

# True Baptists Can Trace Their Origins Back to the New Testament

Nick Michalinos  
From *The Baptist Challenge*, July 2015

## ***In This Issue:***

***True Baptists Can Trace Their Origins Back to the New Testament***  
Page 1

***Baptist Propositions***  
Page 2

***Persecuted Baptists in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century***  
Page 3

***The Will of God***  
Page 6

***The Wise Decision***  
Page 12

**Question:** *In a recent article, you made it appear that Baptists can trace their history back to the New Testament. Many Baptists do not agree with this position.*

**A**nswer: True Baptists, as individuals and as churches, do not have a single voice or hierarchy to speak for them in matters of doctrine and practice as do some religious groups. There-fore, I cannot speak for all Baptists. I can only speak for myself, and the church to which I am privileged to pastor, and for many true Baptists who agree with my position that the people known today as Baptists can trace their origin and existence “back to the New Testament.”

Woe be unto the church that cannot trace its existence, doctrines and practices back to the New Testament, thereby admitting that their church is not a true New Testament church. I believe Baptists can trace their origin back to Christ as their Founder and Head.

In Matthew 16:18 Christ stated that He would “build his church” and that “the gates of hell would not prevail against it.” I take this to mean that His church would always be in existence and is in the world today. His enemies, His foes, described here as “the gates of hell,” would “not prevail against it.” I take this to mean that His church would always be in existence and is in the world today. His enemies, His foes, described here as “the gates of hell,” would “not prevail against it” (His church).

Therefore, down through the centuries, there have always been New Testament churches. Either Christ meant what He said, or He didn't mean it. There is no middle ground. Bible believers believe He meant what He said. His promise has not failed. He that promised is able to perform. New Testament churches have not passed off the scene, and then later re-appeared or re-discovered at various times under the supposed inspired leadership of some men or women who lived hundreds of years too late to be the founder of New Testament churches.

It so happened, and is a matter of divine record that Christ founded His own church during His personal ministry, and as Head, He promised that “the gates of hell would not prevail against it,” and that He would be with it “until the end of the age” (Mt. 28:20).

There have been many Johnny-come-lately denominations and cults that have sprung up the last few hundred years all claiming to be New Testament churches whose human founders can be identified as well as the very year and place their denominations and organizations began.

Within our limited space, I want us to now see what historians and men of non-Baptist faith have to say about Baptist church origin:

- (1) Cardinal Hosius, the president of the Council of Trent, dates the history of Baptists back to at least 154 A.D. He wrote this in 1554 A.D.
- (2) Mosheim, noted great Lutheran historian, places Baptists before the rise of Luther and Calvin.
- (3) Zwingli, the Swiss reformer and co-worker with Luther and Calvin in 1525, admits the existence of Baptists back to the year 225 A.D.
- (4) Robert Barclay, Quaker, places "small hidden Christian societies, who have held many of the opinions of the Anabaptists, have existed from the time of the Apostles."
- (5) John Clark Ridpath, Methodist, says, "I should not readily admit that there was a Baptist church as far back as A.D. 100, though with-out doubt there were Baptists then, as all Christians were then
- (6) Alexander Camp-bell, founder of the "Christian" church says, "From the apostolic age to the present time, the sentiments of Baptists have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced."

There are others, but these must suffice for now. We do not seek to establish our claims as to our first century origin by the Baptist name. Churches of those early days were simply called "churches" for they were all of one faith, and thus needed no distinguishing name, except to identify a church at a certain place, for example, "the church at Ephesus," "the church at Corinth," etc.

But as time went by, false organizations sprang up calling themselves churches, and it became necessary to use distinguishing names. As for Baptists, they have been called by different names down through the centuries like Montanists, Waldenses, etc., but all were called by one name, Anabaptists ("Re-Baptisers" of those that came from unscriptural organizations, or who were not scripturally baptized). These names were usually given by their enemies. The "Ana" in the name "Anabaptists" was dropped in the days of Martin Luther, and the name Baptist has been retained unto this day.

**[Editor: For more information on Baptist lineage, check out our sister website: [www.baptistlineage.org](http://www.baptistlineage.org)]**



## Baptist Propositions

---

Edward T. Hiscox  
From *The Baptist Short Method*, 1868

1. The Bible is our only guide, source of knowledge, and standard of authority in matters of religion. Whatever is taught in the Scriptures is to be believed; whatever is there enjoined, is to be obeyed. And what is there neither enjoined nor taught is not to be imposed on the faith or conscience of any man as of religious obligation.

2. The right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Every man has the right to read and explain the Bible for himself, being responsible to God alone for the correct interpretation of the sacred Word.
3. Freedom of conscience. Everyone has the right to hold such religious opinions as he may believe the Bible teaches, without hindrance or dictation from any; so long as he does not intrude upon, or interfere with the rights and privileges of others by so doing.
4. Liberty of speech. All men possess the right, not only to believe, but also to profess and declare openly and without fear or harm, whatever religious opinions they may entertain, provided they are not contrary to common morality.
5. The right of worship. Every man has a right to worship God, according to the dictates of his own conscience, and the Word of God, as he understands it, without hindrance or molestation; so long as he does not injure or interfere with the rights of others.
6. Civil governments, rulers, and magistrates are to be respected, and in all temporal matters, not contrary to conscience and the Word of God, are to be obeyed. But they have no jurisdiction in spiritual concerns, and have no right of dictation, control, or interference in matters of religious faith and godliness; but are in duty bound to protect all citizens in the uninterrupted enjoyment of their religious privileges.
7. The Christian Church is independent of all human authority, and under law to Christ alone. It neither ought, nor of right can have any organic connection with the state; and for kings, princes, or priests to claim headship over it, is a usurpation of divine prerogatives and treason against God.
8. None but regenerated persons are to be, or properly can be, members of the church of Christ, which is a spiritual body and separate from the world.
9. Pastors are not to be imposed upon churches, nor taken from them, without their consent; but are to be chosen by them without constraint, as by free men in Christ, who have a right to the choice of their religious teachers.
10. Christ is the only lawgiver in his church. Consequently the churches cannot make laws for themselves, but only execute those which he has given. Nor can any man, or body of men, legislate for the church. The New Testament alone is its statute book, by which, without change, the body of Christ is to govern itself.



## Persecuted Baptists in England in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

---

Edward B. Underhill  
From *Struggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty*, 1848

**B**y the aid of the historian Strype, we discover that not a few Baptists were entangled in the meshes of the sanguinary foe. His information was chiefly gleaned from the papers of the English martyrologist, and it is much to be regretted that from a desire to please the ruling party, or a repugnance to acknowledge the merit of those who came not up to his standard of orthodoxy, Mr. Fox has either omitted altogether any reference to their sufferings, or when he has mentioned them, has suppressed those particulars which would enable us to identify them as belonging to this obnoxious sect.

It will be remembered, that in the previous reign, a congregation of Baptists had been discovered, assembling as they might find convenient, at various place in the counties of Kent and Essex, but especially at Feversham and Hocking. Many of its members were then immured in prison with their two pastors, Mr. Henry Hart and Mr. Humphrey Middleton, but were probably released on the death of Edward. In 1554, those two preachers were again incarcerated, with two other ministers of the same people. (Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 502)

On the 12th of July, 1555, Mr. Middleton was burnt at Canterbury, with three others. His examinations were on the usual test-doctrine, transubstantiation. He averred that there was no real presence in the mass, that both the sacred emblems ought to be administered to the communicants, and in the English tongue. It was with difficulty that he was brought to answer the questions of his examiners, but he assured them, that he believed in his own God, saying, "My living God, and no dead God." Bound to two stakes, he and his fellow-sufferers passed into the presence of the Lamb from amid the devouring flame. Like true soldiers of Jesus Christ, they gave a constant testimony to the truth of his holy gospel. (Fox, iii. 363, 373, 377)

Mr. Hart, with many others, was, imprisoned in the King's Bench, where also were confined several, who, under the name of gospellers, adhered to the religion established by Edward VI. Among these prisoners of Jesus Christ arose considerable contention and strife. The eternal predestination of the elect, and the ability of man to keep God's commandments were the topics which excited their unseemly divisions. The Baptists were distinguished by the epithets of "free-willers" and "Pelagians."

The martyr Bradford entered deeply into the subject with them, and more especially with Hart. The latter wrote a piece in defence of his sentiments, to which Bradford replied in a letter to Cranmer, Ridley, and Latymer, at Oxford, he communicates his fears, and sends them both Hart's book and his own. He conceives that these men confounded the effects of salvation with its cause. On the matter of freewill, he deems them plain papists, yea Pelagians. They also utterly contemned all learning. Their holy life, for "they were men of strict and holy lives," commended them to the world, and rendered their sentiments the more dangerous.

To his letter were appended the names of Bishop Ferrar, Taylor, and Philpot. Some yielded to his persuasions; to the rest he showed uniform kindness, alleviating the distress of their imprisonment, from funds confided to his care; for "that he was persuaded of them, that they feared the Lord, and therefore he loved them." Others dealt not so gently with their erring brethren. Archdeacon Philpot was among their opponents. In a letter to John Careless, he calls them schismatics, arrogant and self-willed, blind scatterers, contentious babblers, perverse and intractable. (Strype's *Cranmer*, 502, 503, 907)

In a long letter to a friend in Newgate, Philpot endeavored to establish the truth of infant baptism. Infants, he says, were included in the command of our Lord, Go ye into all nations, &c., but especially had they the same covenant-right enjoyed by the posterity of Abraham. Evidently feeling these grounds somewhat unstable, he earnestly exhorts his correspondent "to submit to the judgment of the church, for the better understanding the articles of our faith, and of the doubtful sentences of scripture. Therefore," he continues, "let us believe as they have taught us of the scripture, and be at peace with them, according as the true Catholic Church is at this day." (Fox, iii. pp. 606, 607)

To such a surrender of understanding and conscience, the Baptists were and ever have been opposed, inasmuch as they conceive that the marks of infallibility have never yet been discovered, engraven by divine skill, either on the "holy Roman church," or on that constituted by the legislative enactments of King Edward and his successors on the British throne.

Singular, too, is the harmony of sentiment existing between our reformer and his cruel persecutor, Bonner, who this same year (1555) put forth his book of homilies. Their arrows are drawn from the same quiver, and winged on earth, not in heaven. Thus in the homily on the authority of the church, in almost the same language, doth this blood-stained hero of Rome's infallibility proceed to say: "I exhort and beseech all you, good Christian people, that in all doubts, opinions, and controversies, ye would resort to the holy church, and there learn what the same catholic church hath believed and taught, from time to time, concerning doubts or controversies." And in the exposition of the sacrament of baptism, he gives especial warning against the error of the Baptists; for, says he, "certain heresies have risen up and sprung in our days,

against the christening of infants;" which elsewhere he teaches, that "the most wholesome authority of the church doth command." (Edmund, Bishop of London, &c., 1555)

While, then, our reformers endeavored to reduce the Catholic Church to the standard of scripture, appealing to its doctrines and honoring to some extent its commands ; yet were they not free from a papal dread' of too much light. They feared the perfect communication of the word of God to the laity, and dreaded the action of free minds on, its contents.

"To the unlearned and laity," says Roger Hutchinson, in 1552, "the publishing them without interpretation is a like matter as if a man would give to young children whole nuts; which, when they have tumbled long up and down in their mouths, and licked the hard shell, being not able to come to their sweetness, at last they spit out, and cast away both the shell and the kernel. The eternal God, to help the infirmity of man's capacity and understanding herein, hath ordained two honorable and most necessary offices in his church: the office of preaching, and the office dreading and interpreting."

To these must the humble man resort; so great is the hardness and difficulty of holy writ, that without a teacher none can wade through it. (*Works*, pp. 91, 94. Parker Society's edit.)

Great therefore was the dismay of Ridley and others, when, as he says, these imprisoned Baptists rejected an open, that is, an established ministry, as not necessary; when the sacraments were regarded as only "badges and tokens of Christian men's profession:" or, as Ridley puts it, they made no difference between the Lord's Table and their own ; yet more amazed was he, that they refused to attend the ministry, or submit to any Christian rite from the hands of any clergyman, however pure his succession, who was not known as a man of God by his holy life, and the fruits of piety.

In such cases of schismatic folly, Ridley counselled a resort to coercion. Since conviction could not be produced by persuasion, force must be applied. To quote the more gentle Hutchinson:

"If there be any suspected to be an Anabaptist, I would to God well-learned preachers were authorized to compel and call such to render account of their faith—if it were found Anabaptistical, that the preacher enter into disputation with him, and openly convict him by the Scriptures and elder fathers; and if he remain obstinate, the same preacher to excommunicate him; and then to meddle no further with him, but give knowledge thereof to the temporal magistrate, which, for civil consideration, may punish him with imprisonment, death, or otherwise." (*Works*, p. 201)

Hence the opprobrious epithets, the passionate language and bitter invective that marked the controversies of these fellow-sufferers for the truth.

Not the least among the opponents of the Baptists was Mr. John Careless, an eminent martyr, and their fellow-prisoner in the King's Bench. He had much conference with them, but failed; to his great grief, in convincing them. In 1556, Careless wrote a confession of his faith, especially favoring absolute predestination against free-will. It was generally concurred in by the protestant prisoners in Newgate and the King's Bench, where he lay. A copy fell into Mr. Hart's hands, and on the back of it he wrote his sentiments. His colleague Mr. Chamberlain also wrote against it.

Strype mentions only one article of this document, from which may be inferred the opposing sentiment of the Baptists. "That the second book of Common Prayer, set forth in King Edward's days, was good and godly, but that the church of Christ hath authority to enlarge and diminish things in the same book, so far forth as it is agreeable to Scripture." This reply of Hart fell into the hands of the Catholic party, and gave rise to scoffs at the divisions and various opinions of the professors of the gospel. It ended in the disownment of the Baptists by the gossellers, and a breach of all intercourse and unity between them. (Strype's *Cranmer*, p. 505)

The friends of the prisoners sought to comfort and cheer them by letters. One of these is preserved. Strype thinks the writer was Mr. Hart, but it is evidently written from the country to those in London who were suffering for the truth, and, as Mr. Hart was one of them, it must have come from some other person. The writer prays that his imprisoned friends may be endued with all wisdom and spiritual understanding. He urges them to walk as the children of the light, and to be fruitful in all good works; to have no fellowship with unrighteousness, to walk circumspectly, to "use well the-time, for it is a

miserable time, yea, and such a time that if it were possible, the very chosen and elect should be brought into errors;" therefore, they must watch, search diligently the Scriptures, and take gladly the yoke of Christ upon them.

The writer then proceeds to argue from the precepts given by Christ to keep his commandments, and to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, that we are able to observe them; that God has given us understanding and reason for the purpose, and that life and death are set before men freely to choose.

He concludes:

"Wherefore, dearly beloved, let us look earnestly to the commandments of the Lord, and let us go about to keep them, before we say that we be not able to keep them. Let us not play the slothful servants, but let us be willing to go about to do them, and then no doubt God shall assist and strengthen us, that we shall bring them to conclusion. And always, dearly beloved, have the fear of the Lord before your eyes, for whoso feareth the Lord walketh in the right path....and at the last God shall reward every man according to his deeds." (Strype, *Memor III. ii. 321-329*)

How these followers of Jesus fared after this period, we have no means of ascertaining. The last mention of their persecutions in this reign is that of the sudden recall of certain inquisitors, who in the year 1558 visited Essex, and especially the district around Colchester, for the purpose of feeding the languishing flames of the martyr's pile, with fresh living fuel. With regret the commissioners obeyed the Council's commands. "Would to God," they write, "the honorable Council saw the face of Essex as we do see; we have such obstinate heretics, Anabaptists, and other unruly persons here, as never was heard of if we should give it off in the midst, we should set the country in such a roar, that my estimation, and the residue of the commissioners, shall be forever lost."(Strype, *Memor. III. ii. 125, 126*)

The country' began to groan over the ashes of the dead, and to regard with horror the cruelties of bigotry and Rome. On the 17th of November Mary died, and this darkest period of our national annals, and of the reformed faith in this land, yielded to a brighter day.



## The Will of God

---

J. L. Dagg

From *Manual of Theology: A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, 1859*

**T**he term will, which always imports desire, is variously applied, according to the object of that desire.

1. It denotes intention or purpose to act. It is said of Apollos "His will was not at all to come at this time,"(1 Cor. 16:12) i.e., he had no formed the intention or purpose to come. In this sense, the will of God is spoken of: "According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1:11) Purpose or intention may exist before the time of action arrives.

When it has arrived, the mind puts forth an act termed volition, to produce the desired effect. In human beings, purposes may be fickle, and may undergo change before the time for action comes, but God's purpose or intention is never changed, and when the time for producing the purposed effect arrives, we are not to conceive that a new volition arises in the mind of God, but the effect follows, according to the will of God, without any new effort on his part.

2. It denotes a desire to act, restrained by stronger opposing desires, or other counteracting influences. Pilate was "willing" to release Jesus" (Luke 23:20), but other considerations, present to his mind, overruled this desire, and determined his

action. We are compelled to conceive of the divine mind, from the knowledge which we possess of our own, and the Scriptures adapt their language to our conceptions. In this way, a desire to act is sometimes attributed to God, when opposing considerations prevent his action. I would scatter them, "were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy." (Deut. 32:27) "How often would I have gathered, &c., and ye would not." (Matt. 8:37)

3. It is used with reference to an external object that is desired, or an action which it is desired that another should perform. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not." (Heb. 10:5) "Be it unto thee as thou wilt." (Matt. 15:28) "Ask what ye will." (John 15:7) "What will ye, that I should do." (Mark 15:12) In this sense, as expressing simply what is in itself desirable to God, will is attributed to him. "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, &c." (Ezek. 33:11) "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." (1 Thess. 4:3)

4. Closely allied to the last signification, and perhaps included in it, is that use of the term will, in which it denotes command, requirement. When the person, whose desire or pleasure it is that an action should be performed by another, has authority over that other, the desire expressed assumes the character of precept. The expressed will of a suppliant, is petition; the expressed will of a ruler, is command. What we know that it is the pleasure of God we should do, it is our duty to do, and his pleasure made known to us becomes a law.

### **Will of Command**

It is specially important to distinguish between the first and last of the significations which have been enumerated. In the first, the will of God refers exclusively to his own action, and imports his fixed determination as to what he will do. It is called his will of purpose, and always takes effect. In the last sense, it refers to the actions of his creatures, and expresses what it would be pleasing to him that they should do. This is called his will of precept, and it always fails to take effect when the actions of his creatures do not please him, i. e., when they are in violation of his commands.

The will of purpose is intended, when it is said, "According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," (Eph. 1:11) and, "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." (Dan. 4:35) The will of precept is intended, when it is said, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Let it be noted that, in the former case, God only is the agent, and the effect is certain; in the latter, his creatures are the agents, and the effect is not an object of certain expectation, but of petition.

GOD'S WILL OF COMMAND, HOWEVER MADE KNOWN TO US, IS OUR RULE OF DUTY. (Ps. 40:8; 143:10; Matt. 6:10; Rom. 22:18; Ex. 20; Rom. 2:12-15)

The Scriptures make the will of God the rule of duty, both to those who have the means of clear knowledge, and those who have not. The disobedience of the former will be punished with many stripes, that of the latter with few. No man will be held account-able, except for the means of knowledge that are within his reach, but these, even in the case of the benighted heathen, are sufficient to render them inexcusable.

We have no right to dictate to God in what manner he shall make his will known to us, but we are bound to avail ourselves of all possible means for obtaining the knowledge of it, and, when known, we are bound to obey it perfectly, and from the heart.

Various terms are used to denote the will of God, as made known in the Holy Scriptures, statutes, judgments, laws, precepts, ordinances, &c. The two great precepts, which lie at the foundation of all the laws, are, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The first of these is expanded into the four commandments, which constitute the first table of the Decalogue; the second into the six commandments, which constitute the second table. The Decalogue was given for a law to the children of Israel, as is apparent from its introduction. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Ex. 20:2)

It was, however, distinguished from the other laws given to that nation, by being pronounced audibly from Sinai with the voice of God, and by being engraved with the finger of God on the tables of stone. When we examine its precepts, we

discover that they respect the relations of men, as men, to God and to one another, and we find, in the New Testament, that their obligation is regarded as extending to Gentiles under the gospel dispensation. (Rom. 13:8, 9; Eph. 6:2) We infer, therefore, that the Decalogue, though given to the Israelites, respected them as men, and not as a peculiar people, and is equally obligatory on all men.

The ceremonial law respected the children of Israel as a worshipping congregation, called "the Congregation of the Lord." It commenced with the institution of the Passover, and ended when Christ our passover was sacrificed for us, and when the hand-writing of ordinances was nailed to the cross. Then its obligation ceased. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ceremonies of the Christian dispensation, obligatory on the disciples of Christ, to the end of the world.

The judicial law was given to the Israelites as a nation, and is not obligatory on any other people. The principles of justice on which it was based, are universal, and should be incorporated into every civil code.

### **Will of Purpose**

GOD WILLS WHATEVER HE DOES. (Job 23:13; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11)

God is a voluntary agent. There are many powers in nature which operate without volition. Fire consumes the fuel, steam moves the engine, and poison takes away life, but these have no will. Even beings that possess will, sometimes act involuntarily, and sometimes against their will, or by compulsion from a superior power.

God acts voluntarily in everything that he does — not by physical necessity, not by compulsion from any superior power, not by mistake, or oversight, or power unintentionally exerted. Men may plead in apology for their acts that they were done in thoughtlessness, or through inadvertence, but God has never any such apology to make. Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world, (Acts 15:18) and therefore they have been duly considered.

GOD DOES WHATEVER HE WILLS TO DO. (Isa. 46:10)

God is not omnipotent if he absolutely wills or desires to do anything, and fails to accomplish it.

WHATEVER GOD DOES IS ACCORDING TO A PURPOSE THAT IS ETERNAL, UNCHANGEABLE, PERFECTLY FREE, AND INFINITELY WISE (Isa. 40:14; Jer. 51:29; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9)

That God has a purpose, none can deny, who attribute wisdom to him. To act without purpose is the part of a child, or an idiot. A wise man does not act without purpose; much less can the only wise God. Besides, the Scriptures speak so expressly of his purpose, that no one, who admits the authority of revelation, can reject the doctrine, however much he may misinterpret or abuse it. The term implies that God has an end in view in whatever he does, and that he has a plan according to which he acts.

The purpose of God is eternal and unchangeable. A wise man in executing a purpose may have many separate volitions which are momentary actings of his mind, but his purpose is more durable, continuing from its first formation in the mind to its complete execution. The term will, as applied to the act of the divine mind, does not, in itself, imply duration, but the purpose of God, from the very import of the phrase, must have duration.

God must have had a purpose when he created the world, and the Scriptures speak of his purpose before the world began. But the duration of it is still more explicitly declared in the phrase, "the eternal purpose." (Eph. 3:11) The term is never used in the plural number by the inspired writers as if God had many plans or a succession of plans. It is one entire, glorious scheme, and the date of it is from everlasting. Its eternity implies its unchangeableness, and its unchangeableness implies its eternity, and its oneness accords with both these properties.

The purpose of God is perfectly free. It is not forced upon him from without, for nothing existed to restrict the infinite mind of him who was before all. It is the purpose which he hath "purposed in himself." (Eph. 1:9) It is his will, and must, therefore, be voluntary. The term purpose and will apply to the same thing in different aspects of it, or according to

different modes of conceiving it. If purpose more naturally suggests the idea of duration, will suggests its freeness. It is not the fate believed in by the ancient heathens by which they considered the gods to be bound as truly as men.

The purpose of God is infinitely wise. We have argued that God must have a purpose because he is wise, and therefore, his wisdom must be concerned in his purpose. It is not an arbitrary or capricious scheme, but one devised by infinite wisdom, having the best possible end to accomplish, and adopting the best possible means for its accomplishment.

Writers on theology have employed the term Decrees, to denote the purpose of God. It is an objection to this term, that there is no inspired authority for its use in this sense. When the Scriptures use the term decree, they signify by it a command ordered to be observed by those under authority. It is the will of precept, rather than the will of purpose. And further, its use in the plural number does not accord so well with the oneness of the divine plan.

Scarcely any doctrine of religion has given so much occasion for cavil and stumbling as that of God's decrees. As if men would be wiser than God, they refuse to let him form a plan, or they find fault with it when formed, and very few have so much humility and simplicity of faith as to escape wholly from the embarrassment which the objections to this doctrine have produced. They, therefore, need a careful examination.

**Objection 1 — The purpose of God is inconsistent with the free-agency of man.**

It is a full answer to this objection that a mere purpose cannot interfere with the freedom of any one. When a tyrant designs to imprison one of his subjects, until the design is carried into execution, the liberty of the subject is not invaded. He roams as free as ever, untouched by the premeditated evil. The infringement of his liberty commences when the purpose begins to be executed, and not before.

So, in the divine government, the purpose of the Supreme Ruler interferes not at all with the liberty of his subjects, so long as it remains a mere purpose. The objection, which we are considering, is wholly inapplicable to the doctrine of God's purpose. Its proper place, if it has any, is against the doctrine of God's providence, and, under that head, it will be proper to meet it.

It was God's purpose to create man a free-agent, and he did so create him. Thus far, neither the purpose, nor the execution of it, can be charged with infringing man's moral freedom, but they unite to establish it. It was God's purpose to govern man as a free-agent; and has he not done so? If every man feels that the providence of God, while it presides in the affairs of men, leaves him perfectly free to act from choice in everything that he does, what ground is there for the complaint, that the purpose of God interferes with man's free-agency? If the evil complained of is not in the execution of the purpose, it is certainly not in the purpose itself.

This objection often comes before us practically. When we are called upon for action to which we are averse, the argument presents itself; if God has fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, the event is certain, and what is to be, will be -without our effort. It is worthy of remark, that this argument never induces us to deviate from a course to which we are inclined. If some pleasure invites, we never excuse ourselves from the indulgence, on the plea, that, if we are to enjoy it, we shall enjoy it.

The fact is sufficient to teach us the insincerity of the plea when admitted in other cases. It prevails with us only through the deceitfulness of sin; and, however specious the argument may appear, when it coincides with our inclinations, we never trust it in any other case. No man in his senses remains at ease in a burning dwelling, on the plea, that, if he is to escape from the flames, he will escape.

The providence of God establishes the relation between cause and effect, and gives full scope for the influence of the human will. To argue that effects will be produced without their appropriate causes, is to deny the known arrangement of Providence. He who expects from the purpose of God that which the providence of God denies him, expects the purpose to be inconsistent with its own development. He charges the plan of the Most Wise, with inconsistency and folly, that he may find a subterfuge for criminal indulgence.

**Objection 2 — If God purposed the fall of angels or men, he is the author of their sin.**

Before we proceed to answer this objection, it is necessary to examine the terms in which it is expressed. In what sense did God purpose the fall of angels or men, or any sinful action? There is a sense, familiar to the pious, in which any event that takes place, under the overruling providence of God, is attributed to him, whatever subordinate agents may have been concerned in effecting it.

The wind, the lightning, the Chaldeans, the Sabeans, were all concerned in the afflictions that fell on the patriarch Job ; but he recognized the overruling hand of God in every event, and piously exclaimed: " The Lord gave, and the Lord path taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) So Joseph, when sold by his brethren in Egypt, saw the band of God in the event, and explained the design of his providence: "For God did send me before you to preserve life." (Gen. 45:5) In precisely the same sense in which God's providence is concerned with such events, his purpose is concerned with them and in no other.

With this explanation, let us proceed to consider the objection. Did Joseph design to charge on God the authorship of his brethren's sin? Nothing was further from his mind. They had been truly guilty of their brother's blood and their own consciences charged them with it. They felt that they were responsible for the sin, and Joseph knew the same, and nothing that he said was designed to transfer the responsibility from them to God. Yet he saw and delighted to contemplate the purpose of God in the event. That purpose was, "to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20) This purpose was executed, and God was the author, both of the purpose and the beneficial result.

So, in every case, the good which he educes out of moral evil, and not the moral evil itself, is the proper object of his purpose. It should ever be remembered that his purpose is his intention to act, and that, strictly speaking, it relates to his own action exclusively. It does, indeed, extend to everything that is done under the sun, just as the omnipresence of God extends to everything, but it extends to everything, no otherwise than as he is concerned with everything, and what God does, and nothing else, is the proper object of his purpose. "HE WORKETH all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1:11) "I WILL DO all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:10) "HE DOETH according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." (Dan. 4:35) It cannot be too carefully noticed, that the purpose of God relates strictly and properly to his own actions. Now, God is not the actor of sin, and therefore his purpose can never make him the author of it.

The objection, though it may appear to have greater force when applied to the first sin of man, is not, in reality, more applicable to this, than to every sin which has been since committed. God made Adam, and all his descendants, moral and accountable agents, preserved them in being, and sustained their moral powers; he permitted their sin; and he overrules the evil, from the beginning throughout to effect a most glorious result. In all this, what God has done, and is doing, he purposed to do. In all, his action is most righteous, wise, and holy, and, therefore, his purpose is so. He is the author, not of the moral evil which he permits, but of the good of which he makes it the occasion.

The distinction between the permission and the authorship of sin some have denied, but in so doing, they have not the countenance of God's Word. The whole tenor of the inspired volume leads us to regard God as the author of holiness, but not of sin. We are taught that in him is no sin that "he is light, and in him is no darkness" (1 John 1:5), that "every good and perfect gift"—not sin—"cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17); that God is not tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man. (James 1:13) In such language we are taught to consider God as the author and source of holiness and it is as contrary to the doctrine of the holy word to attribute sin to him, as darkness to the sun. Yet this same word teaches his permission of evil. "He suffered all nations to walk in their own way." (Acts 14:16) His longsuffering, of which the Scriptures speak so much, implies the permission of sin. But of that which is highly displeasing to him, even when he bears with it, he cannot be the author.

**Objection 3 — If God purposed the final condemnation of the wicked, he made them on purpose to damn them.**

This objection, which impiety loves to present in the most repulsive form, becomes us to approach with profound reverence for him whose character and motives it impugns. Let us imagine ourselves present at the proceedings of the Last Day. The righteous Judge sits on his great white throne, and all nations are gathered before him. The books are opened, and

every man is impartially judged according to the deeds done in the body. The award is made up, and the sentence pronounced. The wicked are commanded to "depart...into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" (Matt. 25:41) and the righteous are welcomed into "the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34)

The scene is past, and the mysterious economy of God's forbearance and grace is now finally closed. Is there anything in the transactions of that day which is unworthy of God? Is there anything which the holy inhabitants of heaven, throughout their immortal existence, can ever remember with disapprobation? Not so. The Judge, while he punishes the wicked with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, is glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; (2 Thess. 1: 9, 10) and he will ever appear glorious in the decisions of that day. If God's action on that day will be so glorious to him, will it be any dishonor to him that he has purposed so to act?

The idea, were any one disposed seriously to entertain it, that God will be taken by surprise at the last judgment, and compelled to pass an unpremeditated sentence, is forever set aside by the fact that, as early as the days of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the great day, and especially the fearful doom of the ungodly, were foretold. "Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds." (Jude 14, 15)

This fact also demonstrates that the Lord will not punish for the mere pleasure of punishing. Why does he give warning of that day? Why are his messengers sent to warn men to flee from the wrath to come? Why are these messages delivered with so earnest entreaty and expostulation, so that his servants say, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20)

As creatures formed by his hand, he has not, and cannot have, any pleasure in rendering them unhappy, but, as rebels against his authority, enemies to his character and government, and the good order of his universal empire, and obstinate rejecters of his scheme of mercy and reconciliation, he will take pleasure in inflicting on them the punishment which his justice requires. The reward of the righteous is a kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world ; but the fire into which the wicked will be driven, is said to be prepared, not for them, but for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25: 34, 41)

In this significant manner, God has been pleased to teach us that his punishments are prepared, not for his creatures, as such, but only for sinners, and in view of sins already committed. Must he, to secure himself from disgrace and reproach, be able to plead that he has been taken by surprise, and that, from the beginning of the world, he had never expected the fearful result? If the proceedings of this great day will be so glorious to God that he will regard them with pleasure through all future eternity, why may he not have regarded them with pleasure through all eternity past?

The objection, originating in dislike of God's justice, wholly misrepresents the character of his righteous judgment. It leaps from the creation of man to the final doom of the wicked, and wholly overlooks the intermediate cause of that doom. It proceeds as if sin were a very inconsiderable matter, and as if it must have been so regarded by God, and, therefore, it represents the punishment inflicted for it as if inflicted for its own sake.

The sentence pronounced will be, in the judgment of God, for just and sufficient cause, and, in all the purpose of God respecting that sentence, the cause has been contemplated. What God does and why he does it are equally included in the divine purpose, and this connection the objection wholly overlooks. God did not regard sin as a trifling thing when on account of it, he destroyed the old world with the flood; and, as if to answer the very objection now before us, and convince men that he did not make them for the pleasure of destroying them, it is recorded: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart." (Gen. 6:6, 7)

Our best judgment decides that the world ought not to have been made without a purpose, and that for its mighty movements now to proceed without any purpose is infinitely undesirable. The best work of human hands that we contemplate with any pleasure has been formed with some purpose; and no intelligent being can view the works of God with satisfaction, if he can imagine them to have been undertaken and executed without design. Who would not grieve to think that this vast machinery is moving to accomplish no end? That the planets are hurled through space wildly guided in

their course and controlled in their velocity by no wise counsel; that the sun shines, that animals exist; that immortal man lives, moves, and has his being without purpose? In this view, what an enigma is our life? Our understandings may consent not to comprehend the purpose for which the world was made, but to consent that it was made for no purpose, they cannot. Our intelligent natures wholly reject the thought.

The doctrine of God's purpose, while it recommends itself to our understandings, applies a test to the moral principles of our hearts. If God has a purpose, we should delight to study it, and rejoice in the accomplishment of it, and our hearts and lives should be regulated in harmony with it. When we prefer that God should have no purpose, or that it should be different from what it is, our hearts cannot be right in his sight.

If we loved him as we ought, we should rejoice in the accomplishment of his will, and view with pleasure the unfolding of his grand designs. Holy angels study the mystery of redeeming love, and learn, from the dispensations toward the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. 3:10)

If right principles prevailed in our hearts, we would not presume to dictate to the Infinitely Wise, nor find fault with his plans, but wait with pleasure on the development of his will. And when we cannot see the wisdom and goodness of his works, we should in the simplicity of faith rest assured that his plan when fully unfolded will be found most righteous and most wise.



## The Wise Decision

---

Edward Lathrop, D.D.,  
From *The Baptist Magazine*, 1858

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Hebrews 10:24-26)

I address myself at this time particularly to the young, and especially to young men, who must soon determine those questions which will be decisive of their eternal destiny. I take, as the illustration of my subject, the happy decision of Moses, at that critical period in his life when he was pressed by conflicting motives, and when, upon the choice which he then made, the scale which had trembled on its poise turned on the side of duty to God,—of a life of holiness,—of an aim at heaven. What a momentous decision! Today I speak to those who have reached that same critical point,—who are pressed by similar conflicting motives, and whose decision, perhaps at this time—while listening to this sermon—may determine the whole of their subsequent career, both for time and for eternity. God grant that such decision may be unto life and not unto death!

We are to notice, in the first place, what it was that Moses declined when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The text says, "the pleasures of sin for a season," and "the treasures in Egypt."

Let us glance rapidly at the circumstances of the case, as indicated in the language just quoted,— "the pleasures of sin," and "the treasures in Egypt." Egypt, at the time here referred to, was the most powerful kingdom on earth, and probably the most corrupt. Its court was the centre of luxury and vice.

Thither resorted the inquisitive and pleasure-seeking of all nations, attracted either by the reputation of the schools of learning there established, or by the facilities there afforded for indulging in every species of animal enjoyment, from the most refined to the most debasing. The character of the Egyptian court, at the period here spoken of, is well described by the phrase, "the pleasures of sin."

Whatever a depraved or fastidious taste could covet, the abundant re-sources of Egypt readily supplied. The riches of the empire were unbounded. Egypt was the granary of the world. Into its treasury was poured the wealth of all other inhabited portions of the globe; and such was the political structure of the government, that the king and the king's household possessed almost unlimited control of the resources of the nation.

To speak of "the treasures in Egypt" is but another form of expression for affluence the most abundant and lavish. In one word, the Egyptian court, at the time of which I now speak, was the most attractive spot on earth to one who was in pursuit of mere worldly pleasure.

Moses had been rescued from the Nile by the daughter—and, as is generally supposed, the only child—of the then reigning monarch. By her he had been adopted and brought up as her own son. The design of the princess, says Josephus, was to make Moses "her father's successor, if it should please God she should have no legitimate child of her own."

But, be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the intention of the royal princess was to make Moses her own heir, and the possessor, ultimately, of the vast treasure which she would inherit as the only child of the most powerful monarch on earth. This fact is distinctly referred to in the text, in which it is said that Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt"—that is, the treasures of which he was the prospective heir.

Such were the outward circumstances under which the Hebrew child grew up. Wealth, and luxury, and power, were the attendants of his childhood and youth; even to mature manhood these had ministered to his daily desires; and all this wealth, and luxury, and power, he had been led to believe were to be his to an unlimited extent. Thus, to the son of a slave, were proffered the pleasures and the possessions of the mightiest empire on which the sun then shone.

But there is here another circumstance to be noted. Moses, while thus flattered, and, no doubt, greatly influenced by the motives addressed to his ambition and his natural love of pleasure, was, at the same time, the subject of other influences, which, all unknown to the giddy throng about him, had been brought to bear upon him in his infancy and early boyhood.

The woman employed by the Egyptian princess to be the nurse of the rescued child was his own Hebrew mother. From her lips he received his earliest instructions. By her he had been taught the knowledge of the true God, and had been made acquainted with the reserved blessings promised to his chosen people. The impress of her warm maternal heart was upon him, and no subsequent influences were able to efface this beautiful image from his soul. Oh, a mother's love! A mother's godly conversation and example! Who can estimate their influence?

But you see what Moses had to contend with in the shape of insinuating, seductive temptations. Riches, pleasure, power—all that could appeal to an ardent and ambitious mind,—and all, nay, immensely more than that for which multitudes in our day are ready to barter heaven with its eternal "recompense of reward,"—all these were temptingly offered to Moses, and all these he declined, rejected, when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

And you will here mark especially the motive which influenced Moses in this decision. He declined the pleasures of the Egyptian court, not because he was insensible to the attractions of that court, and not because he was destitute of those natural propensities which inclined him to gratify the desires of the flesh, but he rejected these things because they were "the pleasures of sin"—because he could not indulge in them and be guiltless. And he rejected "the treasures in Egypt," not because he might not under other circumstances possess riches, but because he could not hold these treasures without doing violence to his conscience and disobeying the law of his God.

Notice, now, in the next place, what it was that Moses made choice of rather than "the pleasures of sin" and "the treasures in Egypt," "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." Who were the people of God, whose lot this man preferred, and whose destiny he was willing to share? They were the most abused, and, outwardly, the most degraded of

all slaves. They were the very scorn and contempt of the proud Egyptian nobility. Their task-masters were the most cruel, their work the most servile, their privileges the most scanty, and their sufferings, all things considered, almost unendurable. Verily, they were an afflicted people. Oppression had ground them to the dust.

Wearisome days and nights were appointed them. How few, even of the lowly and despairing, would have chosen this people as their companions and brethren? But who, with the flattering prospects of Moses before him, would have turned away from the treasures of Egypt, and the pleasures of that seductive court, for the companionship and the destiny of a nation of slaves?

And here, as we pass, I wish you to notice another thing. As Moses did not relinquish the pleasures which surrounded him in the household of Pharaoh because he was insensible to the influence of such attractions, and as he did not decline the riches which were proffered him in Egypt because it would have been wrong in him, under other circumstances, to possess riches.

So, in this latter case, he did not choose to suffer affliction with the people of God because he had any natural fondness for suffering, or because affliction, in itself; was a thing to be desired, or because it would furnish a meritorious ground of his acceptance with God; but, with a higher aim, he preferred the people of God in spite of their afflictions; he preferred them because they were the people of God, notwithstanding their poverty, and destitution, and disgrace. He preferred them because truth and righteousness were on their side, while, on the other side, were only falsehood and sin, although concealed under the names of pleasure and riches.

We are to consider next, the principle which guided the choice of Moses, and the end which he had in view in making his decision. "By faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" by faith he declined to participate in "the pleasure of sin;" by faith he rejected the offer of Egypt's treasure; and by faith he preferred all the affliction and reproach which he should suffer on account of his attachment to the people of God, and his belief in a coming Redeemer, "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

This language, taken in connection with what has already been said touching the motive of Moses in declining the pleasures of sin, exonerates him from all imputation of selfishness in seeking "the recompense of the reward." It was a holy reward which Moses had respect to, a reward which was to be found in the way of obedience, and not simply happiness, irrespective of the means by which it might be attained. Hence it was a just, a religious motive as, indeed, it is recorded of the Author of salvation himself: "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." (Heb. 12:2)

It was a reward which Jesus had in view when he gave his back to the smiters, and when he poured out his soul unto death; but it was a reward which involved in the highest degree the glory of the Father who had sent him. Thus Moses looked forward to a future recompense, but it was not the recompense solely which stimulated his obedience. The recompense was a gracious bestowment which he certainly desired, but which he desired in no other way than as it should be connected with God's glory and his own holiness.

But we were considering the principle which animated him. It was faith we are told. By faith he contemplated a joy which would be full and abiding long after the pleasures of sin had vanished and left nothing behind them but the inevitable sting. By faith he grasped the riches which would endure and be satisfying long after the treasures in Egypt had turned into dust and been forgotten. By faith he looked beyond the present affliction of the people among whom he had cast his lot,—beyond their servitude, their privations, and their disgrace. "

He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible;" (Heb. 11:27) and so strong was he in the strength of this divine principle that he boldly "forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." (Heb. 11:27) It was a small matter to him what he should suffer from men, or what of personal convenience and pleasure he should forego, for these things were only for a season; the recompense of the reward, which was laid up for him in heaven, would be imperishable and fadeless forever.

Now this decision of Moses, as it seems to me, was eminently wise; and I appeal to every one of you for the correctness of this conclusion. I have no question whatever as to the verdict of your enlightened and sober judgments. Moses, in rejecting

the pleasures of sin and the offered treasures of Egypt, in view of the future reward, acted wisely and as every sane man should act in a similar case. There was no fanaticism in this decision, no mere impulse of feeling. It was the mature, thoughtful act of an intelligent mind.

See how the case stands now. Thousands of years have fled since the body of Moses was laid in its unknown sepulchre in the valley of Moab. For all these centuries has he been enjoying the fruition of that faith which led him "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," and to bear "the reproach of Christ," than to possess "the treasures in Egypt," or "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Where is Moses today? And where are the Pharaohs? And where are the pride and pomp of ancient Egypt? And where is the giddy throng that mingled in the dance, or that quaffed the wine-cups in their banquet halls? And where the treasures which built the pyramids, and reared proud monuments to the names of kings?

Alas! These all were only "for a season," and have long since perished. But "the recompense of the reward" which the man of God discerned by faith, and upon which he has already entered, shall be for ever and ever. He has received "a kingdom which cannot be moved." (Heb. 12:28) Tell me, was not Moses wise in his decision, notwithstanding all the temporal losses and the obloquy to which that decision subjected him?

And now I bring the subject home to you, my hearers,—to you, young men, who, as I have said, may be this day on the point of a decision which will determine the whole of your future career, and be final as to your eternal happiness or misery. The pleasures of sin are in the one scale; but, remember, they are the pleasures of sin, and they are only for a season. In a short time—a very few years at most—these pleasures will have lost their sweetness, and the dregs of the cup which you must drink, if you now prefer sinful pleasures, will be full of bitterness. In the end, that which seems to you now to be only joy will "bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder." (Prov. 23:32) In the other scale is the service of Christ—an intelligent, rational devotion to the cause of truth and righteousness.

In this service you may have to suffer something of affliction. I will not disguise the truth. The people of God have oftentimes to pass through severe trials before they are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. 1:12) In this service you may have to endure reproach for the name of Jesus. "Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12)

In one shape or another, "the trial of your faith" (1 Pet. 1:7) must be experienced. But, be it so; and even granting that your entire earthly pilgrimage shall be one unbroken series of afflictions, admitting that it may be best, in the wisdom of God, that poverty, and suffering, and reproach shall fill up the measure of your days upon earth,—admitting all this, I ask, which is the wise decision, the service of God here, and "the recompense of the reward" hereafter, or "the pleasures of sin for a season," and, in the end, "the wages of sin," which "is death?" (Rom. 6:23)

What I want, at this time, is not the verdict, simply, of your judgments, for that I have already, but what I want is the decision of your hearts, and your determination, in the fear of God, and in reliance upon his promised aid, to seek, at once, "that good part which shall not be taken away from you." (Luke 10:42) "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," (Josh. 24:15) and let your decision, I pray you, be like that of Moses; choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," if it must needs be that afflictions come, "than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

"For a season!" Contrast these words—the meaning of them—with the meaning of those other words with which my text closes: "the recompense of the reward."

Here is an example in point. A few days ago, two deaths occurred in this city within six hours of each other. The one was the death of a young man, aged about twenty-four years, of whom it is said by one who had taken pains to make particular inquiry, that "he was a young man of promise, being an excellent anatomist, a skilful linguist, and one who might have risen in the world, but habits of dissipation, disobedience of parents, and evil company, wrought his ruin.

He was a young man who preferred "the pleasures of sin," and, truly, they were pleasures which lasted only "for a season." How brief! How illusive! How fatal! He died suddenly—he died upon the gallows, a convicted murderer with the blood of a fellow-creature upon his soul!

From that scene, terminating a life of sinful pleasure, pass with me to another which happened a few hours later. Under the roof of an unpretending dwelling in this city, a circle of weeping friends is gathered about the couch of an aged man who has just ceased to breathe. That man, while yet young, had made the choice of Moses.

The pleasures of sin he renounced, and the people of God, in good report and in evil report, he determined should be his people. For nearly half a century he stood upon the walls of Zion, in this city, an affectionate counsellor of the young, and a messenger to all of the good tidings of the gospel.

For nearly half a century he walked our streets, an example of purity of life and of unostentatious devotion to the cause of the Saviour, whose service he chose in his early manhood. When that man died, every friend of virtue and religion in this community felt that a public benefactor had ceased from among the living; and when he was borne to his burial, thousands pressed around his remains, anxious to pay the last tribute of respect and affection to "the memory of the just."

Both these men are now dead and buried. But is this all? When the one man died upon the scaffold, was that the end of the pleasure-seeker? And when the other man died in his chamber, was that the end of the venerable servant of Christ? Where now are the spirits of these departed men? Could I lift the curtain which separates the present from the future, I would show you where they are.

This I am not permitted to do, but I can tell you what God says in his holy book:

- "All murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8)
- "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:15)
- "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. 25:46)

And again, it is said,

- "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. 12:3)
- "The righteous hath hope in his death." (Prov. 14:32)
- "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13)

"The recompense of the reward" is theirs forever.

My hearers, will you decide this question? Will you decide it now? Whom will you serve? Life and death are set before you. Now is the time for your decision, and the decision, remember, must be your own. God calls upon you by his Spirit to make your choice. He has provided for you all needful helps.

"IF THOU BE WISE, THOU SHALT BE WISE FOR THYSELF; BUT IF THOU SCORNEST, THOU ALONE SHALT BEAR IT." (Prov. 9:12)

