong. The apostle Paul says, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (*Rom 2:14,15*).

Not only do the Ten Commandments reveal to us the preceptive will of God, yea, all the statutes and judgements based on the Decalogue given by Moses' hand, and maxims from the Proverbs of Solomon, further expound His preceptive will. "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (*Deut. 4:8,9*). To Joshua, Moses' successor, God said, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (*Joshua 1:8*).

Indeed, all the examples, either good or bad, recorded in Holy Script of the fathers, of kings and prophets, of knights and knaves, are "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (*I Cor. 10:11*).

One lesson on the preceptive will I've learnt from an Old Testament personage is the story of the prophet of Judah God had sent to rebuke Jeroboam, the newly-installed king of the break-away Northern Kingdom of Israel. The command to the prophet was that after his mission was accomplished he should not eat at the place he had visited and he should return to Judah

The Preceptive Will of God...



...is also like a Mirror.

— James 1:22-25

by another way. Because he disobeyed the Lord by eating with an old prophet he was killed by a lion on his way home. This has taught me to do just one thing when called to serve in another country, such as America, India or Australia. "In the words of the Lord Jesus, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and finish His work" (*Jn. 4:34*). In so doing the Lord has rewarded me with a time of profitable service and good health upon accomplishing each mission.

By reading the Bible a daily portion and meditating on its precepts one is more and more attuned to His preceptive will. But to open the Bible at random and put one's finger on any verse blindly to ascertain God's will is to practise Bibliomancy. The first time you might hit on Judas being told by the Lord to do the thing he wanted to do quickly. The second time you might read of Judas going out to hang himself. This is the sorriest way of seeking the preceptive will of God. This is like fortune-telling by picking at random divination cards with the help of birds and tortoises as practised in heathen lands.

To help young Christians know God's will for their lives through Bible study, we have what is known as Read, Pray, Grow (RPG) work-books. These easy to understand commentaries are edited and published by Dr. S. H. Tow. We heartily recommend them to your daily reading of the Bible. Further admonition from James 1:22-25: "But be ye doers of His Word and not hearers (readers) only, deceiving yourselves. For if any be a hearer (reader) of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

V. Permissive

In studying what theologians have called the permissive will of God, there is no better example that I can find than the example of Job:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face; and the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord (*Job 1:6-12*).

Armed with the permission of the Lord to wreak havoc on Job's house and riches but not on his life, Satan instigated the Sabceans and Chaldeans to rob and plunder Job's children, oxen and asses. This was followed by fire fallen from heaven that burnt up their sheep and servants. Finally when the sons and daughters were eating in their eldest brother's house there came a whirlwind from the wilderness that tore through their banqueting house and left them all dead. Now, when all this was reported to Job, he said not a word against his God. He fell to the

ground and worshipped: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (*Job 1:21*).

When God gave Satan permission to afflict Job further with boils and his wife taunted him to "curse God and die," Job remained steadfast in yielding to the Lord's chastisement. "In all these did not Job sin with his lips" (*Job 2:10*).

Did the Lord know all the calamities that befell Job when he gave Satan permission to test Job? Of course, He did. All the more He knew Job would pass the test with flying colours. Job's trust in the Lord, under any circumstance, even going through fire and sword, was amply vindicated. And what God permitted, He permitted not out of weakness, like an old indulgent father his wayward grown-up daughter, but rather from strength.

Twenty-five years ago the Lord tested me with a trauma that brought me back to Job. The Lord took away my wife and youngest daughter in a motor accident that involved 50 Lifers heading towards Cameron Highlands. This was Easter Monday, 1965. Though it shocked me white, the grace of God sustained me. The words of Job came to me to comfort and strengthen me in the hour of darkest gloom. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (*Job 1:21*). "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (*Job 13:15*). I, through learning the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, had no doubt this tragedy had come by His permissive will. He would work out good from evil. I see this more clearly now after 25 years.

God purposely allowed the evil to come that good might result. And did not God reward Job with another family of seven sons and three daughters and goods and animals twofold? Job was rewarded further with twice the usual span of life, 140 years, through four generations.

How comforting is the doctrine of the permissive will of God, of a God who brings good out of evil. So could Joseph in

his old age forgive his brothers who out of a wicked heart had sold him to Egypt. But God used their wrath to bring up His praise (*Ps. 76:10*), for through Joseph's ordeal in Egypt, the lives of the big family of Jacob were preserved in the famine. Moreover, by their coming to Egypt the family of Jacob grew to a powerful nation. Let us learn the permissive will of God in Joseph's own words, "and God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it is not you that sent me hither, but God. And He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt...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" (*Gen. 45:7,8; 50:20*).

If you are perplexed with the hard times you have gone through, know for sure these have come not without God's permissive will. When you are still going through much suffering, be uplifted even now that though these seem evil against you, God means it unto good (*Gen. 50:20*). Oftentimes I have counselled women in their matrimonial troubles. Many are bereft of their husbands, being stolen by some more attractive persons that cut into their lives. As a result these troubled souls are turned to the Lord. So I comfort them, "If you had not met with this trouble, you would not have become a Christian. Now, while you have lost your husband, on the other hand you have gained Christ! He will take care of you better than a husband, and be a Father to your deserted children." God sometimes has to permit such heartbreak in order to save a soul, and more than one, when the children are also saved.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (*Ps. 42:11*).

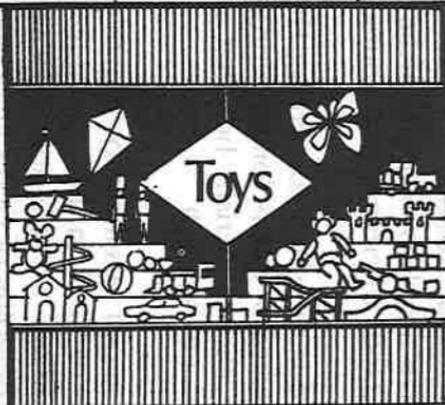
"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His

sale

sale

SALE

ONLY BUYERS
CAN ENTER!



If John 3:16's offer of salvation to anyone who would believe is a restricted offer only to the Elect, then it is like holding a SALE with the stipulation, "ONLY BUYERS CAN ENTER"!

purpose" (*Rom. 8:28*). Yes, all things, whether good or bad, sweet or bitter, will turn out good and sweet in the end to the God-loving Christian. On the contrary, all things, good in the eyes of the world, will turn out bad for the non-Christian in the Day of Reckoning.

VI. Desiderative

Another aspect of God's will is what we call the Desiderative. This word comes from the Latin implying desire or a longing for. The desiderative will of God is revealed in such Scripture verses as follows:

1. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (*I Tim. 2:3,4*).
2. "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" (*Ezek. 18:23*).
3. "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (*Ezek. 18:32*).
4. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness: but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (*II Pet. 3:9*).

Whether stated positively or negatively, these verses express the attribute of God in His "goodness" (Westminster Shorter Catechism Answer to Question 4). The word "goodness" here refers to the outgoing of God's grace and love and mercy toward the creature in his sin and need. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (*Rom. 2:4*) — Buswell.

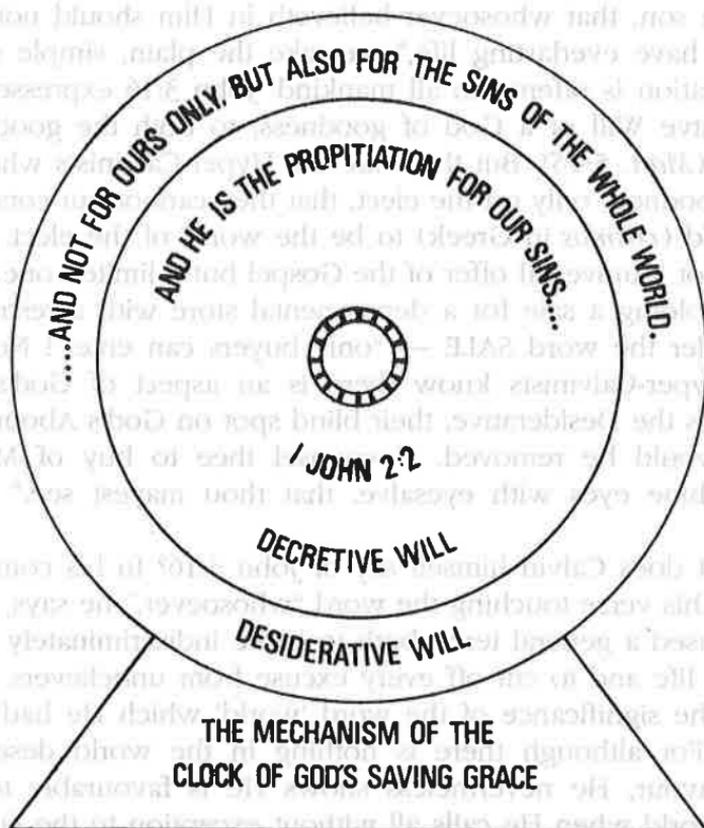
It is of God's character not to exult like Nero in the torture

and death of his Christian subjects, nor like Hitler exterminating six million Jews with a stone-dead heart, but the very opposite. God is good, God is love. So it is in Himself to see sinners turn to Him in repentance, for He is not willing that any should perish.

Thus when we read John 3:16, the most famous verse in the whole Bible, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," we take the plain, simple sense that salvation is offered to all mankind. John 3:16 expresses the Desiderative Will of a God of goodness, to both the good and the evil (*Matt. 5:45*). But there are the Hyper-Calvinists who see God's goodness only on the elect, that they cannot but conclude the world (*cosmos* in Greek) to be the world of the elect. John 3:16 is not a universal offer of the Gospel but a limited one. This is like holding a sale for a departmental store with a restrictive sign under the word SALE — "only buyers can enter"! Now, if these Hyper-Calvinists know there is an aspect of God's will known as the Desiderative, their blind spot on God's Abounding Grace would be removed. "I counsel thee to buy of Me anoint thine eyes with eyesalve. that thou mayest see." (*Rev. 3:18*).

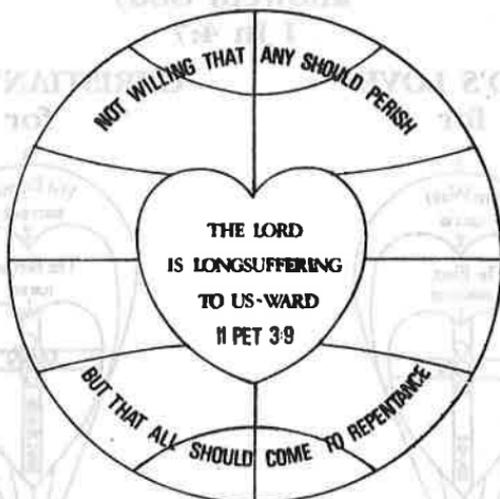
What does Calvin himself say of John 3:16? In his commentary on this verse touching the word "whosoever," he says, "And he has used a general term; both to invite indiscriminately all to share in life and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such is also the significance of the word 'world' which He had used before. For although there is nothing in the world deserving God's favour, He nevertheless shows He is favourable to the whole world when He calls all without exception to the faith of Christ which is indeed an entry into life." If the Hyper-Calvinists should still insist on the Gospel in John 3:16 being offered only to the Elect, let them answer what the apostle John says in I John 2:2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." By the desider-

“Sufficient For All, Efficient For The Elect”



I John 2:2: John 3:16

"Sufficient For All, Efficient For The Elect"



The heart represents God's Decretive Will in electing us, and the sphere His Desiderative Will towards all mankind.

CALVIN'S

HYPER-CALVINIST'S



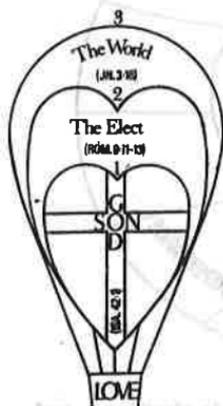
**VIEW
of
John 3:16**

**VIEW
of
John 3:16**

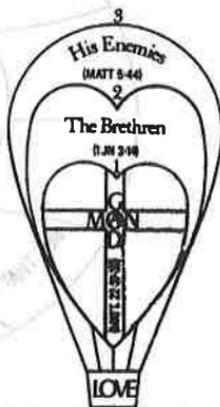
The Three Degrees of Divine Love
(Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God
and everyone that loveth is born of God, and
knoweth God)

I Jn 4:7

GOD'S LOVE
for



CHRISTIAN'S LOVE
for

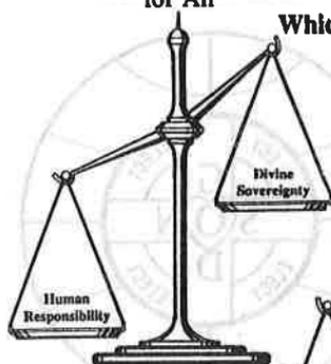


(....I tell you of heavenly things Jn 3:12)

Sufficient-efficient
for All

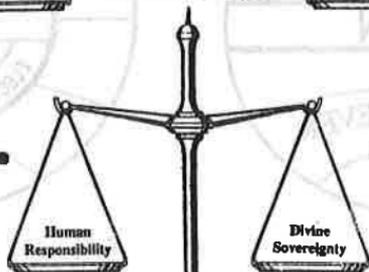
Sufficient-efficient
for Elect

Which View of the Atonement
do you take?

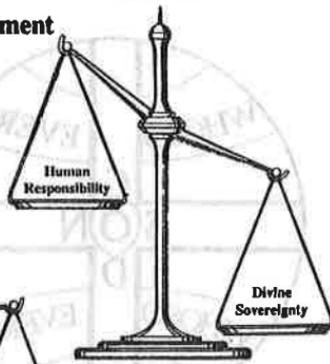


Arminianism

Sufficient for All
Efficient for Elect



Calvinism = Paulinism
(Systematized)



Hyper-Calvinism

"And ye shall know the Truth
And the Truth shall make you free." (Jn 8:32)

ative will of God we will see clearly what is succinctly stated by Augustine on the effectualness of Christ's death — "Sufficient for all, efficient for the elect." — Calvin in his commentary on I John 2:2 above accepts this formula as correct (Buswell).

Another way to show that John 3:16 is a universal offer of salvation to the lost is the parable of the sower (*Matt. 13:3-8*). According to the Hyper-Calvinists the sower would be seen digging a hole in the good ground and pouring all the seeds into it. These are their precious elect. According to our Lord, however, the seeds are scattered to the uttermost part of the field. Hence, there are those that fall by the wayside, on stony ground and among thorns and thistles. The last three places where the good seeds landed yielded nothing. That cannot stop the good ground bring forth an hundredfold. Nor do we dispute the supralapsarian emphasis of Christ dying in fact for the elect, but to restrict John 3:16 to the elect is like pouring all the seeds into that hole.

As to II Peter 3:9, "... The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," this is what Calvin has to say:

This is His wondrous love towards the human race, that He desires all men to be saved, and is prepared to bring even the perishing to safety. We must notice the order, that God is prepared to receive all men into repentance, so that none may perish. These words indicate the means of obtaining salvation, and whoever of us seeks salvation must learn to follow in this way.

It could be asked here, if God does not want any to perish, why do so many in fact perish? My reply is that no mention is made here of the secret decree of God by which the wicked are doomed to their own ruin, but only of His loving-kindness as it is made known to us in the Gospel. There God stretches out

His hand to all alike, but He only grasps those (in such a way as to lead to Himself) whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world.

Now, when we see the desiderative will of God applies to all men, we will be the more zealous to spread the Word to as wide a field as possible. We will not like those Hyper-Calvinist Baptist ministers, when approached by William Carey to support his mission to India, be heard saying, "God has predestined whom He would save. He doesn't need you!" How like the Sale in that departmental store we have mentioned above that has a restriction beneath the big sale sign: "Only buyers can enter"!

But our God is not static. Our God is dynamic. Our God is not a computer. Our God is Controller of the universe and Comforter to the Church, yea, even to you and me, who says, "And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (*John* 6:37). God's grace is not bound, but abounding. *John* 3:16 is God's universal offer of salvation to everyone who believes. When you believe, you will soon know from Scripture you are elect.

VII. Decretive

TEXT: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that

died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:28-39)

The most wonderful aspect of God’s will, and by no means the last, is His decretive will. The decretive will of God is clearly taught in Romans and Ephesians insofar as this message is concerned. The Westminster Shorter Catechism Answer 7 says, “The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” From a study of Romans and Ephesians we discover that our salvation is entirely of the Lord, for except He had chosen us from before the foundation of the world, we would not be what we are today. No man can believe in Christ if he had not been predestined, foreordained, pre-chosen by God the Father. Calvin’s motto is, “Salvation is of the Lord” (*Jonah 2:9*).

This deep truth is confirmed by our Lord Himself in His great discourse on the Bread of life. “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. ... And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ... No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (*John 6:37,39,44*).

So, Christians are called not only saints but also the elect (*1 Pet. 1,2*). Are you grateful that God had not left you out when

He made the Plan of Salvation of the Saints and had counted you in? If you know this part of the decretive will of God, happy are you for a start!

The decretive will of God that will humble us is that He predestined us to be saved not according to His foreknowledge of our merit or demerit. He decreed to save us merely out of His good pleasure according to the counsel of His own will. For example, of the twins Esau and Jacob, God chose Jacob above Esau when neither had done any good or bad in the mother's womb. So, if you have believed, you are chosen, and you are a trophy of His decretive will. There is no merit in you. Even your faith is without merit, for it did not generate from you. It is given you from Above. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (*Eph. 2:8,9*). Further read verse 10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." A Christian, therefore, cannot boast of his merit of good works. A Christian cannot be puffed up with pride of race nor pride of place, pride of face and least of all, pride of grace.

Then what about those who are become reprobate? The accursed, like Judas Iscariot. Did he come under God's decretive will, under His predestination? Of course he did! Solomon says, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (*Prov. 16:4*). Then, if God so decreed him to be a traitor to his Master, what else could he do? This argument is raised in Romans 9:19, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His Will?"

The case of Judas Iscariot is given this verdict by our Saviour, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born" (*Mark 14:21*). No doubt the decretive will of God had it that Judas would betray Jesus, but Judas in betraying His Master must bear his human

responsibility. Why? Because when he betrayed His Master it came out of his own wicked heart to kill Jesus and not from anywhere else, except he gave way to Satan to direct him in his plot. Thus our Lord says in another place, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he offend one of these little ones" (*Luke 17:1,2*). Human responsibility! The opening paragraph of Chapter III of the Westminster Confession, "Of God's Eternal Decree" declares: God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second courses taken away, but rather established.

Says Dr Buswell, "The Scripture is equally clear that the chargeable cause of the loss of the lost is in the lost."

The clearest indication, to my mind, that the lost are the chargeable cause of their own lost condition is found in the fact that the Scripture repeatedly and emphatically declares that God is angry with them on this very point, namely that they reject His grace. "He who believes on Him is not condemned. He who does not believe has been condemned already because [*both*] he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, for their works were evil" (*John 3:18,19*). "He who believes in the Son has eternal life. He who does not believe in the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him" (*John 3:36*). "... Because they did not receive the love of the truth so that they would be saved, even on this account God sends to them a deceitful energy, so that they believe falsehood; and so they are all condemned

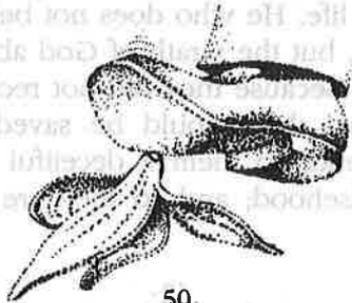
who do not believe the truth but take pleasure in iniquity" (*II Thess. 2:10-12*). From these Scriptures it is clear that God is angry with the lost and holds them responsible for their lost condition, on the ground that they have rejected His grace.

That God is not the chargeable cause of the loss of the lost the Scripture makes clear! "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live? For I have no pleasure in the death of him who dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." (Buswell, *Systematic Theology II*, p.154, 155).

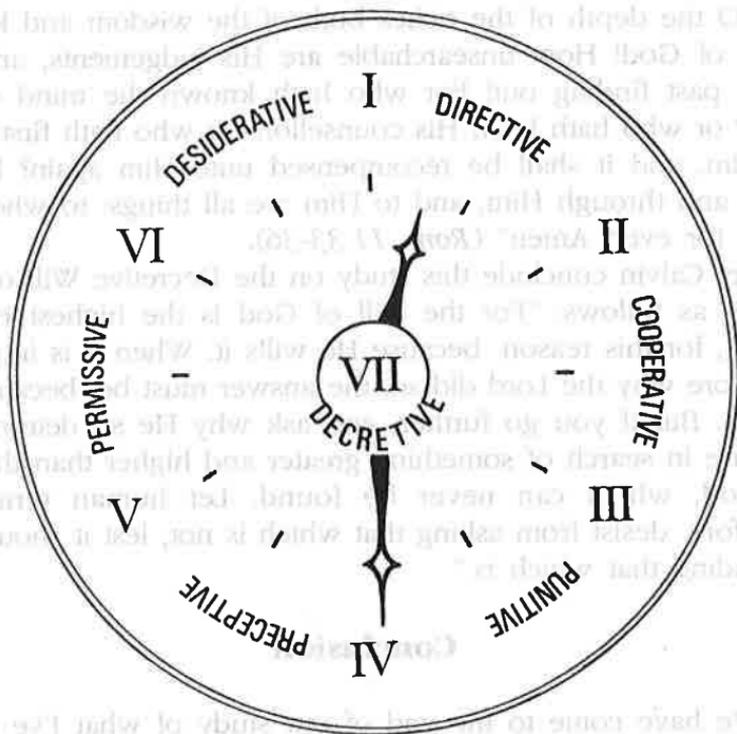
Yes, Judas was one of the privileged Twelve to be chosen (as an apostle), who lived with his Master and saw all the miracles that He did. Nevertheless, Jesus called him a devil because of his disbelief and wilful turning from the Truth.

The decretive will is a high mystery of Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility. It may be illustrated by this famous moot question often discussed in the schools of law. Suppose I invite you to come to my party. On the way you trip on a banana skin and break your kneecap. Who is to blame? You or I? Can you sue me at law?

Another example of the reprobate fulfilling God's purpose is Pharaoh, cited by Paul in Romans 9:17, "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my Name might be declared throughout the earth". A modern Pharaoh is Saddam Hussein who is now waxing violent against the whole world. But



The Clock of the Sevenfold Will of God



All other aspects of God's Will are "energised" by His Decretive Will

God who punishes Pharaoh can do the same to the Arab dictator so that His power and glory will shine throughout the earth. "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory..." (*Rom. 9:22,23*).

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (*Rom. 11:33-36*).

Let Calvin conclude this study on the Decretive Will of God for us as follows: "For the will of God is the highest rule of justice, for this reason, because He wills it. When it is inquired, therefore why the Lord did so, the answer must be, because He would. But if you go further, and ask why He so determined, you are in search of something greater and higher than the will of God, which can never be found. Let human termerity, therefore, desist from asking that which is not, lest it should fail of finding that which is."

Conclusion

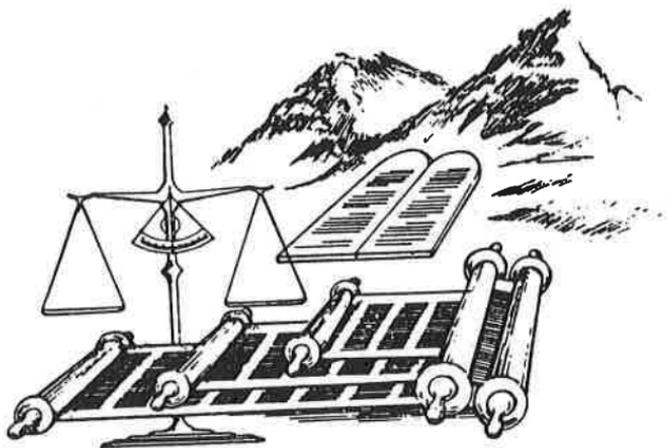
We have come to the end of our study of what I've called "the clock of the sevenfold will of God." As to His directive and preceptive wills, they are simple to understand like the reading of the time on the face of the clock. Of the decretive will of God, this is a subject that we cannot rush in with impunity. Says the Westminster Confession of Faith: "The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care..." Being a subject that reaches deep into the mind of God, using the figure of a clock, it is like knowing the ways of

the mechanism within. While we may never bring the two parallel lines of Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility together, we have this consolation that as long as the clock ticks, we can know what time of the day or night it is.

May the sevenfold will of God, viz., I. Directive; II. Cooperative; III. Punitive; IV. Preceptive; V. Permissive; Vi. Desiderative; VII. Decretive; give us enlightenment in our understanding of what the Lord's will for our life is. Then, as we keep our eyes on the clock of this sevenfold will, we will not miss our appointment with God or with man. We will be on time, all the time! Hallelujah, Amen.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (*Eph. 5:15-17*).

*God's
Holy
Law*



GOD'S HOLY LAW

Text: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6-15

In these days of widespread lawlessness, affecting even the Christian Church to our shame and pain it is not only timely, but urgent, for us to preach on God's holy Law. This Law God has given to mankind through Moses in the Ten Commandments.

Before we go into this subject, let us learn a lesson from the fortunate state of our nation under God, Singapore that we love. Though one of the smallest nations, Singapore is known throughout the world. We have a good many firsts. We have the tallest hotel, and at the Bird Park I was told we have the highest man-made waterfall in the world! We are the biggest port and we have the best airline. We are the richest in Asia next to Japan, but if you do not believe me, just look into your CPF account! How is it that a tiny nation like ours has become the envy of bigger nations, and the praise of those who respect us? The answer to this question is good government, and a corollary to this is a law-abiding people.

When God created man and put him into the Garden of Eden, which was Paradise, or Heaven on earth, here was the perfection of perfections of good government. But to live happily in Paradise, man must obey his Creator. A holy God must have a consecrated people, a people absolutely obedient to His holy Law. To deviate in the least from His will or holy Law is disaster. So, the first thing that God did to the first man and woman after bringing them into the world was to tell them the vital importance of obeying His holy Law. This He did by setting up two trees in the Garden, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (*Gen. 2:16,17*).

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die...And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Now, we know the tragic sequel to this primeval event, how Eve under temptation and Adam by deliberation ate of the forbidden fruit. By the way, that fruit was not the apple as the world blindly believes and repeats. Yes, even ministers in high government misquote this portion of the Bible.

Now, the Lord God is a just God. He did not say "thou shalt not touch" as Eve reported. All He said was "Thou shalt not eat of it." It is dangerous to add to God's Word or to take away from it. At any rate, both man and woman had eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and in so doing they brought death into the world. They broke the holy Law of God. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (*Rom. 5:12*).

That man should obey God absolutely as expressed in the Commandment not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is known in theological language as the Covenant of Works. That is to say, if man would do all that God commands him, then he can live as long as he keeps on obeying Him. Thus Moses promises the Israelites life in the Promised Land if they will refrain from their old Egyptian ways and keep themselves from the heathen practices of the Canaanites and fully follow the Lord. "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do My judgement, and keep My ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgements: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord" (*Lev. 18:3-5*).

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."(Ezek. 18:4)

The Covenant of Works is not only transacted openly between God and man in a verbal statement, but invisibly inscribed upon the human heart. We are given a conscience that tells us inwardly that if we do good, God will bless us, and conversely, if we do bad, God will punish us. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality,

eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath ... which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (*Rom 2: 6-15*).

But man has broken the holy Law of God. Man has sinned, and God's Word declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (*Ezek. 18-4*). "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (*Gal. 2:16*). "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (*James 2:10*).

Man having failed to keep the Covenant of Works, he is expelled from the Garden. He not only has to die, but also to live a life of toil and sweat, and woman must suffer pain in childbirth. Man has lost his right to live. To redeem him from death, God has to work on man's behalf by sending a Saviour. This is foretold in *Genesis 3:15* when God said to the Serpent. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." By the death of the Virgin-born Son of God on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins (His heel is bruised), Satan, who has brought us into death, is crushed. This work of Christ in delivering us from sin and death and restoring life everlasting to us is called "the Covenant of Grace." "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (*Eph. 2:8-10*). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom. 6:23*).

God's Covenant of Grace Confirms the Ten Commandments

There are many in the world today who are working their

way to heaven by deeds of charity. Some Church-goers think that by offering money they will find compassion from God. This is like the Buddhist concept of earning a place in the Western Paradise by helping the poor; like the Roman Catholic buying indulgences, or doing penance. This will never save you. The way to life is not through works, but through "repentance [from sin] toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Acts 20, 21*). Are you trusting in your good works and righteousness which the Bible declares to be "filthy rags" (*Isa. 64:6*)? For we are only condemned by God's holy Law.

Since we are saved by grace through faith, and not by works, "do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" (*Rom. 3:31*). The Covenant of Grace in no way abrogates God's holy Law, i.e., the Ten Commandments. Rather, it confirms.

The Ten Commandments are the full expression of the moral law of God. The moral law of God emanates from the holy character of God, like the sun's rays radiating from the sun. They are the foundation of human society, for without this law it would result in crime and anarchy, rebellion and chaos. Inasmuch as God changes not, so His character changes not, and His law changes not. Indeed, all the laws of nations and governments insofar as they are just are founded on His holy Law.

One moral law that stems from the Sixth Commandment is given through Noah: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (*Gen. 9:6*). When a man commits murder, our Singapore law decrees that he be put to death. There is no other alternative. This law is inherited from Great Britain, which was a devout Christian nation in times past. This stabilises our society. But today, Britain has veered from her Christian past. Capital punishment is done away with. What is the result? Murders are rampant and on the increase, and that is the same with every other country that has done away with the Sixth Commandment and capital punishment. The holy Law of God, says Calvin, is a

sword that restrains evil, and must remain always. When it is done away or bound by man's willful foolishness, crime and corruption multiplies. Woe to the nations that take lightly the Law of God.

God's Holy Law Springs From His Holiness and Love

But what is the relationship between the Christian and the holy Law of God? There is a school of theology known as Dispensationalism that says that since the law is done away with by the coming of Christ, we are no more under law. Therefore the Ten Commandments are abrogated together with the ceremonial and statutory laws of the Old Testament. When the Ten Commandments are taken lightly, antinomianism results. Chambers defines antinomianism thus: "The belief that Christians are emancipated by the gospel from the obligation to keep the moral Law — a monstrous abuse and perversion of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith". One moral law, namely the Sabbath law of the Fourth Commandment, is particularly abused. To the Dispensationalists the Lord's Day is the same as any other day. They are not careful to keep it holy, i.e. to separate it for a Day of holy rest and worship. As a result, we find no peace on weekdays, since we spurn the peace He gives when we keep the Lord's Day.

The Ten Commandments remain a restraint to Christians, to keep us from sin. The Ten Commandments, says Calvin, is also like a whip, especially to our flesh, to urge us, like a tardy animal, forward to its work. We need the Law to keep us straight.

It is also a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Christians walking in its light are kept from stumbling into sin. Christians, having the new life of God in them by the new birth, love this law and meditate on its virtues, ever willing to do His will by His holy Precepts. Jesus says, "If you love Me, keep My

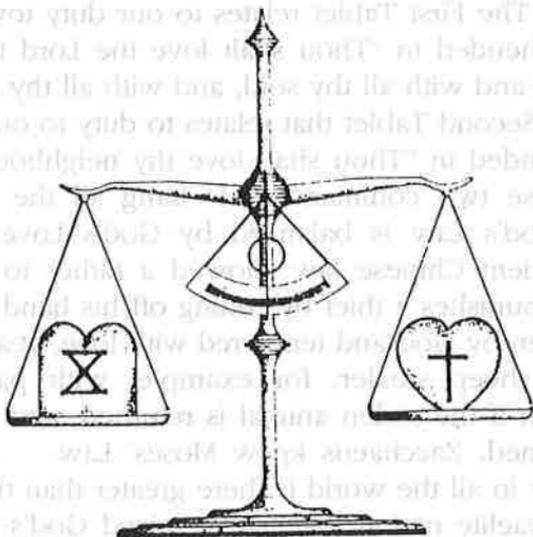
Commandments." And John says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous" (*I John 5:3*). Hence the Ten Commandments are taught to candidates for baptism in the Catechism Class. The Ten Commandments are basic to the Christian Faith.

The holy Law of God springs not only from His holiness but also from His love. The Ten Commandments, according to Jesus' exposition, may be briefly summed up in the Great Commandments. The First Tablet relates to our duty toward God, so it is comprehended in "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." (*Matt. 22:37*). The Second Tablet that relates to duty to our fellow men is comprehended in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Yea, on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. God's Law is balanced by God's Love. By way of contrast, ancient Chinese law allowed a father to kill his son. Muslim law punishes a thief by cutting off his hand. Moses' Law, which is given by God and tempered with love, yea even mercy, punishes a sheep stealer, for example, with paying double compensation if the stolen animal is returned, and four-fold if it be not returned. Zacchaeus knew Moses' Law.

What law in all the world is there greater than this? So Moses asked the Israelite nation that had received God's holy Law on mankind's behalf, "And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself: and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (*Deut. 4:8,9*) Our response: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (*Ps. 119:97*). The whole Bible is God's holy Law. Let us not only keep His holy Law, but treasure it forever in our heart by constant reading and meditation.

In these days of widespread lawlessness affecting even the Christian Church to our shame and pain, it is not only timely, but urgent, for us to preach on God's holy Law.

The Balance between GOD'S Preceptive Will & Desiderative Will



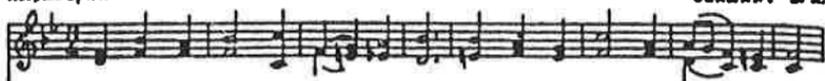
"Owe no man anything, but to Love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. 13:8)

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16)

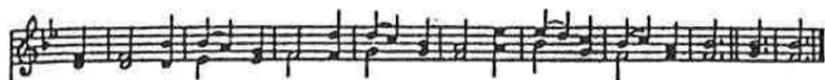
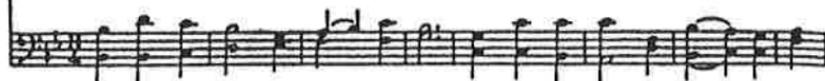
The Ten Commandments

Adapted by F.T.

GERMANY S. M.



1. T-h-o-u no gods shalt have but ME, Be-fore no i-dol bow the knee.
2. Nor dare the Sab-bath day pro-fane. Give to thy par-ents ho-nour due.
3. Abstain from words and deeds un-clean. Steal not for thou of G-o-d art seen.



Take not the name of God in vain, Nor dare the Sab-bath day pro-fane.
Take heed that thou no mur-der d-o, Ab-stain from words and deeds un-clean.
Tell not a wil-ful lie, nor love it, What is thy neigh-bour's do not co-vet. A-men.



Jesus says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5 : 17, 18.

*How do
we know the
Bible is*

 *God's Word* 

HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

Message delivered by Rev. Timothy Tow at Calvary-Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church on Lord's Day, 5th April, 1981.

*Text: II Pet. 1:19, 20.**

To the question, "How do we know the Bible is God's Word", the Bible, anticipating, has already declared the answer!

The Bible is an encyclopaedia of 66 books. It is not only a source book on matters of Faith but also a source-book on matters of Knowledge. The Bible is the one and only storehouse of true knowledge which Calvin has defined to be the knowledge of God and of man (not of mosquitoes)!

The Bible is Truth unchanging. It requires no new edition (did you realise that?) like secular books, whether they be of art or science, to keep abreast of the times. It is the oldest book, yet ever new.

The Bible contains the greatest statement made on knowledge. Jesus says, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (*Jn. 8:32*). If you have believed the Lord Jesus and know but a tenth of the Bible, you are more enlightened than the unbelieving scientist or educationist, Dr. Phelps of Columbia University has made this observation, "A high school student with a knowledge of the Bible is more educated than a college graduate who has no knowledge of the Bible." What is it that made the distinguished educator say so? It must be due to the fact that he recognised the Bible to be a super Book, a supernatural Book, a Book God has given to man.

How do we know the Bible is God's Word? When we say the Bible is God's Word, we mean not as the New-Evangelical

FEBC TAKES OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE WORD OF GOD



In pursuance of the requirement of Far Eastern Bible College that every member of the Board of Directors and Faculty, shall under solemn oath, subscribe to the absolute belief in the doctrine of the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, inerrant and infallible, to the exclusion of the latest leaven of "limited inerrancy" and so-called textual and grammatical errors in the autographs, Members of the Board and Faculty at the 11th Graduation Service on the Lord's Day 29th July 1979 publicly affirmed their allegiance to the Word of God by this oath:

"I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that I believe the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme. So help me God. AMEN."

scholars say, the Bible is God's Word inerrant when it touches on matters of Faith, but not on matters of science, history, geography and language. This wolf-in-sheep teaching is summed up in the damnable doctrine against God's Word called "limited inerrancy". This damnable doctrine we must expose wherever we go. When we say the Bible is the Word of God, we mean what our Lord has categorically stated. The Bible is true and unchanging to the last letter, to the dot of an i and the cross of a t. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount," For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (*Matt. 5:18*). We believe in the words of Dean Burgon of Oxford that: "the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme". This sublimest statement on the Bible ever made by man, in my opinion, is incorporated in the Oath that Faculty and Board members of Far Eastern Bible College are required to take at its annual graduation service. We delight in declaring and reaffirming the Bible to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God because we humbly believe it, and the need of contending for the Faith was never greater than it is today.

Now to the first part of the Question, "How do we know . . ." There are many reasons that can be adduced to show the Bible is God's Holy Word. Calvin in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion", in the Chapter entitled "Rational Proofs to Establish the Belief on the Scripture", lists at least ten reasons. Insofar as this message is concerned, it suffices us to present only four.

The first reason for declaring the Bible to be God's Word was given at the very outset. We stated, "To the question, How do we know the Bible is God's Word, the Bible anticipating has already declared the answer." The writers of the Bible, none of them ever wrote as secular writers would. Secular writers say things out of their own hearts, out of their own thoughts, and declare them to be their own. None of the writers of the Bible state the words they declare are theirs. Everyone speaks in the Name of God or of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every Book points to the Saviour of mankind. The declaration, "Thus saith the Lord," or "Hear the Word of the Lord" or "The Lord spake unto. . . . saying" appears over 3,000 times in the Bible.

The 39 Books of Old Testament were and are received by the Jews to be the very Word of God. This found endorsement in our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus declares His coming is not to destroy or supplant the Old Testament teachings but rather to fulfil them (*Matt. 5:17, 18*).

The Books of New Testament are declared to be on the same footing with the Old when Paul says the faith of the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles (N.T.) and the prophets (O.T.), Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Peter, when quoting Paul, puts him at a par with the Books of the Old Testament. In II Pet. 3:15, 16, Peter says "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures unto their own destruction." Note that Paul's epistles are classed with "the other scriptures" which, of

course, refer to the Old Testament. Further, when Paul writes to the Churches, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he is gratified that the word he gave them was received not as the word of men, "but as it is in truth, the Word of God . . ." (*I. Thess. 2:13*). Summing up, we see how writers of both the O.T. and N.T. declare the Divine origin of their writings, without apology, but with authority and authenticity. Do you believe God is the Author behind every human writer?

II

The second reason why we say the Bible is God's Word is its Unity. The Bible is made up of 66 Books (excluding the 14 books of the Apocrypha which are finding their way back through Ecumenical machinations). These 66 Books are penned by 40 different writers. Moses wrote the first Five Books, David wrote the Psalms and Solomon the Proverbs, etc. These two are kings. The prophets who wrote were from every stratum of society. Some moved in the royal palace, others were herdsmen, nobodies, while the Books in the New Testament are authored by such a scholar as Paul and by fishermen like Peter. The time span between the first and last writers of the Bible is over 1,500 years. Despite all these differences in personages and time, the Bible is woven together as One Book. No Scripture is penned so that it contradicts another. The theme the Books display is one — God's eternal and all-complete plan of salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This all-embracing theme came not from the minds of the writers, since they wrote independently and without mutual consultation across the ages. This all-embracing theme can come from one Supreme Mind, from God alone. If you have not read through the Bible, start reading it tonight! David says, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good" (*Ps. 34:8*), and says again, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth" (*Ps. 119:103*).

III

The third reason why we say the Bible is God's Word is the fulfilment of every prophetic utterance, and the fulfilling today before our eyes of those on Israel and world events, leading to the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The credibility of any prophet is the fulfilment of his prediction. Moses says "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (*Dt. 18:22*).

At a certain charismatic meeting which I had attended, the American preacher who claimed to be a faith-healer gripped the audience by announcing of his special communications from God. "You don't tell me what your sickness is," he thundered, "God will tell me, and I will tell you." I was flabbergasted. I almost fell off my seat! But as he went on, he did not fulfil what he had boasted. He began to drawl as he pointed to a group of 30 ladies sitting in the front, "God tells me one of you is suffering from diabetes!" Immediately I saw through him to be a charlatan and a psychologist. He was a false prophet, for what he predicted he could not bring to pass.

The Bible does not predict and generalise on the prediction. There is no need of using equivocal language by an all-knowing God. The Word of God is yea and Amen, infallible and eternal. Everyone of the prophecies about our Lord Jesus Christ in his first coming - from his conception in the Virgin, His birth and upbringing to His crucifixion and resurrection, has been fulfilled. These are so well-known that we have no need to refer to the Scripture passages. His coming again in power and great glory, setting foot on the Mount of Olives as He went up before His disciples may occur in our time, according to the prophet Zecha-

riah (14:14).

In conjunction with the prophecies on Christ's Second Coming, which have yet to be fulfilled, there are the prophecies about the Restoration of Israel that must first come to pass, because Christ shall return to the throne of David. The Restoration of Israel as a nation May 14, 1948 after 2,000 years of Diaspora (exile in foreign lands), and her victory in the four wars she has fought against her enemies, as foretold in Isaiah 11, are most wonderfully fulfilled in our times. The routes taken by the Israelis to knock out their enemies in the Six Day War of 1967 can be traced practically step by step, according to Isaiah 11:14; "But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west" (Israel's capture of the Gaza strip on the Mediterranean coast). "They shall spoil them of the east together" (Syria is referred in the O.T. as of the east). "They shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (the names of the small countries mentioned here are linked to Jordanian territory, and from Ammon is derived the modern name Amman, capital of Jordan). All the above territories were either conquered or defeated by Israel in the Six Day War. God's Word is fulfilled and will be fulfilled as the present day drama of nations is acted on the stage of history.

There is a tendency by prophetic teachers to set dates or gauge the year of Christ's coming. Every one of these have failed and failed miserably. Why? Because the Prophetic Word of God not only fixes the place and time of fulfilment, but also forbids any intrusion into the sanctity of His secret knowledge. Jesus says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (*Mk. 13:32*). So if prophecies seem not to be fulfilled, they are not fulfilled due to erroneous human interpretations, and not due to the prophecy itself. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the

flower thereof falleth away: But the Word of the Lord endureth forever" (*I Pet. 1:24, 25*). The Bible is God's Holy Word. Don't speak too loudly. "Be still," the Bible says, "and know that I am God" (*Ps. 46:10*).

IV

Now let us come to our fourth and last reason, though not the least. Every reason given to show the Bible is God's Word is as important as the others. This fourth and last reason I'm stating is the absolute accuracy and fidelity of the moral teachings of God's Word.

The Bible has plenty to say on family life. It records the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now, because Abraham had Hagar and Keturah as concubines and Jacob had four wives, the Mormons tried to justify polygamy, and even practise it. To ensure that the records of the patriarchs' polygamous marriages are not a preceptive example, but rather a warning, we must compare with the teaching of other Bible passages. Mal. 2 rebukes the Jews for marrying more than one wife. It challenges them for an answer why God had created one Eve and not two. Sarcastically, was it because He had no more strength to make another woman? No! But that He might have a godly people.

One day when I turned to Ps. 126 to recite the poem on the blessings of home life, and I came to the verse "Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine . . ." I marked the singular noun, wife, in order to show my students the utmost accuracy and fidelity of God's Word in its ethical teachings, and for that matter, on all other matters.

Let us take another case for study. I have heard it so often,

or rather misquoted, "money is the root of all evil". If that is the case, how then did God prosper His children with riches and declare the riches to be His blessings? Gen. 26:12-14 records, "Then Isaac sowed in that land and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great . . . for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds . . ." Money, riches, possessions are not evil of themselves. What St Paul writes to Timothy is, "The love of money is the root of all evil" (*I Tim. 6:10*). How true! A Christian who is blessed with a good job or business that prospers him is blessed indeed. A Christian who becomes covetous, who loves money more than God, soon "falls into temptation and a snare". How it shames the Lord and the Church to read of Christian professional men booked and hooked by the law for one extra, unlawful, morsel of bread. It is not money that entangles them, but the love of money in their covetous hearts.

A third instance will explain what I'm trying to say of God's inerrant Word. Inerrant not only in the form of the letters but even more in the content of their meaning. To test my students, I pretended to say, Jesus said "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with thy mind . . . and Thou shalt love thy neighbour more than thyself". A good many were taken in, but these were soon enlightened by the original statement that is not "more than thyself" but "as thyself". Isn't God fair to all? Paul says, if we love our wives as ourselves that will be good enough. There is no undue stress of spirituality, and no superhuman demand over sinning humans in God's Word. I hope this study of Christian ethics, so holy and so equitable, will make you treasure God's Word as inerrantly sublime in its teachings.

Alas! After all that I've said tonight, after all these objective truths are presented to you, after all the logical arguments have been discharged in a most logical fashion, if you are not a

Christian, you will not fully understand. Are you a born again Christian? If not you won't understand what I've said to show the Bible is God's Word. Jesus says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God (*Jn. 3:3*). Except you have been born by the working of the Holy Spirit in your heart you will not treasure and love the Bible as a Christian would, much less understand. Paul writes in I Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned".

Do you want the Spirit of God to help you understand His wonderful Word? Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel. Trust in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, for by His death on the cross for your sins, He is able to cleanse you and forgive you of all your sins, and give you new life, life everlasting. Then will come to your heart a spontaneous, illuminating answer to the question, "How do we know the Bible is God's Word?".

*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (*II Pet. 1:19, 20*).

*The Way
to Success
in the*

 *Christian Ministry* 

THE WAY TO SUCCESS IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Message delivered at the 42nd Commencement of
Faith Theological Seminary, USA, May 14, 1979

(TEXT: John 21:22, "Follow Thou Me.")

by Rev. Timothy Tow, D.D.

Let me begin by quoting a poem I've gleaned from a booklet I was recently given by Rev. M. M. Myers of Woodland Park Bible Conference, Beckersville, Penna. It reads:

"What is success?" I asked a tree,

Standing beside a wall.

The leaves looked down at me and said,

"Why success is growing tall."

"What is success?" I asked a brook,

Gurgling through the leaves.

It laughing, dancing, said to me,

"A river then to the sea."

"What is success?" I asked a bird,

Singing in the wood.

It answered me in lilting song,

"Success is gratitude."

"What is success?" I asked a man,

His cheek aglow with health.

He answered me with mighty scorn,

"Why, success is gaining wealth."

Then on bended knee I asked the Saviour,

"Who on earth had trod,"

And a wee small voice within me said,

"Success is knowing God"

From this little poem you have the hint that the theme of my message, based on John 21:22, "Follow Thou Me," is "The Way

to Success in the Christian Ministry.” I have preached from this text at this pulpit once before, and the same text has been quoted, you say, for the hundredth time! So, why this text again? Well, let me tell you an anecdote about Dr. Harry Ironside. One day, he was invited to speak by a certain church. The message he preached was, “Ye must be born again.” When invited back a few weeks later, Dr. Ironside preached on the same theme, “Ye must be born again.” A member of the church asked him, “Why do you preach again, ‘Ye must be born again?’” Answered Ironside, “Because, ye must be born again!!”

Why do I preach, “Follow Thou Me?” from this pulpit again? Is it because you have not been following Him since my last sermon? How often we follow, but reluctantly. How often we go each our own way. We refuse to follow! “The Way to Success in the Christian Ministry” is addressed not only to the graduands, but to us, ministers of the Gospel, to all who are gathered here tonight, to you my brothers and sisters!

Now, “Follow Thou Me” is a very short, simple sentence. It has only four syllables, one syllable shorter than our Chinese text. It is so short that any foreigner without any English can learn in one minute. To follow Christ is to take one step at a time, one step at a time. “Follow Thou Me” is as easy as A-B-C! Yes, the rudiments of success in the Christian ministry are easily learned if you take one step at a time. As the prophet, Isaiah, has said, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little.” (*Isa. 28:10*) See, we have Scriptural authority to require our students not to learn Greek from an interlinear, but by patiently learning their paradigms!

Now, while the rudiments of “Follow Thou Me” are easy, one step at a time, one step at a time, the way to success is a long, long, long, long, long one! It is the journey of your whole life span on earth; as the Chinese saying goes, “It is only after the coffin lid is sealed,” that you can tell of one’s success or failure. That is why, though you’ve come to the successful conclusion of

your academic training, we do not call this graduation "completion" or "consummation," but, "commencement." You are just commencing, just starting out in life. There is a long way ahead of each one of you. (So, don't throw away your Hebrew grammar and Church History notes yet!)

"Follow Thou Me" to some of my graduate students in Singapore who have returned with higher degrees, seems too elementary a lesson to learn! They would rather run ahead, holding high the keys of their newly acquired knowledge. For, has not Peter been given the keys to bind and loose, to remit sins and to retain sins? Cocksure like Peter before his fall, these soon are found crestfallen from their haughty heights. There was a classmate of mine in China, who studied Greek with me from Huddilston's little grammar. After six or seven weeks of barely learning six or seven paradigms, he began to wax eloquent, correcting the Chinese translation of the Bible. In the Homiletics class, he began to point out a mistake here, and an error there. "My translation," he said, "is the one and only perfect one!" When will young upstarts begin to "follow?"

Does Peter talk like this to his congregation? to his students? In his First Epistle, see how lowly he conducts himself. Speaking to the whole Church, from the highest to the lowest, he says, "the elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder (he did not assert his apostleship though he could), and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (II Peter 5:1-5)

Yes, until we are humbled before God and before one another, we cannot succeed to follow. Calvin, quoting Chrysostum and Augustine, gave three rules on the Christian religion. "The first rule," he said, "is humility; the second rule is humility; the third rule is humility!" Humility is the strength that will carry us through life's journey to success in the Christian ministry, and indeed, in any kind of human endeavour.

Now, "Follow Thou Me" is a call the Lord has given Peter; do you know, five times, as recorded in Scripture? Following Christ is of quintessential importance!

I

The first time Peter heard "Follow Thou Me" was when his brother, Andrew, brought him along, and there were John, Philip, and Nathaniel. In taking this first step to follow Jesus, Simon was changed to Cephas, which is the Aramaic for Peter, a stone. Some of you foreign students coming to this country might have acquired a new name, like me. I got my new name, Timothy, from a classmate, Schuyler Marshall, when Faith Seminary was in Wilmington, Delaware. The reason why he called me Timothy was that there was another Chinese student whose name was Paul. I like the name Timothy because it's the name of a disciple, a lowly person. It is so much easier to live up to Timothy than to Paul!

What I'm trying to say about Peter's change of name from Simon to Cephas is not so much the form as the content. It is his conversion. He was changed from the Simon that he was, from his slimy, sinful self, to a born again Cephas, a stone, a rock!

The trouble with the Christian ministry these days is we have so many professional, unconverted ministers! Is this not reflected in the infamous Auburn Affirmation (Defamation) signed by

1,294 U.S.A. Presbyterian ministers in the Twenties, that they were not bound to believe these five fundamentals: the inerrancy of Holy Scripture; the deity of Christ; His virgin birth; substitutionary atonement; and miracles? Ministers of Jesus Christ who repudiated His Word and spurned His saving works! I dare say these 1,294 ministers were unregenerate, blind guides of the blind, the unsaved trying to save others, "rice-tubs" in our Chinese expression, or lazy professionals.

I have a graduate student who after some years in your country returned to teach in our college in Singapore. This young man preached a series of sermons from Jesus' parables. When he came to the parable of the Pearl of Great Price, he gave his exegesis, quoting the Greek and referring to Lenski. Then he concluded, "The Gospel is not unique. It is the best of religions." Do you agree to that piece of idle talk? It's the most subtle yet devastating statement against our Lord I've ever heard in our college. What is the Gospel? It is defined for us in I Cor. 15:1-4. In substance, the Gospel, if it is to save us, must be none other than the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, who was buried, and who rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. How then can it be said that the Gospel is not unique, unless he doesn't know what "unique" is? There is one Gospel, and only one, no other. "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (*Gal. 1-9*).

Coming back to Simon, changed to Cephas, let me make this loving warning again! It is very possible there is one or two or even more unregenerate students right here in this Seminary. How unfortunate to leave the school of the prophets unsaved, unregenerate still! Are you a Simon or a Cephas?

II

The second step in Peter following Christ to success in the Christian ministry is found in Luke 5. Here we see him discard-

ing his boat and nets to serve the Lord full time. He was overwhelmed by Christ's power to provide so abundantly for him. By today's calculation, the two shiploads of fish could easily fetch \$10,000.

When we are decided to follow Christ, to serve him full time, let us have faith to trust Him to provide. I'm not against taking a secular job, but often we are found blindly struggling and foolishly relying on our own strength and power, not relying on the Lord. If He has called you into full time service, then one evidence of that call is He'll give you the Word to preach! There are **many** vacant pulpits in this country. If Seminary students are not beginning to fill them, who will? What's wrong with many of us is that we are still "riding two-legs-in-two-boats," to use another Chinese expression. What we need if we are to succeed is **to burn our boats** behind us and launch out into the deep with Peter at His Word.

III

Thirdly, we see Jesus telling His disciples He must go to Jerusalem to be crucified (*Matt. 16*). Immediately, we have Peter jump up to stop our Saviour. While he didn't want his Master to suffer death, neither did he resign to it himself. He tried to shun the cross. So was uttered this famous saying of Jesus, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross and follow me.**" (*Matt. 16:21-26*). Following Christ without the cross of sacrifice and suffering disqualifies our discipleship. If you want to serve Christ, He can give you no prospects but a cross. But, we would rather transform that cross into an airplane, into a flying bed of ease. The cross is a yoke, rather, when it is horizontally placed, a yoke for the oxen to carry. In our day-to-day service, this is our lot. The reason why the church has no power today is that the cross is missing. As William Burns, the great pioneer English Presbyterian missionary to China said, "No cross, no crown." Because he was willing to

suffer, therefore he achieved great success, yea, even that of a modern St. Paul, in China. Will you submit to the cross He has given you to carry, yes, your own cross (each one has a specific one) if you examine the text above. This is a most crucial step to success in the Christian ministry.

IV

After this, we see Peter watching the interview between Christ and the rich young ruler. The requirement that the young man give up his riches to follow Christ is a second lesson on a Christian's need to overcome materialism. This emphasis was made to Peter and the Twelve. Praise the Lord, since Peter forsook his boat and nets, he never looked back. He has well succeeded in this step. His avowal that he had given up all to follow Christ was accepted by the Saviour, who blessed him a hundredfold. But, I have seen how many a minister after serving the Lord for five, ten, or fifteen years, comes to the season of drop-outs, like over-ripe fruits. I have known a Filipino minister, a graduate of this Seminary. This brother came through our city one week-end, so I invited him to preach for me on the Lord's Day. He gave a powerful, thrilling sermon on salvation. When I asked him what church he was now ministering to (I had not seen him for 20 years), he said, "No, I'm now manager for a big American firm." Oh, how good it would be if he should continue preaching full time as he did that Sunday morning. How will you end up, my fellow theologues, five or ten years from now?

V

Lastly, we see Jesus confronting Peter the third time on materialism. "Lovest thou me **more than these?**" The fishes he has caught so plentifully, 153 of them "great fishes," perhaps ten-pounders! why the third time? Because materialism, money, is of greatest temptation to every one of us.

We are beset with not only the temptation of money, but of sex, of friendship, of associations and alliances. These all pull away from Christ. How can we conquer them? Only by love of our Saviour. By that first, fervent love! But, we have left that first love like Ephesus, and that discourages and dampens our Lord. How often in human relationships we see a third party come into the picture to form a triangle. So that first love between husband and wife is gone. O, the broken marriages we witness today and the broken relationships with our Lord! Even broken marriages in ministers' lives, and the consequence of many fallen by the wayside....What is the reason? Love is lacking. Love is no more. So, Demas has forsaken Paul, having loved this present world (*II Tim. 4:10*). Without that first, fervent love, we will not make it to success in our Christian ministry.

As we review the five steps of Peter's following, let us also stress the negative side of following. If we are to follow in the way to success in the Christian ministry, we have plenty to forsake. We must forsake that old self of a sinful, slimy Simon; we must forsake the self-reliance in our livelihood. We must forsake that spirit of self-ease and self-security, and embrace the cross of daily suffering with Christ. We must, a second time, be examined in regard to riches, forsake the love of self that smothers the first love we had for Him.

Praise the Lord, Peter, having three times been asked the question, "Lovest thou me," was trebly revived. He followed Christ to the very end. Like Paul who could boldly say he had fought a good fight and finished his course, Peter could refer to his faith and example he had shown his disciples to the very eve of his departure. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord, Jesus Christ, hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." (*II Peter 1:13-15*). Can you and I follow Christ to life's very end?

"What is success?" I asked a man,
 His cheek aglow with health.
 He answered me with mighty scorn,
 "Why success is gaining wealth."
 Then on bended knee I asked the Saviour,
 With Peter by the sea,
 And a wee small voice within me said,
 "Success is 'Follow thou Me.'"

E^b B^b7

1. I'm fol - low - ing Je - sus one step at a time,
 2. The path-way is nar - row, but He leads me on,

B^b9sus B^b F7 B^b7 E^b

I live for the mo - ment in His love di - vine;
 I walk in His shad - ow, my fears are all gone;

E^b7 A^b

Why think of to - mor - row? just live for to - day!
 My spir - it grows strong - er each mo - ment, each day,

A^o E^b B^b B^b7 E^b

I'm fol - low - ing Je - sus each step of the way.
 For Je - sus is lead - ing each step of the way.

EPILOGUE

“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” (*Ephesians 5:14-17*)

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” (*Isaiah 30:21*)

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (*Psalms 119:105*)

“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (*Proverbs 4:18*)

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (*Proverbs 3:5-10*)

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 *APPENDIX* 

APPENDIX I
WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH
CHAPTER I.
OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I. **ALTHOUGH** the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church, and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

II. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Genesis. | II. Chronicles. | Daniel. |
| Exodus. | Ezra. | Hosea. |
| Leviticus. | Nehemiah | Joel. |
| Numbers. | Esther. | Amos. |
| Deuteronomy | Job. | Obadiah. |
| Joshua. | Psalms. | Jonah. |
| Judges. | Proverbs. | Micah. |
| Ruth. | Ecclesiastes. | Nahum. |
| I. Samuel. | The Song of Songs. | Habakkuk. |
| II. Samuel. | Isaiah. | Zephaniah. |
| I. Kings. | Jeremiah. | Haggai. |
| II. Kings. | Lamentations. | Zechariah. |
| I. Chronicles | Ezekiel. | Malachi. |

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| The Gospels according to Matthew. Mark. Luke John. The Acts of the Apostles. Pauls Epistles: Romans. I. Corinthians. II. Corinthians. | Galatians. Ephesians. Philippians. Colossians. I. Thessalonians. II. Thessalonians. I. Timothy. II. Timothy. Titus. Philemon. The Epistle to the Hebrews. | The Epistle of James The first and second Epistles of Peter. The first, second, and third Epistles of John. The Epistle of Jude. The Revelation. |
|--|--|--|

All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection there-

of, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,

therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, (which is not manifold, but one,) it may be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

X. The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

CHAPTER III.

OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE.

I. GOD from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-or-

dained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

OF PROVIDENCE.

I. GOD, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

II. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge, and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry

other just and holy ends.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan: whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

VII. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures, so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

CHAPTER X

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

I. ALL those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace

the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested.

CHAPTER XIX

OF THE LAW OF GOD

I. GOD gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

II. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a Church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral

duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.

IV. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any other, now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

V. The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.

VI. Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that

freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

CHAPTER XX

OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY, AND LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

I. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love, and a willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law: but under the New Testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands

of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

IV. And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature: or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either, in their own nature, or, in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church: they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church.

APPENDIX II
THE
SHORTER CATECHISM

Question 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q.2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q.3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q.4. What is GOD?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q.5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Q.6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Q.7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q.8. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q.9. What is the work of Creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q.10. How did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q.11. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q.12. What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q.13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q.14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Q.15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q.16. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Q.17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q.18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in, the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Q.19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Q.20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

Q.21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be God, and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Q.22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Q.23. What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q.24. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by Word and Spirit, the Will of God for our salvation.

Q.25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

Q.26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Q.27. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of his life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q.28. Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q.29. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Q.30. How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Q.31. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q.32. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of

justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.

Q.33. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q.34. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

Q.35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q.36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Q.37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.

Q.38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Q.39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q.40. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Q.41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehend?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehend in the ten commandments.

Q.42. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.

Q.43. What is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, **I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.**

Q.44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that

because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Q.45. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**

Q.46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Q.47. What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.

Q.48. What are we specially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words, **before me**, in the first commandment teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

Q.49. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.**

Q.50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Q.51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word.

Q.52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Q.53. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, **Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**

Q.54. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Q.55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.

Q.56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q.57. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, **Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.**

Q.58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Q.59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Q.60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q.61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by

unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q.62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath-day.

Q.63. What is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, **Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.**

Q.64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q.65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Q.66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Q.67. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, **Thou shalt not kill.**

Q.68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Q.69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Q.70. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, **Thou shalt not commit adultery.**

Q.71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

Q.72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

Q.73. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, **Thou shalt not steal.**

Q.74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q.75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's, wealth or outward estate.

Q.76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.**

Q.77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q.78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.

Q.79. Which is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.**

Q.80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.

Q.81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

Q.82. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

Q.83. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q.84. What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

Q.85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q.86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q.87. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

Q.88. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q.89. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

Q.90. How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer: receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Q.91. How do the Sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive him.

Q.92. What is a Sacrament?

A. A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Q.93. Which are the Sacraments of the New Testament?

A. The Sacraments of the New Testament are Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Q.94. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Q.95. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience of him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church, are to be baptized.

Q.96. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Q.97. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love and new obedience; lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q.98. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.

Q.99. What rule hath God given for our direction in Prayer?

A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called **The Lord's Prayer**.

Q.100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, **Our Father which art in heaven**, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Q.101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, **Hallowed be thy name**, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Q.102. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, **Thy kingdom come**, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q.103. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, which is, **Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven**, we pray, that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q.104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, which is, **Give us this day our daily bread**, we pray, that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Q.105. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, which is, **And forgive us our debts**,

as we forgive our debtors, we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q.106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, which is, **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**, we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q.107. What doth the conclusion of The Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of The Lord's Prayer, which is, **For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen**, teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

- NOTE:** (1) "he descended into hell" should mean, he continued in the state of death, and under the power of death.
- (2) "the holy Catholic Church" does not mean the Roman Catholic Church at all, but the universal church.

Do you want to know what is God's will for your life? What time is it on your "clock"? By studying this booklet, which is the crystallisation of Dr Tow's many years' teaching theology at Far Eastern Bible College, you will find the answer!

**"See than that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
*(Ephesians 5:15-17)***

