RETRACTIONS

"Every Word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him." Proverbs 30:5

Negative statements regarding the King James Bible are hereby retracted. Having studied Greek in two colleges and in seminary, I was led to believe that the Alexandrian Text line was the best text to rely upon. The Received Text line upon which the King James Bible came from turns out to be the best and oldest. All revivals and great movements of God through the work of the Holy Spirit and Blood of Christ have their roots in the Received Text also known as the Textus Receptus line. I confess that I misjudged the King James Bible. I based my arguments upon the Alexandrian manuscripts, which I have now discovered have over 3,000 corruptions. All modern versions have their roots in the Alexandrian line and like the cursed fig tree and are not fruit bearers. Certainly, if God could speak through a donkey, He could speak through one of these versions if need be, however why use just a book when the King James Bible is available. The difference between the King James Bible and other so called versions is that the Holy Spirit lives in and moves upon the KJB. Versions have a different spirit. Hence, I preach only from the King James Bible. I do not use Bible versions for the same reason I do not serve alcoholic beverages, why keep a dog that bites one out of five people? I regret that it has taken me twenty years after college and seminary to find out what a Bible is! This case was never presented to me during college and seminary.

The basic argument of DID GOD KNOW? still stands, however, I am still wrestling with some concepts of the ATONEMENT. As with all discussions in theology, please keep the Scripture as the final authority. If you are interested in material regarding the Alexandrian verses the Received Text controversy, please write: Calvary Road Church, Warner Road Route 3 - Box 85, Staples, MN 56479 (218) 894-2685 Please include your phone number if you write. Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,

[Signature]
Pastor Howard

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is call The Word of God." Revelation 19:13
And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Genesis 6:6

—Does God know your future?

H. Roy Elseth
Did God Know?
About the Author

Howard Elseth trusted Christ as Saviour at a Billy Graham Crusade in 1961. In 1962 he graduated from Warren High School, Warren, Minnesota. Later, he received a degree from Covenant Bible College in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. He is also a graduate of Seattle Pacific College (now Seattle Pacific University), Seattle, Washington. At S.P.C. he was given a B.A. in Speech and Biblical Literature. From Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky he earned a Master's of Divinity. In addition he has had clinical pastoral counseling experience at the University of Kentucky Medical Center, University of Kentucky at Lexington, Kentucky. Besides his work in Greek at Seattle Pacific and Asbury, he has studied Greek at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. At Cerritos College in Los Angeles, California, he studied U.S. Government. He has also participated in archaeological work in Tel-Aviv, Israel, conducted by The American Institute of Holy Land Studies and Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel. Special theological studies have been undertaken in Germany and Switzerland. He has pastored in Los Angeles, California. He has lectured and preached in many different denominations, helped direct evangelistic and follow-up crusades in Central America and presently is a pastor at Calvary United Church and Research Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Did God Know?
a study of the nature of God

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Dedicated to Willard and Ruth
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In the past five years this project has brought me into many new and deeper relationships. Many people have been helpful in the completion of this work and thus one is always afraid of overlooking someone who has helped.

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Next, I want to thank Gordon Olson, who has completed much research in this area. His life and work have greatly influenced this book as well as my life.

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Finally, special appreciation must go to family and close friends who stood by me patiently during many hours of research and writing.
Preface
by Harry Conn

I sincerely wish that every scholar and Christian will have the opportunity to read and very seriously consider the serious implications of this book. The true servant will give it an "honest hearing" even where and when it may seriously shake or demolish our pre-suppositions.

There has to be more reasons why many thinking people are not Christians other than they want to live for themselves supremely or that they have "rejected Jesus" or they want something else in this world more than they want to be reconciled to God or they don't have enough truth to be saved. It may be that they have too much "Christian truth" and it violates their sense of justice and logicity. This book will certainly answer the perplexities of the latter excuse.

It seems to me that every major false theological premise, pre-supposition and theological postulation winds up as a major tenet of some false and damaging area of psychology and sociology. For example, Skinner's idea that man doesn't have any free will or that man can be put in a psychological test tube or their lack of understanding or total disregard for the noumenal. True physical scientists recognize the
noumenal and it is tragic that the "popular scientist" of the psychological and sociological don't use their experimental skills in the area of the spirit.

The subject matter of this book is of vital importance and has been written by one who has the best of qualifications in the area of the Spirit, academia, research, devotion and experience.

During the last century and the early part of this century many learned and influential servants of our Lord held to the theological positions as propounded in this book. Not only the intellectuals of our day have the problems that are dealt with in this book, but many Christian workers and laymen have and are still perplexed but need not be. There are many men of theological stature that believe what this book teaches, a few of which are afraid of standing for an area of truth that will bring persecution.

Miceli wrote, "When He sculptured the Ten Commandments in stone God did not write: 'Thou shalt not be an atheist.' Instead He commanded: 'Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.' Why? Because man is incurably God-centered. He cannot exist without God, and if he rejects the true God, he will invariably create his own false god...." 1 It isn't any secret many theologians have made God in their own image and many thinking men don't want anything to do with their god. This book lets God say what He means and mean what He says about Himself and his attribute of omniscience.

A man that won't stand for truth, even when it hurts his acceptability, let alone when it exonerates our great God, doesn't really love truth.

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Introduction

Does God know your future? Theologians and churches have taught for sixteen centuries that He not only knows your final destiny but any future decisions or choices you may make. Countless hours of Biblical research, however, have led me to conclude that this traditional concept of God's knowledge is riddled with inconsistency and error.

As you read the following pages, evidence presented may seem incompatible with your current understanding of the Bible and your faith. They may be new concepts to you, but do not reject them solely because of their apparent newness.

Do not confuse truth with familiarity. It is not easy to dislodge ideas which have been taught to us by our parents, by pastors, and our friends. Repetition and time tend to encrust ideas on our minds as truth even though they may have no basis in truth. Therefore, I encourage you to reason this subject through to its completion and examine the evidence with openness. Just as a judge should not make a decision until hearing all the evidence; therefore, out of fairness you should not preclude the truth and veracity of this book until you have read it in its entirety.

The approach used to draw conclusions of this book has been inductive. First, in order to observe
the facts, each verse of the Bible was read and re-read. Approximately eleven thousand verses which hint toward a position on the subject were singled out for further study. Passages were researched in both the Greek and Hebrew languages and experts in these fields were consulted. After five years of investigation, a correlation of the facts was assembled. Finally, and most important, methods of practical application were considered.

The conclusions contained in this book give harmony to the entire Bible. They revitalize the need for prayer and evangelism. They have drawn me, and those who have embraced these truths, to a more stimulating relationship with God. Freedom, responsibility, and the consequences of our actions are re-emphasized by these ideas.

Howard Roy Elseth

Editor's note: All quoted Bible verses are taken from the Authorized King James Version. This is not to say King James is the only version, for many obvious improvements have been made in recent translations. However, it is used because of its wide acceptance and familiarity.
CHAPTER 1

Planned Ugliness?

Before the first man was created, God in his eternal counsel had determined what he willed to be done with the whole human race.

In the hidden counsel of God it was determined that Adam should fall from the unimpaired condition of his nature, and by his defection should involve all his posterity in sentence of eternal death.

Upon the same decree depends the distinction between elect and reprobate: as he adopted some for Himself for salvation, he destined others for eternal ruin.—John Calvin (1509-1564)

Hot sand drifted lazily through the coastal village. The chatter of children carried by the warm breeze was a welcome sound to Robert Duncan. Duncan, a young officer in the Royal British Navy, had been captive too long in the rust-streaked patrol boat. Even though this was only a primitive North African seacoast town, it was earth. It was good to once again feel firmness and certainty under him.

A sense of Saturday afternoon timelessness now engulfed Duncan and his companion, Jeff Vaness, as they wandered aimlessly through the dusty streets. At the end of one road, near a shallow pond, a small group of children frolicked in the wetness. Duncan noticed a little girl stacking stones into a make-believe tower. The girl was no more than five
years old, perhaps four, he thought. Richly tanned skin and black hair made her look delicate and innocent even in her dirty-brown sack dress. She smiled as she played. The child reminded Duncan in a strange way of the loveliness of his future wife in faraway England.

Wanting to give the girl something, Duncan remembered the package of gum he had. He called to her, but the shy little girl misunderstood and was frightened. She jumped away from her stone toys—and Duncan’s call to her became the call of death.

Nearby the water pond, unknown to the children, lived a viper. The snake hid himself during the day between rocks and fed on the small animals that frequently came to the water. Today, however, the heat had driven him to the shade of one of the many bushes near the pool. He had been silently sensing the presence of the children for a long time, but now the sudden movement of the little girl excited him. He lunged out at her and dug his venemous fangs into her soft leg with incredible deftness.

Terror overcame Duncan. He unholstered his seldom used revolver and shot the snake until its flesh and syrupy blood sprayed the ground. Headless, the snake made eerie motions in the soft dirt.

Vaness and Duncan, recognizing the type of snake this was, wasted no time. They quickly cut into the fang marks on her leg and took turns sucking as much blood and venum as they dared.

Having heard gunfire, townspeople gathered at the scene. Seeing the dying snake and the child, most recognized the hopelessness of the situation. Some even gently scoffed at the white-clad seamen for their frantic efforts. They reasoned that nothing could be done to save the young girl.

Duncan had not prayed in a long time. But he prayed now—out of desperation. He pleaded with God
not to let the beautiful child die. It seemed to him that there was no reason or sense to what had hap-
pened. His prayers were to no avail, however. The innocent girl shivered in the afternoon heat. Numb-
ness worked its way up her leg and poison quickly moved throughout the small body. Sweat came out of her unwrinkled skin as convulsions emptied the girl’s stomach of vomit. As the afternoon sun faded, the black-haired girl died.

Duncan did not sleep at all that night. For weeks afterward he wrestled with what had happened. He had studied the terrors of war at sea; this however was real and tangible, and seemed far more terrible. The life of a blameless child was snuffed out for no reasonable cause. Further, he felt responsible. If only he had not called to the girl perhaps it would not have happened.

Duncan’s thoughts drifted toward God. What had the girl done that God inflicted this upon her? Was her crime playing with stones in a quiet African town? Who is God that He would allow such a thing? If God knew beforehand that the viper would strike out at the child, why didn’t He prevent it? How could a God of love remain idle during such an event? Worse yet, did God plan or determine that this event would happen, as the theologian John Calvin suggests? How ludicrous it seemed to Duncan that a God so great that He created millions of planets in millions of light years of space would spend His time plotting and planning to kill one child in an obscure African village. How could this possibly be the “will of God”? It made no sense. A God of that kind could not conceivably be worthy of man’s love.

The concept of prayer also bothered Robert Dun-
can. Did it make any difference that he prayed that Saturday afternoon? The Christian church had
taught the young officer of God's omniscience, of God's absolute knowledge of past, present, and future. If God knew beforehand, however, what He was going to do with the child and how He was going to respond to the situation, it was apparent that God had already made up His mind. God had already adjusted to Duncan's prayer before the prayer was made. God foresaw the prayer, responded to it (in this case negatively) before it occurred, and thus Duncan's action was only a fulfillment of God's knowledge. So in effect the prayer could not have possibly changed anything. What was going to happen was already a certain event.

This is not fiction. This is a true story. Today as you read this book, Robert Duncan is living with his family in Canada. He has been driven to the position of agnosticism, believing that if there is in fact a God, He could not be the kind of God that most Christians understand Him to be. Duncan will not accept the fact that it was the "will of God" that the little black-haired girl died.

There are many other "Duncans." Bertrand Russell, a well-known philosopher of our age often related why he was not a Christian. He strongly believed if God existed, He could not be a God of love if He knew before creating man that the world would eventually end with wars, famine, and poverty. Russell believed it was an astonishing thing that people could believe that this world, with all its defects, could be the best that omnipotence and omniscience has been able to produce. Russell states: "... there is to me something a little odd about the ethical valuations of those who think that an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent Deity, after preparing the ground by many millions of years of lifeless nebulae, would consider Himself adequately re-
Planned Ugliness?

...it is clear that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity demand a great deal of ethical perversion before they can be accepted. The world, we are told, was created by a God who is both good and omnipotent. Before He created the world He foresaw all the pain and misery that it would contain; He is therefore responsible for all of it. It is useless to argue that the pain in the world is due to sin. In the first place, this is not true; it is not sin that causes rivers to overflow their banks or volcanoes to erupt. But even if it were true, it would make no difference. If I were going to beget a child knowing that the child was going to be a homicidal maniac, I should be responsible for his crimes. If God knows in advance the sins of which man would be guilty, He was clearly responsible for all the consequences of those sins when He decided to create man. The usual Christian argument is that the suffering in the world is a purification for sin and is therefore a good thing. This argument is, of course, only a rationalization of sadism; but in any case it is a very poor argument. I would invite any Christian to accompany me to the children's ward of a hospital, to watch the suffering that is there being endured, and then to persist in the assertion that those children are so morally abandoned as to deserve what they are suffering. In order to bring himself to say this, a man must destroy in himself all feelings of mercy and compassion. He must, in short, make himself as cruel as the God in whom he believes. No man who believes that all is for the best in this suffering world can keep his ethical values unimpaired, since he is always having to find

warded by the final emergence of Hitler and Stalin and the H-Bomb."
excuses for pain and misery."

Is the world with all of its imperfections, wars, and hate on some grand schedule that God has willed or planned millions of years ago? Did God indeed plan ugliness? Did God know man would sin before He created him? Is it in God's wonderful plan that a four-year-old child should writhe in pain from the bite of a poisonous snake? Did God will that certain children should be born without arms and legs, with cleft palates, with missing organs? Does God desire hatred between His people, such as between the Arab and Jewish nations? Did God really know about these things before He created man?

The beginning chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, gives some startling insight into man's creation. Genesis 1:27, 28 and 31 declare:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good, And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Several ideas stand out here. First, we were originally created in the image of God. If we are creative and inventive personalities, it would follow then that God probably has those same characteristics. Secondly, God appears to want man to dominate the earth, not in a destructive way, but in a productive and protective way. He appears to leave the method how this task is to be carried out to man's
ingenuity. In other words, He seems to give man a certain freedom.

God makes a value judgment in the last verse of the chapter. He declares about His creation, “It was very good.” God does not just say it was fair creation, or a good creation, but the “good” is stressed. It was “very good.” Now it seems odd that God would make such an observation if He knew several years later that His production would become askew, a failure, and that man would become extremely evil. If God knew the corruption that would follow before He created man, then we can only believe that His conception of good is far less than ours.

In Genesis 6:5, 6, and 7, God appears to have a change of mind. The perception of goodness has changed to regret and remorse:

> And 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. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

From these passages it would seem that God is rather illogical and slow-witted if He does have absolute knowledge of future events. Why would He be grieved if He knew exactly what would happen to man at the precise moment He created him? There could be no possible reason for this outburst. The time to be sorry would have been at the time the knowledge of man’s fall first occurred to God. But when did this occur if God has absolute knowledge of the future? Would He have always known it?
22/Did God Know?

Perhaps for many reasons our conception of God’s future knowledge is inaccurate. Perhaps the great theologians of the world have been wrong and have misunderstood the concept of “omniscience.” That then is the investigation of this book. What is the nature of God? What does God really know?

Notes for Chapter 1


2. This is a true account; however, names have been changed in order to protect the identity of the seamen involved.


4. Ibid., pp. 29, 30. Used by permission.

5. Some theologians call these and other Old Testament passages anthropomorphic. In other words, these passages attribute human characteristics to God in order to help us better understand God, and thus we cannot infer from them their face value meaning or plain meaning. There are several problems, however. First an anthropomorphic passage cannot mean the opposite of the face value meaning. If we say Jesus Christ is a door (a passage way), we cannot mean that He is a wall (a barrier). So here if we say that God regretted that He made man, we cannot say that it really means He was overjoyed that He made man. Secondly, it is very difficult to draw the line as to what is anthropomorphic and what is not. Theologians have a tendency to throw out what doesn’t fit their theology and call it “anthropomorphic.” Are we any more justified in calling this passage about the character of God anthropomorphic than in labeling the verse “God is love” as an anthropomorphism? More will be said about this later.
CHAPTER 2

Is God Responsible for Evil?

Bertrand Russell is correct if his assumptions are correct. He assumes that if God is all powerful and all knowing of past, present, and future events, then it is logical to assume God created a world knowing with certainty the end result would be evil. If God created the world in such a way that evil was to come about, then we can only conclude that God desired the development of sin and wickedness.

Let us put it another way. If I load a gun and give it to my child and I know with absolute certainty (knowledge with such exactness that nothing different can happen than what I know) that my child will go and shoot one of his playmates, it would be reasonable to assume that I desired the end result of the event. It is useless to argue that my child had a free will or free choice. If I could foresee the result of my child's choice with certainty and I set in motion the situation which provided for the shooting, it is I, not my child, who would be responsible.

Thus if God creates a man who God knows is going to be evil and will ultimately kill, rape, and steal, then we can only reason that God desired that man to come into existence and God desired the evil resulting from that man's life. As Russell points out, it is useless and pointless to argue that the man was free to choose whether or not to kill, rape, or
Did God Know?

steal. Whether or not such free will exists makes no difference. If God knew at the time He created man what such free choices would be, then the so-called free choices had only one possible outcome in God’s mind. Whether God determined the choices or whether He knew with absolute certainty the outcome of the free choices of man, the result is the same, certainty or fixity.

Russell’s arguments are ironclad,¹ and theologians for centuries have been trying to weasel out of the impact of such logic. John Calvin suggested the position that God predestinates or causes the events of our lives, but that makes the problem even worse: if God caused the evil in our lives then He is indeed responsible for it. Theologian Jacobus Arminius took the opposite position, that God knows with certainty the events of our lives yet we are free to choose those events. The outcome, however, is still the same. Our choices to God would be just as sure and definite as if He had caused them.

There is a third possibility not yet fully explored—that man is truly the originator of his own choices. Thus those choices cannot be known until they are made because they do not exist until the time they are decided upon. Because God does not know or in any way coerce or cause such choices, He cannot be responsible for them, other than creating the possibility for choices. It is the purpose of this book to examine that position more completely, but first it is necessary to agree on the basic concepts of what good and evil are.

As we have seen above, knowledge and responsibility are directly related. As your knowledge increases, your moral responsibilities also increase. You cannot have one without the other. An insane person doesn’t have an awareness of the consequences
of his actions. In reverse, if a person has knowledge, that person has responsibility to the extent of his or her knowledge. An adult, for example, would be negligent in giving a four-year-old child a loaded gun. Knowledge and past experience would tell that adult that the possibility of injury or death in such a case would be great and thus, it would be a foolhardy act. Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that if God's knowledge is great (which it is), His responsibility must follow. It is impossible for Him to avoid the moral accountability which His wisdom creates (and further, there is no indication in the Scriptures that He wants to).

At the point where knowledge defies what is right, it also violates responsibility. Thus an evil act or a sin occurs. Sin is always a contradiction of what is right, and is related to the amount of understanding that one has. You do not sin if you are not aware that your action is wrong and violates your responsibility. Thus if the President of the United States had no knowledge of the planning of an illegal event, then at that point it could not have been a sin to him. However, if our leader learned of the event and then chose to conceal what he had learned, a contradiction or a sin would result. He would have stated one thing knowing with certainty that the opposite had occurred. The same would be true of any man or even of God. If God knew something to be true (example: that creation was going to be evil) and then made a statement to the opposite effect (that creation was "very good," implying it would continue to be good), then God would be violating His knowledge and His responsibility by contradicting His knowledge and responsibility.

It is important to understand that evil is not merely the absence of goodness or goodness the mere
absence of evil. Both represent free choices.

Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of God?

This is a problem which in reality has a comparatively simple solution. It has often, however, been made to appear unnecessarily difficult, and indeed unanswerable, through ignorance of forgetfulness of the nature of the process which in Logic is called abstraction. Some thinkers, for instance, have attempted to minimize the evilness of evil by maintaining that it did not really exist at all, that it was the mere absence of goodness. Manifestly this argument cuts both ways. Good is as much the negation of evil as evil is the negation of good. Indeed, goodness does not exist until a choice for good is made. The term sums up the common qualities of a certain class of actions.

If we use the word goodness as a synonym for God, we must remember that God is good because He chooses to be good. If we say that God is simply a "blob" of good in the sky who can do nothing but good, because He is good, you then destroy the factor of choice. If you eliminate choice you eliminate virtue. This would make God no different than a machine operating out of necessity in proportion to the quality of its construction and the ability of its operator.

Similarly in regard to evil. It is not a concrete thing, but an abstract term. It represents the common qualities of a certain class of actions. Evil exists because beings choose to sin. So the problem we must face is this: Is God responsible for the evil acts of these beings? If not, who is?

Theologians generally tell us that evil must have been permitted by God for some purpose. Some even talk as if reason would suggest that God ought to have prevented evil, and that, had He done so, we should have found ourselves much more fortunately
situated than we are. Now reason, I believe, teaches no such thing. It shows, on the contrary, that the absolute prevention of evil would have made our world not better than it is, but infinitely worse.

There are three conceivable ways in which evil could have been prevented: 1) God might have refrained from creating beings capable of sinning; or 2), having created such beings, He might have kept them from temptation; or 3), allowing them to be tempted, He might have forcibly prevented them from yielding.

First, suppose that He had created only beings incapable of sinning. That would have been to create nothing higher than a brute. If he had not formed creatures capable of doing wrong, He could not have formed any capable of doing right: for the two things inevitably go together. He only is able to do right who is able at the same time to do wrong.

Let me give you a very simple illustration. I wish my desk to hold my papers, and it does so. Do I therefore thank and praise it, and feel grateful to it, and call it good and kind for obeying me? No! Why? Because it cannot disobey; and for this reason it cannot be properly said to obey. Take, again, the case of lower animals. At first sight it might seem as if some animals could lay more claim than many men to the possession of a conscience. It is probable that their best actions are done merely from an instinctive and irresistible impulse of affection. They can, of course, be kept from doing certain things, by the knowledge that if they do them they will be punished. They may be cured of stealing, for example, by being whipped when they do steal. However, they could not be taught to refrain from it because it was an infringement of another's rights. Since they have no language properly so called, and since (so far as we are able to judge) their reasoning
is always restricted to matters connected with the senses, it is unlikely that they ever reach the conception of duty. This lack of endowment renders it impossible for them to choose to do wrong; and it is manifest that the same lack of endowment must render it equally impossible for them to choose to do right.

Beings incapable of sinning must be ignorant of the difference between right and wrong, or must be destitute of the power of choice, or must always be impelled by irresistible instincts. In none of these cases could their conduct be really moral or right. Had God therefore only created creatures of this description, He would, it is true, have prevented the possibility of evil; but He would at the same time also have prevented the possibility of good.

Second, suppose that God had resorted to shielding us from all temptation. What would have been the result? We could never have attained the possession of a good character, for that comes only through the conquest of temptation. We might have been innocent as animals, but never upright as men.

If we take the trees of which Adam and Eve were allowed to eat to represent lawful pleasures, and the tree of which they were not allowed to eat to represent unlawful pleasures, and the command of God to represent the voice of conscience, then the account of Adam’s fall will be for us a literal history of our own. Temptation has in our case led to a fall, to many falls. Man is constantly falling by eating forbidden fruit. But, thank God, though temptations have led to our fall, they may lead to our rising eventually to a height which apart from conflict we could never have attained. It would have been better for us to have been tempted without falling; but it is better to fall and to rise again than never to have experienced temptation—since
this is absolutely essential for the moral development of every finite being. Even Christ, Divine though He was, had to be made “perfect through suffering”; and much of this suffering was due, we may be sure, to the discipline to temptation. There is a glory possible for you and me, which but for moral conflict could never be ours, any more than it could belong to zoophytes or machines. “To him that overcometh,” says Christ, “will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

Third, it is said that God might have resorted to the last of the three expedients: He might have prevented man’s yielding to temptation by giving him at the outset a will strong enough to resist, or by compelling him on every occasion to use his will in the right way. To say this is, however, to talk nonsense. A will by definition cannot be made to choose only one course. The will must be able to choose either of two alternatives and opposite courses. Choice is the essential nature of the will.

Freedom cannot exist without contingencies. Nor can anyone possibly be compelled to use his will in a particular way. That would be to deprive him of his will altogether. So long as he has it, there is, in virtue thereof, a choice of conduct open to him. God could of course have refrained from making us free; but then we should not have been men—we should have been only automations or brutes. God could of course, at any moment, deprive us of our wills and make us act in a particular way, but we should then for the time cease to be free men.

A man must be capable of moral action, and a moral agent must be free. A forced goodness is a contradiction in terms. There is no difference in moral value between forced obedience and forced disobedience. If God used a man’s will or pre-
vented him from using it in the way he preferred, that man would be no longer responsible for his conduct, and so would be reduced to the level of dead, unreasoning matter.

You may keep your boy's hands out of mischief by tying them behind his back, but to the extent to which this takes away from him the power of doing wrong, to the very same extent does it deprive him of the power of doing right. To ask why God did not give Adam a more perfect will is as absurd as to ask why the square has not been endowed with the properties of the circle. God could not have given Adam a more perfect will. Every will is a perfect will. The perfection of a will consists, not in being able to choose only one course, but in being able to choose either of two courses. Right-doing is praiseworthy just because it implies that wrong might have been done but was not. To make a man virtuous is an impossibility even for omnipotence. To make a man virtuous is a contradiction of terms. A forced goodness is always a contradiction of terms. Omnipotence, it must always be remembered, is not the power to do the impossible; it is the power to do all possible things. A man might be divinely compelled to refrain from evil; but if he were so compelled there would be no moral value in his refraining. Hence compelling him to refrain from evil is not, after all, compelling him to be virtuous. A virtuous character cannot be bestowed upon anyone by a creative act from without. It must be the outcome of his own free will within. God can create innocent beings, and every child that is born into the world is innocent; but He cannot create a perfect character, for character is the result of a man's own voluntary choice.

The origin of evil, then, just like that of good, lies in the power of choice. God must have been
(if I may so state) necessitated, by His very goodness, to create beings capable of goodness. Such beings must be free. This freedom carries with it the possibility of sin. It lies in the very nature of things—that if there is free choice the possibility of good and evil must exist.²

Notes for Chapter 2

1. I believe if we reevaluate the basic assumptions of omniscience and understand this characteristic of God how the Scriptures teach it, then Russell's accusations against God will evaporate and deteriorate.


The following excellent chart by Gordon Olson helps to understand the relationship of God to the world. Used by permission.
"Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6).

"The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Ps. 103:19).

**Moral Government**
A government of free moral agents by motives presented to the mind for the will to make choice between, except for necessary providential interruptions of this normal moral freedom to maintain a tolerable world order and accomplish certain divine plans, all of which was made necessary by the entrance of sin into the world with the impending chaos resulting from selfishness.

**Free Moral Action**
The normal course of accountable, self-caused action, where man is allowed to choose between motives presented to the mind to form his own moral character and be sole author of his destiny. Here God says: "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded" (Prov. 1:24).

**Governmental Providence**
The abnormal or unusual operation of God's wisdom in inciting men's wills to actions in various particulars through external events or internal persuasion, temporarily setting aside man's normal moral freedom and accountability under a law of cause and effect by coercing or constraining man's will.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free Moral Action</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>The normal course of accountable, self-caused action, where man is allowed to choose between motives presented to the mind to form his own moral character and be sole author of his destiny. Here God says: &quot;I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded&quot; (Prov. 1:24).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Non-moral Government  
A government of animate creation not endowed with free moral agency by means of internal impulse or tendency, and of the vast natural creation not possessing the life of growth or self-locomotion by means of dynamic energy or divine omnipotence, the law of cause and effect functioning in both areas. Certainty is the law of God’s operations here; the cause being brought into existence, the result always follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animate Non-moral Creation</th>
<th>Inanimate Creation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here the mysterious law of instinct becomes a compelling directive, which must be supplemented by direct divine impulses to stimulate man to God-consciousness, judging from the phenomenal things that are taking place that exhibit more intelligence in certain details than man possesses.</td>
<td>God in omnipotence holds absolute sway over the vast realm of material creation by producing an adequate cause for every desired effect. God creates by His great omnipotence and exercises perfect control according to His ever-wise benevolence. “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me” (Isa. 45:5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 9:2</td>
<td>Gen. 6:7, 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonah 1:17</td>
<td>9:11</td>
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<td>Num. 11:31</td>
<td>19:24, 25</td>
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<td>22:22, 23</td>
<td>Ex. 14:21-29</td>
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<td>Deut. 32:11, 12</td>
<td>I Kings 18:38</td>
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<td>I Kings 17:4, 6</td>
<td>I Chron. 29:10-12</td>
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<td>Job 35:10, 11</td>
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<td>Ps. 104:16-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan. 6:22, 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark 5:11-13</td>
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Gen. 6:7, 13; 9:11; 19:24, 25; Ex. 14:21-29; I Kings 18:38; I Chron. 29:10-12; II Chron. 7:12-14; Ps. 50:1; 62:11; 93:1-4; 135:5-9; Gen. 9:2; Jonah 1:17; Num. 11:31; 22:22, 23; Deut. 32:11, 12; I Kings 17:4, 6; Job 35:10, 11; Ps. 104:16-18; Dan. 6:22, 24; Mark 5:11-13; Isa. 45:5-7; 12, 18; Dan. 4:34, 35; Jonah 1:4; 14, 15; Matt. 5:45; 8:24-27; 24:29, 30; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 11:17; 16:1-4, 8, 12, 18, 21
The following chart by Harry Conn very capably illustrates the process of moral government. Note the role of the cross. It is through Christ that we are restored to peace, joy, etc. Used by permission.

LAW OR
RESPONSIBILITIES

SANCTIONS or
CONSEQUENCES

DISOBEDIENCE PENALTIES

GUILT DEPRESSION DEATH BONDAGE LOSS of PRIV. SICKNESS REBELLION

PEACE JOY LIFE FREEDOM PRIVILEGES HEALTH PURPOSE

"O HOW I LOVE THY LAW!
IT IS MY MEDITATION ALL THE DAY"
CHAPTER 3

Is God Reasonable?

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—Isaiah 1:18

Few professions throughout history have trampled basic principles of logic and reason as consistently as ministers, evangelists, and theologians of the Christian faith. In their well-motivated efforts to declare the greatness of God, they have made him abstract and above reasonable thinking—instead of the tangible, concrete and real God that He is.

A Methodist Bishop recently declared in a commencement address to a group of graduating seminary students, "The Scriptures are so great and profound that they transcend reason." Obviously the theologian thought he was elevating the Word of God, but consider the impact of what he said. Would this mean that the Scriptures are not logical even to a righteous man? Does it mean that the Bible cannot be understood by reason? If it cannot be understood by man's reason, then who was it written for? What then is the methodology of study for the Bible? Should we study it not by logic but by what we "feel" or "lead to feel it means"? But then, what is the purpose of studying the Bible if the truth found in it is only determined by what we "feel"?
What we "feel" would automatically become "truth" without any need for verification or objective study. Do you see the trap we fall into?

It is also quite common in Christian circles to hear the statements: "If we could prove God, He would not be God," "If we could fully understand God, then we would be equal to Him," or "If we could fully understand Him, He could not be God." This is incredible subjective reasoning. It is just as logical as saying, if you could fully understand the workings of a television set or prove how it functions, then you would become a television set. Most of us would agree that God fully understands the principles of television. Does that mean then that we can absurdly reason that God is a television set?

Certainly we will not be able to understand all the intricate and magnificent machinery in the mind of God unless He chooses to reveal such details to us. That does not mean, however, that understanding God can in any way mean being equal to God. However, understanding is essential. It is the key to our relationship with God and to the Scriptures.

A major underlying theme of the Bible is God's desire for man to seek after wisdom and knowledge, "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7). God encourages us to seek out His character and moral nature. "Come let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Isaiah 1:18) He wants us to find Him and learn of Him, and in that way we will understand Him more fully and realize His greatness, reality, and the wonder of His power. God literally begs us to come to Him.

Ezekiel 20:35, 36 says, "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. (36) Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God."
Among the gifts given to man by the Spirit is the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. (See I Corinthians 12:7-8.) Also in James 1:5 “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

In the parable of the sower in the New Testament, Jesus is not just saying the Word falls on rocky ground, some on thorny ground and some on good ground—that some grows and some doesn’t and that’s just the way it is. He is making the point if we scatter seed and it does not grow, it probably means that those receiving the seed are not understanding it. Jesus states, “But he that received seed unto good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matt. 13:23). It is the word “understanding” that is repeated over and over. The concept of understanding is repeated over 45 times in 23 verses in Matthew. Jesus is declaring that the seed of God’s Word grows because of understanding and receiving the truth. Jesus also said that if you could not perceive the meaning of this parable, then you would not be able to understand any of His parables. (See Mark 4:13.) In other words, understanding is a pas­sageway to all the Scriptures.

The following words relate to understanding as found in Matthew 13 (verse numbers follow the words):

- Ears—9, 15, 15, 16
- Hearing—13, 14, 15
- Heareth—19, 20, 22, 23
- Hear—9, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 17, 18
- Heard—17
- Seeing—13, 14
- See—13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 17
God's logic described in the Bible is not in dichotomy with man's logic as Calvin suggests. Certainly it appears unreasonable to rebellious and wicked men, but God's pattern of logic is in no way on a different wave length than the logic of men and women who earnestly seek Him. His truth rather than being obtuse and abstract is compelling, reasonable, gentle, and soothing to those who seek wisdom. "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Psalm 9:10: "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee. . . ."

Nowhere in the Bible does God deny Himself to, or criticize, or condemn men who sincerely seek Him. Nowhere in the Bible does God speak evil about a righteous man (and over thirty people are described as righteous and/or perfect in the Old Testament). Passages such as Isaiah 55:8 must be read in context: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord." Here a specific group of people are being talked about in a specific point in time. These were wicked and not religious people. Certainly wicked people's thoughts and acts are not as God's thoughts and ways. To give this and other such verses universal application is to grossly distort the Scriptures. This does not mean that we have not sinned, but that in turn does not mean we cannot be perfect in intention
of our hearts and minds. Jesus commands us, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). If such perfection is beyond our capabilities it was certainly an illogical remark for Jesus to make.

Putting a high degree of emphasis on knowledge and understanding does not in any way depreciate the need for faith and the work of the Holy Spirit, rather it enhances their importance. How can one accept if he has not first heard and understood? Faith indicates an acceptance but it need not be a "leap of faith" as many theologians suggest. Cold understanding alone will not save men, but it is by an accepting, reliance or faith based on understanding of God, that we come into a right relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit's role in drawing us and compelling us in this process cannot be overestimated. The Holy Spirit, however, never draws us against our free will, but rather reasons with us and gently coaxes us.

With the aid of the Scriptures and the guiding of the Holy Spirit, we can come to an intelligent understanding of God and His character. Yet regarding God's future knowledge and how it can be compatible with free will, many ministers throw up their hands and say the problem is unresolvable or "it is not clearly taught in the Scriptures" or "we cannot understand it; therefore it must not be important." The fact of the matter is, if we can overcome many of the obstacles a man named St. Augustine and also John Calvin have set up for us, we will learn that the Bible does teach a clear and consistent view of God's knowledge.

To those who say that this subject must not be important, it could be pointed out that it is logically inconsistent for one to say that the matter of "foreknowledge" is unimportant while on the other hand,
admitting a lack of understanding about it. How can one determine the importance of something if he does not understand that something he says is not important? It is like saying, "I don't understand radio waves, therefore they must not be important."

Understanding the truth about God's knowledge is significant because it determines our view of sin, prayer, evangelism, and freedom of our wills. Our emotions and subjectivity should never become the yardstick for truth. Although each man must interpret truth for himself, truth is not determined by what each man interprets. Let us now more carefully analyze where the theological ideas come from that God knows your future choices even before you make them.
CHAPTER 4

The Subjective Boneyard

On November 13, 354 A.D. in a small town named Tagaste in the Roman province of Numidia, a man was born who has influenced the thinking of nearly every evangelical Christian in the United States of America. His name was Aurelius Augustinus or more commonly known to us as Saint Augustine of Hippo. He is considered by many to be the father of theology, for he was the first to systematize the nature of God. Earlier church fathers had mentioned the concept of “foreknowledge” of God, but it was Augustine more than anyone who fully developed the idea. In his later years, further, he embraced the concept of “predestination”—the idea that God predetermines or foreordains all things.

From the time of his conversion to Christianity in A.D. 386 until his forty-second year, Augustine believed that man had total freedom—whether to sin or not to sin. Augustine in his early years as a Christian did not believe in predestination. He stated, “Sin is a volitionary evil. No one is compelled by his nature to sin. Whatever the cause of the will is, if it cannot be resisted, it is yielded to without sin. Man fell by his own free will. God did not predestine his fall.”¹ He goes on to assert, “It is by our free act of faith that we are cleansed from sin.”²

Augustine did not believe that God’s “foreknowl-
edge," or absolute knowledge of the future in any way hindered free will. In a debate between Evodius, one of his students, we learn of Augustine's understanding of God's knowledge. It is a position held almost universally by twentieth-century Christians that God has knowledge of all future events, that man has free will, and that there is no conflict between these ideas. If there appears to be a conflict, however, Augustine reasons that it is probably a limitation in our human understanding.

In their discussion, Evodius laid out his argument. He reasoned:

1. God has absolute knowledge of all future events.
2. Therefore if a man is going to sin, God "foreknows" that event.
3. Whatever God knows is inevitable, it will happen. (If something could happen without God "foreknowing" it, that fact would "destroy God's foreknowledge by the wildest kind of blasphemy.")
4. Therefore, if God knows that a man will sin, it follows the man must necessarily sin.
5. Furthermore, if a man must necessarily sin, then "there is no freedom of the will in the act of sinning." Man does not therefore sin voluntarily.
6. Therefore, we must conclude that man does not have a free will regarding the act of sinning.

Augustine responds in agreement that points one through four are true but attacks points five and six. He reasons that God knows all future events and thus God foresees sin. However, if God knows that we are going to sin, it logically follows that we must necessarily sin when the time comes (an abstract or intangible concept). If God sees the future as a reality, then the future is a certainty. We could not do other than what God foreknows; otherwise his foreknowledge would be incorrect. However, it
can also be readily observed in day-to-day life that man can control his will. Augustine concludes that God’s foreknowledge does not influence our act of free will. God cannot thus be blamed or be responsible for our sins just because He knows about them. He does this, however, by ignoring the fact that ideas cannot emerge from a non-being. If I do not exist, how is God furnished with ideas about me? If I exist, then I am subject to them and hence not free. This is the point of the problem. Augustine leaves it unanswered!

About A.D. 396, Augustine’s arguments were advanced several steps. Pelagius, a stubborn Welsh monk, formed a school of thought that believed “what I ought, I can.” Pelagius affirmed that man had complete free will and that the human will itself was sufficient to initiate the holy life. He went to the extreme of suggesting that man was the sole author of his salvation. Augustine, then living in the African coastal town of Hippo Regius (45 miles north of his birthplace, Tagaste), disagreed violently. Augustine hurried to the opposite extreme and declared that the entire work of salvation was accomplished exclusively by God. Pelagius ignored the work of the Holy Spirit as a factor in man’s salvation, and Augustine ignored the factor of free choice in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. In the personal feud, both men departed from the Scriptures. Augustine was then driven to a form of “predestination” which in turn affected John Calvin eleven hundred years later.

Subjectivity was the major problem of Augustine’s theories. He was thoroughly schooled in the platonic thought of earlier Greek philosophers who dealt heavily in abstractions. Augustine thus found no difficulty in merging contradictory abstract thoughts with day-to-day concrete observations. What he observed to be true became true to him without any serious meth-
od of verification. For example, he assumed that because God is great, therefore God knows all future events. Yet nowhere does he or his student verify how this first premise is so. His speculations thus became a mixture of "truths" with little regard for their logical or objective correlation. Historian C. F. Tertullian writes, "Augustine in his teaching combined a number of different theological tendencies, without working them into a consistent system. His doctrines of original sin, predestination, and grace, are by no means harmonized with his position regarding the church and the sacraments in which he builds upon the foundation laid in the west. . . ." 3

Between A.D. 1509 and 1564, the Genevan theologian, John Calvin, appeared on the scene. Calvin had the same lack of concern for objective logic as Augustine, and his theological works consequently resulted in many contradictory conclusions. He reasoned that God's "foreknowledge" is based on "predestination." Calvin even made God's will the originating cause of moral evil, even though he (Calvin) held firmly to the blamelessness and purity of God.

Calvin's chief argument eminated from the ninth chapter of the book of Romans. Calvin seemed never to be aware that there is a concept in theological interpretation called providential government. (This concept will be explained in a later chapter.) He stretched those passages to mean that God determines our eternal destiny while literally ignoring hundreds of other passages which weigh heavily in the opposite direction. Those arguments which he could not respond to logically, Calvin chose to respond to subjectively calling such problems "a mystery." He believed in a dichotomy between the logic of God and that of man—that man's knowledge was so far below God's logic that man could not hope to under-
stand the reasoning of God. Calvin concludes a discussion on predestination by stating, "Now while many arguments are advanced on both sides, let our conclusion be to stand astonished with Paul at so great a mystery; and amidst the clamour of petulant tongues let us not be ashamed to exclaim with him; O men, who art thou that repliest against God? For, as Augustine justly contends, it is acting a most perverse part to set up the measure of human justice as the standard by which to measure the justice of God." It is baffling to understand how Calvin believing that man's mind was in such a reprobate state could be so sure of his own human reasoning. Yet, sure he was.

Calvin was ruthless to those who opposed his beliefs. Michael Servetus (1511-1553), a Spanish theologian and physician, entered into correspondence with Calvin in 1546. Servetus sent Calvin a copy of his manuscript Christianismi Restitutis, and requested that he and Calvin exchange ideas about theology in Geneva. After a few letters, however, Calvin would have nothing to do with Michael Servetus and would not return the precious original manuscript. Calvin remarked to his associate Guillaume Farel that if Servetus should ever turn up in Geneva, he (Calvin) would not permit him to leave alive. In 1553 exactly that happened. Servetus sincerely hoping to correct beliefs he thought mistaken, showed up in Geneva at one of Calvin's meetings. He was recognized and promptly arrested by authorities. Calvin took a prominent part in the trial and Servetus was convicted because he disagreed with Calvin's view on the trinity and baptism. On October 27, 1553, Michael Servetus, forty-two years old, was burned alive at Calvin's urging. (Ed. note: "I have experienced this same type of reaction by many Christians when confronted by the truth on the subject. Thank goodness
burning people at the stake is still not popular!

There is also historical evidence to support the fact that in the summer and fall of 1555 John Calvin took an unofficial part in the beheading and quartering of the Compare Brothers, Claude Geneve, Francois Daniel Berthelier, and Ami Perrin and his four associates. Pierre Vandel and Philibert Berthelier were sentenced to the same fate in their absence. Their mistake had been to criticize Calvin's theological and political control of Geneva. In addition, Calvin sanctioned fifty-seven executions and seventy-six banishments in a five year period, not to mention his possible involvement in over 1500 religious related executions.

Calvin's life is important to this study because of the wide spread acceptance of his theology and also because he greatly influenced the Geneva Bible, printed during his life in A.D. 1560. The Geneva Bible in turn affected the theology of the Authorized or King James Version first published in 1611. The Geneva Bible or "Breeches Bible" as it was sometimes called can hardly be overemphasized in importance. Translated in Geneva, it was dominated by the persuasions of Theodore Beza and John Calvin. Its marginal notes were especially tinged with Calvinism. Furthermore, it was by far the most popular English Bible between its publication in 1560 and the publication of the King James Version in 1611. During that time there were 5 new editions of Tyndale's New Testament, 7 new editions of the Great Bible, 22 editions of the Bishop's Bible (the official version of the church), and over 120 new editions of the Geneva Bible. Its influence was felt also in the early American colonies. It was the Geneva Bible that was carried on the Mayflower by the Pilgrims in 1620, and that was used almost exclusively by early Puritans.

As new editions of the Geneva translation came
out in the late 1500's, more and more of Calvin's beliefs were added in the marginal notes.

In reaction to these added notes and not so much to the Scriptural text of the Geneva Bible, King James I of England commissioned a new version in 1604. He instructed that it was not to contain marginal notes with theological content, that it should contain ecclesiastical words in common usage in the church even though Hebrew or Greek might suggest a slightly different word (i.e., "church" was used in place of "congregation"), and finally it was to follow most closely in text to the Bishop's Bible, the official translation. The final production, however, contained far more material from the Geneva Bible than any other translation. Historical scholar C. C. Butterworth claimed the King James Version was influenced more by the Geneva Bible than any other version. In personal research and comparison of the two texts, I am astounded at the similarity. One wonders if it is even fair to call the King James Version a translation. Were the men whom the king commissioned translators or copiers?

Not much is known of the forty-seven translators of the King James Version. It is, however, safe to assume that many of them were strongly in agreement with the persuasions of Calvin and Augustine.

Like translators, we too have difficulty sorting out prejudices from realities and objectivity from subjectivity. Our past has such an effect on us that our former errors cannot be repudiated without great humility and spiritual enlightenment. Augustine influenced Calvin. Calvin influenced the Geneva Bible. The Geneva Bible influenced the King James Bible, and the King James Bible influences us and our theology. When examining truth, therefore, let us not base truth only on tradition and what has been encrusted into our minds through the ages. Just because
past church leaders said repeatedly, "The world is flat," that does not make such a statement fact. One must examine the objective evidence when deciding whether the earth is flat, round, or oval. The same is true when examining the various schools of theological thought. Let us therefore examine the evidence.

Notes for Chapter 4

2. Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

Does God Need Products Liability Insurance?

If a Detroit automobile manufacturer puts a car on the market which he knows to have a steering defect which will cause the death of thousands of people, it does not take much intelligence to know who is responsible. Obviously the producer of the car, the manufacturer, would be held liable in almost every court in the land. But, would a God who built the earth, planted man and life on it, knowing with certainty that the entire production was going to steer off into the direction of sin and destruction be any less liable? Does it make any sense, further, for God to declare His creation good immediately after the creation of man knowing full well it had a certain defect? That clearly is false advertising and misrepresentation. If these facts are true, God would not have a prayer in any just court of law. God would be culpable.

Wait, you say! In defense of God you contend that man and a car are different because man has a free will and a car does not. Therefore the burden of guilt is shifted from God to man because man sinned by his free will. You might argue that we cannot blame God simply because He knew definitely that man was going to sin. You might say God’s certain knowledge of man’s sin did not cause man to sin.
The difficulty in this case revolves around two theological words: "foreknowledge" and "predestination." If we say that all men are "predestined"—that is, foreordained, planned, determined or fated, then man has no free choice. You would be a mere robot (or car) and in the above law suit could not in any way be held liable. It could make no difference whether you cheated, murdered, or raped because whatever you did would have been foreordained and planned anyway. There can be no sin if one is not free to sin or not to sin. There can be no virtue, rewardability or punishment for what cannot be prevented from happening.

Most theologians opt for a second possibility—that man has free choice and is not "predestined," yet God knows with absolute certainty what man is going to do (defined by most as "foreknowledge"). If man has free choice not previously known by God, however, the Almighty appears to be limited. Thus to protect God's power and man's free choices, Bible scholars such as Augustine have concluded God's "foreknowledge" does not affect man's free will.

This conclusion is made with one glaring problem unanswered. That is, how is it possible to have "foreknowledge" without "predestination"? How is it possible for God to have absolute certain knowledge of future events without those events being planned or predestined by Him? In solution to this problem we must analyze two additional questions: First, is knowledge transcendent? And secondly, is it possible for facts to have pre-existence?

By asking if knowledge is transcendent, we mean simply, if God has a fact in mind, does that fact in His mind cause you to partake in some action? Suppose we say God knows you will rob a bank two days from now. Does His knowledge cause you to rob the bank? If we say "yes," then knowledge would
be transcendent and we would be fated and, in effect, predestined. We would have no choice whether to rob the bank or not to rob the bank. Again we would have the problem of fatalism ("whatever you do really doesn’t matter" syndrome). Furthermore, God would be implicated as an accessory to the bank robbery because of the causative effect of His knowledge. This would be taking Calvinism to its extreme and if such were the case, we could fairly reason that God did help to murder the little black-haired girl in Northern Africa mentioned in chapter one.

Once again in order to circumvent the problem of blaming God for sin, and of eliminating man’s free will, most thinkers conclude that God’s knowledge is not transcendent or causative. Rather than eliminating problems, however, this leads to several additional difficulties. First, if knowledge is not transcendent, how is it possible (assuming I am completely free) that I can accurately act out precisely what God foresees? Where do I obtain the data, which is contained only in God’s mind, that has no causative influence on me? Where do I get this information so I can act it out? Or if this is not the case and God simply knows what we are going to do without our "acting," where does He obtain the information about my not yet made choices? Again, assuming I am completely free and that I am the originator of my own choices, how would it be possible for God to know my choices before I made them unless He had planned or predestined such choices? My decisions would be certain and unchangeable even before I made them! Under these conditions, Adam would have had to sin in order to fulfill God’s “foreknowledge,” otherwise God’s “foreknowledge” of Adam’s sin would have been inaccurate. By this reasoning one can only come to the logical conclusion that Evodius, Augustine’s student, came to 1600 years
This leads to the second major question. Is it possible for knowledge or facts about future free-actions to be pre-existent? In other words, is it possible for God to know my future choices if they are truly free? Do I myself create my own thoughts? If I do, then how is it possible for God to know my thoughts before I, who created those thoughts, even exist? Is it certain I will think the thoughts He has known I will think even before I am born? This is the key to the entire debate: Can a fact exist before the event occurs or the idea is thought upon which the fact is hinged? Although it sounds nonsensical, can a fact exist before it exists?

Let's go back to the bank robbery. In order for God to foresee the robbery two days before it happened (again making the assumption I am free and that ideas cannot emerge from a non-being), where did God obtain the facts that are not yet facts? If I did not yet choose the future choice of robbing the bank which He presently sees, and certainly a morally pure God would not choose such an event as a bank robbery (or murder of a little girl), where did such facts come from? How can God know my future free choices without my will being forced either by Him or some other being? To say that He does have knowledge of such choices yet we are still free to originate those choices is just as logical as saying, "My mother gave birth to me two days before I was born!" God would have had a fact before the existence of that fact, a logical absurdity.

The problem of harmonizing "foreknowledge" of God and the free will of men is overwhelming. It is a theological antinomy. This contradiction can be accepted, however, if one is willing to lay in the mud pit of subjectivity and completely ignore rational intelligence. There have been many men who
have done just that. Augustine in a moment of honesty admitted that he was perplexed by the problems his theory presented. John Calvin, who agreed with Augustine, never offered proof as to how God could remain blameless while at the same time “predestinating” men to hell. John Wesley who taught “foreknowledge” without the evils of “predestination” simply ignored the above problems. Jonathan Edwards believed in the Augustine-Calvin position—believing that some men are planned for heaven and some are planned for hell. Edwards rightly suggested that to believe in “foreknowledge” without believing in “predestination” is a flat contradiction. Yet Edwards, too, faltered when trying to explain how God could be pure and faultless while at the same time condemning men to eternity in hell—even before they were born.

If you are logical, you cannot reject “predestination” (as commonly defined) while accepting “foreknowledge” or visa versa. They logically cannot be separated. You must accept both or accept neither. Some have thrown an additional barb into the argument by saying God lives outside of time, and although this does not solve the man’s free will versus God’s “predestination” question, it attempts to explain the pre-existence of facts to God. This is not a characteristic of the God taught about in the Judeo-Christian Bible, however, The God of the Scriptures makes new decisions in specific points in time, can be angered at certain times, and can be elated with joy at other times. The Bible must be accepted on its face value or literal value. The evidence is overwhelming that God lives in an endless duration and succession of time. He faces consecutive moments just as you or I do. This question will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter seven, but first let us look more carefully at the word “foreknowledge.”
Notes for Chapter 5

1. Much confusion exists concerning verses in Romans concerning “predestination” such as Romans 8:28, 29. It is vital to understand that these verses do not mean we are predestined to fall into a certain mold, but rather, in order to obtain salvation and a righteous life, there is a predetermined procedure (not the people) that is predetermined.

“Predestination,” as used in the Scriptures, needs further explanation. The term was originally applied to agriculture. A farmer would preset, prearrange, or delineate the boundary lines around his fields. He would thus “predestinate” the metes and bounds of his land. Likewise God sets the bounds and procedures for becoming a fulfilled Christian. Once you have accepted His love and His Lordship in your life, the next step is to conform to the image of God’s Son, Jesus.

Perhaps it could be better illustrated this way. Suppose you had a friend whom you wanted to come to your house and he only had a vague idea of where you lived. You would obviously call him up and explain exactly where you were located. You would describe exactly what street you were on, the street number, and which roads to take. There would be a predetermined or “predestined” way for your friend to get to your house from his house. It would be stupid for you to tell him that you lived on Johnson Avenue if you really lived on Peterson Place, or to tell him that you lived two miles north of him, if you really lived two miles south. Why? Because he would never find your house if you didn’t describe truthfully a predetermined route that you knew by experience would get your friend to your house. Likewise, God has laid out a predetermined or “predestined” plan for those that he “foreknows” or knows intimately as friends that He wants to get closer to. To get to God’s house we have to follow the predetermined procedures, and the roads that will lead us in the right direction. We obviously wouldn’t want to go in the opposite direction that He has told us, otherwise we would never get to His place. (Again, I re-emphasize, it is not the people in Romans 8:28, 29, that are “predestined”; rather, it is the conditions of righteousness that are “predestined.”)
CHAPTER 6
In the Bible, What Does "Foreknowledge" Really Mean?

God cannot be all loving if He creates individuals whom He foresees will be eternally miserable.—Dr. L. D. McCabe (1882)

God's knowledge is perfect and boundless. Nothing happens without God knowing of that happening—whether it be the death of a sparrow in Yellow Medicine County in Minnesota or an earthquake in Sylmar, California. God's communication system makes our space satellites, television sets, and C.B. radios look childish. His radar can spot every Concord and every twin engine Cessna and every bumblebee that is flying our airways—simultaneously. Our Lord knows the precise number and location of every blood cell in each inch of the 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body. If you fear what the F.B.I., the C.I.A., and other government agencies know about you, you should be even more fearful of God. He can perceive all of your thoughts and listen in on all of your phone calls. God knows every problem we have entangled ourselves into and the best course of action to solve those problems.

Our God is the ultimate. The Psalmist declares, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5). The Apostle Paul writes, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom
and knowledge of God!” (Rom. 11:33). John further reveals, “...God knoweth (perceives and understands) all things (of the heart)” (I John 3:20). Nothing is hidden from Him.

Theologians have rightly described God as “omniscient.” This is a word which has been derived from “omni,” meaning all or everything and “science,” which has the same meaning as the Greek word, Ginosko (found in our words “prognosis” and “diagnosis”), and conveys the idea of knowledge, perception and understanding. Combined into “omniscience,” these two words convey the description of “all-knowing” or “all-perceiving.”

The problem arises, however, when we leave “all-knowing” unqualified. Is omniscience limited to knowing what is knowable, such as past or present events, or does it include knowing future events and thoughts not yet reality? Are there some things unknowable to God, such as future ideas and plans He himself has not yet conceived of and man’s future choices not yet made by man, or does God’s knowledge perceive all future happenings before they exist? In other words, does God have absolute and perfect knowledge of the future or is His knowledge of the future limited to predictability of what will happen?

Most modern-day theologians would argue that God has absolute knowledge of the future as evidenced by the use of the word “foreknowledge”—used in reference to God in the New Testament five times (Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 11:2, I Peter 1:2, and I Peter 1:20). There are two facts which cast doubt upon this concept, however. First, the basic Greek meaning for “foreknowledge” or “proginosko” is different from the English conception of “foreknowledge.” Secondly, “proginosko” is found two additional times in the New Testament (seven times
altogether). In both instances this exact same word used to describe God’s knowledge is used to describe man’s knowledge of man! (Acts 26:4, 5 and II Peter 3:17). Thus if we say that God has absolute future knowledge by these verses, then we are compelled in fairness to the Greek text to say that man also has absolute future knowledge—a ludicrous dilemma.

The English word “foreknowledge” generally means knowledge of something before it happens, exists, or comes into being. It usually connotates certain knowledge—i.e., the event must happen or occur otherwise the person did not have “foreknowledge.” The Greek word found in the forms “proginosko, prognosis, and proginosken” is decidedly different. It means to predict what will happen, exist or come into being.

Proginosko carries with it the idea of past knowledge, to know beforehand, or even foresight, whether human or divine. It is rooted in a medical term originating in the time of Hippocrates and means almost exactly what our English counterpart word, prognosis, means. In medicine, it is the prediction of the probable course of a disease and of the chances of recovery based on present knowledge. In other words, it is a prognosis based on diagnosis. The words “prognosis” and “proginosken” stem from the same root “proginosko.” (Nearly every research book on the subject had an excellent review of these words. However, when interpreting them in context of Scripture a strong theological twist was added. It seemed as if the scholars were trying to force a meaning upon proginosko [foreknowledge] which it really doesn’t have. They get in real trouble when they find that both Luke and Peter apply this same word “proginosko” [foreknowledge] not only to God, but also to man. The Greek is covered up as you will see by translation. Ed.)
In the Bible the Greek words for “foreknowledge” are only used by three men: Luke, the physician (who, understanding medicine, obviously knew the meaning of these terms), Peter, and the Apostle Paul. They use the concept in reference to God as follows:

Acts 2:23: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge (prognosis) of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Romans 8:29: For whom he did foreknow (proginosko), he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Romans 11:2: God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew (proginosko). Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying . . .

I Peter 1:2: Elect according to the foreknowledge (prognosis) of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

I Peter 1:20: Who verily was foreordained (proginosko) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

In Acts 26:4, 5 and II Peter 3:17 there is a startling and unexplainable difference in the translation of the word “proginosko.” By reading the King James Version one could not possibly suspect the same Greek word was being used. Those verses read:

Acts 26:4, 5: My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me (proginosko) from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

II Peter 3:17: Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know (proginosko) these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.
By the Greek structure here there is no question that the knowledge concepts contained in these verses are describing the knowledge of men. But why the change? It seems doubtful that this was an oversight by King James translators. Instead it is more likely that the theologies of Augustine and Calvin have been written in here. The only way to eliminate the dilemma is by giving a different meaning to the five passages describing God than the two passages describing man's knowledge. But on what basis? Such an interpretation would be purely subjective and inconsistent with root word meanings.

All seven of the passages cited are consistent with a concept of past or predictive knowledge. Not one of these verses promulgates the idea of God knowing facts or choices with certainty before those facts or choices exist—unless the idea of "foreknowledge" is given a meaning that the words "prognosis" or "proginosko" never had. Yet most ministers and pastors and priests attribute a unique ability to God that the Scriptures do not teach. Their intentions are to uplift God, but in reality and without realizing it these ideas limit God because they present a wrong view of God.

Contrary to current thought, it does not make God less perfect and great because He does not have exact knowledge of all free choices that will determine future events. It takes much greater intelligence to create unprogrammed men than programmed men. Even men have learned how to create robots and computers which will spit out knowledge at incredible speeds, but no man has learned how to create a being who is free, unprogrammed, and unpredictable. Only God has that ability.

God knows everything that is knowable, but how can He know that which does not exist? If you say
He does, however, then you limit God instead of making Him great. Think of it, if God knows all His future actions and thoughts, how could God think new thoughts and be creative? He could not have that capability because there would be nothing new for Him to create or think. God would be in bondage by His own knowledge. He couldn't possibly make new decisions or change His mind.

Why have theologians persisted on adhering to a concept of God which is not taught? Why would intelligent men and women believe in something which is not true about God? The answer, I think, is that ministers and scholars have superimposed their ideas of what God should be instead of what the Scriptures present God to be. Even though many theologians have had good intentions, it is important to understand that good intentions do not always yield truth.
Notes for Chapter 6


2. "Before the foundations of the world" does not carry any time element in the Greek language and although it seems awkward to us, "in plain view (in front of, before) of the disintegration of the inhabitants." More will be said of this later.

3. The phrase, "from the beginning" unless otherwise stated in the text is limited to the context of the passage and should not be stretched back to before the world began. In this case it would refer to the time in which the Jews first knew Paul.

4. The link between the King James Bible and the Geneva Bible (the Bible which came out of Calvinism) is unmistakable and there is no question that the King James writer plagiarized often from the earlier Geneva Bible.

Compare the Geneva Bible with the King James in Acts 26:5 and II Peter 3:17.

**Geneva:** Which knewe me heretofore (if they wolde teftifie) that after the moste ftraite sect of our religion I liued a Pharife.

**KJV:** Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

**Geneva:** Ye therefore beloued, feing ye knowe thefe things before, beware, left ye be also plucked away with the errour of the wicked, and fall from your owne ftedfaftnes.

**KJV:** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

This almost exact wording demonstrates that many passages were copied almost word for word, and it seems, especially those verses concerning Calvin's theology. KJV also usually takes the stronger Calvanistic twist in the text when it is able to do so. (Example: "knew me heretofore"—"knew me from the beginning" or in Romans 8:29 the Geneva says, "knew before" where KJV used the word "foreknow.")
CHAPTER 7

God Lives in Time

Time is not minutes, hours, days or years. These are the units we have of measuring time or duration but they are not time itself. Time is not growth or decay or the aging process. Those physical evidences are merely the effects that time has. Albert Einstein theorized that if a space ship leaves the earth and travels near the speed of light to a distant planet, that the spacemen (or women) in that ship would experience a slower rate of aging than people on earth during the same time period. These interplanetary travelers would experience fewer earth minutes and hours than the people back at home. However, there is no real evidence to show that time itself would slow down (or speed up as the case may be) in such a space trip, but merely the effects of time, altered by increased velocity, would slow down.

What then is time? Certainly it is perceived by us in the form of units of measurement and physical change, but these evidences are not themselves the commodity of time. Time instead is the duration or succession of one moment after another. Whether one ages or doesn't age during those moments is immaterial. Whether a clock runs at a slower rate of speed or a faster rate of speed does not show necessarily a variance in succession of moments but simply a difference in the mechanical functions of a clock under different situations.
We often think of time as a limiting factor. We say, “We only have so much time” to do something, or “time really flies.” What we really mean is that we are physically limited and thus can only do a certain amount of things in a given moment of time. As time gets away from us, our options disappear and in that sense we are confined. It is not time, however, that is the culprit. If one could live forever and be all powerful; that is, be physically unlimited, time would no longer be a barrier. A day would be like a thousand years because it would be possible to do as much in a day as what might normally appear to take a thousand years (see Psalm 90:4 and II Peter 3:8). Further, if the time you had was endless, there would be no possibility of “time running out.” Opportunities could never dimish but only increase. Yet suppose you were all-powerful and had to live without the existence of time. In that state you would be more confined and imprisoned than living with the presence of time and not being all-powerful. At least now you can do some things subject to physical limitations, but without time you would be bounded by what you had always done. There could be nothing new because there would be no successive moments in which to create anything new.

Imagine if you did not have the perception of depth. Objects would seem flat. Distances would be difficult to judge. Worse still, imagine eliminating the entire dimension of depth. Not only would objects seem flat, they would be flat. A well-groomed race horse would have heighth and width but no contours or depth. The earth would be literally flat. There would be no distances besides horizontal and vertical. In such a two-dimensional world it would be like living on a giant checkerboard. You couldn’t swim or fly or jump. You could move only forward or
back or sideways but never up or down into a third dimension. Now suppose in addition to depth, we remove the dimension of width. We would all be vertical lines. In this extremely confining existence we could move only backwards and forwards on a single line. We would probably bump into people using our line as we tried to move back and forth. We would thus have a one-dimensional world. Now suppose we eliminated all your dimensions. Where would you be then? You would be literally nothing.

Get the picture? As you eliminate spacial dimensions, you confine living beings, but as you add dimensions you create more options and allow more freedom. Likewise with time. If you eliminate that dimension, you eliminate succession and moments in which to operate. An all-powerful being with no time would have no ability to demonstrate his power. He could not think new thoughts nor produce new things because there would be no time in which to do it. (It would be like owning a shiny new Rolls Royce sedan with no road to operate it on!) All that that being had produced, thought or done would have to be always the same. If you lived in such a state, there would be no possibility whatsoever of changing your mind about something or changing your course of action. You would be confined to one moment and there would be no successive moments in which to act.

Again, in order to elevate God, students of the Augustinian and Calvinistic camps have come up with the novel but illogical idea that if God is such a great God (and He is!), He must not be limited and confined by something as mediocre as time. John Wesley, an eighteenth-century theologian, states the position, "God cannot know one thing before another and one thing after another."² Wesley taught that there can be no distinction in the Divine will, and
no succession of thoughts in the Divine mind. God does not know one thing before another, or one thing after another. All eternity is present to Him at once, He sees all things at once, in one point of view from everlasting to everlasting. In other words, Wesley is in effect saying that our God is trapped by His own knowledge in a cog in time and is capable of doing nothing new. God would never have the freedom to change His mind or take a new course of action. This would be the opposite of what Isaiah 48:6, 7 state: “I have shewed thee new things from this time.... They are created now and not from the beginning: even before the day when thou hearest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.”

This subjective snare is prevalent also in the twentieth century. The great philosopher C. S. Lewis has fallen prey to the same trap. Lewis expounds his ideas in Appendix B of his book on Miracles, “... it is probable that Nature is not really in Time and almost certain that God is not. Time is probably (like perspective) the mode of our perception.... To Him all the physical events and all the human acts are present in an eternal Now. The liberation of finite wills and the creation of the whole material history of the universe (related to the acts of those wills in all the necessary complexity) is to Him a single operation. In this sense God did not create the universe long ago but creates it at this minute—at every minute.”

Followed to its conclusion, Lewis’ theory would mean if God is still creating the universe, He then is creating men as they are now—with sin and greed. If God is still creating, then He also must have created the Vietnam War, World War I, and the gassing and cremation of millions of people before and during World War II. God must have also created the cir-
cumstances for the death of a beautiful little black-haired girl in Africa. These things would all have to be a part of His wonderful creation! Further, if God lives in an “eternal now,” we could also absurdly reason that the earth always was and we always are being created—simply because if God lives outside of time, where would God get the time to enter into time and create the earth and man at a specific point in time?

We could also inanely reason by Lewis’ logic that everything God has done in the Bible He has been always doing. Jesus Christ was then born on earth before He was born on earth. If we fly to Bethlehem tonight, we could watch Christ physically being born because His birth has not happened in past tense, but is happening “at this minute” and “every minute.” Followed to its logical conclusion, we end up with introspective mish-mash.

Evidently C. S. Lewis and John Wesley either didn’t understand what the Scriptures teach about God in relationship to time or they understood the Bible and rejected what it had to say on this subject, for both men expound theories which are diametrically opposed to the Word of God. Gordon C. Olson, a profound modern Biblical scholar, states the Scriptural case far more accurately: “The theological dogma that God is an ‘eternal now,’ or that time or succession is not an element in the Divine existence, is evidently a philosophical rather than a Biblical concept. In the Bible God is presented as a living Being who walks or dwells with men, performs definite acts at definite times, who rests, observes, thinks and is reasoned with, remembers, is grieved, is jealous, is provoked to anger and then causes His wrath to rest, is moved with compassion, who forgives and comforts, delights and rejoices, hearkens unto men, repents, changes His plans,
makes new decisions, etc. These various acts, states of mind, or experiences obviously conflict and cannot coexist at the same instants in a particular series of events, and thus require the chronological element of time for their occurrence." 

Some state that God's relationship to time is on a "two-line theory"—that is, God can move in and out of time at will. There is absolutely no Scriptural basis for such an argument. Measurements of time may have been defined by God, but there is no indication that time itself was created by God. (Thus giving Him the power to abandon it at will.) It is important to understand that "time" is not a thing which requires creation. It simply implies duration and because God has an eternal, everlasting duration, God could not have created time anymore than He created Himself. We are not in any way equating time with God, but merely stating that the ability of acting in successive moments is an attribute of God. The science fiction "time-machines" are illogical, just as the line theory is illogical. If God jumped outside of our line of time into an absence of time, there would be no time for Him to jump back in to our time. Thus, once outside of time, God would be permanently locked and bound without the ability to do anything in duration. Without time, God would not be able to think, act or do anything, since these depend on succession of moments, which is the essence of time. 

Much of the confusion has come about by interpreting verses which refer to God's unchangeable moral character to God's ability to live and act in time. Jesus Christ is certainly the "same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). He is the same always in righteousness and moral perfection. This does not mean, however, that Jesus does not have successive moments of existence. He came into this
world at a specific point in time, He healed blind men at exact instances, and He died the death of a criminal on a Roman cross—a precise event in history.

Furthermore, Jesus was capable of different and conflicting emotions demonstrating He was not the same every day in real life actions. For example, Jesus expressed amazement at the faith of the centurian (Luke 7:9: "When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him . . ."). How would it be possible for Jesus Christ to express such surprise if He lived outside of time and had always known of the event? Christ would have had to act out a fictitious expression of surprise if such were the case. The content of the passage instead implies that Jesus did not know the specific actions of the centurian until their occurrence and that the Son of God's expression was genuine.

In John 14:2 we have another startling revelation. Jesus exclaims that He is going to prepare a place for us. If Christ lived in an "eternal now," why would His action be necessary? Why wouldn't the place have already been prepared? Furthermore, where would Jesus, a member of the Trinity, get the time to prepare a place for our future existence if He lives outside of time?"

God the Father, another member of the Trinity, also has an endless duration. He always was and always will be. "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). Instead of implying an "eternal now," however, this verse indicates that God has an endless successive duration in the past, present and future. Other verses bear this out. Psalm 102:24-27 gives evidence that God will live an endless number of years, but apparently in succession. In Psalm
God Lives in Time

95:10, 11, God states that He was grieved for a forty-year period with a certain generation. Zephaniah 3:5 shows the judgment of the Lord is in sequence, “Every morning doth he bring his judgment to light.” Again in Zechariah 1:12, God is indignant about the sin of a nation for a specific number of years.

God experiences a wide variety of emotions throughout the Bible—emotions which would not be possible without the successive duration of time. In the twenty-second chapter of Genesis God is elated at Abraham’s obedience (and why would God have tested Abraham by asking for the sacrifice of his son, Isaac, if God already knew what Abraham was going to do? The test would have been meaningless). In Psalm 78:38 and Isaiah 12:1 we find a God who is compassionate and slow to anger, yet capable of anger. In Psalm 86:5 God is described as delighting in mercy. Jesus tells of the joy that occurs in heaven over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:7, 10). Further, an incredible verse in Zephaniah describes God as so jubilant that He is singing! “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will save, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

God’s actions are frequently contingent upon the actions of men. In the early chapters of Exodus, Moses and God are discussing the methods needed (in this case plagues) to free the Jewish people from Egypt. It is apparent from the conversation that God really didn’t know at what point the Jewish people would be released or how the Jews would respond. He is in effect saying if the Egyptians and Jews would not believe after the first plague, then they would probably believe after the second, but if they would not believe after the second plague, then He would try a third, and so on. God said, “If they
will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the latter sign. And it shall come to pass if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto my voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river..." (Ex. 4:8, 9). It is clear the Egyptians were free to repent and Pharaoh was free to let the Jewish people go at any time. God was simply waiting for the decision of these men. It was Pharaoh who freely hardened his own heart against God, prior to the times that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 8:15). God even asks Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron, “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?” (Ex. 10:3). Why ask, if God already knew?

Another fascinating passage is found in Exodus 32:7-14. God here is furious at the Jewish people for worshipping a golden calf as an idol. God’s anger was “waxed hot against them” and he wanted to “consume them.” It is only after Moses’ fervent pleading (again a contingent act of a man) that God cools down to the point where the Scriptures state, “The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people” (Ex. 32:14).

It is apparent by literally hundreds of verses that man’s actions have a profound influence upon the Almighty God. God does not know ahead of time the free decisions of men (aside from predictability). God does not predetermine the free events of men, and God does not live in the future so He can know in some magical sort of way what is going to happen before it happens. God lives in time. How else is it possible to explain verses like James 5:20 and I John 1:7, 9? God, here, will cleanse us contingent upon our actions. This cannot mean He is always cleansing us in an “eternal now,” but only after we
act by confession and by “walking in the light.”

The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, also dwells within a succession of moments, and acts to reveal truth, to give gifts, to bear witness, and to make intercession. There was a specific time when the manifestation of the Spirit came (Acts 2:4), and there is a specific time in which He will indwell our lives if we freely choose that He do so. The Holy Spirit, further, is a personality of endless duration, like the Father and the Son.

Many have suggested that we cannot take a large number of the passages which refer to the nature and character of God literally or on their face value or natural meaning. Thus if a passage describes God as living in time it cannot be so. They term such passages an anthropomorphic—that is, they give human characteristics to God in order for us to understand God better. Two problems crop up, however. First, how do we determine which passages are anthropomorphic and which are not? Do we accept those which seem to fit into our theology and accept them at their face value while rejecting other verses as anthropomorphic which do not fit into our theology? Secondly, how do we translate verses if they are in fact anthropomorphic?

Take, for example, Jeremiah 32:35 (Jeremiah 19:5 is also very similar), in which God is astounded at the Jewish worship of the idol god, Baal. God exclaims, “... neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.” God did not even perceive that they would do such a thing—it didn’t even enter His mind. Now obviously if you believe in absolute and certain foreknowledge in the mind of God and that God lives outside of time, such a truth would be inconceivable. This verse would have to be false under those circumstances. Can we then logically explain the pas-
sage away by calling it anthropomorphic and saying that man's sin in this case did in fact enter into the mind of God before it occurred? Can we conclude that the statement here means the opposite of what it says it means? Then if Bible verses don't really mean what they appear to mean, how do we possibly determine what they really mean?

Once again, you can believe anything that you want to about God—that is, if you are willing to ignore rational intelligence, ignore principles of logic and be completely subjective. God has acted in a succession of events in the Bible and the record is clear. Gordon C. Olson sums up the evidence from that record very ably: "There was an eternal duration of past time when the Triune Members of the Godhead had Their perfect fellowship together before the Second Person took upon Himself a catastrophic change of existence through His incarnation by way of the Virgin Birth. Then there was a period of time when the Son of God as the Son of Man 'tabernacled among us' in the special enduement of the Holy Spirit and in sacred prayer fellowship with the Father. Then there was the second greatest event in the history of mankind, second only to creation, when the Saviour in His lonely atoning sufferings said, 'It is finished.' Then, subsequently, resurrection life and ascension introduced a change into the very realm of the Godhead—a God-man in the heavens, ever living 'to make intercession.' How can anyone in simple-mindedness conceive of such immense inter-personal changes in the essential nature and experiences of the Godhead without allowing a true chronology of succession in the Divine existence? These tremendous facts confound philosophical speculations."
Notes for Chapter 7

1. II Peter 3:8 is a quotation from Psalm 90:4. The verse in Psalms reads: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” Thus the implication here might be that God’s memory is so clear that He can remember something that happened a thousand years ago as well as something which happened yesterday. This in no way suggests that God experiences the future before it happens because the text states specifically, “when it is past.”


5. Ibid., pp. I-5.
CHAPTER 8

Would God Be Less of a God if He Didn’t Know?

I think we’ve needed God to be oppressive. So, we’ve constructed a God.... A God who is the “super manager,” one of the American Management Association would move to the head of its faculty, a kind of super know-it-all who has the whole plan figured out and only asks us to be figures on a numbered drawing. All we have to do is guess which color matches our number and then come up with that color.—Msgr. Robert Fox

The immediate response of many Christians to the concept that God does not know our future choices is “No, that cannot be, I just couldn’t worship a God who doesn’t know my future,” or “God just wouldn’t be God if He didn’t know!” This is hardly a surprising response in a society which has been conditioned to the desire for security and comfort. We like to visualize God as the man in control—the “super manager” of the universe. Nothing is uncertain or unpredictable to Him. He lives in a never-never land over the rainbow in a cotton-candy world where
there are no problems and all is secure. Is this really God? Have we made God into a father image to fulfill our own needs? Is this really the God of the Scriptures? Is the God we perceive just a fantasy of our minds?

We have made it a necessity for God to know the future, suggesting we couldn’t worship Him if He didn’t. This position, however, is extremely dangerous, for it borders on idolatry. When we conclude, “I couldn’t conceive of a God like that,” we are doing what man has done for centuries, namely, forcing God into the mold of what we think a God should be and then worshipping that conception. That is the essence and the heart of idolatry. When we approach the Scriptures, we are not to sit as judge and jury of what we would like God to be; rather, we are to seek and humbly learn who God is as He reveals Himself. We cannot know God apart from that which He chooses to reveal. It is not for us to set up the criteria for God.

So what if God does not know our choices until we make them? Where is the problem? Many contend that this would limit God’s knowledge since He would not be knowing all the things. Again the argument can be validly made that knowing all things does not imply knowledge of what does not exist. A future choice is still contingent, and its outcome does not exist and thus the choice cannot be known. Albert C. Knudson, former Dean of the Boston School of Theology, states it more succinctly, “For as omnipotence does not imply the power to do the non-doable, so omniscience does not imply the power to know the unknowable. If foreknowledge of free acts is a self-contradictory conception, there is no reason why such knowledge should be ascribed to God.”

2
Prophecy is another area that many raise to show that all of the future is known by God. They state, "If God can tell what the future will be, then He obviously knows in exact detail what will happen in the future." Again, this is not true. God can do all that is doable; therefore, if He plans for something to happen in the future, it requires no difficulty at all for Him to predict that event. Albert Knudson summarizes this concept well: "Objective certainty cannot, so far as we can see, be combined with true freedom. Still, in spite of the difficulties connected with the divine foreknowledge of free acts, it has been customary to affirm it. But the reasons for the affirmation are not altogether convincing. The one on which chief reliance was placed in the past was that drawn from the predictive element in Scripture. But this argument has been greatly weakened, if not completely undermined, by biblical criticism. There is hardly a specific prediction in the Bible that requires divine foreknowledge of free acts for its explanation." 3

More will be discussed concerning prophecy in a later chapter.

The most difficult problem, however, is one of security. If God does not know the future, then He is not capable of controlling the future or responding in an intelligent way to the future. This is also a falsehood. Some security may be felt by believing that God knows all of our future acts. However, the fact that one feels secure does not make one in reality secure. If God is all powerful, where is the limit to His resources in responding to our problems regardless of whether He knows or doesn't know the future? Also, if He has all past and present knowledge He would be capable of extremely accurate predictions. Dr. Knudson further states: "If God foreknows everything, he will never be taken
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by surprise, not even by the acts of evil men. Hence we may trust him all the more securely. But while there may be some religious value in this line of thought, the margin within which human freedom moves is so limited that, even though its acts cannot be positively foreknown, to infinite insight it is hardly possible that they should contain much in the way of surprise, and certainly to one possessed of infinite resources of wisdom and power their unexpectedness would constitute no serious practical problem nor would there be in it any valid ground for appreciably lessening one’s confidence in him.”

The reason why we might have trouble conceiving of a God capable of making new choices and changing His mind is that we are emotionally afraid. We are uncomfortable with unpredictability. A brilliant Catholic theologian, Msgr. Robert Fox, states this well, “We’re terrified to live with wonder. Wonder means unpredictability and uncertainty. We believe that when you’re 46 years old, you should have it all together. You can’t still be wondering what it means to be a man or a woman. We should have decided what it means to be a man or woman, have a definition of ourselves and then live it out for the few years that remain to us. Anything else is a sign of immaturity. I think we’re afraid of wonder because we’re afraid of it in ourselves. And yet, when it comes to God, I cannot think of Him without thinking of ‘wonder.’ God has been and is willing and able to wonder with us as we groan to co-create this universe and this thing called humanity. I can’t think of a God who sits up there with a bored look, and reads out of the book of our life saying, ‘Well, on page 46, it says that you will be surprised by the death of a loved one and I knew that you were going to cry.’”

In his excellent article, “What Kind of God,” Fa-
ther Robert Fox continues, "It's very secure to be a child with somebody up there who knows where it's all going. If we can only guess his plan and be good kids, then the whole plan will work out in the end. But, it doesn't seem to me that this is our God at all. When you read Scripture and look at the life of Christ, it seems that God is inviting us to 'mutuality.' ... When it comes to the whole canvas of the universe, the people, the events, the times and the places, God has invited us to be His expression of Himself in the total canvas. So, we are... becoming. That's a frightening, awesome thing—but also something about which we can rejoice and celebrate, if we can only stand the fright and scare of it all." 6

"Because God is a being who believes in mutuality, He believes in an unconditional, gratuitous bond between humanity and Himself. Because of this bond, He is willing to show Himself in every possible kind of way, to be smelled and touched by us humans. He shows Himself in big impressive ways—in the vastness of the universe, the oceans, the mountains, and the rivers. He is willing to risk Himself in funny looking peacocks, crazy looking insects, grains of sand, weird colors—all of these, to be available to us, to get into us, to be with us. Yet, we do not seem to be comfortable with God in this way, because we're not comfortable with an ongoing exploration of who we are. Nor are we comfortable with an ongoing sharing of who we are with one another. And this may be the core problem facing the human race. It's not only the secret to personal development within marriage and the family, it's also the key to understanding oppression through the world." 7

So, does unpredictability of the future to God make Him a greater God or a lesser God? By any reasonable and objective argumentation I think we
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would have to say it makes Him a much greater God. It doesn’t take any power at all for God to deal with what is certain. All He has to do is sit back and watch what is happening, which He always knew would happen. On the other hand, however, it takes a far superior God to deal with the challenge of that which is not yet known—that which may end up one way or the other. The first requires only a passive God but the latter requires a God who is an active participant.

To say that God does not know your future thoughts and actions, lives in time, and faces tomorrow like you or I appears to diminish the power of God. However, when you discover that God responds and adjusts His great plans to your decisions, your concept of God will expand tremendously. It takes a far greater being to run a universe that involves changes not known in advance than one that has no unexpected occurrences. The director of a Hollywood movie has a difficult task coordinating all the actors even with a good script, but imagine the task of a director if each actor was free to develop his own plot and script during the movie!

Notes for Chapter 8

3. Ibid., p. 321
4. Ibid., p. 321.
6. Ibid., p. 9.
7. Ibid., p. 9.
CHAPTER 9

Prayer—Does It Really Change Things?

If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.—Mark 9:23, Jesus Christ, first century

There are some who believe prayer has only therapeutic value. In other words, we change through prayer but our circumstances do not change.

This approach suggests that prayer really can't have an influence on what God has already foreordained. The teachings of the Bible on this subject when taken at face value are different. They are radical and revolutionary in contrast with this mild idea that prayer is only for our psychological well-being. Jesus talks about moving mountains and changing the world. He offers to meet our every request offered in His name. Our Lord states, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14). "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:10). "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Ps. 37:4). "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them
of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

There seems to be no limit to the power of prayer. The power of God through prayer instead is like millions of untapped oil fields, and sources of energy we have not yet conceived. Further, God seems willing to share everything, even His entire Being with us. “He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

Even God’s knowledge will not be hidden from us if we ask. “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10). Jesus also astoundingly tells us that we not only will be able to duplicate the things He has done, but do even greater things! “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

Prayer, communication with God, is the means for tapping this great power. The very thought of it is astonishing. Imagine us (smaller than ants in comparison with God) communicating, talking to and walking with the originator and designer of the universe! He will converse with us in any language and in any situation. We can tell Him about our every problem, no matter how small. We can praise Him through prayer and express our gratitude to Him because He is deserving of it. He tells us, further, that He is interested in the difficulties we are having and that if we ask, really wanting Him to help and indwell our lives and really wanting to attain His moral perfection, that He will guide us and direct us through whatever we face. Not only will God lead us, He will give us anything that our heart desires as long as it is compatible with His moral perfection. The possibilities of what God is talking about
are beyond our wildest fantasies. The dynamics involved here, of which few of us have used even a fraction, can literally change the course of nations and the direction of history. God is in effect offering the opportunity to be creative, inventive, and decisive through the use of His power. He is making us sons of God through His omnipotence.

There are basic requirements that must be met by man before God will answer his prayers. There are some things which we must do before God avails Himself to us. It is a contingency—an "if": "If ye shall ask anything in my name"; "If ye abide in me"; "If you delight thyself in the Lord"; "If two of you shall agree." "Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17:20). God will act or not act depending upon what we do. The "if" suggests that not even God knows if we will turn to Him as individuals or nations. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14). It should be noted that God is not arbitrary in answering prayer. Before God will answer prayer, He must have intelligent and sufficient reasons why He should answer the prayer request.

Life is changeable and so are our surroundings and situations. Life is fluid, vibrant, and involves radical changes. Indeed the previous Scriptures reveal and teach exactly this. However, there are those who still suggest that life is not full of contingencies, that all things are "foreknown." C. S. Lewis is such a person. He maintains that man is free to pray and yet God knows all that man is going to do even
before he does it. According to Lewis, a prayer can be answered by God before it is prayed. We can, furthermore, pray for the outcome of past events because God takes into account our prayers before they are prayed in deciding past events. Lewis states, “Shocking as it may sound, I conclude that we can at noon become part causes of an event occurring at ten o’clock.” \(^1\) By this logic it would then be possible to pray for someone that died yesterday (so that he didn’t die yesterday!). Lewis suggests absurdly that this would only be possible if we didn’t know that such a person died yesterday. He says, “What makes the difference is precisely our knowledge. The known event states God’s will. It is psychologically impossible to pray for what we know to be unobtainable...” \(^2\)

Here again we have fixity. Lewis, who subscribes to the Calvinistic position in part, advocates that “known events” constitute God’s will because all events have been decided “before all worlds.” \(^3\) Lewis specifically states that prayer was taken into consideration before it was prayed and answered even before the event prayed for happened. Ideas obviously do not emerge from nonbeings. Prayers are ideas. If we are not yet born we are obviously nonbeings. This is the heart of the problem. Where do these ideas come from? How are they then ascribed to us when we become beings? If they exist before we exist and then attached to us, then we have simple determinism or predestination! It must be noted that it is a plain contradiction to have something exist before it exists. We get into all sorts of entanglements if we accept Lewis’ concept of God as the “eternal now.” Pointedly, when did God decide what the answers to prayer would be if He always knew what they would be? Under an “eternal now” concept God could not originate a new thought
in the present, past or future because He always knew what His thoughts would be. Thus God could not conceivably answer prayer unless He had always answered it. It is also quizzical to understand how our knowledge is the determining factor in praying for past events. Does that mean our knowledge limits God in deciding what the outcome of events shall be? Or does it mean that once an event happens (i.e., when an event is certain in our minds) that fact cannot be changed? Then would whatever happens be God’s will because “known events state God’s will”?

If past, present and future are the same and all certain to God (and if He can change the future based on our prayer requests), why can’t He change the past as well as the future? To say simply on one hand that it is “psychologically impossible” to pray for a certain and known event of the past (a true statement, by the way) seems inconsistent with Lewis’ other belief that God lives in an “eternal now,” and doesn’t experience any past or future events. Again, is it any less “psychologically impossible” to pray for a known certain event of the future than a certain known event of the past? If the future is known by God, how can our prayers result in anything different than what God already knows?

In addition, to suggest God always knew what we would ask, means even before our creation God knew us intimately. Thus if our thoughts and actions were always in God’s mind, we then have existence, at least in thought co-equal with God. This would be especially true if we indeed originated our own thoughts. If so then God could not have known those thoughts until we originated them, and if God always knew those thoughts, then we could correctly reason that our existence began even before God’s existence
(if God had a beginning, which the Scriptures indicate He did not).

Once again, Lewis’ philosophical account seems to vary with the concrete face value meaning of the Scriptures. The Bible does say that God knows our needs even before we ask, but nowhere does it say God knows exactly what we will ask or even if we will ask. In reality God’s plans in relationship to man are conditioned on the conduct of men. Our prayers really do change things!

An example of prayer changing things can be found in Isaiah 38. We also note while studying this passage that predictive prophecies are not necessarily “hard and fast” certainties, contrary to popular opinion. Numerous prophecies were and are being adjusted and readjusted contingent on man’s repentance or other actions. Further, in many cases, the events foretold by God never occurred. (See Joshua 3:10, Judges 3:4, 5.) In Isaiah 38, for example, we find King Hezekiah on his deathbed. God told Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah that he (Hezekiah) better get his house in order for “thou shalt die, and not live” (Isa. 38:1). King Hezekiah, however, pleaded with God. He argued, don’t you remember God how I “walked before you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight?” (Isa. 38:3). The Lord pondered what Hezekiah had said and responded, “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years” (Isa. 38:5). Now if God said that Hezekiah was going to die of his current sickness and if God had absolute knowledge of the future and knew that Hezekiah wasn’t going to die until fifteen years had passed, then God lied or the Bible is inaccurate and cannot be interpreted literally in this chapter. Furthermore, if God said that He was going to “add unto thy days fifteen
years,” how could God add fifteen years if it was always known that Hezekiah was going to live an extra fifteen years? What would God be adding to? The only reasonable way to interpret this passage (unless you say the words in the passage mean something different from what they say they mean) is that God has only contingent knowledge of man’s future events, and Hezekiah’s fervent prayer actually did cause a change in the actions of God. It was a real change. If it was not a real change, then God had Isaiah tell a direct lie to Hezekiah!

In another passage, I Samuel 15:11, we find an example where the conduct of men changes God’s evaluations and influences Him to modify His treatment of men. King Saul, whom God ordained as king, had been rebellious toward God. In a state of regret and full of grief, God said, “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me and hath not performed my commandments.” Saul, acting out of free will refused to change and follow God, so God replaced him with King David. Samuel, being close to God, so deeply sensed the grief of God that he wept all night over this horrible situation. God had given Saul enough chances, yet Saul begged for God to repent, but He wouldn’t repent. God was thinking in terms of the nation of Israel and the future of the world, while Saul was thinking of his own skin. God saw that He could not trust Saul. Certainly if God had always known that Saul was going to be sinful and such an occurrence was expected, grief such as this would be absurd. Then God could not have regretted what He had done, even though He specifically said that He regretted what He had done. This would be an outright lie by God. This is not an isolated incident. God shows regret often over some action or decision that He previously made. The word “repenteth” oc-
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curs in reference to God in the Bible over thirty times. This is not to say that God has poor judgment or is to blame, but rather shows the strength of man’s will and how often he uses it to disappoint God. Man simply does not always correctly handle responsibility that God gives him. Rather, he chooses to live selfishly, as did Satan.

If there can be change and readjustment in the above cases, then why not in others? If there are no readjustments in the actions of God, then what is the possible meaning of prayer? What was Jesus talking about when He said that He would do anything asked in His name? Suppose all morally free beings on earth from this day chose to obey God, certainly the plans of God would drastically change.

It is commonly objected, "What about Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:18?" "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." At first reading in the King James or other versions we are impressed with certainty, as if there is a set number of things that will happen, but this is not the case. The Greek verbs parerkomai and ginomai give the real meaning to this verse. Parerkomai (pass, pass away) occurs twice and ginomai (fulfilled) occurs once. Both verbs occur in the subjunctive mood. The subjunctive mood (which means might happen or probability) is different from the indicative mood (which means statement of fact or certainty). The subjunctive expresses a mood of possibility, doubt, hesitation, hope, but not definitely or certainty. The usage of the subjunctive in this verse changes the whole basic meaning. What is being expressed is that the time heaven and earth will pass away is uncertain, and the smallest letter will not disappear from the law, even though all things may or may not happen. If everyone repents as God still
hopes will happen (He desires that all be saved, I Tim. 2:4), His will and plans will change accordingly. Again in verse 19 of Matthew 5, we see the subjunctive. Both “breaks” and “teaches” are in the subjunctive mood, but “shall be called” is future indicative. Thus it is not known even by God who will break or teach in error, but if, or whoever does, it is a certainty he will be punished. Note that it is Jesus doing the talking.

This is further documented by Revelation 22:18, 19. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Here again we find both the use of the subjunctive and indicative moods. We note, “If any one add (subjunctive),” then God will add (future indicative) the plagues and if anyone takes from (subjunctive), God will take (future indicative) from him.

These passages do not say some will add or subtract from the Word but if they do, certain punishment will arise as indicated by the future indicative (statement of fact). If God foreknew people would add or subtract from His Holy Word, this passage would never have used the subjunctive mood. It would have used only the future indicative. It would have read, “Those who will add and those who will subtract will be punished,” but it does not read that way. The usage of the subjunctive throughout Scripture clearly helps document that facts cannot exist before they exist.

Furthermore, if God cannot change what He has
predicted in Revelation concerning the end of the world, then God is fated by His own design, an unplausible and ridiculous suggestion. But God is free! He does have the ability of readjustment and change and that ability is demonstrated through answered prayer. Prayer is the intervening means through which God gives power to all men who desire to follow Him. Prayer is a way by which God can intervene in a person's life without violating one's or others' freedom. Prayer is the means by which God will do something for somebody on condition of asking, which He would not do if that request was not prayed.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus prayed, "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven..." This implies three things. First, God wants His will done on earth. Second, it implies that His will is not being done on earth. Finally, it implies that we can do something about having His will done on earth. If God has foreknowledge of all events, then all events are certainties. On what grounds could Jesus pray that the Father's will be done if everything already was a certainty? What could be changed? Furthermore, if everything is always certain, no matter what we do, then where is freedom? If such be true, then God really can't change things because the very word change suggests something different from what was before. If God always knows what is going to happen "from before," then He also knows exactly when we are going to pray. We could only pray exactly in correspondence to Divine foreknowledge. We could not pray any more or any less than what was known by God under this structure. Why, also, would God ask us to repent if He foreknew we would not repent? Prayers also would be answered before they were prayed, and neither the prayer nor the
answer could be altered. Again we would merely act out God's foreknowledge. Everything would be determined.

As Dr. L. D. McCabe said in 1882, if absolute foreknowledge of God is true rather than a contingent knowledge in the mind of God, "I can no more affect that future reality which corresponds to divine foreknowledge than a babbling brook in its lisping murmuring could command the cataract of Niagara to check its rushing and plunging to cease forever its mighty thunderings." 4

If indeed, prayer doesn't change things, why should God ask me to pray? Is the prayer of men who believe in predestination or foreknowledge in the absolute sense, any different from the prayer of the fatalist? Are not prayers either voluntary or involuntary? If involuntary, I am nothing more than a machine and freedom is impossible.

Philip Schaff says Richard Rothe is the greatest man that Germany has produced since Schleiermacher, and he exclaims, "If absolute prescience (foreknowledge) be true, prayer becomes not only nonsense, but an inexcusable absurdity." 5

Notes for Chapter 9

2. Ibid., pp. 214-215.
3. Ibid., p. 214.
5. Ibid., p. 99.
CHAPTER 10

Setting Men Free

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.—Spoken by God to Moses and the people of Israel, Deuteronomy 30:19

Let us suppose your father and mother have five children including yourself. Suppose also that your father one day gathers your four brothers and sisters together excluding you and says to them, “You shall inherit all that I own, all my acres of land, all my wealth including all my stock, buildings and houses. It shall be divided among the four of you equally.” But then your father calls you into the room and says, “You, child, shall suffer. No matter what your brothers and sisters do or receive, no matter what you do, right or wrong, you shall suffer. You shall receive no part of my inheritance. Furthermore, child, even before you were born, I knew that this would be your destiny and that you would have no part in this family.”

What kind of a father would this be? Certainly cruel, arbitrary, biased and unjust. Is it any more unfair, however, for our Father who is God to tell us that He knows what our fate will be even before we make the choices which will determine the course
of our lives (of course this would really not be choice, but determinism)? Wouldn't such a child fated to an eternity of suffering be better off not being born at all? Could an all-loving God create a child whom He knew would be eternally miserable? If God could know exactly what would happen to that doomed life, why wouldn't God prevent it from even occurring (if God is a God of love)?

Only a sadistic being would create a living creature whom he knew was foreordained to suffering, then sit by and watch that being live out its destiny and finally sentence it to death for living out what was already known. It would be like putting an animal into a steel and brick cage from which there was no escape and then seventy-two years later coming back and condemning the animal in the cage to eternal damnation for not breaking out of that cage. How could such an action involve any inkling of justice? In man's court of law or God's court of law, there could only be one reasonable verdict. As long as we perpetuate this foolish type of theology, we should not make fun of deterministic sociology and the psychology of B. F. Skinner.

Sin cannot exist without freedom of choice of whether to sin or not to sin. The same can be said for the word love. Love cannot exist without choices. It is unjust to put a man in prison for a crime he had no control over; likewise it would be unjust for God to punish a man for sin for which he was forced to commit. If a man is not free, then for him there is neither right, wrong, good, bad, morality or immorality and off we go into the wild blue yonder of existentialism. If life is fixed, then man cannot be held accountable or responsible and off we go into the mechanistic view of psychology. In order for morality to exist, man must have the ability to turn to God in repentance and obedience or to walk
away from God in disobedience. One cannot be blamed for an action that he is not as free to commit as not to commit.

The very word freedom necessitates choice. It indicates room to operate with a variety of options and choices. A free person is not under the control or power of another. We really cannot be free to choose a "thing" unless we have the option to not choose that same "thing."

Free will implies the ability to originate thoughts and actions not previously in existence. The initiation of these choices by the free will precludes their previous existence known by God or man. Although a choice may be predictable, a choice not made is a nonentity—it is a nothing. As long as the possibility of choice remains, there is the possibility, even if remote, that the decision may be made one way or the other, or that the decision may not be made at all. If such is not the case and the decision must be made by necessity in a certain way (i.e., because God knew it would happen that way), then neither is there choice nor freedom.

Freedom, it must be remembered, is the only measure of accountability and responsibility. When talking about man's freedom the concept of "incipiency of the will" must always be kept in mind. Incipiency of the will is the mysterious ability that man has to say yes to a good influence and no to a bad influence and vice-versa. This mysterious ability is freedom. Character is simply the sum of our choices. We will be and are held accountable for our choices. Judgment is only fair if the individual being judged was free to make the choices that he is or will be judged for.

If God has absolute certain knowledge of the future, then all of man's future choices would have existed in God's mind from eternity, and thus could
not have been created by man's free will. They would have had actual existence before they were made by man. Man could not then be the author of his own thoughts and actions because they would be crystalized and fixed in the mind of God before they occurred. By definition, furthermore, if a result is certain, it can be foreknown with certainty, but if a result or some thought is uncertain (which the word "choice" implies), then it cannot be known with certainty.

God can cause events to occur in the lives of men. However, in areas where He does cause, He eliminates choice or freedom (unless the intervention was requested by freedom of choice). He obviously would foreknow the event which he causes. Events over which He asserts no influence, but has given men freedom to originate, cannot be known with certainty by Him until man decides the outcome. In other words, if God does not will an event, does not operate to bring it to pass, and does not see it as the result of His exerting causes, then He can only know it when man, who possesses the power of alternative choice, brings it from nonentity into existence. God cannot know that which is nothing until it is something. It is impossible for a thing to be certainly foreknown without certain evidence.

The major problem of saying that freedom of men and the perfect foreknowledge of God can coexist is the problem of fixation. If God has absolute knowledge of all our future choices, then the results of those choices are fixed knowledge in the divine mind and become a fixed fact in the history of the universe. Such knowledge would be immutable. If it was known to be, it can never be known not to be, it must be. To be or not to be indeed is the question. It all depends whether we really do have freedom of choice! The question is, whether we "will" choose one thing over
another or whether we "can" choose one thing over another, and there is a vast difference. One implies that we are fated to certainty and the other indicates a contingency based on freedom of choice.

Men are free and responsible and the Scriptures are evidence of this. The concept of original sin—that we sin not out of freedom but because Adam sinned—is a weak argument indeed. If we sin because our father sinned or Adam sinned, then why is sin morally wrong if we have no choice in whether or not to do it? It would be like saying that because my grandfather burglarized the local grocery store, I should be tried and convicted of the same crime. Certainly through Adam's fall sin is a present influence upon us, but not a causation to sin. Our sin is our own sin. The Bible says, "All have sinned." This is a verb, not a noun! We alone are accountable for what we do (see Ezekiel 18:20). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." What most theologians never seem to have mastered is that Adam was the occasion for the circumstance via which sin entered into the world and not the cause, just as Christ is the occasion or circumstance via whom we can be saved and not the cause (see I Corinthians 15:22). If Adam makes or causes every man to be a sinner, then if we take this verse at face value, we must say that Christ makes or causes every man to be saved. Thus everybody is now a born-again Christian. We know this is not true. Hence we must interpret this passage in the light of Scripture as a whole. We must also be fair to this verse. We cannot interpret half of it one way and the other half another way. It is simply saying "Adam was the occasion
by which sin entered the world and Christ is the occasion by whom we can be saved!

Many people like to blame circumstances. They say, "I had a bad childhood," or "I grew up in a bad neighborhood," or "My teachers hated me," or "I'm an Aires and the stars caused me to have a miserable day." We like to shift responsibility from ourselves to our circumstances. "Adam sinned; thus it must follow that we all will sin." "Nobody is perfect; thus it is not possible for me to be perfect." Our behavior becomes a result of our assumptions. Ideas have consequences and erroneous ideas have bad consequences. If our assumptions are faulty, our behavior will also be faulty. If we believe it is impossible to be perfect, we will make no conscious effort to be perfect and holy even though Jesus said it is possible: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Ultimately, whether we like to face it or not, we determine our own destiny and are responsible for our own lives. We control our assumptions and our behavior.

 Ironically, when we choose to come closer to God, our lives will become freer, but if we wallow in sin, doors will be closed to us and we will gradually lose our freedom and our life. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17). "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). Sin ultimately repre-
sents slavery, but a right relationship with God through Christ represents growing freedom!

Man can and does originate sin which he knows God hates. However, man can repent (see II Chronicles 7:14). Everywhere the Bible tells us to repent, and nowhere does it say we do not have the ability to repent. “When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17). There always appears to be personal choice in matters regarding salvation. “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away ... I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish...” (Deut. 30:15-18). “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

God cannot know what men or women will “open the door” until each individual decides, determines, or puts his ideas into action via choice. The only conceivable cause of an “if” or contingency is a free will, and a free will, to be free, cannot be coerced, known, or determined by an outside force. That which is forced or known cannot be free, and that which is free cannot be forced or known. Freedom can be predicted but not with certainty. Thus God may have predictions and theories as to what man will do, but He cannot know with certainty what man will do in areas where God has given man absolute freedom of choice.
The failure to distinguish between free choice of man and "cause and effect" or that which is determined by God and therefore fully known to God leads many to the error that God can know with equal perception all the choices of man, with the same certainty as His own choices. The ultimate end of this tragedy is that Christians begin to believe that God is satisfactorily working out His plan as He wants it in the world. The sad result is that many believers do not respond to the challenge of prayer and evangelism. They no longer feel responsive to the loss of millions of perishing lives.

In conclusion, the choices of the free will of men causes the entrance of sin into the moral universe. To say otherwise is to say God is responsible for man's sin, which is painfully absurd. Also, if we conclude that God foreknows all man's future choices, then He is accountable for man's failures. Just as an architect who builds a building knowing that it is unsafe and defective and will in a short period of time collapse and kill many people is responsible, so God ultimately would be responsible for sin if He knew in advance that Adam, as well as others, would sin. If God has the ability to foreknow tragedy, then He has the ability and responsibility to prevent tragedy.
CHAPTER 11

Is God Free?

If God cannot now originate a new thought, he never could and never did.—Dr. L. C. McCabe (1882)

Naturally we often ask questions such as, "Why are we here?" or "Are we really free?" Theologians throughout recorded history have pondered the question of man's free will and man's purpose. However, in our introspection we forget about our Creator. We consider it an odd question to ask whether God is a free and creative Being, because we naturally assume that He is. After all, He is the God who originated the idea of chickens, giraffe necks, elephant tusks and green leaves, isn't He? These and other objects certainly demonstrate God's imagination and ability to make an endless number of new things which are continually being conceived in the Divine mind. If God can cram thousands of miles of blood vessels in the human body, He definitely is not limited in His freedom and ability to create. God can do whatever is possible.

Let us back up a moment, however, and suppose that God does have perfect foreknowledge of the future and lives within an "eternal now." He would then have all thoughts that ever existed in the past, present and future (to Him all at one moment). He would never have a new thought because if He had
all thoughts, there could not be additional thoughts that He would not have. The concepts of chickens, eggs, and giraffe necks would have always had existence in God's eternal moment. There could not be any new hybrids of chickens and giraffes or any totally new creatures which were not always conceived of in God's mind. Our Creator could not, for example, one day decide to make a new animal called a "super-chicken," which has the ability to lay two hundred eggs a day, unless He had always conceived of a "super-chicken." It would be outside the realm of God's knowledge, thus nonexistent.

Under the theological umbrella of St. Augustine and John Calvin, God would not have the ability to precede a new idea by original thinking because for God there could be no such thing as a new idea or original thinking. If God had all thoughts, by definition, He could not develop new thoughts. If God had a new thought, then it would be really new and thus could not be foreknown. If God had all thoughts and could not develop new thoughts, then His thoughts would be as eternal and uncreated as He is. Furthermore, patterns of logic require a succession. Thoughts require comparisons and reflection. If John Wesley is correct in saying that God's thoughts cannot proceed or follow each other, indicating that there is no succession in the Divine mind, then not only would God be crystalized in icy fixity, but, He also could not possibly have a logical thinking process. There would be no way for Him to organize His thoughts into logical patterns. All His thoughts would be random and could not be reorganized in any way different from what they always were. There could be no change in God's mind. What always was would always be.

If God's mind exists in one moment, it follows that also His actions are in one moment. If God
does everything at once as C. S. Lewis suggests, then, as McCabe said, "God makes worlds and burns them up, creates souls and binds them into everlasting chains, invites them into his love and fixes an impassable gulf between them and himself, and millions of other self-contradicting things" all occur at the same instant and by one action. God would punish us for our wrong-doings and praise us for our obedience at the exact same moment.

If God is operating with foreknowledge of events before they are caused or chosen by individuals, then He would have to view such individuals as unchangeable entities. This, however, would be impossible since one cannot have a changeless view of change! If man is changing, it would be impossible to have a changeless view of his changing world.

"Never would God have created men who were foreknown to be wicked," said Augustine, "had he not seen how they would finally subserve the ends of goodness." But what "ends of goodness" could God have had in mind? Does it make any sense for God to create wicked men in order to cause goodness to flourish on the earth? That is like producing more crime in order that we will have less crime. Furthermore, this theory would be inconsistent with God's constant pleading for wicked men to come to repentance and for us to pray "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." If God has an absolute fixation of the future, knowing that we will be eternally miserable, it is absurd to suggest that God, knowing our fate, would ask us to be obedient to Him and worship Him. Why would He promise us something He knows to be impossible? Why would He tell those who are in a right relationship to Him to warn others whom He knows will end in eternal damnation? What can be the possible purpose of evangelism to those whom God knows will never ac-
I Did God Know? (See Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:45-47.) If God is not willing that any should perish, why would He create people whom He foreknew would perish?

In addition, if God now foreknows everything that will ever come to pass, then everything in the future will and must come to pass as He now knows it. Then logically, He cannot do anything in the future different from that which He now foreknows He will do. If His will will always take the course of action He knows it will take, then God's will will always be shut up to a single choice. It, therefore, would become necessary for Him to always take a single course of action in each situation. If God has only one course of action then He, too, would be existing under fatalism! God's will would be fettered by a logical necessity over which He would have no capability of change. As was stated earlier, actions which cannot result in but one outcome cannot be defined as free choices. Admit that God knows the future because if He could not, then He could not be God then you also admit that God operates out of the necessity of His own foreknowledge. All of God's plans and purposes and feelings would then roll forth out of necessity. God could not exercise free will if He was bound by what He knew He had to do and had no capability of taking the opposite or different action.

Many say that because God lives in an "eternal now" and that we live in time, God's actions appear to us to be occurring in time. But where would God get the time to enter into time if He does not live in time? How would God relate to individuals in time if He existed in the "eternal now"? He would still have to view man as unchangeable in one sweep of His sight (the only sweep!). God could not relate in any way different from how He had always related.
There could be no new actions by the person of God. Man could not surprise God; neither could God surprise Himself.

Obviously few believe that God is not free, but, the above conclusions are the only ones a reasonable person can derive from the original assumptions that God has absolute foreknowledge and that He lives in an "eternal now." However, there is a better answer—one filled with hope and excitement and freedom.

First, it is necessary to understand that God cannot do everything. He can only do what by definition is possible. Also, He can only know what by definition is knowable. He cannot know something which is nothing. Why should this be so difficult? Why should this be so strange? Certainly in all forms of science there are stated impossibilities. For example, in mathematics it is impossible to divide a number by zero. In biology it is impossible for a frog to be dead when it is alive. In physics it is impossible for an apple to be falling toward the earth when it is rising away from the earth. It is impossible for a door to be open and closed at the same time. Likewise for God, by definition, many things are impossible. God cannot sin and remain pure and holy. God cannot lie and tell the truth at the same time. God cannot hate a person and love him at the same time. (Although He can hate what a person does and still love that person.)

You have probably heard the question, "Can God make a rock bigger than He can lift?" The answer is very simple when you understand the problem with this question. This question deals with the unlimited power of God which is usually called omnipotence. The problem with the question is that the first half gives unlimited power to God ("Can God make a rock bigger ...?") and the second half
limits God's power ("... than He can lift?"). Thus
we have a contradiction. In a contradiction one has
only two alternatives. First, both of the statements
which contradict each other are wrong, or secondly,
one is right and the other is wrong. In any contra-
diction both sides cannot be right. Back to the
original question: God is either limited or unlimited
in His power. The Bible teaches that He is unlimited
in power, i.e., He can do anything possible. Thus
the answer to the problem question is, absolutely
not! If God can make a rock, He can lift it. Any
rock that God decides to make, no matter how large,
He can lift as easily as He can make it! Similarly
we cannot say that God has absolute knowledge of
the future of man and yet man has the freedom to
originate choices without outside interference. Facts
would then have to exist before they exist and that
is a flat contradiction! Neither can we say that God
can live outside of time and yet have succession of
thoughts because by definition succession implies
time. By definition these concepts would contradict
each other.

It may be helpful to understand how God governs
His subjects without interfering with their freedom
or His own freedom. (This could only be ac-
complished in the framework of time.) There are
four different realms where God governs His crea-
tion. (The following material is an elaboration of
the work of Gordon Olson which was used in Chap-
ter two of this book.) First, there is the plant kingdom
which operates by cause and effect; second, the ani-
mal kingdom which operates on instinct; third is
providential government; and finally the area of free
moral action by man.

Nature was created by God. It was God who in-
vented physical laws and methods by which animals
and plants would replenish the earth. Not only has
He developed literally hundreds of thousands of beneficial rules by which plants and animals are governed, but there are also beneficial rules by which man is governed. (All rules are beneficial if they are a result of sufficient and intelligent reasoning.) Freedom has responsibility. For instance, if you step in front of a moving car, you will be hit and probably injured depending upon the speed and point of impact. If you jump out of an airplane five thousand feet above the ground, you will surely meet instant death upon hitting solid ground unless you have a device known as a parachute to slow your descent. If you put a bag over your head so you cannot breathe, you will eventually suffocate. If you shoot someone with a real bullet, he will bleed. If a child is bitten by a poisonous snake and if the child’s body is small in proportion to the amount of poison injected and the child’s resistance to the poison is not high, the child may easily die. These are laws of nature better known as physical laws which make up the study of physics, medicine, engineering, etc.

By experiential knowledge and common sense we know that such rules are in effect and that we cannot violate them without consequences. We know, for instance, that if we put our hand on a red hot stove burner, our hand will blister and hurt. We know that if we jump off a building we will go down instead of up. These are logical and orderly consequences of our decisions. These are laws of cause and effect.

In a sense these principles in nature constric$t us, but they also result in an orderly and predictable creation. For example, if there were not the principle of friction, everything which had been set in motion would continue moving all the time. Without gravity, nothing would stay permanently on our planet. Without the greater mass of the sun tugging at the earth, we would be drifting aimlessly in space with neither
day or night. Without the principles of combustion, there would be no light or heat. The sun would not burn, our cars would not run, and we would freeze. Without the realm of natural laws, our lives would be chaotic and disoriented.

In spite of the fact that this world was set up with orderly rules for a smooth operation, free man chose to sin. This brought in chaos. In order to save this world from complete disaster, God has had to providentially enter into the affairs of this world by the use of cause and effect. He has entered into the world via His own choice and in response to man's requests via prayer. Miracles is one way God has affected our lives. Here, God not only shows His greatness to us, but demonstrates that He is apart and distinct from His creation—contrary to the philosophy of pantheism which equates God with nature. This does not mean to indicate, however, that miracles are necessarily illogical or are produced in contradiction to the orderly laws of nature. The mechanics of a miracle may very well coincide with physical and scientific principles, and why should this make them any more or less great? Why should mystical and unexplainable events be considered more magnificent than what is logical, orderly, and explainable? The uniqueness is only necessary so that we know that it is God speaking (see Isaiah 48:4, 5).

God not only has the ability to intervene in nature, He can also intervene in our lives. God can use angels, men and animals as He wills and desires. He uses good men because they are obedient to His will and plans. God can also use bad men in His plans to overrule or punish sinful beings. Every man, woman, child, animal or plant is subject to the providences and wishes of God. If God wants a certain event to happen at two o-clock next July 4th, in
Mitchell, South Dakota, He can plan it to happen and cause it to happen exactly as He wants. Thus it is not difficult to see why prophecy can be extremely accurate. God planned that He would send His Son at a specific place (Bethlehem). It must be understood, however, when God does cause an event to occur in someone’s life, God eliminates free choice of that person concerning that particular event. Absolute causations by God and free will of men in a specific event cannot by definition coexist. This is providential government. It must be also pointed out that God almost always reserves the right to change His mind concerning future actions. A significant percentage of prophecy indicating what God said He would do never took place. (See Joshua 3:10, Judges 3:4, 5, Psalm 78:41, Jeremiah 15:6, Jeremiah 18:8, 9, 10.) Usually such changes were associated with changes in the heart and mind of man—changes not known by God beforehand.

Freedom is our fourth area of consideration. It is the only measure of accountability and responsibility for both God and man. We know we are free by intuitive truth. Unless we are coerced or restricted by another being, we can decide what we will do tomorrow, tonight or in the next fifteen minutes. Our freedom to decide to accept the saving love of God cannot be coerced or forced, neither by God nor man. It does not follow that because the laws of nature are uniform and predictable (the same result with the exact same ingredients), free will follows that same uniformity. This is the incipiency of the will. Man has the mysterious ability to say yes to a good influence and no to a bad influence and vice-versa. This is a noumenal concept. By noumenal we mean it cannot be predicted by science under the law of cause and effect or by reoccurring evidence, thus not predictable through any of the five senses. There
are some things science cannot predict. The will cannot be predicted with certainty. It can be predicted, but not with certainty. (That which is free cannot be caused and that which is caused cannot be free. Freedom is the measure of accountability and responsibility.) Furthermore, most people seem to be unaware that freedom is the measure of responsibility and accountability even for God. By definition freedom implies contingency—the ability to choose one thing or another.

Because of a free will I myself am ultimately responsible for my salvation, though the Holy Spirit first convicts and speaks to me and each of us about sin. Man is still the causal agent of accepting Jesus Christ. If the contrary were true and salvation depended simply on the will of God, everybody would be saved at this moment and forever because God says that He is willing that none should perish (see I Timothy 2:4). The problem is that without my free choice, I cannot obtain a moral character. God cannot create within me a moral character. This would be a contradiction. Without free will there can be no right or wrong because right and wrong imply choice. If man is not free he cannot have a moral character. Neither can God have a moral character if He is not free!

Notes for Chapter 10
2. Ibid., p. 48.
3. Ibid., p. 51.
The major portion of prophecy from Old Testament times, perhaps ninety percent, had nothing to do with foretelling the future. All prophecy, including that which does foretell future events, had and has one primary purpose: to call men to righteousness. Yet in modern times, we have completely distorted the word “prophecy” much like we have mutilated the word “foreknowledge.” We have reduced the great prophets into a pack of fortune tellers, soothsayers, and crystal-ball astrologers and have missed the fundamental purpose of their message.

True, the prophets of old did at times tell of the future before it happened, but such predictive prophecy was most often in the form of contingencies: “If you continue to disobey, you will be punished, but if you repent and obey, you will be blessed.” Prophecy does not evidence the fact that God does have absolute future knowledge as many Christians assert. Prophecies do not occur out of necessity of God’s foreknowledge, or even always because God said they would take place. In fact, God often changes His mind and does not do the things He says He will do. Once again the ability to be flexible and change does not make God weaker but stronger. Because God changes in action does not mean He is “wishy-washy.” Rather, He is able to adjust and respond
to ever new developments in human history. We must be careful to separate the physical or natural attributes of God, which are unchangeable, and the actions of God, which are ever creative, inventive, and flexible.

Why does God tell us what He is going to do before He does it? Isaiah 48 gives us a clear and concise reason. God says, "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob. . . . I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them" (Isa. 48:1-5). God knew that many of the Jews were stubborn and unflexible ("iron necks" and "brass brows") and that they often attributed future events to their images and idols. God therefore needed a method of drawing His people back to Himself. He thus declares certain things to happen ("the former things from the beginning") and causes them to happen ("I did them suddenly"). God is not saying that He knows the future events of free beings but only those events that He induces to happen at a specific point in time. God wants to show us that He alone is God. He wants prophecy to set Him apart as God and to show His wonderful greatness. This is done not out of selfishness on God's part but out of love. God knows there is no other being in the universe that can give or sustain life. He knows that if we sever ourselves from Him, it means certain death. He doesn't want death and unhappiness for anybody. He wants us to have life, joy and peace (abundant living, John 10:10b; Deut.
30:6, 16, 20). Deuteronomy 30:20 says "... for he is thy life." How can we help but love a God like this?

God doesn't want us to ruin our life with false idols that only bring death. Thus He states in Isaiah 48:6, 7: "Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou hearest them not; lest thou shouldst say, "Behold, I knew them." God created things (events of prophecy) which were not created from the beginning, indicating that God can do things new and different. If they were not created "from the beginning," they would have to be new even to God. (This does not mean beginning of the world but rather the beginning of this particular set of events. However, either way it would still be new to God.) The passage indicates succession in Divine action and in God's mind, a past ("from the beginning"), a present ("they are created now"), and a future (before it came to pass"). The time element is unmistakable.

Of the small proportion of prophecy which does foretell the future, there appears to be two basic categories. First, telic prophcies which become true because of God's causation or providential government (Isa. 48:3-7; Ezra 1:1-2; Luke 1:30-37). Secondly, conditional prophecy which are without causation, but depend on the accurate and vast knowledge of God of past and present events. They are called conditional because their fulfillment depends upon man's response to the prophecy (see Jonah 3:5-10 Jeremiah 18:1-10). There is a third area of prophecy which is rather unique. It does not foretell, but rather looks back on history and compares events of the past with events of the present. It then declares that
the present events are fulfilling a given situation, just as did the past event. Often these bring great problems to readers, because King James, Geneva Bible and other translators often cover up the original languages and make these similar situations sound like direct telic fulfillment of prophecy (Absalom and Judas is a good example; see Acts 1:16, 20, Ps. 41:9, 69:25 [notice the plural there, but in Acts it is singular], Ps. 109:8, more will be said later). These type of situations are called ebatic prophecies.

In the first category (telic), God tells us He will do something such as sending His Son, Jesus Christ. God, because He is omnipotent, can do anything which is possible (always based on sufficient reason and intelligence) and has no problems sharing the plans He has, such as sending His Son. As in nature, cause and effect or providential government plays a part here. God says He will do something, and then He does it. Usually this form of telic prophecy is specific as to who, what, or where. The second type of conditional prophecy tends to be more general than causative prophecy. God can predict (quite accurately but not with certainty) what a man will do by knowing everything that is in that person's heart. Also, God can see trends and movements of nations far more accurately than any of our historians or political scientists. It is only natural that He, being a God of love, should warn us if we are going afoul as a nation. Such predictive statements are obviously far more accurate than any human judgments, because they are made with the most current, complete, and best information available anywhere. However, they do not have to come true if man changes his behavior.

One hot afternoon—yes, that's right, the Lord came in physical concrete appearance to Abraham! (When the Bible says "No man has seen the Father,"
it doesn't mean 'to look upon' but to perceive or understand fully.) Abraham was excited and scurried around suggesting that the Lord's feet be washed and that God be fed. Abraham told his wife to fix some fine cakes and had a young servant to dress out one of the finest calves. When the meal was ready, they all sat down under a big old tree and ate. The Lord apparently shared in the meal also. (If we are in His image and vise-versa, why not?) After they had partaken of the feast, God began to make statements concerning Abraham's family. Abraham had pleased God and God now prophesied that Abraham would have a rich and full life and that his wife Sarah would have a son. Now this wouldn't have been so amazing except for the fact that Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sarah was of a similar age, well past the child-bearing years. When God declared that she would have a son, Sarah overheard the conversation and "laughed within herself." She probably thought, "How ridiculous is this. Here I am 'waxed old.' How can I possibly bear a child?" God questioned Abraham, "Why does your wife laugh? Doesn't she know there is nothing too hard for the Lord?" Sarah tried to deny that she laughed, but God chided her gently, saying, "Nay, but thou didst laugh!"

God could tell Abraham that Sarah would have a child because He would be the cause of that event. The remainder of Genesis 18 is even more interesting and startling. After the meal, all the men and God rose and went toward the town of Sodom. God told Abraham that He would not withhold anything from Abraham by reason of the fact that Abraham would be blessed and his descendants would be a great and mighty nation. God then revealed another reason for His trip: to check up on the city of Sodom and Gomorrah and to judge them "because
their sin is very grievous.” God supposedly wanted firsthand information before destroying these cities to make sure that His decision was correct. Verse 21 of Genesis 18 oddly suggests that God wasn’t even sure whether they were as sinful as He had heard, “I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.” Abraham then challenged God and asked Him if He was going to “destroy the righteous with the wicked.” God said, “No, that would be far from me. I am just and will do what is right. In fact, if I find fifty righteous men in the city, I will spare the entire city for their sakes.”

Thus began a dramatic pleading and negotiating session between God and Abraham in which God kept lowering the requirements for saving the city of Sodom. Abraham in verse 28 remarked, “Just suppose, God, that you lack five righteous men, will you still destroy the city of Sodom for lack of five men?” God replied, “No, if I find forty-five, I will not destroy the city.” Abraham: “Just suppose there are only forty righteous men. Would you destroy it then?” God: “No, if I find forty I will not destroy it for forty’s sake.” Abraham: “Don’t get mad at me, God, for suggesting this, but what if you only find thirty righteous men? Will you still destroy the city then?” God: “No, I will not do it if I find thirty there.” This whittling down process continued until God finally agreed to save the city of Sodom for ten righteous men!

As it turned out only one righteous man, Lot, was found, and according to God’s contingent prophecy and the Abraham-God agreement, Sodom was destroyed but Lot was spared. Only the wicked were destroyed by God’s causation.

There are many other prophecies which show
causative influences of God. Jeremiah (626-580 B.C.) was a subject of God's knowledge before birth because God raised him up as a prophet (Jer. 1:5, 7). God decided before Jeremiah's birth that He would make a prophet out of him. (More is said later in the book.) In Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-14 the seventy-year Babylonian Captivity was determined as judgment for Judah's rebellion. In Joshua 3:7, God promised Joshua that He would make Joshua a great man. I Samuel 3:10-14 contains the prediction that God would destroy the house of Eli because of sinful corruption within his household, namely his wicked sons. I Kings 16:1-7 predicts the destruction of the house of Baasha because of their evil. I Kings 17:1-7 predicts the drought and famine in the time of Elijah. In Genesis 6:18 God covenants to bless Noah and his family because of Noah's righteousness. In I Kings 11:11 God told Solomon that He would literally "rend thy kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" because of Solomon's disobedience.

Man can be brought under laws of cause and effect as well as plants, animals, and inanimate objects. God can use a dumb beast to speak through (Num. 22:28-30) or a prophet such as Jeremiah. When He wishes to accomplish something through intelligent beings, He may bring such influences to bear upon them, or offer to them suggestions, or lead them into a particular direction.

If the influences of God cannot be resisted, however, then they interfere with free moral character and are not punishable acts. For example, in I Kings 13:1-10 a prediction was made that the altar at Bethel would be destroyed by a man named Josiah, not even yet born. In II Kings 23:15-20 that prophecy was fulfilled. It apparently was a causative act which Josiah had no control over.

Another good illustration of this is Cyrus, King
of Persia, chosen by God to finally release the nation of Israel from captivity. Isa. 44:24-28, 45:1-4, 13 prophesied 150 years before it happened that Cyrus would be a shepherd of God and perform all of God’s desires. “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 45:13). Obviously God’s hand was on Cyrus. When the Jews showed King Cyrus the above prophecy, he became deeply interested in the welfare of the Jewish nation according to historians of that day. The prophecy in which he was personally named was the prepondering influence upon his mind to accomplish the designs of God in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, refounding the temple, and liberating the Jewish captives without price or reward. Cyrus voluntarily submitted to God’s plans and God used Cyrus constructively to accomplish those goals.

The second major category, “conditional prophecy,” is where God predicts, based on present diagnosis. These are usually observations as to what men will do in the future or in a given situation. In Deuteronomy 31:16-21 God reveals to Moses that after Moses’ death the children of Israel would rebel, scorn God, and break His covenants. This was not difficult for God to do because He had already observed that the Israelites were a “stiffnecked people” (Deut. 9:13). This was also no surprise to Moses who said that he knew of the peoples’ rebellion and stubbornness during his lifetime—“and how much more after my death?” (Deut 31:27). There was no reason to believe the people would change, and God was only stating what reasonably would happen.

There are many other examples of this type of prophecy. Jesus could predict the desolation of the world with great accuracy in Matthew 24:14-30 by
current knowledge. God could predict easily the evil that might come, but God certainly would not cause these events in which men would rebel against Him. Instead, it is obvious to God, knowing man's heart and Satan's plans, what direction civilization might move toward. Because of the power of sin, God knows that some people of the world may never be converted to Christ, but will rather pursue their own pleasures and self-gratification. It is a straight and narrow gate (Matt. 7:13, 14) which leads to life and few are those finding it. (Scriptures indicate that God hoped this would change at the coming of Christ; see Matt. 21:37, Luke 20:13.)

The wonderful thing about conditional prophecy is that it is dependent upon our actions. If all men would repent, the world would not have to face the tragic end that it is racing towards. This is why evangelism and prayer are so vital to Christianity. We are narrow-minded if we think the purpose of evangelism is to increase the size of our church or our own little group. The very direction of the world is at stake and the odds are against us. Men do not have to continue to sin!

Contingency in prophecy is proven by the fact that God sometimes changes what He says He will do, or something happens other than what God predicts. God can literally change His mind! An excellent example is that of Jonah and the city of Ninevah. Jonah, as you may remember, is famous for being swallowed by a great fish and living to tell about it. But few of us remember why Jonah was running away from God. God had determined that the city of Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days due to their corruption, and God wanted His spokesman, Jonah, to give the people fair warning. Few prophecies have been more explicit. God said that He would destroy a certain place at a certain time because of their wicked-
I Did God Know?

ness. When finally Jonah agreed to bring this message to Nineveh, after a period of procrastination, a strange thing happened. The people believed Jonah and repented. The King of Nineveh himself took off his robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in a pile of ashes—the ultimate humiliation. A fast was proclaimed, and the people cried unto God in repentance, and they turned from violence. God, seeing the change in this large group of people, took an about-face also. When God saw their works, when He saw them, from the greatest even to the least, from the king down to the humblest subject, the whole city sitting in sackcloth and ashes, fasting and crying mightily unto God in prayer, everyone turning from his evil way, from the violence that was in his hands, God repented of the evil that He in good faith had said He would do unto them and He did it not (Jonah 3:5, 8, 10).

The inspired prediction of Jonah was not fulfilled and Jonah was angered. Thus Jonah went out of the city to sulk and brood because his heart attitude was wrong. He should have gone out to celebrate. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach that in forty days He would destroy the city. If He knew they were going to repent and if He knew He would not destroy the city, God had Jonah go preach a lie. Not only would Jonah be a liar but, if God went ahead and put such impressions and convictions in the mind of Jonah when they were really false impressions, then God also lied. God would be guilty of double-dealing toward an accountable person, Jonah, even if the ultimate intention was a good one. It was a serious thing for a prophet to make a prediction which was false, for it meant that He could be stoned to death. Isn't it far easier to believe, however, that the passage means what it says it means? (Both the Hebrew and the Greek LXX confer as far as God was concerned that it was a certainty or state-
ment of fact that He planned to destroy Nineveh). Isn’t it easier to believe there was a genuine change in the mind of God as well as a real change in the hearts of the people of Nineveh, which God did not know would happen?

The Hebrew word “repent” (naw-kham) in reference to God is not uncommon. Theologian Gordon Olson states, “The word basically implies difficulty in breathing properly and means to sigh, to pant, to groan, to breathe strongly or draw the breath forcibly. The word came to signify to be sorry, to grieve, to lament, to regret, to suffer remorse or to repent because of one’s actions; also to grieve on account of the misery of anyone, hence to pity, console, or comfort. It is translated repent about 40 times, of which about 33 times refer to the actions of God in an aroused state of emotion.” 2 Another word, “shoob,” is often used in reference to God’s actions. It means “to turn about, to return, to turn back, thus metaphorically to be converted, as a sinner; to turn one’s self to a person or thing, to have a radical change in one’s attitude toward sin and God, with a complete turn to righteousness. The verb is very extensively used in various structures and renderings. It is used many times concerning God’s actions, as Psalm 90:13.” 3

Change in the decisions and operations of God are repeated. Lot and his family (except Lot’s wife) were delivered out of the city of Sodom by reason of God’s and Abraham’s agreement. The Lot family, the only righteous ones in Sodom, were ordered by God to flee into the mountains before Sodom’s destruction. Lot didn’t want to go up into the mountains and pleaded instead to go into the small city of Zoar. God finally changed His command and consented to Lot’s request (Gen. 19:17-23). In I Kings 21:27-29, because Ahab repented, God promised not
to destroy Ahab's house until after Ahab's death—in direct conflict with what God previously said He would do. II Chronicles 12:1-8 indicates that God was going to abandon some of His people during the reign of Rehoboam because they were unfaithful to Him. But when they repented God didn't destroy them as it was suggested He would do.

When we come to the New Testament, it is necessary to recognize that the authors often preferred to refer back to Old Testament Scriptures in order to support their writings. When they use the phrase "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," we must be careful to realize this does not have to mean that the New Testament events had to occur so that Old Testament passages could be fulfilled. Those that use the "telic" sense of this translation—thus, those who maintain that in all cases, later events were fixed and predestined and foreordained by prophecy to which reference was made—not only introduce a new element of interpretation, but also destroy the meaning and force of the original texts. Far more accurately, most of these New Testament passages should be translated in the "ecbatic" sense—that is, the use of the words "that it might be fulfilled," merely express correlation, similar situation, consequence, parallelism, application or simple illustration. The "ecbatic" means that the new events occurring in the New Testament were not necessarily a fulfillment but rather similar in nature to those events which occurred beforehand. This is confirmed by the usage of the subjunctive mood which means the event may or may not happen. If the author meant those to be statements of fact, they would have used the indicative mood.

This is not as complicated as it sounds. Take for example Matthew 2:14, 15. It says that Joseph "took the young child (Jesus) and his mother by night,
and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled (subjunctive) which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” But if you turn to the Scripture to which Matthew refers (Hosea 11:1), you will see that it has no reference whatsoever to Christ and refers to calling the nation of Israel out of Egypt, which had already been fulfilled hundreds of years previously! All Matthew is trying to convey is that this event is similar to the event which occurred in the past.

Other passages bring similar confusion. Jesus refers to Psalm 35:19 when He says in John 15:24, 25 that His enemies hated Him in order “that the word might be fulfilled (subjunctive) that is written in their law, they hated me without cause.” But if you turn to the correlating verse in Psalms, you discover that David is making reference to his own enemies, and there is no suggestion that this passage needs to be fulfilled. Jesus is only saying that His situation is similar to David’s situation. Further, John 19:36 declares, “For these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled (subjunctive), A bone of him shall not be broken.” But again the reference is to a Psalm of David which alludes to the fact that righteous men (in the plural tense) should be delivered, and each of those men shall “keep all his bones” and none of them shall be broken. There is no evidence that this has reference to Christ. Jesus is one of the men in this category of righteous men (see Ps. 34:19, 20).

Time after time Calvinistic and Augustinian translators have misconstrued original Greek and Hebrew texts in order to support their theological case. So much so that it is difficult for the average layman to see anything different than certain foreknowledge in the mind of God by reading the King James Ver-
sion at face value. A classic example of this is found in Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus." Taken at face value it would seem that Judas was foreordained to betray Christ. The Scriptures to which Luke refers as being fulfilled are found in the twentieth verse of Acts, chapter 1: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take." This citation is taken from two separate sources, Psalm 69:25, "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents," and from Psalm 109:8, "Let his days be few and let another take his office." Now there is not the slightest indication in the Old Testament that these passages were originally spoken of Judas or that they had any reference to him. Luke does not assert that David distinctly or consciously referred to Judas in these Psalms. In fact, the two verses, just preceding the one Luke cites (Ps. 69:22, 23), are quoted by Paul in Romans 11:9, 10 as having application to unbelieving Jews in general. "Let their table become a snare... Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see..." In context, concerning Judas the passage does not refer to a single man but a group of men (see 69:25). Luke in his quotation, changes that which had been spoken in plural describing the enemies of David in general to application in a specific case.

(It is also important to point out that "fulfilled" is not in the future indicative [statement of fact, certainty] but an infinite which in the Greek does not carry the element of certainty but predictability or probability. Futhermore, the predictability of betrayal was a reality to Christ before He came into this world. After all, God was betrayed many times
by many people in the Old Testament. However, to say that this predictability was directed toward Judas is nonsense. God didn’t even know Judas would be born until he was conceived.

We thus see that predictions and prophecies concerning God’s actions are not the hard and fast things we usually think them to be.

It is true that God knew Jesus would be offered as a sacrifice and that the death of Christ was allowed as it happened by God. It appears, however, that in the Divine mind, Jesus was not to be murdered but offered as a sacrifice, much like Abraham was to offer his son Isaac (see Is. 53:10, Mark 14:27). But God’s plans appear to have been aborted by wicked men. “The mode of his death, by wicked men on a Roman cross, was nowhere attested, or even hinted at in the Old Testament Scriptures. Now, which is easier to believe, that God planned the murder of Christ, or to distinguish between the necessity of the fact of his dying to save the world and the contingent mode and instrument of his dying? God had his own plan for the offering up of his Son, which wicked men murderously invaded, and wholly in opposition to his wishes.”

In fact Paul himself clearly states that there was a possibility that these men would not have murdered Christ had they known of His hidden wisdom. “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world (ages) unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 2:7, 8).

There was no set, fixed plan here!

It was not until Jesus knew what was on the hearts of the religious leaders that He knew that He would be crucified on the cross. It apparently was a sur-
prise to Jesus as well as to the disciples. When Jesus told the disciples that He was betrayed, (Jesus had come as a sacrifice, but not to be betrayed, especially by one of His own), the followers of Jesus were baffled. Now, if any of these things had been mentioned or hinted in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is amazing that none of the apostles had any idea of what was going on and what Christ was talking about. They were acquainted with Old Testament Scriptures yet none of them, not even Peter, knew anything of what Christ meant.

There was much grief upon the heart of Jesus over the developing situation. In Gethsemane Jesus fell upon the ground and prayed, if possible, that that hour might pass from him. “O my Father,” He exclaimed, “if it be possible, Let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39). “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36). When Jesus prayed this prayer, He was not praying to escape an atoning death, but that He might not be killed prematurely. Hebrews 5:7 says He was spared from death. What death? The only death He could have been spared from was a premature one of stoning. He knew that if His sacrifice was to have value it must be public. He was in no way shrinking from the cross. If this had been planned, predicted, or known beforehand, then what was the point? Toward what purpose would Jesus have been praying? Was He just trying to soothe himself with some “psycho-cybernetics” or “transcendental meditation?” How could Jesus say upon His death, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do?” What would Jesus be forgiving them for if it was planned and fixed what they were to do? Would Jesus be forgiving them for following God’s
plans—or God's foreknowledge?

The murder of Jesus Christ was done by the work of evil men and God had no part in the plot. The men who did the awful deed accomplished it by their own free wills and must be held accountable. Early Christian leaders made no bones about who was guilty. Paul charged the Jews that "they killed the Lord Jesus" (I Thess. 2:15). Peter said to them (Acts 3:14, 15, 30): "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." Stephen said, "Of whom (the Just One) ye have been now the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52). And Jesus Himself said to those priests who finally murdered Him, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). Plainly the entire event was one which was repulsive in the Divine mind.

Further, if God knew that Jesus would not be a loser, but only a winner, then the temptations of Jesus mean absolutely nothing. They could not have been real temptations. He could not with honesty say, "I was tempted in all points like you, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). If God really knew Jesus would not fail, then the temptations of Jesus were nothing more than deceptions and lies.

If the cross was a real defeat of Satan, then it also had to be a possible victory. This is axiomatic. You cannot have possible defeat without possible victory or vice-versa.

Much more needs to be written about the facts surrounding Christ's death and the atonement, for there are many stones yet unturned. It is incredible that with the resources and scholarship we have, that we are still groveling in the outdated views of the atonement of Augustine, Calvin, St. Anselm,
Leon Morris, and totally disregarding the many great writings of Grotius, Burge, Albert Barnes, Butler, Dunn, Finney, Miley, and P. P. Waldenstrom.

Notes for Chapter 12

1. It is interesting that by elementary political standards, Israel has never become a "great and mighty nation" as God predicted here. Apparently His wish for a mighty, just, good, and prosperous nation was never fulfilled because of Israel's disobedience. During the reign of Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, Israel achieved prominence but never to the extent of a first-rate nation that God intended. The Jews have been scattered and persecuted contrary to many Old Testament passages stating that the Jewish people would be blessed greatly.


3. Ibid.

CHAPTER 13

Sowing the Seeds of Life

If from all eternity God foresaw that you were to be eternally miserable, and still, with all these terrible realities before him, he allowed you to come into existence, it is the baldest mockery for him to ask you to obey and worship him, and to seek his favor and presence.¹—Dr. L. D. McCabe

Salvation implies a right relationship with God. Merely believing that God exists will not save you. Rather, salvation must be defined as a right affiliation and kinship with God and man, with God's truth and dynamics. With His dynamics, we can overcome the power of sin and death (a result of sin) in our lives. But salvation is not just a free ticket to heaven. If we do not love God now and love the study of His Word, the Bible (see John 8:31, 32), then there is no reason that we will after our death. Furthermore, if we are not comfortable with God now, how would we ever expect to be in the event we make it to heaven?

Salvation is not a one-time decision. Obviously there is a beginning. Salvation is progressive or an ongoing process. In the Greek it is always in the present tense. Even John 3:16 is not talking about having everlasting life in the future but now: "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have (present tense) everlasting life." (Note in the Greek
the emphasis is not on the everlasting but on life, and not life in the future but right now.) The Apostle Paul commands us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," implying duration in the procedure (Phil. 2:12). Salvation is not a one-night stand at a Gospel tent meeting, though it can begin there. It is a right relationship with God and man. (Repenting and believing on Jesus is not salvation. This is the process by which one comes into salvation. Neither is going to heaven salvation. That is a by-product of salvation.) In the Greek, salvation means whole or complete. In order to become whole and complete, one must repent of all known sin, and put one's trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is a two way commitment. If we receive Him, He will accept us.

Jesus Christ is our mediator, and He provides a way of escape for us. Jesus will become our defense attorney if we do falter and sin, and God will show mercy upon us if we repent.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, commands us to share His "Good News" or soothing balm unselfishly with others. Like beggars we share the bread of life, for the more we give the more we will get and the less we give, the less we will have. It is not God's intent for us to be uncomfortable, but rather more loving and lovable. God may make us at times uneasy and restless, but His ultimate goal is for the highest good for our lives. If we really love our neighbors, then we will share the great secret of the Gospel—that of God's love for us. Not sharing the Gospel to others who want and need it is like having a garden in your backyard with an unlimited supply of fruits and vegetables and hoarding it all to yourself, while your neighbors have long since run out of food and are starving to death. You may be well fed and fat for a spell, but eventually your heart will turn cold and
lusterless because of your lack of love, and your fruits and vegetables will rot.

Our neighbors may be persuaded through our pleading and the Holy Spirit’s urging to come to a right relationship with God, and they may not. Our reasoning with them, however, may make the important difference. Each of us alone must decide our own destiny—by means of free will given to us by God and by the understanding we have received from our neighbors, friends, churches, and God. If an individual doesn’t believe in Jesus Christ, it may very well be because such a person does not clearly understand, as Jesus illustrated in the parable of the sower. Since Jesus has delegated part of the duty of spreading seeds to us, we can see what a critical role we play as believers. Evangelism can and does make a difference. It is important. If the ground we are spreading seeds on is unfertile, rocky, or filled with weeds, it may be because we have not picked the rocks, or plowed down the weeds. Any intelligent farmer knows this!

If salvation depends solely on the will of God, then we all must be saved or God could not possibly be just. God wants no man to perish or to be separated from Himself. “He would that all come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9). However, all the earnest and prolonged efforts by God to save souls fails in thousands of cases. This can only be explained by the free will of men and women. God cannot produce a moral character in anybody by causation any more than He can make a sin a blessing, a wrong to be right, or light to be darkness. God cannot force a free being to love Him, nor prevent a bad free being from hating Him if such beings are truly free.

A monkey wrench is thrown into the Biblical system if we adhere to the wilted flower theory of Cal-
vinism commonly known as the "TULIP" theory. It has five basic tenets: First, the Total Depravity of man; second, Unconditional Election of God; third, Limited Atonement; fourth, Irresistible Grace of God; and finally, Perseverance of the Saints. Let us examine each of these presuppositions of John Calvin and see how they completely dash any reasonable definition of salvation or evangelism.

1. First, by Total Depravity or Inability, Calvin meant that man's fall was total, involving complete bondage of the will and inability to do any spiritual good. Man, according to this theory, is incapable of initiating any movement toward God. Being utterly dead to sin, man cannot respond or believe in God by his own volition. The implication here is that we have no choice but to sin apart from God and that we cannot by free choice turn to God. But if we cannot prevent ourselves from sinning—if there is no course but to sin—then how can we be blamed for the sin which we commit? How can anyone be guilty of a crime over which he has no control? This tenet is in direct violation of Deuteronomy 30:15-20 in which God tells us that we do have a choice. God verifies continually throughout Biblical history that we have choice. Total depravity is only supported by verses which refer to a wicked group of people, and such passages cannot be applied to all people in the way that Calvin has done. If this concept of depravity is true, then Asa could not possibly have been described as perfect "all the days of his life" (I Kings 15:14), nor could Job be described as perfect in Job 1:8. (Perfect means in motive or intention.)

2. Unconditional Election indicates God's decree to elect certain people without regard to the faith or works of men. These decisions were made "before the world was created." A pre-selected few will enter heaven. Those not selected will not enter into
heaven. Virtue has no part in the selection of those who go to heaven, only God’s arbitrary choice. This viewpoint, rejected by many moderate Calvinists because it is so repulsive, completely eliminates any virtue in entering into the salvation experience. It also shatters any real reason for evangelism other than to persuade those that God has already “elected.” If you are chosen, you are chosen; and if you are not, well, tough luck, you poor slob! Whatever happens thus becomes God’s will and there is nothing we can do to change what will by foreordination take place. This can only result in the fatalistic opinion that nothing really matters. John Calvin contradicts God’s specific statements that God does not want any man to be separated from Him (I Tim. 2:4, II Peter 3:9). His doctrine of election is based on a few obscure verses taken out of context. There is no broad support in the Scriptures for this concept.

3. The third postulate, the “L” in “TULIP,” refers to the Limited Atonement of Jesus Christ. Christ only died for the elect as opposed to a universal atonement. For those elected, its efficacy was absolutely so satisfying that such persons could not fail to be saved. But this seems odd because God appeals to all men everywhere. Jesus tells us to go into the highways and byways and spread the good news into all lands. It seems ridiculous for God to plead with those He has not elected or knows with certainty will not accept. What would be the point of it? Is it to further damn them? Why would He tell us that we do have a free choice if it is not true? Does God lie? To accept this idea as truth means that the Gospel’s primary message—that of God’s love—was meant only for a select few. Hence, it would follow that God does not love everybody, but only those who are chosen!

4. The fourth tenet, Irresistible Grace, means
that when God calls, man will answer and accept because God's calling is irresistible. First comes the long-distant call from God, then man is regenerated and caused to believe.

If this is true, then if a person enters into salvation, it is because God called him. If a man or woman does not respond to God, then it must reasonably follow that God did not call him or her. Who then is to blame if an individual does not come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? How could anyone be to blame except God because He did not exercise His power to call? This also does not square with God's willingness that none should perish. Certainly God calls all men but all men do not heed God's call.

5. The final postulate of Calvin's incredible theories is that of Perseverance of the Saints. This signifies that because man is absolutely and unconditionally elected and irresistibly called out of a depraved state by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, a Christian could not possibly fall from grace. The saints will not defect. But when we accept Jesus Christ as an intermediary to our relationship with God, do we lose our freedom? When we enter into the salvation experience, is there no possibility of ever terminating that experience? If there is not, God is going to have to apologize to Adam and Eve. But what is freedom other than the ability of choice and a greater number of options? This must also mean the ability to choose against what we may have chosen previously. I know from firsthand experience of a girl who sincerely and honestly accepted Christ and now has rejected Christianity because she can't understand how God can be fair. She can't perceive how God can pick and choose specific people for heaven or for hell, and label such action "fair" (which is precisely what all five of Calvin's points
I allude to). She cannot make any sense out of this nonsense. Certainly most will not want to terminate the salvation experience, but some will. God will never leave nor forsake us as long as we never want Him to leave nor forsake us.

Now I realize that there are "three-point Calvinists," "four-point Calvinists," and "five-point Calvinists." Most Calvinists, in fact, probably don't accept the five points above. But all five tenets, taken separately or as a group, support the position that man does not have free choice, that man really has no part in the salvation process, that it is God alone who is responsible for our salvation, that it is God's wise counsel that has decided who will or will not perish, and that all is fixed or determined either by foreordination or by absolute foreknowledge. Once again, how can anyone but God be blamed for a person not coming into the relationship of salvation if this system be true? Each one of these tenets when examined under the rigors of intelligence are about as firm as quicksand.

Wise old Benjamin Franklin, who was baffled by the Calvinistic tendencies of many of the early American puritans, remarked of their religion, "Such beliefs are so repulsive that none do believe them, unless they have been patiently drilled into them from early childhood by revered parents." Calvinists embrace such ideas only because they feel compelled to in order to escape what they feel is a more unreasonable position—that God does not always know the future with certainty, that He lives in time, that He changes the course of His actions, and that man's freedom is somehow outside His realm of control and foreknowledge. They think this degrades God when it is in fact their own pet theories that make a monster out of God.

Suppose you convince a man that all things are
bound up by the chains of necessity (all things happen by necessity of what God wills). Suppose you convince that same man that all his future choices are now certainly foreknown by the Divine being—that whatever he does is as certain as the events of an old movie rerun on television. How then would you expect him not to be depressed by a philosophy which is the same as fatalism, especially if this man’s movie was not a good one but had an ugly outcome? How could he be expected to act with a free spirit if he really believed what you said? How could you expect this man to believe that the events of his own personal movie will ever change by such methods as prayer unless such prayers were already contained in the movie? What is your basis for hope when depravity permeates and pervades every vein, nerve and fiber of your soul, and you are not one of the lucky elected ones?

Why should we spend time evangelizing people for Christ if what we do cannot affect the outcome of lives? If every man’s destiny is certain in God’s mind, there would be no need for Christians to invite non-Christians to a relationship with Christ. There would also be no need for missionaries and ministers to tell individuals of Christ, since the final destiny of each would already have been determined. If foreknowledge is true, then evangelism is nonsense.

If a sinner cannot through pre-offered grace recover himself voluntarily from his sin, then the atonement is entirely useless to him. What was the reason for Christ’s death if we have no ability to accept the cleansing of His great sacrifice? Why does God appeal to us with pathos and eloquence to obey Him and to live for Him if He is certain that I am to be eternally lost? Why does He persist in efforts to save me if He knows that all those efforts
will only increase the weight of my condemnation?

Inherently, we all know that God tries earnestly to save us from eternal death. We all have heard the voice of His Spirit saying to us, “This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isa. 30:21). Many times we have procrastinated and put Him off saying, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). And yet for the thousandth time that loving Personage has stood before us on our highway to selfishness and ruin, gently pleading with us, sometimes begging for us to receive His truth, holiness, and love, or to face judgment. If God knows all the time while He is pleading that you will never turn, what then is the use of all this? Isn’t God just wasting His time? At our door stands the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and God the Father. They hold between them all the power of the universe, yet they stand patiently knocking. It is obvious that with one sweep, they could break down our door into hundreds of splinters, yet they don’t because they respect our freedom and privacy. God says to every soul, “Choose, exercise your freedom, do as you prefer, make your own selection. The initiative is wholly your own: you have power to choose the right or to choose the wrong, and I am waiting patiently for you to decide” (Deut. 30:19).

Notes for Chapter 13

2. Ibid., pp. 79-80.
... My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry.
—Isaiah 5:1-7

God was perplexed. He just couldn't understand it. He found the most fertile hill of land in the area.
He cleaned the land of rocks. He fenced the land. He irrigated the land and then planted the best possible grapevines that He could obtain. What happened? Instead of plump, juicy, thick bunches of grapes, there grew shriveled, scanty and wrinkled wild grapes! In frustration God asked, “What more could I have done? What could I have done that I didn’t do? Here I have loved these people, cared for them, cultivated and watered them, provided for their needs, and what do they do? They spit in my face! I have taught this motley bunch, I have begged them, coaxed them, and called them to righteousness, but the only fruit they produce is the cry of evil and oppression!”

Are these the words of a God whose plans are occurring just as He desires? Are these the words of a God who understands why men have rejected him? Of course not. God is bewildered, astonished, and surprised that these things would happen. He is in a state of disbelief. Our Lord appears not to have known that good grapes would not grow in this vineyard—or else why would He have taken such painstaking care if He had known all to be in vain to begin with? God is clearly baffled as to why the nation of Israel will not accept Him as a God of love.

Over and over God appeals to His people to change their ways in order that He may change the severity of His judgment upon them. It seems obvious that God never really is certain what the moral choices of the Jewish nation will be. He pleads with them, “O house of Israel . . . If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the severity of judgment that I thought to do unto them” (Jer. 18:6-8). There is uncertainty by God whether or not Israel will repent. God does not
abandon a vineyard until He has made every chance available.

Literally thousands of times God changes His mind and makes new decisions because of the unexpected actions by the nation of Israel. God is constantly adjusting and readjusting to make the vineyard productive. He is constantly making new appeals to man. Such actions would be ridiculous if God already knew what man's actions would be.

God tested Abraham by asking for an ultimate sacrifice—the offering of his only son, Isaac. After Abraham's obedience was clear, God said, "Now I know that thou fearest me" (Gen. 22:2, 9-12), implying that God did not have such knowledge previously. God also allowed the test of Job to see whether Job would remain obedient to God. By the context of the book, Job's righteousness was not a fixity. God also tested the nation of Israel for forty years in the wilderness. God frankly admits that it was not certain whether they would be obedient or not. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deut. 8:2).

In Exodus 32:7-14 God wanted to destroy the entire nation of Israel because of their foolish worship of a golden calf. It was only after the humility and pleading of Moses that God changed His mind. In Numbers 11:1, 2 we again find God's wrath kindled because of Israel's complaining. It was only after the prayers of Moses that God stopped this judgment. Again we see Moses pleading with God in Numbers 14:11-15, 19, 20 to prevent God from destroying the people for their sins. Also in Numbers 16, God's penalty of a plague is stayed from destroying all of
Israel because of Moses' action. Several times Moses pleaded with God to spare Israel. God commiserated with His people, readjusted His judgment and gave the people another chance. Psalm 106:43-45 indicates that this number may be much greater: "Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies." God was continually changing and rearranging His actions according to the choices of the Jewish nation.

In Exodus 33:2 and 34:24 the Lord states clearly that He would send an angel to drive out the wicked people in the "promised land" area. God specifically mentions that among these people would be the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. How specific could God be? But unexpectedly to God, the people of Israel began to serve the god Baal and made pacts and agreements with the people God wanted to drive out. They (the Israelites) began to intermarry with these nations, contrary to God's wishes. Now God was in a peculiar situation because His own people had made leagues with some of the same wicked people He had planned to drive out. What a dilemma! The people who were to be a righteous witness were fast becoming as corrupt as the people to whom they were to witness. In Judges 2:20, 21, we find an angered God who has decided not to drive out the nations that His chosen people had agreed with. Which nations? Again the Scriptures are clear. God would not drive out the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Judges 3:1-5). A direct reversal! Now if God has absolute future foreknowledge of men's decisions,
what was the point of the original declaration in Exodus 33:2? Under such circumstances it would have distinctly been a statement which was known to be false by God. Again, the question the followers of Augustine and Calvin must answer: Does God lie or are the Scriptures just inaccurate here, or is this a real change of mind?

The list goes on! In Exodus 4:10-15 God commands Moses to speak to the people of Egypt to show them signs of God’s power. Moses objects and says that he is “not eloquent” but “slow of speech” and “slow of tongue.” God rebuked him and said, “Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing or the blind? have not I the Lord?” Moses still refused and God was angered. Because of Moses’ disobedience, God changed His command and asked Aaron to be God’s spokesman. Aaron, a brother to Moses, was much more “eloquent” in speech. Now if God knew that Moses was not going to obey His (the Lord’s) desire, then what was the point of God’s anger? Why would God be angered at a fixed and certain event? Isn’t it far more reasonable to believe Moses’ choices were incipient (self-originated) thus not certain and not known beforehand? Isn’t it far more likely that God really did change His mind, was not sure what Moses would do, and that God’s emotions were genuine? To say anything different is to suggest that the Scriptures really mean something different than what they say they mean.

The famous kings of Israel, Saul, David, and Solomon, also reveal a cause for God’s readjustments. God did not even want a monarchy or king system in the first place, but finally after the people’s pleadings, God allowed Samuel to choose Saul as king. Saul did not turn out as God had expected and it deeply grieved God that He had set up Saul
to be king. The Lord said, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night" (I Samuel 15:11).²

David also disobeyed God. This did not happen repeatedly as in the case of Saul. The Scripture mentions that King David was perfect (perfect obviously meaning in intention), except for the case against Uriah the Hittite (I Kings 15:5). After David yielded to the sin of adultery, the king was so grieved that he lamented over his sin for about a year and a half. David took sin seriously! Later scriptures mention that David disobeyed God again. This time David was given three choices of punishment. This seems strange if God already knew what David's choice of punishment would be. There would be no point in asking. Why should God ask for information that He already has?

Instead it appears that God did not know for sure which punishment David would choose. "So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue you? or that there be three days of pestilence in the land? now advise and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, it is enough: stay.
now thine hand” (II Sam. 24:13-16). David displayed a completely different attitude about sin than many of the other Jewish kings. It is no wonder that David is even today highly respected in Israel. Notice that David would rather be punished by God than by man. He could trust God to be just and honest and at the same time kind and loving.

Listen to what God says to King Solomon: “And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all Solomon’s desire which he was pleased to do, That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he has appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou has made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou has built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgment: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: And at this house, which is high, everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers
out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil” (I Kings 9:1-9). Does not this passage succinctly reveal the element of choice, responsibility, and accountability? Doesn’t this passage reveal uncertainty by God as to which choice the vineyard of Israel would make?

God loves us so much, that not only does it surprise Him and cause Him anguish when we sin, but most often it does not even occur to Him that we will sin! (See Jeremiah 19:5 and 32:35.) Our sins actually limit, curb, and thwart God’s plans and desires. “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel” (Ps. 78:40, 41). Apparently God is greatly influenced by us, the creatures that He loves. Just as a disobedient child grieves and may limit the desires of his or her parents, so we may bind God’s hopes. We do not produce large bunches of grapes when we sin and thus limit our own selves. However, we also limit the keeper of the vineyard who is frustrated by vines which will not produce fruit.

It is a mistake to think that only verses in the Old Testament suggest change. There are changes and new decisions by God evidenced in the New Testament also, but it must be understood that the New Testament involves a much shorter historical period.
Notes for Chapter 14

1. This is not to say that God specifically makes the dumb or the deaf or the blind. The Hebrew word used here is not the common word for make. The verse should be more correctly translated: "Or who cares for the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind?" This concept is confirmed in the following verse (Ex. 4:12) when God says, "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Once again we have a strong similarity between the KJV and The Geneva Bible. (KJV: "...or who maketh the dumb...", Geneva Bible: "...or who hathe made the dome...")

2. John Calvin in his Institutes lists several of these passages which say that God is sorry that He made man, or sorry that He set Saul up as king, etc., and then quotes verse 29 of I Samuel 15: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." Calvin then reasons, "See, God doesn't repent at all." But what kind of backwards, clumsy, and absurd logic is this? If Calvin would have taken the time to analyze verse 29 in context with surrounding verses, he could have easily ascertained its meaning. God says in verse 11 of the same chapter, "I am sorry that I set up Saul." The latter verse, verse 29, can easily be understood in connection with previous verses. God has continually forgiven Saul for his disobedience, but finally there came a time when God said to Saul, "It is all over, you cannot continually persuade me as you do men. I will not repent or change my mind this time. I will not give in again. It is over." Later we note the tragic suicide of Saul. To say that all of these things happened to Saul and the nation of Israel as God planned, as John Calvin would suggest, is to accuse God of paramount evil.
CHAPTER 15
The Briers and the Thorns:
Problem Verses—Part I

It is not easy or possible to box up knowledge into a neat little package, because learning is a journey and not a destination. Often we find it difficult to differentiate between a contradiction and a problem. The foreknowledge of God and the free will of man is a contradiction. Divine nescience of future contingencies may present problems to the reader, but it is not a contradiction. If a philosophy is true, it should be able to withstand and weather all reasonable attacks against it. Controversy and differences which are launched in the right spirit are good and healthy, for they test our ideas and influence us to think, reason, and to develop love for those with whom we disagree. You really cannot tell how virtuous people are until you see them in real confrontation! We need to learn the value of confrontation and reason. Peter said “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Pet. 3:15).

When formulating any theological position from the Scriptures, several rules must be adhered to. First, one can never base an entire Christian philosophy on a half dozen or even a dozen verses. There are too many variables which can upset such a posi-
tion. It is too easy for a translation error or misinterpretation to have influenced one to lean toward such a stance. Most theologians, in fact, will agree that it is probably a good rule of thumb that one should have at least a hundred passages in support of any major position which you may advance.

Another rule is that each verse that you examine and use to support your position must be considered in light of the context in which it was written. Who was it written to? Who was it written about? Was the message to a specific person, to a specific group of people, or to all men? Why was it written? What are the ideas that the author is associating with the verse in surrounding verses? Finally, if there is still difficulty with a particular verse, the original Hebrew and Greek sources must be examined. The primary source (primary Hebrew and Greek texts) must always take precedence over secondary English translations. With recent source books, it is possible even for the layman who has no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew to make fairly good judgments of the verse meanings in primary works.

If serious textual questions arise when we examine a certain verse, then such a verse must be ruled out and cannot be used for either side. There are a number of such verses. This is not to accuse the King James translators of deliberately tampering with Scripture, but they probably did so through misunderstanding and theological bias. However, deliberate tampering cannot be completely ruled out. It is known that many of the King James translators were of the Augustinian-Calvinistic persuasion. Thus, whenever translators had the option to translate a verse to a meaning similar to what they believed, more often than not they would prefer their own beliefs and translate the verse to become more akin to what they thought to be true. And isn't this
only natural? Wouldn’t we all have had such tendencies? Whether we like to admit it or not and although overall, the King James is an excellent translation, many passages are tinged with the Augustine-Calvin philosophy. It is not a completely unbiased version.

With these factors in mind, let us now look at several verses which do not seem to correspond with the theories of this book. First, there are many verses which refer to God’s knowledge, which appear to create problems. Psalm 94:11 teaches, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men.” In Matthew 9:4 we find, “And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?” Other verses convey the same idea—that God knows the hearts and minds of men. Remember, however, that God can know all that is knowable. A thought is tangible because it is in existence. Therefore it is by definition possible for God to know all of men’s thoughts. There is no future connotation here. Nowhere do the Scriptures say that God can know a thought that is not yet in existence before a man has thought it!

Again, where God foretells an outcome of an event, He does so via one of three types of prophecy, telic (stated therefore certain—cause and effect), ebatic (similar situation), and conditional (dependent upon people’s response). God can thus make the prediction in Genesis 18:19 that Abraham would “command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.” God could make such a statement because He knew Abraham thoroughly. He had witnessed the reoccurrence of positive evidence of Abraham the man of faith. Such a prophecy would be under the heading of “conditional prophecy.” God’s predictions were predicated on Abraham’s past. But, even history has proved God didn’t know. The offspring of Abraham’s
children did not all keep the way of the Lord, even though Abraham stayed true. As history progressed, God's view of His people increased dramatically. God could almost predict what Israel would do in a given situation. Even Moses learned by reoccurring evidence. In Deuteronomy 31:29 he predicted that after his death the people would "utterly corrupt" themselves and "turn aside from the way" of the Lord. Joshua led the people quite ably for a period, but it was not long before Moses' predictions began to come true.

In Isaiah 46:10, we see that God can declare "the end from the beginning." This is a problem when taken out of context, but if we look at this verse in context, there is a simple solution. There are times when God enters into the affairs of man for his highest good. Isaiah 46:10 can be best understood when we look at Isaiah 48:5, "I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them." When we read the full context of Isaiah 46:10 and following, we discover two basic concepts. First, "declaring the end from the beginning" has nothing to do with the creation of the world or foreknowledge as commonly taught. It simply means declaring the end of a particular event before it is brought about. God can enter history and bring about any event that He so chooses, but remember He never acts without sufficient and intelligent reasons. The second concept is often misunderstood. It has become the central issue of prophecy, that of foretelling the future. The real purpose for prophecy is not foretelling but, as has been said, to call men to righteousness. In Isaiah 48 we see that the people were attributing the great events of God to their idols (Is. 48:5 "... mine
idol hath done them’’), so God, working for the peoples’ highest good, knowing idols cannot give life and happiness, sought to destroy their false views and hopes by declaring the end from the beginning so that when the people witnessed the great acts of God there would be no mistake to whom credit was due.

A more perplexing problem is found in Acts 15:17, 18: ‘‘That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (18) Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.’’ If we take this verse at face value, it would appear that God, by this statement, would know all of His activities in the future. Thus nothing could be new to Him. However, the Greek teaches us something different. The first thing one notes is some very sloppy translation work in verse 18, ‘‘Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.’’ The phrase ‘‘from the beginning of the world’’ does not even occur in the Greek text. ‘‘Unto God are all his works’’ is another addition that does not occur in the Greek text. Incredible as it may seem that leaves only three words left. The other two words when translated do not even make an intelligent thought. We must remember when the Greek manuscripts were originally written, there were no divisions of verses. There is no question these three words belong to the latter part of verse 17. The other two words are ‘‘from’’ and ‘‘age.’’ ‘‘Known from age’’ does not make sense by itself. When added to verse 17 it should be translated: ‘‘...is saying the Lord (who) is doing these things known from of old.’’ This is quite a different meaning than what the King James Version implies. In addition, this is a quote from the Old Testament. The quote is from Amos 9:11, 12, ‘‘In that day will
I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: (12) That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." Amazingly, the two texts do not even sound alike! What God is saying in Amos is quite different from what the King James translators are saying in Acts. Acts 15:15, 16 help clarify the meaning of 17, and 18 and clearly show us what Amos is trying to say. It is clear that 17 and 18 have nothing to do with foreknowledge. How has such an erroneous application been made to these verses? One does not need to look far. Ironically, the difference between Calvin's Geneva Bible and the King James is so minute in these verses that one wonders if some of the King James translators were actually translators or copiers! Acts 15:18 in the KJV reads: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The Geneva Bible reads, "From the beginning of the worlde God knoweth all his workes."

I John 3:20 is another example which has often been misunderstood. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." First we note that it says "God knoweth all things." It is obvious that God knows all things. We do not dispute this, but what must be clearly defined is the difference between a "thing" and a "nothing." A "thing" is always something that bears a name or a concept. It always has existence, just like an apple, shoe, car, etc. A "nothing" does not have a name, is not a concept, and does not have existence! This is why it is called a nothing. A nothing cannot be known, perceived or related to in any way, form or shape. A fact is a thing and has existence. A nothing does not have existence and therefore can-
not be a fact, and therefore cannot be foreknown. A thing cannot have existence before it has existence, and since things (ideas, actions, etc.) cannot emerge from a nonbeing, they cannot have existence until someone brings them into existence. I am the author of those things which pertain to me. Therefore until I have existence I cannot be foreknown. This is self-evident. Hence, when I John 3:20 reveals that God knows all things, it is simply stating that God knows all that is knowable.

However, there is also another difficulty with this verse. If we look at the context of what is really being said in I John 3:20, the emphasis is not that God knows all things in general, but that He knows everything in our hearts. It is simply trying to tell us that God is greater than man, for man looketh on the outside, but God can look not only on the outside but He can also discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Galatians 4:9 is another troubling passage to some. “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” This is almost self-explanatory. It is obvious that there can be a point in time “after” we have known God, but how can there be a point in time “after” God has known us if He has always known us?

In addition, there are four passages in Revelation often used to say that God does not change. He lives in an “eternal now.” Revelation 1:8: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 1:1: “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book . . .” Revelation 21:6, 7: “And he said unto me, It is done, I am Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Also consider, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:13, 14).

If you study these verses carefully, you will note that each of these passages is followed by challenges of choice to follow Christ. None of them speaks of God knowing all things or choices of man before they are made. They all confirm that God was in the beginning and will be at the end. They suggest the continuance and the power of God, but not that God knew future thoughts and possibilities of man before they occurred. Like Psalm 90:4 ("For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past...") and II Peter 3:8, there is the suggestion that God's power is unlimited—that what should reasonably take a thousand years might only take a day in God's sight—but not that God is somehow outside of time. Quite the contrary, if God experienced the beginning and will experience the end, wouldn't that suggest that He does in fact live in time?

Another troubling passage is that of Peter's denial: "And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell you, Peter, ... The cock shall not crow, til thou hast denied me thrice" (John 13:38). Jesus knew that "pride goeth before a fall." He knew that Peter was full of pride. He knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He knew Peter's personality traits, strengths and weaknesses better than any computer could ever know. Jesus knew that Peter had big ideas and big plans, but when it came down to the nitty-gritty,
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blood-and-guts situation, Peter just couldn’t handle it yet. If Peter was to remain strong, when greater trials and tests would come, then Peter had to be shown his weakness now.

It is possible that Jesus allowed His disciple to be so bombarded by demonic spirits that Peter’s rejections were almost certain (compare with the case of Job in which God allowed satanic influence as a test) or Jesus may have actually used cause and effect on Peter so that Peter would see the depth of his pride. Luke 22:31-34: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: (32) But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (33) And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. (34) And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” He notes first that Satan was begging earnestly for Peter. Jesus had already suffered the loss of Judas (John 17) to Satan and He didn’t want to lose Peter also. Thus Jesus was praying concerning Peter that Peter might not fail. The fact that “might not fail” is in the subjunctive means that Jesus did not know for certain whether Peter would fail or not. But He did know Peter was in trouble; thus He sought to teach Peter a real lesson. History shows that it worked. Whatever means Jesus used concerning Peter, we do know that it was for Peter’s highest good.

In Jeremiah 1:5 we seemingly have indication that God knows of our existence before we are born—that God knows “our members” before they are created. Jeremiah 1:5 reads: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” We must carefully consider the con-
text of this verse. It is not all men but only Jeremiah that is spoken of here. God has not ordained all men to be prophets. God could know Jeremiah because He created him and caused him to come into existence as a prophet. this is simple providential government and has nothing to do with salvation. Times had gotten so bad. Many of the pagan religions that are prominent today were in their infant stages at that time. Few were taking a stand for God and righteousness. God had no alternative but to intervene into the affairs of man by cause and effect. He created a prophet; therefore He could say, “I knew that prophet.” Later God allowed Jeremiah to exercise his free will and Jeremiah obeyed God. This is not always the case, however. Samson is also an example where God entered into history via cause and effect. (See Judges 13:3, 5, 7, “… but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. (5) … he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. (7) … for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.”) Samson, unlike Jeremiah when given freedom of will, played with sin and never fulfilled what God had desired!

Psalm 139 also makes reference to God’s knowledge of the development of a child in the womb. Psalm 139:16 states: “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” It is not clear whether or not the reference here is only to David or to all men. However, even if it does refer to all men, biological science has advanced remarkably in the last twenty years. By means of D.N.A., genes and chromosomes, we know it is possible to predict the physical structure of a child even though it consists of only a few cells. Of late we have even learned that not only “mem-
bers” can be determined but even some personality traits can be ascertained while a child is still in the womb. (Note: verse 2 of this psalm, understanding "my thought afar off," has no reference to time, but should be thought of in terms of distance.) Nowhere does it say He knows thoughts before they are thoughts.

Another passage, Romans 9:10-15, makes reference to two children still in the womb—Jacob and Esau. Again it was not difficult for God to predict which would be the stronger and which would be the smarter child. God could easily predict these traits. However, in this case there appears to be some causative influence, for God seems to favor Jacob (the younger) to lead His people. If you read the Old Testament you will notice that a serious problem had developed among God’s people regarding the tradition of the younger always serving the elder. God was apparently trying to work out something more just. Romans 9:11, 12 “…that…election might stand...(12)...The elder shall serve the younger” is true, but is often incorrectly linked in thought with verse 13 which has nothing to do with election. Romans 9:13: “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Although hated here means preferred (it is quoted from Mal. 1:2, 3), which carries a far stronger meaning, dislike, even hate, it has nothing to do with election; rather it is the result of a history of sinning by Esau. Nowhere does the Bible mention that God would hate one but love the other at the time of their births or shortly thereafter. It is only after a pattern of selfishness and sin did God speak so harshly about Esau. Had Esau lived righteously and Jacob evilly, God would have said, “Jacob I have hated and Esau I have loved!” God is not arbitrary!

The Judas affair deserves much more study, but
one verse in particular, John 13:18, seems to say that Judas was picked by Jesus to do what He did, "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled (May be fulfilled is in the subjunctive mood—which means that it is not a certainty. If it was certain that Judas would betray Christ, this would have been future indicative in the Greek.) He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."
The Scripture that was being fulfilled is Psalm 41:9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Christ here applies to Judas that which David had applied to Absalom. There is no indication at all that Psalm 41 refers to Judas. Jesus is only saying that "I know Judas, whom I have chosen as a disciple and he has turned out like Absalom in David’s situation." In other words, this is simply an ebatic prophecy. It was evident and knowable to Jesus that Judas was His betrayer, because as you remember Judas made an agreement with Jewish officials prior to the last supper. It was past and knowable knowledge to Jesus—not future knowledge. Again, we need to scrutinize carefully any verse using the words "That it might be fulfilled," or "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." This type of phrase in the Greek carries a far different meaning than what we generally assume it to be. These passages almost always use the subjunctive (that which may or may not happen) as opposed to the future indicative (statement of fact).

Several additional comments might be made about Judas. It is erroneous to say that Jesus needed Judas so that He could be put to death. John 11:53, 54 teaches that Jesus could no longer minister openly because of possible death: "Then
from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. (54) Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness... and there continued with his disciples." In Matthew 19:28 Jesus is talking to His twelve disciples and He announces to them: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." How could Jesus make such a statement if He knew Judas would never be there on one of the twelve thrones? It would be an outright lie. Further, John 17:12 uses the subjunctive again indicating that these were not certain events. In addition, Judas was sent out with the others two by two to minister and to cast out devils. How could he minister in such a way if he himself was of the devil? What possible reason could God have to pick evil to minister righteousness, especially when He so hated evil and sin? Judas was not always of the devil, but became a devil. Even Acts 1:16 has the element of prediction in the Greek, but not certainty. When one reads in the King James it sounds like the Scripture had to be fulfilled, or that Judas had to betray Christ. If this were true, why was not the indicative mood used for "fulfilled"? It is obvious because this is ebatic and not telic. In Acts 1:20 another interesting fact is observed, "Let his habitation be desolate. . . .", but this verse is quoted from Psalm 69:25, which is in the plural, "Let their habitation be desolate. . . ." Obviously these are ebatic or similar situations and not direct telic prophecies. Some of these problem verses have been covered in part under the chapter on prophecy since they also relate to that section.
Notes for Chapter 15

1. The Hebrew word used for “know” used by Moses in this verse is translated in other passages to mean “to look into, to examine, to consider, to mark, to understand, or to discover.” Thus it is not certain Moses is saying, “I know for sure you are going to sin,” but rather more likely Moses was saying, “It looks as if you will sin—you will in all probability sin.”
CHAPTER 16

The Briers and the Thorns:
Problem Verses—Part II

This chapter focuses on those verses which are translated “from or before the foundation of the world.” This group of passages seem to cause considerable trouble for students of the Bible. Because of their significance these problem verses demand a chapter by themselves. Tremendous misunderstanding surround these following texts: Matthew 13:35: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” (It should be noted that “of the world” does not occur in the Greek text.) Matthew 25:34: “Then shall the king say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Luke 11:50: “That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation.” John 17:24: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.” Ephesians 1:4: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the founda-
tion of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Hebrews 4:3: “For we which have believed do enter, as he said, I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” Hebrews 9:26: “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Hebrews 11:11: “Through faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.” (Note: “conceive” here is the same word as is translated “foundation” in the other verses.) I Peter 1:20: “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” Revelation 13:8: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 17:8: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

Each of these passages at first glance seems to carry the concept of time, before the creation of the earth or world. However, not one of these passages contains any Greek word that specifically denotes the idea of time, except perhaps for the passage concerning Sarah (Heb. 11:11), which may refer to her old age. Some scholars suggest that the word “foundation” conveys the idea of “being rooted in the very being of God” but does not in any way convey the idea of time.
In addition, there is ample evidence that the phrase "from the foundation of the world" is mistranslated and should read, "because of the disintegration of the inhabitants." This was discovered upon an intensive study of the Greek words, *apo* (pro), *katabole* and *kosmos*, which make up the Greek phrase in each of the above passages (except Heb. 11:11). It is commonly translated "from (or before when the preposition pro is used) the foundation of the world." The key word in this phrase is *katabole*.

The study covered eight major areas: (1) The origin of these words; (2) the use of these words in Classical Greek and in Hellinistic Greek; (3) the Hebrew equivalents; (4) contemporary usage in non-Biblical literature; (5) words with similar meaning and which could be used interchangeably; (6) how the New Testament writers vary in the use of these words; (7) traditional use of these words by early church fathers; (8) and finally a study was made of the basic doctrines to which these words relate and how they relate.

When one begins to launch an intensive study on this phrase, one quickly discovers something that is absolutely incredible. Major theological works on *apo* (pro) *katabole* and *kosmos* tend to spend a great amount of time and space on *apo* (pro), and *kosmos* which have obvious meaning and agreement. Many works will devote page after page, five, ten, even over twenty-five pages to kosmos, yet no work or study was I able to find that devoted more than a half a page to katabole. Yet this tiny word (katabole) probably determines 80-90 percent of our present-day theology. It all starts with our present view of God. Certainly if we accept that God knows all of our future choices, if we accept that Christ was slain before the foundation (katabole) of the world, if we accept that the prophets were slain before the founda-
tion (katabole) of the world, if we accept that we were chosen before the foundation (katabole) of the world, if we accept that we were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation (katabole) of the world—then we are guilty of allowing the small word katabole, of which we know little about, to determine most of our theology. Once we accept the traditional view of foreknowledge, this then colors our view of redemption (personal salvation), evangelism, prayer, eschatology, etc.

Let us take a closer look at katabole. In the biological sense, scientists speak of the catabolic (katabole) process, meaning the disintegration of food. They may also speak in terms of destructive metabolism. Catastrophe and catatonic are also related words.

We are not trying to say katabole has never been used for foundation, but we will prove that this is not its usage in the Bible. Katabole has also been used for the idea of payment. In addition to payment it has been used for an illness, such as an epileptic seizure. Thus we see, like many words, katabole has been used a number of different ways. Our purpose here is to find out its exact usage in the Bible.

As we look a little closer at katabole, we notice that its usage for foundation is quite limited. Let us first look at The Classic Greek Dictionary by Follett Publishing Company. This dictionary was prepared by George Ricker Berry, Ph.D., late professor of Semitic Languages at Colgate University and the University of Chicago. This dictionary has had over fifteen printings. It has both Greek to English and English to Greek. In the English-to-Greek section under the word "foundation" about thirteen Greek words for foundation are listed. Katabole is not even listed. Neither does he list it under founder
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or founding, of which he lists about twelve different words.

Themelion or themelios is the first word on his list for foundation. Themelios is also the most frequent word for foundation in the Bible. It is ironic that this word is used as the primary word for foundation, either figuratively or literally, and yet not once is it used in any of these ten phrases. Furthermore, outside of these ten phrases katabole is not once used for foundation in the Old Testament (LXX) or in the New Testament. The following is a list of verses in the Old Testament (LXX) where foundation is found. In each of these cases the Greek word is themelios, and not once is katabole found. If katabole means foundation, why is it not used at least once where it is obvious? (O.T.: Joshua 6:26, Ezra 3:6, 10, 11, 12, Job 22:16, Ps. 87:1, Is. 28:16, 16, 44:28, 48:13, Ezek. 13:14. N.T.: Luke 6:48, 14:29, Acts 16:26, Ro. 15:20, I Cor. 3:10, 11, 12, Eph. 2:20, I Tim. 6:19, II Tim. 2:19, Heb. 1:10, 6:1, Rev. 21:14, 21:19). (There are a couple of other words for foundation; however, their usage is quite limited.) In Hebrews 6:1 we find both katabole and themelios in the same sentence. It is important to note that katabole is not translated foundation: rather, themelios is. Katabole is given the concept of disintegration or going backwards.

We have seen how themelios is used in the Old Testament (LXX) and the New Testament. Now let us look at katabole in the Old Testament (LXX). The LXX is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and was the book the disciples read and studied. It makes sense that if they wrote in Greek they also read in Greek. In the LXX katabole occurs in the verb form, kataballo, about thirty times. Each time it is translated with the idea of:
cast down, overthrow, felled, destroy, etc., and not once with the idea of foundation.

If you were an unlearned fisherman reading the Old Testament (LXX) and you came across this word katabole (verb form kataballo) over thirty times and not once used for the concept of foundation, but always with the idea of destruction, cut down, or disintegration, how would you use the word in the New Testament? Further, would it not only confuse matters to use a word for foundation in the New Testament that does not carry that meaning anywhere in the Old Testament? Would this not confuse the readers? Why not use themelios, which was the common word for foundation, if they really meant foundation. Why allow for confusion on such an important issue? The following is a list of the usage of katabole in its English translation (kataballo—verb form) in the Old Testament LXX and in the New Testament.

(O.T.: II Sam. 20:15, cast or thrown down; II Kings 3:19, shall fall or cut down; 3:25, felled or cut down; 6:5, felling; 19:7, fall (by the sword); II Chron. 32:21, slew or cut down; Job 16:14, breaketh; Ps. 37:14, cast down, 73:18, cast them down; Ps. 106:26, overthrow; 106:27, overthrow; 140:10, cast; Prov. 7:26, cast down; 18:8, go down; 25:28, broken down; Jer. 19:7, fall; Ezek. 6:4, cast down; 23:25, shall fall; 26:4, shall destroy; 26:4, break down; 26:9, break down; 32:12, to fall; 33:4, take him away; 39:3, fall. N.T.: II Cor. 4:9, cast down; Heb. 6:1, not laying again or going back or disintegration; Rev. 12:10, cast down.

How can anybody read through each of these verses and see the consistent usage of katabole (verb form kataballo) as cast down, break down, disintegration, etc., and then proceed to translate it
in ten passages as foundation?

Some further thoughts on these all-important words apo (pro), katabole, and kosmos. We must remind ourselves, as has been stated, that whenever we find evidence that puts a passage or several passages in question, these passages cannot be used to interpret Scripture; rather, reoccurring evidence from other passages must be used to shed light on the passages that are in question. If we do this with these passages, we practically destroy the argument for the absolute foreknowledge of God as commonly taught.

Further studies on these words apo (pro), katabole, and kosmos ("from the foundation of the world") show that the word "apo" can be translated "from" or "because." Upon this there is no disagreement among scholars. "Kosmos" is generally known as the sum of creation with man at the center, and upon this there is no disagreement among scholars. But the problem arises when we discuss the interpretation of the meaning of "katabole." The overwhelming evidence supports the idea of destruction, downfall or disintegration as far as the Bible is concerned. Furthermore, when translators are deciding the usage of any given word, they must consider necessity, context and logic. After all, this is how any unknown language is broken down. Translators must look for reoccurring evidence and patterns and associations of words, etc. To translate katabole as disintegration fits, necessity, context, and logic. It fits into the harmony of its root word. It occurs over thirty times in the Old Testament (LXX) and not once is it translated foundation; always with the idea of disintegration. How then can it be translated foundation in the New Testament? A very weak argument is that the Old Testament
(LXX) uses a verb form, while the New Testament uses a noun form. This is weakened by the fact that themelios is used as both in the noun and verb forms (foundation and founded). It is further weakened by the fact that the usage of katabole for foundation is extremely limited. Further, every author in the New Testament that used katabole also used the word themelios and knew their meanings. They knew the similarity between nouns and verbs. Why not pick an obvious word for foundation? Why not at least use themelios once in these ten phrases? Is there not a similarity between jumper and jumped? Still some Greek teachers teach as if the noun does not generally follow the verb, and vice-versa. As has been said, there are usually exceptions to most rules. The exception is not the rule, however. One need only go through every verb and noun form in the New Testament and he will be surprised to notice that there is great harmony between verbs and nouns. Several examples related to katabole and kataballo will be cited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Verb</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anabole—that which is thrown up (mound of dirt), a putting off, delay.</td>
<td>anaballo—(to toss up—as a mound of dirt) put off, delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apobole—a throwing away, a casting away, loss</td>
<td>apoballo—throw away, to lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diabolos—devil, slander, false accusation</td>
<td>diaballo—throw over, slander, accuse falsely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekbole—ejection, casting out, throwing overboard</td>
<td>ekballo—to eject, cast out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parabole—that which is thrown alongside, comparison, parabole</td>
<td>paraballo—to throw alongside, compare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Greek the rule is that there is harmony between the verb and the noun, though there are also exceptions.

In addition, if the disciples were trying to communicate a time concept "before or from the foundation of the world," they not only used the wrong word for foundation (why not use themelios which is obvious?), but they also used the wrong word for world. Why use kosmos to denote world or earth when it basically refers to man and not the earth or world? In John 3:16: "For God so loved the kosmos (people) not the gee (earth or world)." There will be a new heaven and a new gee (earth or world) not a new people. Kosmos occurs about 175 times in the New Testament, and it is obvious from the context that about 150 times it should be translated inhabitants or people. The remaining 25 times could go either way, but based on logic and reoccurring evidence, it is more likely that it should always be translated inhabitants (the sum of creation with man at the center). Gee, on the other hand, occurs about 200 times in the New Testament, and about 175 of these times it is obvious from the context that it should be rendered as earth and not refer to the people. About 25 times it could go either way in context, but again we are reminded by the law of reoccurring evidence. More than likely it should always be rendered earth. Why was not gee used at least once (or all the time) instead of kosmos? If gee were used in combination with themelios, the meaning would be obvious, as in Hebrews 1:10. Here, we have both themelios and gee used. "And, thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation (themelios) of the earth (gee)..."

Kosmos is used in the Old Testament (LXX) about 25 times, and 8 different Hebrew words are
used as synonyms or equivalents, which are in turn used about 793 times, all basically in harmony. Gee occurs about 2,760 times in the Old Testament (LXX) with 23 Hebrew equivalents which occur about 11,734 times in the Old Testament.

Katabole occurs about 30 times in the Old Testament (LXX) with 9 Hebrew equivalents which occur about 1500 times, always carrying the meaning of disintegration, fall down, cut down, destroy, etc. Themelios occurs about 40 times and has 8 equivalents which occur about 931 times with harmony. Apo is used along with its equivalents over 5,000 times and pro about 150 times. In the light of all of this evidence, how is it possible that we could mess up on such important passages?

We look for further evidence. Katabole is made up of two words. First let us look at kata. Kata is used as a prefix for over 130 different words in the New Testament. These words occur over 800 times. Kata as a prefix generally carries the idea of down, or a situation of intensity. Ballo occurs about 130 times in the New Testament. It carries the meaning of cast down or cast into 105 times; strike down—1; thrust—8; send or bring judgment—3; to put (with relationship to destruction, intensity or burden)—13. Bole occurs by itself in Luke 22:21 and is translated cast.

The fact that there was an error made in the translation of the word "katabole" is strongly evidenced by the writings of one of the most prominent early Church Fathers—Origen, who was born in Alexandria in 185 A.D. and died in 254 A.D. The noted historian, Dr. K. R. Hegenbach in his work History of Doctrines, states of Origen that, "He is undoubtedly the most eminent writer of the whole period, and the best representative of the spiritualizing tendency." Dr. Hegenbach continues, "The doctrine of omniscience was to some extent mixed up
with anthropomorphitic ideas, and even Origen puts limits to this attribute of God, as well as to his omnipotence."

So what does Origen, who lived shortly after the books and letters of the New Testament were written, say about the phrase "before the foundation"? Origen writes, "This point, indeed, is not to be idly passed by, that the holy Scriptures have called the creation of the world by a new and peculiar name, terming it 'katabole,' which has been very improperly translated into Latin by 'constitutio'; for in Greek 'katabole' signifies rather 'dejicere,' i.e., to cast downwards,—a word which has been, as we have already remarked, improperly translated into Latin by the phrase 'constitutio mundi.'...From this it follows, that by the use of the word 'katabole,' a descent from a higher to a lower condition, shared by all in common, would seem to be pointed out."³

So much of our theology, as has been said, has been determined by our lack of understanding of this phrase. When you add up the sum total of facts and evidence, you have over 20,000 words, phrases and verses all in harmony that stand directly opposed to our present translation of these ten verses. In addition to this we have over 11,000 times in which there is an indication that God has changed His mind. Why do we still persist in translating katabole as foundation? Perhaps one clue is our translators. I was talking to a translator in Israel. I asked him what he would do if while in the process of translating a verse, he discovered the Greek or Hebrew contradicted his theology? He stated that he would go with his theology! I said, "What if you're wrong?" Here lies a serious problem. Do we accept the Bible as it was written and our authority or do we impose our ideas upon the Scripture and make God into the image we want?

Again we look at the Geneva Bible, and guess
what? It almost sounds like a broken record. The King James boys were at it again, copying instead of translating. They were so lazy at this point that they plagiarized almost word for word, as you will soon see. I will list each of the passages that we are concerned with—first with the King James, then with the Geneva version, and finally how the Biblical evidence obligates us to translate “apo (or pro) katabole, and kosmos.”

Matthew 13:35
KJV: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” (Note—kosmos or world does not occur in the Greek.)

Geneva Bible: “That if might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, & wil vtter the things which have been kept secret from the fundacion of the worlde.”

Should be translated: “I will utter things which have been kept secret because of (apo) the disintegration* (katabole).”

Matthew 25:34
KJV: “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

GB: “Then shal the King say to them on his right hand, Come ye bleffed of my Father: inherite ye y kingdom prepared for you fro the fundations of the worlde.”

*Disintegration is a closer translation to the Greek. Moral decay, though not as accurate, could be used for the translation.
SBT: "... prepared for you because of (apo) the disintegration (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos*)."

Luke 11:50
KJV: "That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation."
GB: "That the blood of all the Prophetes, shed from the fundacion of the worlde, may be required of this generacion."
SBT: "... which was shed because of (apo) the disintegration (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos)..."

John 17:24
KJV: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."
GB: "Father, I wil that they which thou haft giuen me, be with me euen where I am, that they may beholde my glorie, which thou haft giuen me: for thou louedft me before the fundacion of the worlde."
SBT: "... for thou lovedst me in front of (in plain view, or can be prior or before due to preposition pro) the disintegration (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos)."
(Acts 5:23 "... standing without before (pro) the doors.")
Acts 12:24 "... and told how Peter stood before (pro) the gate."

*Kosmos is translated inhabitant rather than world, since inhabitant describes both the habitat and the dweller.
Ephesians 1:4
KJV: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”
GB: “As he hathe chofen vs in him, before y fundacion of the worlde, y we shulde be holie, & without blame before hi in loue:”
SBT: “… He hath chosen us in Him in plain view (pro) of the disintegration (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos)…”

Hebrews 4:3
KJV: “For we which have believed do enter, as he said, I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest. Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”
GB: “For we which haue beleued, do enter into refte, as he faid (to the others—added in by GV) As I haue fworne in my wrath, If they fhal enter into my refte: althogh the workes were finisshed from the fundation of the worlde.”
SBT: “… Although the works were finished because of (apo) the disintegration (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos).”

Hebrews 9:26
KJV: “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”
GB: “(For then muft he haue often fuffred since the fondacion of the worlde) but now in the end of the worlde hathe he appeared once to put away finne, by the sacrifice of himzelf.”
SBT: “… For then must he often have suffered since or because of (apo) the disintegration (rebellion) (katabole) of the inhabitants (kosmos)…”
Hebrews 11:11
KJV: "Through faith Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."
GB: "Through faith Sarra also received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful which had promised."
SBT: "There are some textual tamperings with this verse. Abraham probably is the subject rather than Sarah.
"Through Abraham (or Sarah) received strength for seed in his (or her) disintegration (or physical condition of age—katabole) . . ." (age is implied in the text by helikia—kairos, age or time is not denoted in any of the other passages by a Greek word).

I Peter 1:20
KJV: "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."
GB: "Which was ordained before the fundacion of the worlde, but was declared in the laft times for your fakes."
SBT: "Who having been previously known (proginosko) in plain view of the disintegration (katabole-chaotic) of the inhabitants (kosmos), He was manifested in these last times for you. (Previously known may refer to the public crucifixion and resurrection, see verse 19, and manifested or revealed may refer to personal salvation, much more work needs to be invested to find the treasure that this verse contains.)"

Revelation 13:8
KJV: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall wor-
ship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’”

GB: “Therefore all that dwell upon the earth, shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Boke of life of the Lambe, which was slaine from the beginning of the worlde.’”

SBT: “. . . whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain because of the disintegration (katabole—breakdown, downfall, moral decay) of the inhabitants (kosmos).”

Revelation 17:8
KJV: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

GB: “The beaft that thou haft fene, was, and is not, and fhal ascende out of the bottomles pit, and fhal go into perdicion, and they that dwell on the earth, fhal wondre (whose names are not written in the Boke of life from the fundacion of the worlde) when they beholde the beaft that was, and is not, and yet is.”

SBT: “. . . whose names are not written in the Book of Life because of (apo) the disintegration (katabole—downfall) of the inhabitants (kosmos). . . .”

Notes for Chapter 16
2. Ibid., p. 110.
CHAPTER 17

Hope in a New Vineyard

Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.
—Isaiah 41:21

It was a damp, gloomy Los Angeles day. The yellow stucco on the side of the church was wet from an early morning rain. The senior pastor and I had just begun our day’s schedule. We were soon notified by one of the church secretaries that an older man needed some money. Knowing that city churches are often conned by fake stories, we listened to the man’s story cautiously. He told us that he was saving money for a bus ticket to Pittsburgh and explained he did not want a handout, but that he wanted us to give him a job for the day. He insisted that he was not a beggar and would work for whatever he received. Since we had no authority to hire the man with church funds, yet sensing the sincerity of the man, we decided to help the man out of our own pockets.

To our surprise, the haggard man turned out to be a competent and hard worker. At the day’s end we decided to give the man dinner. During the meal, the greying gentleman began to unravel his story. Fifteen years earlier he was a respected Pittsburgh businessman. He had grown up in a well-known church denomination. But then one single event shattered his life and his hope.
He was driving with his family on a Pennsylvania highway when a drunk suddenly swerved over the center line crashing head-on into his car. Both the man's wife and five-year-old daughter were killed. Not hurt seriously, our friend was treated and soon released from a local hospital. The drunken driver, although injured badly, also survived the accident.

Questions kept haunting the man. If God is a God of love, why did He allow his wife and child to be killed at the hands of an alcoholic? Why did God allow this to happen to his family? Why did his little black-haired girl of five die so senselessly? If God knew this was going to happen, why didn't He prevent it? Well-meaning friends tried to console him by suggesting that this was God's will for his wife and daughter. But our friend could not understand how this Christian God could remain a God of love and yet will, desire, and plan the death of his little child and wife.

Bitterness had drained our friend. Frustration and anger so consumed him that he soon lost his business and then his house. With his money almost gone and with little to buy food or clothing, he was driven into the life of a vagabond. He wandered the country aimlessly, taking a job here or there for a few days or a few months, but never with any permanence. The purpose and stability of his life were gone. Resentment and hate toward God and the drunken driver had eaten away at his flesh, and he had become a man aged well past his years.

To the man's astonishment, we asked him where he received the idea that God knew the accident would happen before it happened, and that the accident was God's will or plan? Where did he obtain the idea that it is God who determines or fixes the day which we will die? He assumed it would be obvious knowledge to us and replied that these ideas
came of course from his church and what he had been taught by family and friends. He found it difficult to believe that we, as Christian ministers, did not hold the same concepts of God that he had been so arduously taught by pastors and those close to him.

For the next several hours we shared with the haggard man how God did not know the accident would happen before it happened. When God saw the circumstances developing which precipitated the accident, God, because He is all-powerful, could have intervened and prevented the accident from occurring. But, if God stepped in when this accident was about to happen, to be fair, He would have to intervene every time something wrong was about to happen to anybody. Under such a system we could not choose wrong or will to do evil and we would all be perfect—perfect robots without freedom. It could only be because we desired His protection or freely prayed for God's care that God could justifiably intervene in situations like the above case. The Pennsylvania accident was thus the tragic result of a drunk man's actions—nothing more and nothing less. God certainly had not planned or even fore-known it. He had even been taught that nothing happens by chance! However, his teachers forgot to tell him about Luke 10:31 where Jesus said, "And by chance..."

The man's lusterless eyes began to light up. He began to perceive a new image of God. God had not taken his wife and daughter. It was not His will that they died the way they did. It was not God's fault. The man began to see a more loving God, always wanting the best for us, yet always willing to comfort us and always willing and able to work out our situations for the good (see Romans 8:28), even though we may find ourselves in a tangled mess—
often of our own creation. The man's bitterness turned to joy as he asked God to heal him and forgive him, both of the hatred he had felt against God and the drunk man who had stripped him of his family. Layers of hostility towards life built up over many years began to peel off, and our new friend in Christ left a new man filled with joy, peace, and happiness.

Jesus said in the parable of the sower that we may plant seeds in all different types of ground conditions but that understanding is the key to an abundant relationship with God. It is only when we remove rocks and thistles, and water the ground that we can expect growth.

We must remove stumbling blocks and weeds which would choke out truth. It is understanding that increases our faith—not lack of understanding. Yet as evangelical Christians, we assume that the great theologians and seminary professors have learned it all—and they by virtue of their positions must be correct, even if the position they teach seems unreasonable to the common man. We have let others do our thinking instead of understanding for ourselves. The fact of the matter is we have only scratched the surface of knowledge contained in the Bible. Furthermore, subjective methodology of study of the Bible has at times been horrendous even by great thinkers. There is still much to discover, to correlate, and apply.

In this book I have tried to share what I believe to be the truth taught by the Scriptures. You may accept or reject these thoughts, but I encourage you to search these concepts thoroughly and not throw them out because of former assumptions. Much more research needs to be done in this area of theology, and thus I encourage you to "bring forth your cause" and wrestle with Biblical truths. It is hoped that by this work, you will come into a new and deeper rela-
tionship with God and His son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Even with elementary Bible training and basic logic, one soon realizes it is difficult to justify a God who lives in an "eternal now" and does not change in thought or action. The overwhelming evidence teaches that God lives in time and can and will change His mind. The Bible teaches that prayer really does change things. The Bible teaches that evangelism can bring men to repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ. We can encourage our friends and neighbors to enter this new vineyard. We can bring others to new belief, and the Scriptures clearly tell us that we should. If this were not true, then why isn't God honest? Why doesn't He point out to us only those who are called, selected, and elected? Why does He waste our time encouraging us to bring His message to all men (that is, if He already knows most are doomed)? Why does He tell us to go into "all the world" to preach His message? (John 3:16, Ps. 9:10, I Tim. 2:4, Matt. 28:18-20, II Tim. 2:7, and II Peter 3:9).

God knows all that is knowable and is capable of doing all that is possible. God is free! He can change his mind! The Scriptures verify this by numerous verses which indicate God changes His mind or takes a new course of action because of some action by man. It is very difficult to pass off such a magnitude of evidence as "anthropomorphic."

Isn't it far more reasonable to believe that God is an all-loving God who loves, thinks, creates, and who is real and genuine? God is not restricted in power, speed, or distance, and He lives in time and space, contrary to what some philosophers would have you to believe. He loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son on the cross that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10b).
He loves us so much that He will adjust, respond, and act whenever there is sufficient intelligent reason to do so. He is a God who is unchangeable in moral perfection in all that He does, says and thinks. He will always be fair, just, and honest to us. Yet He is never anxious. He never enjoys sending judgment and destruction upon those He loves. Isn't a God who has these characteristics far more worthy of worship than a God who would create the human race and then create hell knowing with infallible certainty that the vast majority of those people would end up in eternal torment—that God elected and chose to save only a few and that the rest are not saved because He has not elected them? How could a God like this ever be justified in any court of law? Are God's standards of justice less than man's standards of justice? Was it not God who originally gave us our standard of justice?

The great, yet unrecognized, theologian Dr. D. L. McCabe sums up these truths well: "Deny the reality of time: chain me in a durationless eternal now: rob God of all change; congeal him into the iceberg of indifference which prescience (certain foreknowledge) necessitates; prohibit him from changing in his feelings toward me, when from obduracy (stubbornness) I turn and break in penitence at his feet: forbid him sympathizing with me in the perplexities of my way, and in the tragedies of my probation; and deny to him the interest, sympathy, and tenderness which alone can be born from a future unfixed and uncertain both for him and for me; and you fill my Bible with obscurity, my theology with paralyzing doubts, and you wrap in distressing gloom the glorious cross of Jesus Christ."
Notes for Chapter 17

1. Faith means a trust, confidence, or loyalty to God. Faith is a matter of choice in what we understand, not in what we don't understand. If it means acceptance without understanding or unquestioning belief as many churches teach, then we could ridiculously reason that we should try to understand less so that we can have a greater faith, i.e., the less we understand the greater would be the potential for our faith!

APPENDIX A

An Approach to the Scriptures

The methodology of examining verses of Scripture in the fashion contained in this book may startle some individuals. They may not wish to hold the Scriptures to such vigorous scientific scrutiny, protesting that human logic cannot understand the mysteries of God. Some feel that even though some things are contradictory in the Bible by man's logic, they are not contradictory by God's logic. However, why would God, if He really wants to communicate to man, speak in terms that man can't easily understand? The Bible, when accurately translated and understood, should be able to stand any test of consistency and should not contradict itself. The book was written for men and should hold up under reasonable tests men may put to it. Just as a lawyer tears apart and puts together every detail of an important law case, so should we be able to tear apart, search, and overturn each stone in the Scriptures and find nothing amiss or unreasonable. Working together, verses of the Bible should perform in harmony like a well-adjusted gold pocket watch or a finely tuned car.

The following thoughts may give you a better understanding of this attempt to understand the Scriptures rationally instead of resigning to accepting mystical mysteries.

There are only two basic methods in any form of research, subjective and objective. In the sub-
jective approach, self becomes the determining factor in determining truth, while in the objective, something outside of self becomes the determining factor. The first approach builds research around one's own interpretations and presuppositions. While the second builds a case around data outside of self to which, when the evidence is complete, a student submits himself. In objective research the student submits to the facts. In the subjective approach, the data submits to the student. Subjective data refers to the abstract world of thoughts, concepts and ideas. Objective data refers to the concrete world. By that we mean that which can be known by the five senses: hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, and tasting.

All concretes (objective data) must be in harmony or they will do damage to one another. Every tangible object that man makes such as an automobile or airplane must submit to the laws of the universe, gravity, energy, etc. Abstracts can and do exist out of harmony with each other, but if they enter into the concrete or objective realm, they cannot be out of synchronization, or they will do damage. For example, if a man takes an automobile that was designed for gas and attempts to run it on water, he will do damage to the car. The result of putting two contradictory concretes together, which are not in harmony in design will always produce chaos.

All concretes were once abstract ideas. For example, the automobile was once an abstract in someone's mind. When the idea was put into the concrete world, it was necessary to be in harmony with all other concretes. It had to be in harmony with scientific principles such as the laws of gravity, friction, etc. No man has even shown that he is able to put an abstract idea into the concrete world that
isn't in harmony with the concrete world and not cause damage.

Thus I conclude that all abstracts must be in harmony with all concretes if there is to be order and not chaos. This order we define as logic and logic is the only objective approach man has to determine what abstracts can be held and put into the concrete world and not cause harm. Logic is synonymous with order; nonlogic, with chaos.

The approach to an adequate philosophy of life that will not end in chaos must be logical. By this process we are able to prove that there is a God with just three words: "Design necessitates designer." No man has yet shown any design without a designer. Cars, houses, roads, etc., are all products of a designer. Likewise the intricacies of our bodies suggest harmony and design which are not possible without a designer.

After we have discovered our Creator, the relevant question is: Has God, the Designer, attempted to communicate with the design, or creation? In order to find an answer we must look into the concrete world for an intelligent orderly communication that can be documented. We have found such a communication in a book called the Bible. The communication in the form of the Bible would of necessity be logical and objective if it is to be in harmony with the rest of creation and all logical discoveries of the Bible must be based on facts. (A fact is an obvious conclusion from reoccurring evidence, and conclusions from facts must be in harmony.) Major reoccurring evidences that document the Scriptures are: several thousand Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, thousands of archeological discoveries verifying the events of the Bible, other written historical records, and millions of conversions and changes in the lives of believers.
The next intelligent thing for a man to do is to take a serious look at this book, the Bible, and see what God is trying to say. This demands an objective approach. The design (man) must look for reoccurring evidence, and all reoccurring evidence that is found in the Scriptures will help us to develop obvious conclusions.

The first step in any objective approach is observation. One must observe all the verses in the Bible without preconceived ideas just as a detective must observe all the details in a crime. The second step in research is investigation which simply means observing that which you do not understand and gathering more evidence until you do understand. The third step is correlating the obvious conclusions. The fourth and final step is application in your personal life or applying these abstracts in the concrete world.

In this process, I am not negating the Holy Spirit in His instruction of truth to man from the Bible. I confirm that He is the teacher of all truth. But science shows our entire universe, including man, is built on principles of logic and order. Can we then say that the Holy Spirit would teach contrary to God's orderly universe? Jesus claimed to be one with the Father and that the Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance all that He had taught to the disciples. Are we then to say that the Spirit teaching is not logical?

The designer is always greater and more intelligent than the design, but this does not mean that He is different. There is certainly a quality variance between a five dollar pocket radio and a five hundred dollar stereo, but just because the two radios are priced differently does not necessarily mean that they are receiving different radio waves. We are created in God's image not in His "dis-image."
APPENDIX B

Biblical Evidence

SECTION I
Over 11,000 verses that reveal God changes His mind.

The following 11,000 verses include changes in the mind of God, adjustment in the actions of God because of some action by man, and emotions expressed by God. I have reasoned that God’s actions must be viewed as a change if the particular action of God is in response to men. The action was, then, something God probably would not have done if man had not acted in a specific way. Each consecutive action by God following such a change would have to be viewed as confirming the original change.

The passages listed may not appear to you to indicate change or new decision upon your first reading of them. Be sure, however, to check preceding verses. A command of God which follows a new action or new direction by God would have to be viewed as a change. In other words, any action which follow a change of mind would have to be a new action even though that new action in itself does not appear to be a change of mind.

Statements made by God in succession, especially if contradictory in nature, attest to the idea that not only does God change His mind but that He lives
in time. In fact it could be argued that any statement made by God, if made at a specific point in time, would indicate God indeed lives in time. To live in an “eternal now” situation God would have to be doing contrary actions at the same time, and this is ludicrous. Furthermore, different emotions would be impossible if God were not in time. God could not experience anger and no anger toward the same person at the same time. Thus each emotion fairly substantiates that God does live in a form of succession.

Each change or adjustment evidences that God does not know what the future free choices of man will be; otherwise these would not be genuine adjustments, changes, or responses. God would only be play-acting if everything was certain to Him. Our lives under such an arrangement would be about as exciting to God as watching a soap opera for the twentieth-thousand time. Nothing in the script could change.

Following, then, is the massive evidence supporting these theories. An asterisk * indicates that a particular verse strongly supports the above concepts.

OMNISCIENCE—Change of Mind—New Decisions


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RUTH 1:6, 9, 21; 4:11

I SAMUEL 1:5, 17, 19; 2:26, 30, 31-36; 3:4, 6, 8, 10, 11-14; *5:3, 4, 6, 9; 6:19*; 7:3*, 9, 10, 13; 8:7*, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13-18, 22; 9:15-17; 10:1, 6*, 7-9, 18, 19, 22, 26; 11:6, 7, 12:5, 7, 9, 11, 13-18, 22; 13:13, 14; 14:10, 12, 23, 37; 15:2, 3, 10*, 11, 17, 18, 22**, 23*, 26, 28, 29, 35; 16:1-3, 7, 10, 12-15, 18, 23; 17:37, 46, 47; 18:10, 12, 14, 28; 19:9, 21, 23, 24, 23:2, 4, 11, 12, 14; 24:4, 10; 25:22, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 38, 39; 26:12, 23; 28:6, 17, 18, 19; 30:8, 23

II SAMUEL 2:1; 3:18; 5:2, 10, 19, 23; 24; 6:7, 11; 7:1, 4-16, 23, 27; 8:6, 14; 11:27; 12:1*, 7, 8, 10, 11-15, 24; 14:14, 17; 17:14; 18:31; 24:1, 12*, 13, 15, 16*, 25

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I CHRONICLES 2:3; 4:10; 5:20, 22, 25, 26; 9:20; 10:13, 14; 11:2, 3, 9, 10, 14; 12:17, 18, 23; 13:2, 6, 10, 14; 14:8, 10, 14, 15, 17; 15:2, 13; 16:40; 17:2-14, 21, 25, 27; 18:6, 21:8; 21:9, 10-12, 14, 15, 18, 27*; 22:8-12, 18; 23:25, 27:23, 24, 28:3, 5, 6-10, 19, 20; 29:1, 17

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JONAH 1:1-4; 2:2, 3, 9, 10; 3:1, 2, 4, 10; 4:4, 6-11
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These passages represent about 8,339 new decisions or changes of mind by God in His relationship to man. Either these represent new decisions by God or He always knew what man would do in each given circumstance. Man’s actions would have to be certain events in God’s mind. If they are certain events then man would not have freedom since God’s knowledge of each event would exist prior to man’s choice and existence. Another, alternative would be that man would have to be as eternal as God. If God always knew man’s choices and man originated the choices, then man would of necessity have had to exist prior to this life and coexisted with God in order for God to foreknow all events of this life. This conclusion is absurd since it would make all of life one long play. Some have concluded that God is timeless or lives outside of time. This argument is weak since it is lacking in solid Biblical evidence and logic. Successive moments are necessary for a thought process. Successive moments are what make up time. Many believe this is something you cannot understand but if so, how can one say “I understand because I don’t understand”?

The following is a list of New Testament passages, approximately 3,307. Many of these are from the lips of Jesus. Either He was play-acting or was originating new decisions in response to individuals. To say that He was limited by humanity can be objected to by the fact that all that Jesus said and did (John chapters 14-17) was of the Father.

New Testament Passages

MATTHEW 1:18-23; 2:5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22, 23; 3:3, 10, 11-17; 4:4, 7, 10, 11, 14-17, 19, 23, 24; 5:3-48; 6:1-34; 7:1-37; 8:3, 4, 7, 10-13, 15-18, 20, 22, 26, 32; 9:2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10,
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JOHN 1:6-17, 23, 27, 29, 30, 32-35, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50, 51; 2:4, 7, 8, 10, 11-17, 19, 21-25; 3:3, 5-8, 10-22, 27,
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ROMANS 1:1-24, 26, 28; 2:12; 4:20, 24; 5:6, 8, 10, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21; 6:4-12, 14; 8:3, 26, 27, 28-30, 32, 36, 37; 9:13, 15, 17, 28; 10:4, 9, 13, 21; 11:4, 5, 8, 11, 20, 21, 22, 13:4; 14:9; 15:3, 8, 12, 15, 16

I CORINTHIANS 1:1, 2, 7, 17-21, 24, 25, 27, 27, 30, 31; 3:7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19; 4:5; 6:13, 14, 19, 20; 7:23, 24; 11:24, 25; 12:4-10, 18, 27, 28; 15:3-8, 10, 25, 26, 27, 28

II CORINTHIANS 1:9; 3:3, 13, 14, 16, 18; 5:1, 4, 5, 14, 15; 6:16; 8:9; 9:8; 13:4

GALATIANS 1:4; 2:2, 16, 17, 20; 3:6, 8, 13, 22, 24, 25-29; 4:4-7, 9*; 6:7-9, 14

EPHESIANS 1:20; 2:5-14, 16, 18, 20, 22; 4:10, 11-14, 24; 5:6

PHILIPPIANS 1:11, 13, 21; 2:9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16; 3:15, 20; 4:7, 13, 19

COLOSSIANS 1:27

I THESSALONIANS 2:12; 3:13; 4:8, 14, 16, 17; 5:2
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II THESSALONIANS 1:7, 8, 9, 10; 2:1, 8, 9, 11
I TIMOTHY 1:12, 15; 2:3-6; 3:16; 4:1
II TIMOTHY 4:1, 17, 18
TITUS 1:3; 4:4, 5-7

HEBREWS 1:1-6, 13; 2:3, 4, 9, 14, 17, 18; 4:2, 14; 5:5, 6-10, 20; 7:11-17, 19, 21, 22, 24-28; 8:1, 2, 6-13; 9:12, 14, 23, 25, 26, 28; 10:5-7, 9, 10, 12-17; 11:5, 19, 35, 40; 12:2, 6, 7, 24; 13:20

JAMES 1:5; 4:8, 10

I PETER 1:3, 19; 2:4-6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24, 25; 3:18, 21, 22; 4:17, 18; 5:5, 6

II PETER 1:14, 17, 18, 21; 2:4-9, 20, 21, 22; 3:9, 10

I JOHN 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2, 3; 3:2, 5, 6, 8

JUDE 5, 6, 7

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### SECTION II

Prophecies made to Israel not fulfilled (primarily pertaining to Israel's relationship to other nations such as the Hittites, Jebusites, Geshurites, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAMPLES OF PROPHECY MADE TO ISRAEL</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF PROPHECY NOT FULFILLED</th>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis 15:18-21: God made a covenant with Abraham to give him the land of the Kenites, Hittites, Perizzites, etc.</td>
<td>Numbers 25:1, 2, 3: The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel when they committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, sacrificed, and worshipped to their gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 26:3, 5: I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genesis 34:2, 8, 9, 10, 14, 38:2, 46:10: They were not to mix with these people lest they fall into sin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 3:8, 17, 18: God comes to Moses, and plans to deliver His people. (Ex. 6:9, 13:5, 11, 15:14-18, 17:14, 16).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exodus 23:26-33: I will drive them out. (Ex. 33:2, 3, 34:10, 11, 12, 24).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Numbers 33:52, 53: You shall drive them out and destroy them and their evil ways.

Numbers 33:55, 56: Conditions set for Israel.

Deuteronomy 2:25: I will begin to put fear in your enemies.


Deuteronomy 20:17, 18: You shall utterly destroy them.

Deuteronomy 31:3, 4, 5: God will destroy them from before you. He shall thrust them out (Deut. 33:27).

Joshua 1:5: None shall be able to stand against Joshua.

Joshua 3:10: God will with out fail drive out these nations.

Joshua 9:14, 15: They went against God and made a league with them.

Joshua 13:13: Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites.

Joshua 15:63: Judah could not drive out the Jebusites.

Joshua 16:10: They could not drive out the Canaanites. Joshua 17:13, 16.
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Joshua 23:5-10: He shall expel them... but there are conditions. Joshua 23:11-16.

Judges 2:1-4: Why have you disobeyed me? I will not drive them out. Judges 2:20, 21, 22.

Judges 3:1, 3, 4, 5: I will leave them to prove you to see whether or not you will keep the commandments.

Judges 6:1-4, 6, 10: The Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

Judges 10:6: They served false gods and forsook the Lord.

I Kings 9:20, 21: And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, etc.

II Kings 16:3: Heathen worship.

II Kings 17:18: Only Judah was left.


II Kings 23:27: I will remove Judah also.

II Kings 24:2, 3, 4: The move to destroy Judah.

I Chronicles 28:2-10: To build a house for God forever.
II Chronicles 7:14-22: For (Later destroyed) now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever. Conditions are also stated.
SECTION III
Explicit verses which show God did not know man's future free choices.

Genesis 6:6, 7: “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. (7) And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

Genesis 18:17: “And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?”

Genesis 18:20, 21: “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; (21) I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.”

Genesis 19:29: “And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.”

Genesis 22:11, 12: “And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. (12) And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.”

Exodus 2:23, 24, 25: “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. (24) And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with
Isaac, and with Jacob. (25) And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."

Exodus 3:19: "And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand."

Exodus 4:8, 9: "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. (9) And it shall come to pass, IF they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."

Exodus 13:17, 18: "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: (18) But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt."

Exodus 16:4: "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

Exodus 20:20: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not."

Numbers 14:11: "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the
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signs which I have shewed among them?"

Numbers 14:27: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me."

Numbers 25:11, 12, 13: "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealously. (12) Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: (13) And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Numbers 33:55, 56: "But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. (56) Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them."

Deuteronomy 5:33: "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

Deuteronomy 6:2: "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged."

Deuteronomy 6:24, 25: "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might
preserve us alive as it is at this day. (25) And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

Deuteronomy 8:2: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."

Deuteronomy 13:3: "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Joshua 10:13, 14: "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. (14) And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."

Joshua 24:20: "If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good."

Judges 2:2: "And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?"

Judges 2:12: "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger."
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Judges 2:18: "And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them."

Judges 2:20-23: "And the anger of the Lord was not against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; (21) I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: (22) That through them I may prove Isarel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. (23) Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua."

Judges 3:4: "And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses."

Judges 10:13-16: "Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. (14) Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. (15) And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. (16) And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

Judges 13:5, 7, 9, 24, 25: "For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be
a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. (7) But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. (9) And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. (24) And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. (25) And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol."

Judges 16:17, 19, 20, 21, 28, 30: "That he told her all his heart...if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me.... (19) And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head.... (20) ... And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. (21) The Philistines took him, and put out his eyes.... (28) And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. (30) And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life."

I Samuel 2:27-30: "And there came a man of God unto Eli.... (28) And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest ...? (29) Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice
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... and at mine offering... and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat. (30) Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

I Samuel 3:11, 12, 13: "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. (12) In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin I will also make an end. (13) For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

I Samuel 4:11: "And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

Jonah 4:2: "... I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil."

Zephaniah 3:7: "I said, Surely thou will fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings."

Zechariah 6:15: "... And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God."

I Samuel 15:11: "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night."
I Samuel 16:1: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him for reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."

II Samuel 24:16: "And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite."

I Kings 2:4: "That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel."

II Kings 20:1, 2, 3, 5, 6: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. (2) Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, (3) I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. (5) Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. (6) And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."
II Kings 21:12-15: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. (13) And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahag: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. (14) And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; (15) Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day."

I Chronicles 21:15: "And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite."

II Chronicles 12:6, 7: "Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous. (7) And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak."

II Chronicles 15:2: "And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

II Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the Lord
run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him . . .

II Chronicles 21:7: "Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever."

II Chronicles 25:15: "Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?"

II Chronicles 30:18-20: "For the multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one (19) That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. (20) And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people."

II Chronicles 32:31: "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

Psalm 78:38-41: "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. (39) For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. (40) How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! (41) Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel."
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Psalm 90:4: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”

Psalm 106:23: “Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.”

Psalm 106:45: “And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.”

Isaiah 1:4: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.”

Isaiah 5:4: “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?”

Jeremiah 2:21, 28, 30: “Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? (28) But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. (30) In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.”

Jeremiah 7:31: “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.”

Jeremiah 8:19: “Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her king in her? Why have
they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?"

Jeremiah 18:8, 10: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. (10) If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."

Jeremiah 19:5: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their son with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."

Jeremiah 26:3, 13, 19: "If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. (13) Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. (19) Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls."

Jeremiah 32:35: "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

Jeremiah 42:10: "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you."

Ezekiel 2:5, 7: "And they, whether they will
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hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. (7) And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, of whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.”

Ezekiel 3:11: “And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.”

Ezekiel 12:3: “Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.”

Ezekiel 20:35, 36: “And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. (36) Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.”

Ezekiel 34:11: “For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.”

Hosea 6:4: “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.”

Hosea 8:4: “They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.”

Joel 2:12-14: “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with
mourning: (13) And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. (14) Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?"

Jonah 3:9, 10: "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? (10) And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

Luke 10:31: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."

Luke 17:3: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

Luke 17:6: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." (IF occurs numerous times in the Bible. In the New Testament it is often spoken by Jesus indicating the future is not fixed or certain)

Luke 20:13: "... it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him."

Galatians 4:9: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: IF any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me."
SECTION IV
Scriptures which God stated something would happen and then a change of mind by God occurred.

Exodus 32:9, 10: “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: (10) Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

Exodus 32:11-14: “And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? (12) Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. (13) Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. (14) And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

Numbers 14:11, 12: “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? (12) I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and a mightier than they.”

Numbers 14:13-20: “and Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) (14) And they will tell it to the
inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. (15) Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying (16) Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. (17) And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, (18) The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. (19) Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. (20) And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.”

Numbers 16:21: “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”

Numbers 16:22, 26, 35: “And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? (26) And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. (Spoken by Moses as instructed by God.) (35) And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.”
Appendix B: Biblical Evidence

Numbers 16:44, 45: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, (45) Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces."

Numbers 16:46-50: "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. (47) And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. (48) And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. (49) Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. (50) And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed."
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