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PREMILLENNIAL

BIBLICAL

BAPTISTIC

THE LORD'S CHURCH

BY E. G. COOK — Birmingham, Alabama

CHAPTER FOUR

In Revelation 2 and 3 we have the prophecy concerning all of Christendom in this age, and it behooves us to study well this prophecy in order that we may be able to distinguish between our Lord's churches and the others. As with everything else in the Bible, there have been different teachings set forth concerning the seven letters that were written to seven churches in Asia. None of these churches were located on the continent of Asia. Rather, they were in the province of Asia that was a part of the Roman Empire. They were in what we know today as the western part of Turkey bordering on the Aegean Sea. Some may wonder why only seven letters were written when there were more than seven churches in that area. We know there was a church at Colosse, and one at Troas. Then there was one at Antioch in Pisidia, and probably more. So why only seven letters? In the Scriptures seven is the number of completion or perfection. So in these seven letters our Lord gave us the complete prophecy concerning Christendom from beginning to end. Christendom includes our Lord's churches, and all the others. And it is essential that we learn something about the other churches in order that we may be able to recognize them.

The most popular teaching concerning these seven letters during the past generation seems to have been that each of these churches represented a period of time during this church age. The Scofield Bible was probably the cause of all this. In fact, I held to this view in my younger days. But now, due to the fact that all the prophecy found in these letters has been fulfilled before our eyes it is possible for us to know more about it. When a prophecy has become history there is no excuse for our not knowing what that prophecy meant.

It is true that the church at Ephesus did represent all the churches up to 251 A.D. But since that time no one of the other six churches has ever represented all of Christendom. I want to hasten to say that every one of these seven churches was one of our Lord's churches. But the prophecy found in these seven letters gives us a preview of what would transpire in Christendom from beginning to end. Up to 251 A.D. there was no open rift among the churches. Officially, there was fellowship among them. However, in the letter to the church at Ephesus we see things taking place that would eventually force a withdrawal of fellowship from some of the churches. In Revelation 2:2 the Lord's churches were beginning to find that some who claimed to be some of the Lord's saints were liars. In verse 4 some had left their first love. Their first love was a true love of Jesus Christ, and for His teaching. Being true to our Lord's teaching helps us not to leave our first love. But when some of the ones who made up the churches in that day began to depart from the teaching of Jesus Christ, and to substitute other teachings for it, they began to leave their first love. Then in verse 6 we see that there was an element among the churches who was practicing the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The word "Nicolaitanes" comes from NIKAO which means to conquer, and LAOS which means the people. Our Lord said in Matthew 23:8 "All ye are brethren." And if you want to make me happy just call me Bro. Cook. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes simply means to me that some of the "big shot" preachers began to lord it over the little ones. I hope to show why I believe this as we go further with this study. In verse 5 our Lord threatens to remove the candlestick from those erring churches. This He did in 251 A.D. when His true churches were forced to withdraw fellowship from them. In Revelation 1:20 we learn that the candlestick represents the church. So when our Lord's churches withdrew fellowship from the apostate churches they became empty shells. Our Lord no longer claimed them as His churches. They had been cut loose from the source of spiritual life, and were now dead churches. The word "Ephesus" means beloved, or desired. And how that name fits in with our Lord's true churches during that time! They were greatly beloved by the Lord.

Our next letter under consideration is the one to the church at Smyrna. The word "Smyrna" means myrrh, and myrrh is a substance obtained from the stems of Commiphora Abyssinica, a tree that grows in the desert lands of Arabia and Abyssinia. This myrrh was used in embalming the dead. We are told that the more this substance was beaten and crushed the sweeter the fragrance. And certainly the beating and crushing at the hands of Rome during the awful Dark Ages caused the Smyrna type churches to send up a sweet smelling savour to our Lord. The Ephesus type churches merged into the Smyrna type churches. And the Smyrna type churches represented our Lord's true churches from 251 A.D. when the Lord's churches were forced to withdraw fellowship from the apostate churches until Rome

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The Baptist Examiner

Baptist Is Our Middle Name

Paid Circulation In All States And In Many Foreign Countries

"To the law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isaiah 8:20

Vol. 49, No. 39

ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, OCTOBER 6, 1979

WHOLE NUMBER 2243

A DISCOURSE ON THE DECREES OF GOD...

"MOUNTAINS OF BRASS"

PART II

A third property of the Divine will is graciousness. The Ephesians being predestinated unto the adoption of children, as it was according to the good pleasure of His will so also to the praise of the glory of His grace; so our redemption and justification is according to the riches of His grace. That a Saviour is proclaimed by the angels, in order to man's eternal peace, was from the good will of God. What had become of the burning bush in Egypt, had not the good will of God dwelt in it? This name God hath commanded to be proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex. 34:7).

There is a great deal of unmercifulness in sinner's will, as the Devil hath a will to destroy all; but blessed be God, who hath the great red Dragon in a chain, his power is not absolute; for though he go up and down seeking soul's destruction; yet it is not whom he will but whom he may devour. God's will is a gracious will, when He gives His church Himself in covenant, and all His attributes; His Son and all His offices, and purchased blessings; His Spirit and all His saving operations; whence can this flow but from the fountain of free grace? Hence 'tis said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

A fourth property of the Divine will is immutability; hence His decrees are compared to mountains of brass, "And I turned, and lifted

up mine eyes and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass" (Zech. 6:1), which are immoveable. With Him is not the least shadow of turning; it is not compatible with Him, whose name is Jehovah, to change; if so, the church had been destroyed ere now; it's not for want of sin in Jacob they are not destroyed, but because He is Jehovah, and change not; neither is it possible He should change, because He perfectly foreknows what ever will come to pass. Indeed men who have not that power, do often will and purpose this and that, and

change their mind after, not foreseeing the cause of the change; which if they had, would have willed that which they must undo again, because it's some dishonor to men to be changeable, but "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19). "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). When Scripture speaks about God's repenting He made man, it is not to be understood properly, as if God were capable of repentance, as man is, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). But it is spoken to our capacity: God is said to repent, when He doth such things as men do when they repent; when God withheld those judgments and effects of His anger He had threatened against Nineveh, He is said to repent; so when God lets out His judgment, the effects of His anger upon the old world, God is said to repent. According to our capacity, and man's practice, who when he doth repent of a thing, doth show it by some visible act. It's because God's compassions fail not, but are ever the same, that the church is not consumed. Though David's house nor heart was as it should be; yet this was his comfort, God had made with him an everlasting covenant. God foreknew Israel would be a transgressor from the womb; yet for His name sake would defer His anger, and for the praise of His grace would not cut them off. God fore-

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OUT OF AN ATHEIST'S GRAVE

In Twain churchyard, a short distance from King's Cross Station, in England, stands a great four-trunked tree growing out of a grave. Apparently, the tree has grown right out of the body in the grave. The grave is that of Lady Anne Grimston. Here is the story that lies behind the strange growth of a tree out of a grave.

Lady Anne Grimston did not believe in life after death. When she lay dying in her palatial home she said to a friend, "I shall not live again. It is as unlikely that I shall live again as it is that a tree shall grow from my body." She was buried in a marble tomb. The grave was marked by a large marble slab, and surrounded by an iron railing. Years later the marble slab was found to be moved a little. Then it cracked, and through

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Milburn Cockrell

RAPTURE, NOT RUPTURE

(Preached on the Independent Baptist Hour September 16, 1979)

(PART I)

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

It is generally held by students of the prophetic Word that all believers will be translated or resurrected at the coming of Christ preceding the tribulation period. There has appeared in the last century a small but growing group of premillennialists who teach that not all believers will be taken at the rapture. They say only those who are "watching and waiting" for the event, those who have reached some degree of spiritual attainment which makes them worthy will go in the rapture. Such men as Robert Govett, G. H. Lang, D. M. Panton, Ira David, William Leask, G. H. Pember, Austin Sparks, and J. A. Seiss held this position.

This teaching is usually called the partial rapture theory. It in the main is the concept that only the faithful believers will be resurrected at the first resurrection. Others would say the saints will be raptured in groups during the tribulation as they are prepared to go, being purged and purified by their trials and sufferings.

In the last few years there has

arisen a very small group of independent Baptists who hold the split rapture position. Unlike most other split rapturists of a generation ago, they teach that only faithful Baptists will be in the first resurrection. These claim Elder J. R. Graves as the greatest defender of their position. However, they usually do not tell people that Graves' original view was the pretribulation rapture of all the saints. Graves changed his old position held in 1883 (See THE SEVEN DISPENSATIONS, pp. 406-430) to his new position about 1887 (See THE PARABLES AND PROPHECIES OF CHRIST, pp. 239-243).

The split rapture position is not of great antiquity. Many claim that it originated in the writings of Robert Govett in 1853. However, this is untrue. It was first taught that only the church would be worthy to be caught up by Miss Margaret MacDonald in 1830. Miss MacDonald wrote: "I repeated frequently, but the spiritual temple must and shall be reared, and the fulness of Christ be poured into His body, and then shall we be caught up to meet Him. Oh, none will be counted worthy of this calling but His body, which is the church, and which must be a candlestick

all of gold." Here is the oldest defender of the split rapture position known to me. Can someone name one before this?

But no prophetic view should be "kicked out" merely because it is a bit new or held by a minority. The important thing is not what history says; it is what the Bible says. Does the Bible teach the split rapture position? Are we to believe in a rapture of some of the saints or a rapture of all of the saints?

THEIR SCRIPTURES EXAMINED

In fairness to the good and godly men who hold the partial rapture position, I feel we should honestly examine the verses they depend upon to prove their position. Let us honestly see if the Bible will sustain the position that resurrection and translation is a reward for human works.

Matthew 24:41-42 is often cited to prove this view: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." This passage speaks of some being taken and others left, but it says nothing about faithfulness or church membership as a condition of translation. The mean-

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The Baptist Examiner

THE BAPTIST PAPER FOR THE BAPTIST PEOPLE

MILBURN COCKRELL --- Editor
Editorial Department, located in ASHLAND, KENTUCKY, where all subscriptions and communications should be sent. Address: P. O. Box 71, Zip Code 41101.

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY, except last week of December, with paid circulation in every state and many foreign countries.

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BRIEF NOTES

Elder Eldon Joslin, formerly of Melbourne, Fla., is starting a mission work in Prattville-Montgomery, Alabama area. The work is under the authority of Philadelphia Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., and Pastor E. G. Cook. Anyone interested can contact Eldon Joslin at Rt. 4, Box 135, Lot 5, Prattville, Ala. 36067. His phone is (205) 365-4809.

Rapture, Not Rapture

(Continued from page one)

ing is that the saved will be raptured while the lost will be left behind.

Luke 21:36 is another proof text: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass; and to stand before the Son of man." This passage enjoins watchfulness for Christ's coming—the normal attitude of all Christians. The worthiness to escape the tribulation is due to the work of Christ Who will deliver them from coming wrath (I Thess. 5:9-10). A man cannot make himself any more worthy for physical resurrection than spiritual resurrection. Neither is there always a need of worthiness to stand before the Son of man (Rev. 20:12).

Luke 20:35-36 is sometimes appealed to: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." Those in this resurrection are called "The children of God." Nothing is said about it being merely some of the faithful few of God's children who qualified themselves for resurrection by the performance of good works. The worthiness required for being in the resurrection is the worthiness imparted to all the elect by the atonement of Jesus Christ, Who is our resurrection and life.

Then there is Philippians 3:10-11: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being

made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul's hope of being in the resurrection from among the dead was based upon his knowing Christ and having won Christ (v. 8). He expected to be in this special resurrection because of the sufferings and resurrection of Christ. He plainly indicated in the passage that he had given up all his good works in exchange for knowing Christ (Phil. 3:8-9).

Also there is II Timothy 4:8 which reads: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Here the reward for loving the appearing of Christ is a crown of righteousness, not a partial rapture. The teaching is that all believers will be raptured, but only those who love His appearing are going to be rewarded with a crown.

Another text which seems to teach the split rapture position is Hebrews 9:28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The passage is speaking of looking for Christ—the normal Christian attitude. The context infers that Christ is coming for the same ones He died for (Heb. 9:26) and is now interceding for in Heaven (Heb. 9:24). This would be all true believers, not merely the faithful believers or faithful Baptists.

QUESTIONS FOR SPLIT RAPTURE PEOPLE

The partial rapture theory raises more questions than it answers. It smacks at the atonement of Christ and makes resurrection and translation, not a fruit of salvation, but a reward for good works. It makes the last stage of regeneration, the regeneration of the body, to be contingent upon human merit. This dogma is utterly foreign to the doctrine of salvation by free and sovereign grace. It allows a person to originate his own physical resurrection by good works, while denying a man can contribute to his own spiritual resurrection by his good works. The inconsistency between these two ideas is most appalling.

The split rapture view leaves numerous unanswered questions. I offer a few for my partial rapture brethren to consider and answer by Scripture and logic:

1. How many good works does a person have to perform to be worthy to go in the rapture? Is there not imperfection in the lives of all believers? Has any Baptist church member attained to perfection in the flesh?

2. How can men claim to believe in salvation by grace, and then teach the last phase of salvation, the salvation of the body, is conditioned upon good works? Do such people really believe the whole of salvation is by free grace without any admixture of works?

3. When will the rest of believers be raised or translated? At the end of the Great Tribulation? If so, will they have been made worthy by the tribulation? In what sense can an unfaithful dead believers who passed from the earth before the tribulation be made worthy by the tribulation? If unfaithful believers are to be raised, will they be raised on the basis of their works or God's grace? How can it be of works since they have little if any? If they are raised on the basis of grace, what has happened to the work basis for resurrection? Why will Christ raise some on a works basis and others on a grace basis? If Christ can raise some on a grace basis, why can He not raise all believers on such a basis? Will unbelievers be raised on a works basis? If not, will God do less for His children than the unsaved?

4. If faithful Baptists only are raised in the first resurrection as some teach, then will all others not be raised until after the 1,000 years are finished? Does such an idea not exclude all the Old Testament saints from the millennium? Would this not also mean that all unfaithful believers would be unblest, unholy, outside of the priesthood, and part of the second death (Rev. 20:6)? Does John not

tell us those in the last resurrection in Revelation 20:11-15 came up out of Hell? Are all unfaithful believers in Hell? Are not the subjects of this judgment said to be cast into the lake of fire? In what sense does an unfaithful believer, Baptist or otherwise, experience the second death?

5. In what sense can a faithful dead believer be watching and waiting? In what sense can an unfaithful believer already gone from the earth be made worthy of resurrection in his disembodied state? Are unfaithful saints made ready in purgatory? If an unfaithful believer has a second chance to become worthy during the tribulation, then why not an unfaithful believer in his disembodied state?

REWARDS GIVEN AT THE RESURRECTION

I believe the Bible teaches that rewards are going to be given out by Christ to faithful believers at the rapture (Rev. 22:12). I deny that resurrection or translation is a reward for faithfulness. Jesus said: "... for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). Jesus did not say that the woman's recompense would be her resurrection. Rather, He said her resurrection would be the occasion at which her rewards would be given out.

The subject of rewards is treated upon in I Corinthians 3:12-15. But the passage speaks of the unfaithful as well as the faithful. There are two kinds of people present at the judgment seat of Christ: one who receives a reward (v. 14) and one who suffers loss of reward (v. 15). How can both groups be present at the same time if the partial rapture theory is correct? Verse 13 says this is a judgment of "every man's works." Faithfulness here determines whether one receives a reward or not, but it has nothing to do with resurrection or translation, for both faithful and unfaithful are being judged at the same time. There will be some saved people here who will lose all their rewards (v. 15). Thus this is a judgment of all believers who are translated or resurrected at the rapture.

Consider I John 2:28: "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." Here again are two kinds of people who meet Christ at His coming: one has confidence and the other is ashamed before Him at His coming. How can this be if the split rapture position is true? Meeting Christ here is not conditioned upon faithfulness, for even the unfaithful meet Him "at his coming."

Note I Thessalonians 2:19: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" Here the coming of Christ is the occasion when the crown of rejoicing is given out. There is nothing said about translation and resurrection being the crown of rejoicing. How could Paul speak of the whole Thessalonian church being present with him at Christ's coming if he believed in a split rapture? How could he be sure they would work enough to be worthy to meet Christ?

The Bible teaches the coming of Christ and our translation or resurrection is the occasion of the giving out of crowns (II Tim. 4:8; I Pet. 1:7; 5:4; Rev. 2:10). To make the resurrection and translation the crown or reward is to ignore the Bible fact that crowns will be given to glorified saints. Rewards are according to works, but resurrection and translation are not conditioned upon human works; any more than spiritual resurrection is conditioned upon human works. The resurrection and translation of all believers is based upon the finished work of Calvary and God's predestination (Rom. 8:28-30).

HE IS COMING

Christians may be unable to agree on the details of the second advent. Some of you may reject my views on the pre-trib rapture of all the saints. But all true Christians must agree that Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross, is coming again. It is our solemn and serious duty to be watching and waiting for His return. We must be looking (Continued on page 7, column 3)

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(Continued from page five)
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Mountains...

(Continued from page one)
knew Peter's sin, Paul's sin; yet that hindered them not from being chosen vessels, elect according to the foreknowledge of God; so that whom He once loves, He must love to the end, because there can be nothing hid from Him, that might make Him change His mind, as it is often with men. So that we may conclude this with the apostle, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

A fifth property of the Divine will is, that it is a sovereign and supreme will; He hath an absolute freedom of will; if He will work, none can let Him: "and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35). "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" (Lam. 3:37). "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. 103:19). He hath an absolute power over men and devils, hence He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious, and He will show mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will" (after the abuse of much patience) "he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18). What reason can be given why Christ must take the human nature to save man, and not the angelical nature to save angels? We must answer as Christ in another case, "Even so Father," for so it pleased thee, it was thy will and pleasure: so if God will choose Abel, and pass by Cain; choose Shem and pass by Saul; choose Peter and Paul, and pass by Judas; that some of the natural seed of Abraham are elected, and the rest in their own blindness and hardness: what shall we say in this case, but as Moses and the apostle, "He will be gracious to whom He will be gracious?" "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto his day" (Rom. 11:7,8). If God will convert a profligate sinner, as the thief upon the cross, and take his soul into paradise the same day, who never gave God a day's service, but a subject of the black prince all his days; I say if God will give him the same happiness He gives another, who hath served and suffered for Him forty years, who shall fault God? May He not do His own grace and glory what (Continued on page 7, column 1)

Atheist's Grave . . .

(Continued from page one)

the crack a small tree grew. The tree continued to grow, tilting the stone and breaking the marble masonry until today it has surrounded the tomb with its roots, and has torn the railing out of the ground with its massive trunks. The tree at the Lady Anne Grimston's grave is a large one. And so God answered the challenge of the unbeliever. But God is not done dealing with her. She will yet have to appear before His throne (the Great White Throne, Rev. 20: 11-15), and hear her final doom. She also will be resurrected; but not in a body of glory, but one of "shame and contempt" (Daniel 12:2).



Mountains . . .

(Continued from page six)

He will? When the apostle said, "that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), the meaning of that is, God doth not respect the person of a Jew, because a Jew, more than a Gentile, a Roman; as Peter did suppose, before God showed him otherwise in a vision; then he saw Cornelius, though a Roman or Italian, and no Jew; yet believing in Christ, and working righteousness, was accepted as much as the believing Jew; yet effectual vocation, and saving faith, must always be concluded to be, not according to our works, but God's purpose in election, as the apostle asserts in Romans 9:11, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth" whether it be a Jew or Gentile, that is called effectually. God's power is suitable to His will; many will great things against the church, as the Devil and his kingdom, wills the destruction of Christ's kingdom; but their power is not suitable and adequate as God is to his will; if He hath a mind to open and change such a heart, rescue such a one out of the Devil's power, He can do it, He can carry His will through; God's will is a Sovereign and supreme will, "for he giveth not account of any of his matters" (Job 33:13), as Elihu saith unto Job, when under some discontent about Divine providence.

A sixth property of the Divine will. It's a will of perfect wisdom, counsel is joined with it in the text; it's not a mere will, but a will with depth of wisdom. He doth every thing, which may render any wise; if it be wisdom to act to a right end, so doth God act all for Himself and His own glory: "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4); moreover He knows and observes all circumstances of actions, all second causes are before God, how they will act, and when, and carries all on in an exact harmony with His Divine will and pleasure; this will is not mere will, but a will guided by the reason and counsel of His own infinite understanding; we never count a willful man a wise man, but all God's acts, are said to be in Judgment and working, all things according to counsel. The wisest men, often miscarry in their ideas and contrivances, but God never did miscarry for want of wisdom in any thing, all the wisdom of men and angels is from Him; the prophet Isaiah speaking of man's wisdom, in plowing, sowing, threshing; "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:29). As He made the world in wisdom, so He governs it, for He works all after the counsel of His own will.

By way of information, doth God work all things after the counsel of His own will? Then we infer this agent is an independent Being and worker; if He works all after the counsel of His own will, then He doth not depend upon the will of another; regeneration is not according to the will of man, but God; that is, of God's free grace, and Divine power; for a child cannot begat itself; He who is dependent upon another's will, cannot do his own, because it depends



Question.

WHAT PREACHER BOILED A POT OF BONES TO ILLUSTRATE A SERMON?

Answer:—Ezekiel, Ezekiel 24: 1-14, especially verses 3-6.—"And utter a parable to the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: Gather the pieces thereof into it, even every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, . . ."

upon another's; God depends upon none for being, wisdom, power, authority to act anything, for He works all after the counsel of His own will. The work of sanctification, spoken of in the context, was the product and effect of God's eternal counsel and will, and not the effect of man's; God's will depends not upon the creature's will; for when He speaks of a new heart, He doth not say, if the creature will be willing he shall have it; but he speaks like a monarch, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and do them" (Ezek. 36:26, 27). I wait not the creature's motion till he be willing, in my working all things after the counsel of my own will. If we consider what regeneration is, it will clearly demonstrate God's will doth depend upon the creature's will in that work at all, because it is a divine seed and principle of grace put where there was never any before, so that in regeneration man is wholly passive, and can contribute no more to his being a new creature, than his being a creature; where even it is wrought, it is the pure product of God's eternal will, and not of the creature's, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (James 1:17); the creature's will doth not determine God's, God's will doth not wait the motion of the creature's will, before He determines about him, "but he works all things" (about the creature) "according to the counsel of his own will." God works in time according to His own purposes, and not men's purposes, in a way of salvation; "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom 9:16); it is from the merciful purpose of God, and not the creature's will, that any are vessels of glory, and that all are not vessels of wrath; so then man's will cannot prevent nor determine God's, because "he works all things after the counsel of his own will," both the will and the deed is wrought in the Philippians, according to God's good pleasure; and not according to man's good pleasure. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

II. If God works all things after the counsel of His own will, then we infer He is irresistible in His will, because He actually worketh what He willeth. In this sense we say with the apostle, "Who hath resisted his will?" (Rom. 9:19). That is, His effective and determinative will; indeed God's ordinative revealed commanding will may be rejected; so the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, in not being baptized with the baptism of John; so the Jews resisted the Spirit in the doctrines of the Prophets; so the false prophets in Jeremiah's time are said, not to stand in the counsel of the Lord, Jeremiah 23:22; so we are to understand the prophet Isa-

iah to the church, when he saith, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4), that is, in respect of His revealed will and external means, but not in respect of internal grace; for all must confess in that He could have done more, but in respect of His will and external means, what could have been done more? He gave His law to Jacob, and statutes to Israel, He hath done so by any other nation; to them was committed the oracles of God, no nation so great in this respect; but though the ordinative will of God may be resisted, yet His will whereby He hath determined to effect this or that, cannot: for in this sense He is of one mind, and who can turn Him? This counsel of the Lord shall stand, saith the prophet Isa-

Rapture, Not Rupture

(Continued from Page Two)

ing for the Uptaker, not the undertaker. We must not be looking for death, but for Him Who is the Conqueror of death. This is the hope of our calling—the living hope unto which we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Before taking leave of this world, Jesus Christ said: "I will come again" (John 14:3). Crushed and bleeding humanity cries: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22: 20). His waiting bride, miserable without Him, cries: "Come" (Rev. 22:17). All creation groans under sin and cries: "Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" (Jud. 5: 28). The persecuted saints in jails and prisons in the solitary places of the earth cry: "Come, Lord Jesus, and end our misery." The white-robed saints around God's throne in Heaven are crying: "How long, O Lord. . . ?" (Rev. 6:10). Surely every heart on earth warmed by His love, refreshed by His peace and sanctified by His grace, cries: "Come, Lord Jesus. Give the mighty shout! Sound the great trumpet!" It will not be long until the voice of the descending Christ will respond from Heaven, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 22:12).

When Jesus comes in the clouds of Heaven, the dead who sleep in Jesus shall hear the voice of the Son of God, recognize the trumpet's sound, sense the approach of His footsteps, and shall rise to meet Him in the air. The living shall hear His approach, recognize the tone of His voice, and shall rise to meet Christ and the risen dead in the clouds of Heaven. They shall go with lightning like speed to the Father's house of many mansions. They shall go with their bodies fully conformed to the image of Christ. They shall go to be forever with the Lord!

What a sight the rapture of all the saints will be! One grave shall cleave in twain and its buried inhabitant shall rise to meet Christ, and the grave that looks equally green next to it shall remain untouched. Green turfs, marble mausoleums, vaults of churches, and the stones of cathedrals will explode as millions rise up to darken the eastern sky. In some homes families shall be gathered talking upon worldly things. In an instant without warning, one shall be taken and the other unsaved members of the household shall remain behind! Oh! great day of family separation—of severance of the dead—of astonishment to the world—of glory to the Lord Jesus—of happiness to the saints!

The promise of His return cheers me. The thought of His speedy coming is a welcome hope in these days when men's hearts fail for fear. The rapture of all the saints is full of quickening, animating, stimulating power. It will cause the believer to separate from the world and to increase his consecration to Christ. It is the purifying hope of the children of God.

Let men abuse this doctrine if they will, but their abuse will never lead me to reject it. The second coming of Christ is of vital im-

portance. No person rejecting it can rightly understand the Scriptures. The coming of Christ is near and hastens greatly. Never has there been such a cluster of signs of the near coming of Christ as now. The branches of the fig tree

are full of sap and the summer is at hand. There is no excuse for closing our eyes any longer against the broad clear light of advancing day. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:7).

The Lord's Church

(Continued from Page One)

was forced to let up on her persecution by world opinion. This was one of the results of the so-called reformation.

The Smyrna type churches suffered the most ruthless and heartless persecution during the awful Dark Ages at the hand of Rome that this old world has ever witnessed. Thousands, yea, millions of our Lord's saints who were members of the Smyrna type churches were beheaded, burned at the stake, thrown to hungry lions, or buried alive by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1550 A.D. this monstrosity passed a law which said that if anyone was accused of being a heretic (all members of the Smyrna type churches were heretics in her eye) and refused to confess, that person was to be burned at the stake. But if the accused person did confess it was different. If it was a man who confessed to being a heretic, he was beheaded. But in the case of a woman they were more lenient. They just buried her alive. The Catholic Church admits that she killed so many heretics in Spain that the number could not be calculated (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, p. 37). The Catholic Church has always been a murderous, bloodthirsty monstrosity. But our Lord's churches have never had the least desire to kill those who refuse to believe the great truths that have been committed to them. We pity the religionist, and would do anything in our power to get the truth of the gospel of grace over to him. But we would never touch a hair of his head in judgment upon him. Our Lord has not committed that type of judgment to His churches as yet. Since the Catholic Church has always been a murderous thing, there has never been a time when all the churches were Catholic churches. Therefore, I contend that the Smyrna type churches existed all through the Dark Ages, and that they blended in with the Philadelphia type churches of modern times.

In verse 9 our Lord says, "I know thy tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich)." Here we have a seeming contradiction. He says He knows their poverty, and then assures them that they are rich. In this world's goods, and as the world reckons wealth, they were paupers. They had to hide out in dens and caves of the mountains for fear of the Catholic Church. But in spite of their material poverty they were millionaires in the spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Should the Fords and the Rockefellers offer me their combined wealth in exchange for my resources in the Bank of Heaven I would laugh in their face. Then our Lord went on to say that He knew of those among the Smyrna type churches who claimed to be Jews, that is, spiritual Jews or saints, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan. I am fully convinced that we see here the beginning of the Pergamos type churches which later developed into the Thyatira type churches. The Lord's churches were forced to withdraw fellowship from some of the other churches because of their heretical teaching and practices. This first division, or split in the churches, took place in 251 A.D., and I believe these heretical churches were the synagogues of Satan in our Lord's eyes.

How comforting it is to hear our Lord saying, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." These are, no doubt, the words that gave the saints in the Smyrna type churches the strength to face the axeman, the fireman, the hungry lions, or the open grave in such a way as to astonish the old monster, the Catholic Church. And then how precious to hear Him say, "Be thou faithful unto death (that is, though it cause your death), and I will give thee a crown of life." The crown of life is not eternal life. Eternal life is a gift of God (John 10:28 and Romans 6:23), but the crown of life is something we earn. It is our reward for our being faithful, even though our being faithful causes our death. Too many people are trying to work for a reward rather than being faithful for one. Our Lord's saying "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" is another way of saying that those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God shall never suffer in the lake of fire.

The next letter is the one written to the church at Pergamos. But since this was the apostate church that our Lord calls the synagogue of Satan, let us go on to the letter that was written to the church at Philadelphia. The Ephesus type churches merged into the Smyrna type churches. These three churches represent the Lord's churches from beginning to end. So may we finish dealing with the Lord's churches before we start with the other fellow's churches. We can hardly refrain from feeling sorry for our Protestant friends as they grope for a way out when they come to this precious letter written to the church at Philadelphia. This letter prophetically sets forth our Lord's true churches in our day. And even with their warped conception of what a New Testament church is, their writers are forced to admit that the dead Sardis church sets forth prophetically the Protestant churches.

(Continued next week)

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Mountains . . .

(Continued from page 7)

lah, and He will do all His pleasure. We can as soon stop the ebbing and flowing of the water, and the sun from going its course, as supersede and put a stop to God in His determinative will; how soon did God change the will of the thief, when this will of God came to act? Though many strong bars upon his heart against God, by nature and action; yet if this be the counsel of His will, He will work and none can let his, for He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will.

III. If God works all things after the counsel of His own will, then we infer He must be an omnipotent and almighty operator and worker: for He works what He hath a will to do; He willed the creation of the world, but had He not been omnipotent, could never have made all things out of nothing,

with only, "Let it be so"; He must be omnipotent, because He wills that which none but an omnipotent arm can perform; He willed Christ's and the saint's resurrection, which none but omnipotency can effect; but God can raise the dead, though none else can. He willed the working of saving faith in the souls of the Ephesians, and the knowledge of the riches of the glory of the saints inheritance; but the apostle saith, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:19, 20). And as by a mighty power, saints are put into a state of grace, so kept in that state by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. This was the doctrine and the experience of the apostle Peter, "Who are kept by the power of God

through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5); He is able to keep you from falling, in respect of His omnipotency; and willing, in respect of His purpose: "For he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." It's His purpose and will to overthrow mystical Babylon; but it could not be done, if God were not omnipotent, and reigned over her. Omnipotency, as 'twas required in the first creation, so also in the second. Omnipotency brought light into a dark world, and the same brings Divine light into a dark heart. Can less omnipotency raise and quicken a dead body from the grave? No less power is required to quicken one dead in trespasses and sins; thus the Ephesians were quickened according to the counsel of His own will.

IV. If God works all things after the counsel of His own will: from hence we infer God's prescience and foreknowledge; if what ever comes to pass, cometh to pass because it is the counsel of His own will, then He must need foreknow all things: "Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). If there can be nothing come to pass, but what He hath determined, then He must of necessity foreknow what ever comes to pass. This is an incommunicable property of the Divine Being; when Jehovah would debate all false gods, He interrogates their worshippers, if they could declare things to come, as He could? "Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? And beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? Yea, there is none that sheweth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words" (Isa. 41:26), "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). The true God "declares the end from the beginning," therefore He must foreknow what ever comes to pass. And albeit God did not decree sin to be in the world, because contrary to His nature; yet He decreed to permit it, knowing how to bring glory to Himself out of it, else would never have permitted it; now if God foreknew all things, then He cannot be disappointed, in anything, as man is, who knoweth not what shall be on the morrow; hence when the Scripture saith, "and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (Isa. 5:2), it is not to be understood, as if God were disappointed, as a man is, who sometimes looks for one thing, but behold another occurs, which he looked not for, nor foreknew anything of. But it is written thus, to show God might justly expect from that people, considering the means and mercies were bestowed on them, but 'tis not compatible with Jehovah to be frustrated in His expectations as man is, He declares the end from the beginning; He foreknew infallibly who would be saved, and who would miscarry, before He made man; notwithstanding all the means afforded, God foresaw many thousands would perish. Yet let none say, if so, why did God make man? Oh, have a care of thy thoughts! "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the

same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 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. 9:19-23). God foreknew the defects of the elect, who are, saith

Peter, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Peter 1:2); yet that did not hinder them from being vessels prepared afore to glory. If all things in time come to pass according to his eternal will, then He must needs foreknow all things; seeing He could not be ignorant of His own will: so He worketh in time all things after the counsel of his own will in eternity.

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