

# DURAND, SILAS & OLIPHANT, J.H. - LETTERS

by Silas Oliphant Jh Durand

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*A collection of letters exchanged between Silas Durand and J.H. Oliphant, two ministers in the Primitive Baptist tradition, discussing theological questions, pastoral concerns, and the Christian life.*

3 Chapters

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## 01 Letters on Time Salvation

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Letters on Time Salvation & Predestination By Silas Durand & J.H. Oliphant

LETTERS

WRITTEN BY ELDER S. H. DURRAND, OF SOUTHAMTON, PA., AND ELDER J. H. OLIPHANT, OF CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

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PREFACE. In as much as these letters were not printed in the same paper, it is thought proper to have them in book or pamphlet form so that the reader can compare them together. It is this consideration that has led me to undertake the task of offering to the public this book, hoping its perusal will be aid our people to find the truth on this subject.

Affectionately,

J. H. Oliphant.

## 02 Letter One By Silas Durand

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ELDER DURAND'S FIRST LETTER.SOUTHAMPTON, PA.,

Oct. 27, 1899.

Dear Brethren: The following is a private letter to a ministering brother in a distant state. As it expresses my views on an important subject, I send a copy for publication in the Signs. Your brother in hope, SILAS H. DURAND.

SOUTHAMPTON, PA.,

Oct. 6, 1899.

Dear Brother: I have received your letter replying to my inquiry concerning your published statement that both Adam and Christ were put on probation or trial; each had freedom of will, acted voluntarily, and each was biased to that which is good. "You express the hope that if I should not approve of your position I will yet regard you as a brother. If I did not regard you as a brother I should not be corresponding with you upon spiritual things. If I am qualified to judge of a work of grace, I think I have seen evidences of it in your writings. But those evidences do not clearly appear in the letter which I have just received, nor in some argumentative articles I have read of late from your pen. You seem to have been so intent upon proving the existence of helplessness on account of a sinful nature, "a deceitful heart and wretched, wandering mind," your inward groaning and cries unto God to deliver you from your own corrupt will, and enable you to do his will, "working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight," and your prayers that the Lord would rule in and reign over you, enabling you to deny yourself.

One who did not know that you have an experience of grace would think from this letter and your published article in reply to me, that you were relying upon your own power, freedom of will, faithfulness and diligence, for daily salvation and spiritual benefit and comfort, and that you were not one of those poor, weak, halting, stumbling creatures who are daily "beggars poor at mercy's door, " and who daily and hourly feel their need of Jesus to uphold and lead them, and of his Spirit to guide them in the truth, and to restore their souls.

Such forgetfulness of the most important things in our life and walk before God will occur when we engage extensively in arguments upon the letter of some point of doctrine, especially in trying to reconcile the wisdom of God with the wisdom of men. I think it is on this account that you have failed of late, at least in some of the articles I have read from your pen, to bring forth the riches of that doctrine of grace which is the only hope and comfort of those poor souls who "can not do the things they would," because of the lusting of the flesh against the Spirit, and of the Spirit against the flesh. {Gal 5:16-18} You seem to insist that they can do the things that they would, and that God has left all spiritual advantage and comfort dependent upon their own will and work, and thus you have bound burdens upon them "which neither we nor our, fathers were able to bear." I do not think you have intended to bind burdens upon those who are without strength, and you may not be

conscious of having done so. But some of them feel it, and complain of it, and suffer under it. You can not have meant to discourage the helpless, but how could it be otherwise than discouraging to them to insist that they are not helpless, but are given freedom of will, and are left dependent upon themselves whether they will be happy or miserable, when they dare not trust their own will for a moment? 'If ye walk in the Spirit," says the apostle, 'Ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; " {Gal 5:16}. They feel a longing for this, but their own will and work will not lead them into that holy walk. It can only be as they "are led by the Spirit," {Gal 5:18}, and as Jesus walks in them, as he said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them."

You must remember that whenever you have felt that you were walking in the Spirit, and were dwelling in the favor of God, with his light speakable blessing, and you have had no thought, at the time, of taking any part of the credit to yourself. You can not, I am sure, have ever thought that any favor you experienced from God had been earned in any part or degree by your own meritorious work. You can not ever have asked for his favor upon such a ground. To the extent that there is an expectation of, or request for, favors upon the ground that we have performed some conditional work, to the same extent the name of Jesus is not needed by us. As in your own case the Lord alone can restore your soul, and lead you in the paths of righteousness, you ought to present the Lord alone to his people as their only hope and confidence. "He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea;" {Psa 65:1-13}. The few that I have known of preachers who have been left for a time to believe that their meritorious work in the performance of conditions had secured their daily or "time salvation," and had gained them favors in the house of God, have been, while under the power of that delusion, a hindrance instead of a benefit to the Lord's afflicted and poor people. For the daily experience of the saints, as well as the Scriptures of truth, teaches them that salvation is all of grace from first to last; that "grace all the work shall crown." They do not find, in either the Bible or their experience, that it takes less of grace to keep them in the way than was needed to bring them there, because of part of the work of keeping them being now left for themselves to do; but that it is the same grace all the way through, and always sufficient for them. {2Co 12:9}. "By the grace of God I am what I am, said the apostle. While he could claim for himself and the other apostles a blameless and holy life and walk among the saints, he ascribed all to the grace of God. In regard to his own work, he never suggests a freedom of will, or an ability on his own part, but always speaks of the will and grace of God as the moving power, and declares that his labor and striving are " according to the working of Jesus, which worketh in me mightily;" {Col 1:29}.

While obedient saints rejoice in the commendation of their own consciences in the sight of God, and in the commendation of the brethren and churches, they would, when spiritually minded, shrink from the use of the word praise as applicable to them in the other sense, implying any merit in themselves ; for they know and feel that Jesus has wrought all their works in them, {Isa 26:12}, and that to him belongs all the praise, while theirs are the blessing and benefit. To me it is a new and strange thing to find Old Baptists claiming praise for works of obedience, and insisting that the favor of God is conditional, depending upon their will and choice, and therefore uncertain, and that when it comes to them it comes as a reward for their obedience. I have heard that kind of talk all my life from Arminians, but never before from Old Baptists. The Lord's people can not eat their own flesh, can not live upon their own works. The doctrine of a conditional salvation, a salvation depending upon their own will and power to perform some meritorious work, will not feed any "who

have seen the plague of their own hearts," for they can not trust in themselves. "We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead. " Such as these must have the flesh of Jesus to eat; upon his works alone can they live. If you preach anything but Jesus your preaching will not satisfy the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. A conditional salvation will be of no use to them who ' can not do the things that they would; " who can not direct their own steps; {Jer 10:25}, who can not walk, but have to be carried. "Even to hoar hairs will I carry you," is one of the many sweet promises for such, but while you are urging upon them the system of conditions, and of dependence upon themselves, you can not minister such precious promises to them. I do not see them referred to by you, though they are probably often in your heart in secret before God. It is better to try to minister to others only what we have ourselves tasted and handled. In my letter to you I referred to the words of Jesus, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me; " and also, "Not my will, but thine, be done," as my reason for not agreeing with you that Christ was put upon probation or trial, and that he was left free to do his own will. In your reply you have not referred to those expressions of Jesus, but have written in such a way that a stranger to your profession might easily regard your letter as a careful argument in refutation of the Savior's declaration that he did not come to do his own will. It is in sincerity and kindness, and not in a captious spirit, that I call your attention to these things.

You say that Jesus was given liberty of choice, and did as he pleased, but he himself says he did not come to do his own will, though his was the will of a sinless man; and the apostle says, "Even Jesus pleased not himself;" {Rom 15:3}. His will as a man could be affected by the wants and infirmities of our nature which he had taken upon him; by sorrow, pain, hunger, weariness; so that the doing of this will would not have accomplished the work of salvation he came to do. He was not at any time left alone to himself until the last hour. His Father was always with him, and did his work in him, as he does the work of his people in them. " The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but my Father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works; {John 14:10}. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise; " {John 5:19}. This is why he always pleased the Father, and not because of himself he had done some work. He did not work alone in this sense. Even in the terrible struggle in the garden an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him, so that he should not fail. As it was with the dear Savior, so it is with . his people; only as God works in them can they ever do that which is well pleasing in his sight. Therefore the apostle says, "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and he expresses his desire that "God, even our Father," would "make them perfect to do his will, working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Christ Jesus; " {Heb 13:20-21}; and they who dwell in the land of Judah, the gospel land, say, "Thou, Lord, wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us; " {Isa 26:12}.

One brother says of the words in {Php 2:13}, just quoted, that, "Whatever they may mean, he is sure that the brethren were called upon to do something more, about which they exercised choice, and in which they were voluntary." And he says concerning such Scriptures, that they must not be interpreted so as to make it unnecessary to exhort one another to love and good works, and to "persuade men." The language of those Scriptures concerning the working of God in us, is not dark or equivocal, but clear as noonday, and needs no interpreting. The teaching of the apostles

will never make any gospel work unnecessary. We need not concern ourselves about the result of the plain teaching of the Scriptures concerning the sovereignty of God, nor try to harmonize the doctrine and things of God with the thoughts and ways of men, for they are not alike, and never will be. {Isa 55:8;1Co 2:1-16}. But what that -more" could be which the brethren were called upon to do, besides what the Lord worked in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, about which they exercised choice, and in which they were voluntary, I can not understand. If the Lord works in them that which is well pleasing in his sight, and if they declare by inspiration that he has wrought all their works in them, what more outside works can there be? I do not suppose such thoughts would occur to one except upon the supposed necessity in order to defend a conditional salvation. In the first part of your letter you have acknowledged and clearly proved that everything in the life of Jesus had been determined before, and was certain. Why then should you need to speak of him as put upon probation? All that, you refer to in the Scriptures concerning his temptations, or trials, does not, in my view, warrant that declaration. That form of language appears to imply some kind or degree of uncertainty, and you evidently have that in view in speaking of him as put upon probation, for you say that being subject to the commands of God "proves that he was situated to do as he pleased;" and referring to his words, "I lay down my life of myself," you say, -While his death was certain, it was not so with such a certainty as would interfere with his liberty of doing as he pleased." It seems to me that the terrible scene of suffering in the garden, and his words of pleading to the Father that the cup might pass from him, if it were possible, might have made you hesitate about writing that sentence.

You say again, "While his obedience was predestinated, it was not predestinated like our regeneration and resurrection were predestinated." I do not find two kinds or degrees of certainty, nor two kinds of predestination spoken of in the Bible or elsewhere.

I do not understand that the difference you refer to between physical and moral government and necessity applies to this subject. The government of Jesus is a spiritual government, and does not come within the observation of men, {Luk 17:20}, and the obedience of his people is a spiritual necessity. The Father worked in Jesus, and he works in his people. If he works in them that which is well pleasing in his sight, can there be any uncertainty as to whether they will all please him in his own time? Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

Both in this letter, and in your published article, you insist that the grace by which we are born of God is not the same as that by which we obey the commands of Jesus afterward. Where do we read in the Scriptures of different kinds of 'grace? We were raised up together with Christ, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." The exceeding riches of his grace" can not be exceeded, and that is shown in all his kindness toward us. "For by grace ARE y e saved.' Now look along that road and see the same grace reaching through and manifested in all the good works unto which they were created, and in which it was before ordained that they should walk; {Eph 2:10}.

You say that an unconditional salvation makes exhortations and the like unnecessary, while to my mind it is that system alone which shows them in their true character and right place. They belong to that new and everlasting covenant "which is ordered in all things and sure," and in which repentance and mercy are provided for, as they can not be under a conditional system. Will the gifts which Jesus gave to men fail till all the saints come, in the unity of the faith and the knowledge

of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ? {Eph 4:7-10}. The Lord "hath set the members in the body as it pleased him," and "the Spirit divides to every man of his gifts severally as he will." If a different measure of grace is given at any time it is not that less is needed in some cases because part of the work is to be done by the will of the man, without grace, or that less grace is needed where the man voluntarily chooses to be obedient. But in this way only can I attach any meaning to your expressions about different kinds of grace. In every case just the measure of grace is given that is needed to be sufficient for us. I do not myself find in my experience, nor in the Bible, a distinction as to kinds or amounts of grace. It seems to me that I need more grace than any other poor sinner, and my judgment tells me that if ever I need more at one time than another it is when I am most lifted up in the joy of God's salvation, for after such exaltation I am most liable to be deceived and hurt by the evil propensities of this deceitful heart, which "is still deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." A brother, one of the most spiritual and tender-hearted, said at our prayer meeting yesterday , "Some talk about free will, but it seems to me that my will is only free to do evil, so that sometimes I seem to be all sin. But, "he said, "When I do feel some holy desires, and love to the brethren, and some liberty of soul in spiritual things, I feel sure it is all of grace. It is not of myself, but of the grace of God which is given me. " And I could join and say truly, Amazing grace."

"Grace taught my soul to pray. And pardoning love to know;

'Twas grace that kept me to this day, And will not let me go."

Speaking of Christ with reference to rewards, we must remember that his reward was with him while his work was before him. {Isa 40:10hew:10 ew:10}. You say it is right to have a reward in view, and that we gain nothing by saying that the reward is in the work, not for it. You say if we know that precious fruits grow along a certain road, we understand that we must go along that road in order to get the fruits. And still I-hold to the Bible expressions: In the keeping of them is great reward. The other view is natural, as sure as salvation by grace is true. I find enough of that system of selfishness in my flesh, but I hate it in myself and others. It has never brought me any real comfort, but has given me great disturbance and pain. It is not for some precious fruits that we go along that road, because we can not have them unless we do go there, but for the beauty and goodness and preciousness of the road itself. Jesus is the road, and we never knew or desired that way till we were brought into it, and then we are filled with wonder and love that we are there. And when a living soul is out of that road he never has any real comfort till the Lord restores his soul, and . brings him back again, for he can never get back by himself.

There seems to prevail in the mind of some brethren, the worldly view that a hope of reward or a fear of punishment is necessary to compel obedience. They forget or overlook in their own experience, and in the Bible, that the Lord has used other and far different motive powers. Will any offered reward cause one to seek righteousness as he does who hungers for it? Will any fear of punishment turn one away from evil as effectually as a hatred of evil felt in the heart? "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil," and that is what the Lord puts in the hearts of his people, "that they shall not depart from him;" {Jer 32:40}.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" {2Co 5:11}. The apostle is not here speaking of terror of some punishment which is threatened if men sin, but of the terror of the Lord's presence to the one who loves him, but is found in transgression; the terror of sin itself to

those who have a spirit which causes them to love purity, and to desire "rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." It is the terror of being found of the Lord in a fleshly, sinful walk, which he hates, and which his Spirit causes us to hate. The terror of being found in crime by one dearly loved would be greater than to be thus found by one who could punish us. Those who are here persuaded are those whose exercises and desires are described in this chapter, whose only delight is the felt favor of the Lord, and whose greatest terror is the withdrawal of his face. These are they whom "the love of Christ constraineth" in all their work, whose desire is to live not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." These are not seeking, in what they do, their own peace and comfort, as a reward, but the honor of God. Their reward is in the work. The principle now so much advocated of doing works of obedience for the reward which shall be given them, I decidedly distrust and oppose in myself or another. It is of the flesh. It is not spiritual nor true. In such a case the worker may not love the work, nor care to obey, but only does it because the reward of peace and joy lies in that direction. If they could not get the reward would they still do the work? If they were to go into darkness and distress, as a consequence of the obedience, would they obey? The principle which God gives as the true incentive to obedience is his own love. Do the good work because it is right, no matter what follows, and avoid the evil because it is wrong, and not because it will subject us to punishment. The true principle says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." I am tired and sick of this self, self; this seeking something for self in all we do. My nature is full of it, but I hate it. I do not want to be controlled by it, nor do I want to see it taught as the right principle by yourself and so many others. I know it is all wrong.

Gospel rewards are of grace, not of debt, and do not pander to that selfish principle of the flesh. They are infinitely higher and holier. They are the honor and glory of God. When we are spiritually led his glory is what we seek. "Do all to the glory of God." He himself is our "exceeding great reward."

I do not understand, as you assert, that the word "if," as used in the New Testament, implies a condition. It is never used as expressing a dependence upon the will. of the creature, as it is in the Old Testament. The Savior and his apostles do not say, "If you will," but, "If you do," "If you are," expressing not an act that may or may not be done. But a state or condition of mind. The Savior never said, 'If you believe,' but "If you do believe.' He did not say, "If a man will keep my commandments he shall abide in my love," but, "If a man keep my commandments." The form of expression in the New Testament never leaves the result as depending upon the will and choice of man, but on the will and power of God. The form of new covenant expressions always is such as shows that man can do nothing of himself toward his own salvation; that "without God he can do nothing." The Savior did not say, "If you will come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. If you will take my yoke upon you and learn of me, you shall find rest to your souls." In commenting on this you say the Savior addresses his people as parents say to their children, if you will obey me in this matter I will give you a toy, or give you my approval. "Again you say, "He presents motives, as it he would say, You need rest, you are laboring and heavy laden, and need rest. He plainly encourages them to obedience by promising rest in case they obey. "I do not understand it so at all. There would be no power in such entreaties. "Where the word of a king is there is power." This Scripture has been very precious to me for thirty-five years, but I never understood it in that way. It is not an invitation nor an encouragement. The Savior's words are

more and better than that. He never invites. The word "invite" is never used by him, nor concerning him, in the Scriptures. He calls, and his call is always obeyed. He speaks, not to the ear, but to the heart, and his word never returns to him void, but accomplishes his will; {Isa 55:11}. He describes those whom he calls as they are, "laboring and heavy laden," unable to do any part of the work of satisfying the law, which presses them down under its condemning power, while they struggle under it, unable to rise. They can not go from sin to holiness, from the powers of darkness to him. But his call brings them. As Lazarus did not know that Jesus had called him till he stood at the mouth of the grave alive, so no laboring and heavy laden soul can know that Jesus has called him till he feels that sacred rest. The peace of God which he feels passeth understanding. This call of the Son is the revelation of the Father by him. He has just said,, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; {Mat 11:27}. Then he reveals him. In his own good time these words, which "are spirit and life," reach every soul that has labored in vain to fulfill the law, and has fallen down helpless under its righteous power, and brings that soul away from the law, freed from every demand, washed from all sin, into his own gospel rest, where they are enabled to say, "Abba, Father," through the name of Jesus, his only begotten Son. Yes, when Jesus calls, they come. No one ever failed to come whom Jesus called. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me. "

It is thought by some that if one can not do good he is not to blame for not doing it. This would remove blame from those to whom the Lord says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil;" {Jer 13:23}. We must remember that the cause of blame was before we were born. We were children of wrath by nature, dead in sins. {Eph 2:1-5}. When made alive it was not in Adam, but in Christ, and only in him can we live before God, or do good works. It is by his life, and his will, and by his grace, not of ourselves, that we obey the Lord. When Paul speaks of himself as laboring more abundantly than all the others, he says, apparently correcting any wrong impression his words might give, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me;" {1Co 15:10}.

I exhort to obedience, and admonish those liable to wander, and warn the unruly, when I feel it needed, though feeling to need the exhortations and admonitions so much myself, and feeling unworthy to admonish others, but it is never with the thought that the desired effect will depend upon the faithfulness, wisdom and power of my work. It all depends upon the faithfulness, wisdom and power of God. I do, or wish to do, what the Lord directs me to do, because he commands it. It is for him to make the work effectual. I could neither preach nor exhort if I thought the benefit depended upon my ability ; I am too weak. "The lot is cast into the lap; the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good ; "{Ec 11:6}. The faith of those ministered unto shall stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God ; " {1Co 2:5}.

I can say to any living soul, -Your peace of mind, and the manifest favor of God, depend upon your obedience, or at least you can not have them while walking in disobedience." But how can I say, "They depend upon your own choice and will?" That would be telling them that they are their own keepers, and are able to direct their own steps, which is contrary to the Scriptures and to their own experience. When I have given the urgent exhortation, admonition or reproof, in love and with

tender anxiety, I must remind them, and must myself remember, that the Lord only can work in them the needed will, give them his holy Spirit to lead them, and restore their souls. We all agree that he only can give us the spirit of prayer and lead us in the paths of righteousness. He only can give us true obedience in our hearts. Could you say to the Lord in prayer, "We know our obedience and our comfort are left to ourselves, and are not brought about by the same grace which brought us from death to life?" No, before you were half through with such a prayer you would be choked up with the surging cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The prayer of our hearts, when wrought upon us by the Spirit, is, "Keep me from evil that it may not grieve me." [Not that I may not suffer punishment.] "Lead me in the paths of righteousness for thy name's sake." The word "if" does not in my view imply anywhere in the new covenant a condition which may or may not be performed, and upon the performance of which, by us, according to our will, depends our experience of the favors and blessings of God. That was the form of the legal covenant, and the conditional expressions made under the covenant are correctly quoted by you and others, but I have wondered why spiritually instructed men should try to apply them to gospel things, which are all made new, The conditional system never availed for salvation. That was not its use and purpose, but to show that salvation was beyond the sinner's power, and to stop every mouth. In the gospel, salvation stands "from all conditions clear." Those who live after the flesh shall die, and those who through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, shall live. But only through the Spirit can a spiritual work of any kind be done by any man.

Believing that God works all things after the counsel of his own will, we can with confidence do each his portion of work, as the Lord directs to it, and in it, knowing that he "will perfect that which concerneth us," and will cause his own gifts to his church to result in her good and his own glory. In {1Pe 3:10}, I do not see that conditional salvation and comfort are any more taught than in any other of this and the other apostles' sweet and tender exhortations. He appeals to that holy \_delight in spiritual things which is in the soul of every one who has been born of God, and which is the only true incentive to self-denial and a holy life. Paul appeals to the same spiritual fountain and source of right action when he says, If there be any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, etc., fulfill ye my joy, etc. {Php 2:1}. But neither of the apostles present these exhortations as conditions uncertain of fulfillment, unsettling the sure covenant of grace. None of them ever flatter the vanity of the flesh by intimating that the Lord depends upon the will of the flesh for the fulfillment of his wishes. No! As Peter said on the day of Pentecost that they who crucified Jesus with wicked hands, had not prevented, but fulfilled "the determinate counsel of God," so he and all the other inspired men assure us that no one can by any act of his change or affect the, counsel of God's will, only to fulfill it.

Faith will enable the child of God to say, in the Lord's time, But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him; " {Job 23:13-14}.

What has our will to do with our love, or with our belief? We can not of ourselves will to do either, neither is it of our will that we keep the commandments. "He that believeth hath everlasting life," not "If you will believe you shall have everlasting life." "He that loveth hath fulfilled the law." What comfort to the poor and helpless there is in the teachings of Jesus and the apostles upon this subject of the commandments and how they are kept. Suppose they had said, "Do you not want to abide in the love of God? Well, if you will keep his commandments you may. It depends upon

yourself. " How the natural man, who neither knows nor cares, for the love of God, would have been inflated with pride and self-confidence, while the spiritual man would sink down to the borders of despair, realizing how unable he is to keep one commandment. But . in the Lord's own time this poor soul will be made to know that the sweet love which he feels in his heart, and which is his only comfort, is a sure evidence that the righteousness of the law has been fulfilled IN him, and that this love is itself the keeping of the commandments. He is taught that by the token of this love he is in Christ, and Christ in him. The commandments have been written in his heart. Love to God is there, and love to his brethren, and a strong desire and earnest prayer that the Lord would enable him to ever walk in that love, and to work it out in his life and conversation. Your brother in the love of the gospel, SILAS H. DURAND.

## 03 Reply By Oliphant to Durrand's First Letter

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REPLY TO ELDER DURAND'S FIRST LETTER. By J.H. OLIPHANT

Elder S. F. Cayce; Dear Brother: I send you herewith my reply to an article by Elder Durand, in the Signs of the Times, of December 1. 1899. Please examine this reply carefully, and if approved, publish in your columns. But unless you endorse it fully, be SURE not to publish it, and oblige yours, affectionately in the gospel,

J. H. OLIPHANT.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

Dear Brother Durand: I notice your letter to me is published in the Signs of the Times of December 1st. I suppose, from what you wrote me, that the Signs of the Times would not be willing to publish my views, and so I will reply to you through Elder Cayce's paper, if agreeable to him. I will not complain of the Signs of the Times for publishing your letter in answer to mine without giving me some notice or opportunity to reply, but will try to review some things found in your letter. In the first two pages you consider the question whether my writing indicates that I am a Christian. This is an important question to me, and has been for many years. Taking all you say on this subject, I understand you to believe that I am a Christian, and I am glad that you have this opinion.

I understand you, in this part of your letter, that at such times as I am in a proper frame and "walking in the Spirit" I am most likely to agree with you; and also I understand you that the fact that I differ with you is evidence that I am 'forgetful of the most important things in my life and walk before God.' On the whole, you seem to judge of one's spiritual condition by his agreement or disagreement with yourself. You say, The few that I have known of preachers who have been left for a time to believe that their meritorious work, in the performance of conditions, had secured their daily or 'time' salvation, have been, while under the power of that delusion, a hindrance instead of a benefit to the Lord's afflicted and poor people."

I understand you in this to set forth the sentiments that we hold, as you understand it, and so you judge a man to be "left for a time" if he fails to see with you on the subject in hand. You regard him as I, under the power of that delusion" so long as he differs with you relative to this matter. When you say, "As in your own case the Lord alone can restore your soul." etc.. your mind seems to be that I am now, while differing with you, wholly given over to an evil influence, and nothing but the Spirit of God can restore me to the right paths.

Now, my dear brother, I have given you the impression that this part of your letter made on my mind, but I will not make any reply to it.

You say, "You seem to insist that they can do the things that they would, and that God has left all spiritual advantage and comfort dependent on their own will and work. " If I wrote this to you I regret it. This is one disadvantage to me in the Signs of the Times publishing your review of my letter without printing the letter itself. I certainly do not think that " all spiritual advantage and

comfort is dependent on their will and work." But I suppose the readers of the Signs of the Times will so understand me to believe. In the Monitor of October you say, "In the beginning of my ministry I sometimes spoke of a "conditional" salvation inside the church, referring to the fact that only when we are walking in obedience to the commands of Jesus can we enjoy the power and comfort of that salvation." In my letter to you I do not think I contended for more or less than is contained in this quotation. Had you not shifted your position you would have the hearty endorsement of our brethren now. I do not think you intentionally misrepresented me, but I would be far from endorsing the sentiment you have attributed to me. You say, "To me it is a new and strange thing to find Old Baptists claiming praise for works of obedience," etc. Elder Cayce and those of his views are not occupying "new and strange ground" to you. They only stand where you first stood, and when you changed your attitude they did not see fit to go with you to your newfound position.

You complain of me, saying, "You can not have meant to discourage the helpless, but how could it be otherwise than' discouraging to them to insist that they are not helpless, but are given freedom of will and are left dependent upon themselves whether they will be happy or miserable?" etc. Relative to the "helpless" ones you refer to, if they are too helpless and poor to be "willing," I will retract. I think you will admit that, poor as they are, they are willing. They are not too poor to ° ° desire. " The man at the pool, {John 5:6}, although too "poor" and "helpless" to get into the pool, yet he was not too poor to be willing. If you have poor ones there that are so poor they can't "desire the sincere milk of the word," I confess I am due an apology, but I am sure the Lord's dear ones are not too helpless to be willing. Now, the best evidence that a man has the liberty to do a thing, is the fact that he does it. If the dear brethren you refer to are willing, if our Savior were to say to them, " Wilt thou be be made whole?" and they could answer in the affirmative, then they have all the liberty of will I have ever contended for at any time. In this last quotation you say, "But are given freedom of will and are dependent upon themselves whether they will be happy or miserable." In this you certainly place a strained interpretation on my words. I hold that our enjoyment is, in some degree, dependent on our obedience. Read my article in the October Momitor. In that article I say, "We are liable to extremes on both sides. If we urge that the work and presence of' the Spirit is necessary to obedience, just as it is to regeneration, we are not voluntary; for, in regeneration, we are not voluntary, and so regeneration is not a virtue on our part, and if the Spirit's power and presence is exerted in our obedience, just as in our regeneration, then there is no duty in obedience, as we perform no duty in regeneration; and so on the other side, we are liable to forget that we must have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, " etc. If we take one extreme we take away all vice or virtue from the conduct of God's people, and if we take the other we substitute cold formality for the spiritual worship of God. Now, here I insist that we must have grace. and that we can not serve God acceptably without it. I do not, as you say, hold °that they are dependent upon themselves," etc. Our Savior, {John 1:13}, speaking relative to regeneration, says. "Nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man," but he nowhere tells us that our obedience is independent of our will. The meaning of the word requires that it be dependent, or resultant from the will, and voluntary; so nothing but a willing service is acceptable. I hold just the views you did before you changed to your present position. So far as I can understand you, you quote the dear. brother at your prayer meeting as saying "Some talk about free will, but it seems to me that my will is only free to do evil." To will, is to choose; so his choice is only free to do evil. His words, if quoted rightly, denote that he only chooses to do evil, or they denote that his

will is only free to do evil. I do not think he means that he only chooses to do evil, because he adds, " when I do feel some holy desires, " showing that there are times when he does not choose to do evil. You say of yourself, "I do, or wish to do, what the Lord directs me to do. " I think the brother meant about what you say of yourself, and if so, he now possesses all the liberty of will contended for in my book entitled "Thoughts On the Will." If the brother meant that his will is "only free to do evil, " then he believes in freedom of will while doing evil. But his first words indicate that he does not believe in freedom of will at all in any sense. So I must think you either misquoted him, or he failed to express just his true case.

I will notice your words, "It is better to minister only what we have tasted," etc. I endorse this, and I am sure that while I can not be happy just any moment I wish, yet I find that if I do the things I esteem as duty I enjoy myself better than in the neglect of those things.

You quote the words, "I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me; "Not my will, but thine be done. " You refer to these words to show that Christ was not situated to do as he pleased." As I wrote to you, I understand these texts to teach that Christ dreaded death and its pains, and not that he was unwilling to obey his Father. If death had no pains for him, it would be no evidence of love for him to die for us. But he at no time betrayed disloyalty to God.

I will try again to prove that he was situated to do as he pleased in all he did and suffered for us. He "Became obedient unto death;" {Php 2:8}. Obedience is voluntary, and to act voluntarily is to do as one chooses. Jesus says, {John 10:18}, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. " Paul says, "Who gave himself for our sins;" {Gal 1:4}. If he gave himself" surely he did as he chose in the matter, and if he did as he pleased he must have been situated to do as he pleased," as I wrote you. But you say, "That kind of language appears to imply some kind or degree of uncertainty." Now this depends on the faithfulness of Christ. If there is any unfaithfulness in him, it would make the matter uncertain for him to be "situated to do as he pleased," for a good mother to be situated to do as she pleases will not endanger the wellbeing of the child. When Jesus was confronted by the terrible scene of suffering in the garden and on the cross, there was joy in his view, so that he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and if the word "obedient" means here what it does in other places, he did as he pleased, and so was situated to do as he pleased, as I wrote to you. But why should it make everything uncertain for him to be situated to do as he pleased? Suppose one should be unwilling for you to be situated to do as you pleased about taking his goods would not this show a want of confidence in you? So, when you express the idea that all would be uncertainty if he should be situated to do as he pleased, it seems that in order to defend this newfound notion of yours, it is necessary to hold that it would be exceedingly hazardous for Jesus to be situated to do as he pleased.

If I should express the thought, with tongue or pen, that it would make matters uncertain for Jesus to be situated to do as he pleased, I think I would retract at once; and if I held to any sentiment making it necessary for me to defend such a notion, I would abandon it.

I grant that his obedience was predestinated, but if it was predestinated just as the resurrection of the dead was predestinated, this would destroy the idea of obedience. In regeneration we are passive, but in obedience we are active. Resurrection is a physical act of God, but obedience is a willing, moral act of Jesus or his people. So there is a distinction between God's decrees touching

our obedience and our regeneration.

You will admit that God's people are tried, and yet the final salvation of every one of them is certain. Now if this be true, how is it inconsistent to hold, too, that Christ was tried and yet certainty attended his whole history? If you deny that Christ was tried, you must also deny that we are tried, or admit the possibility of apostasy.

You say, "I do not find two kinds of predestination spoken of in the Bible. You certainly admit that predestination is efficacious, causative, respecting our regeneration, creation; etc. So, if you know of but one kind of predestination, you would hold that sin is also efficaciously predestinated. In your article in the Church Advocate, October, 1896, you say, "Can we think that he predestinated salvation, and all the times and ways of its experience, \* \* and 'did not predestinate that which made it necessary? \* \* Did the Lord predestinate the rainbow and not the dark cloud in which he set it to display its glorious beauty?" From these and many of your expressions we would understand you to hold that God is as much the cause of evil as he is of good: and what is this but to destroy the distinction between right and wrong?

You quote the text "For thou also hast wrought all our works in us. " What do you understand by the words " all our works?" Did God work David's works in his behavior with Uriah and his wife, in him. Did he work Peter's conduct in denying his Lord, in him: You complain of a heart deceitful and desperately wicked. Did God work all this deceitfulness in you? You quote this text several times as if it were your main reliance. If all our sins and wickedness are wrought in us by the Lord, then wherein does right differ from wrong? You also quote {Heb 13:20-21}, "Working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight." Is there anything in or about God's people that is not well pleasing in his sight? Paul mentions some, {1Co 10:5}, "With many of them God was not well pleased." If every work was wrought in them, how does it occur that God was not well pleased with them? In {Heb 13:16}, "With such sacrifices God is well pleased." But if God is pleased with all our conduct and all our ways, why mention that "With such sacrifices God is well pleased?"

There is as much difference between right and wrong as there is between heaven and hell, and yet you do not make a distinction, that I can see. 'Only one kind of predestination, etc."

Now, in relation to the words, "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" {Php 2:13}. What does this text teach that God works in them? To will. First, when he blesses his people with a new nature and heart they are willing. So the will to do is of the Lord to work in them to do to incline them to do, to prompt them to do; so now those who have been prompted or inclined to obey should obey this text. If this text teaches that all the works necessary were included in the words, It is God that worketh in you," why does he say, "Work out your salvation?" There should be some distinction made between God's unconditional act in working in us, and our duty to him as a result thereof. Your position seems to be, that, when our Savior said of regeneration, "Nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man," he should have said the same of all our duties. The Savior denies that regeneration is in any sense dependent on the will, while you seem to deny that obedience is in any sense dependent on the will. The word "obedience" denotes that the will is essential to it. So, when Elder Thompson insisted that the brethren were called on to "work out their salvation," there was something they were to do besides the act of God in working in them the will, etc.: not that they were to do something not required, or something besides what they were inclined to do by the grace of God; but there was a duty on

their part required a salvation for them to work out and no twisting of this text can destroy the sentiment and truth that these brethren were exhorted to work out a salvation. The fact that God has worked in them to will and to do does not destroy the fact that something yet remained to be done, and that that something was to work out their salvation. All that God had done in them and for them did not destroy the fact that they were yet called on to obey and to work out their own salvation; and as obedience must be a willing obedience, or it is no obedience at all, so these people were called on to obey willingly. I am willing to admit that regeneration is independent of the will, but I deny that obedience is independent of will. So I hold that the will is ever connected with obedience and essential to it; that men who serve God CHOOSE to do so.

You say, ' "Neither is it of our will {or choice} that we keep the commandments." If you are right in this, there is no such thing as obedience, if we pay any attention to the meaning of the word "obedience." If you pay any attention to the meaning of the word "obedience," you make a sad blunder when you say, "Neither is it of our will," etc. On your plan God's government of his people is like the boy's government of his marbles : you may say, 'Neither is it of the will of the marble that it is in the right place.' Your theory requires a new dictionary, made expressly to suit your doctrine. You quote, 'If ye be led by the Spirit,' etc ; {Gal 5:18}. The word "lead" or "pled" implies that those led are willing to be led. If the party led is not willing and active, then it would be "drag." So this word "lead" is fatal to your position that the will is not concerned in our obedience.

"If any man will do his will; " {John 7:17}. So here again the will is concerned in doing God's will. Numberless places could be found showing the will to be concerned in obedience. Duty would mean nothing, obedience would mean nothing, if we exclude the will from them. Vice, virtue, right, or wrong, might be excluded from every language under heaven, and man is reduced in his conduct to the level of a watch or a clock.

What I intended by the distinction in the act of God in our regeneration, or the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and the act of God in leading us into the path of obedience, is, that we should make some distinction here. The raising of Lazarus was a physical act, and one wholly independent of his will; while in leading us, we are, and must be, voluntary. The fact is, when you deny the will of man being concerned in his obedience, you deny that man is a moral being. The planets obey the laws they are under, but not willingly they are not moral beings. And so I understand you to deny man to be a moral being. The words obey, disobey, vice, virtue, leads, led, duty, reward all these words denote a dependence on the will, and I understand you to change the meaning of all these words to suit your notion of things. And so the word if." But I will notice this later on.

You say, "There seems to prevail in the mind of some the worldly view that a hope of reward or a fear of punishment is necessary to compel obedience." Now, I want to show you that you are in love with this worldly view as much as those you oppose. You say:

No. 1. "It is not for some precious fruits that we go along that road, but for the beauty of the road itself." In this you set a reward before the mind as truly as any one has done; and you use the word "for" instead of "in. "

No. 2. "Will any offered reward cause one to seek righteousness as he does who hungers for it? "

No. 3. ' 1 Will any fear of punishment turn one away from evil as effectually as a hatred of evil ? "

No. 4. The apostle is not speaking of terror of some punishment, but of the terror of the Lord's presence to one who loves him, but is found in transgression." In this you place the worldly view you complain of as fully as I have seen it done by any one.

No. 5. "It is the terror of being found of the Lord in a fleshly, sinful walk." In this last you seem disposed to terrify them into obedience.

No. 6. "The terror of being found in crime by one dearly loved would be greater than to be thus found by one who could punish us. " You despise urging men to obey from fear of punishment, and yet you name a terror worse than punishment as a motive.

No. 7. "Their reward is in the work."

No. 8. "When we are spiritually led, his glory is what we seek."

No. 9. "He himself is our exceeding great reward. " In all these nine places you set forth the hope of reward as fully as our brethren care to have it done, and then, after in these nine times you do this, you say, "I am tired and sick of this self, self," etc.

I know of none among us who contend for more "self" than is set forth in these sentences. Read carefully the following sentence from your pen {No. 10:} "Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me: not that I may not suffer punishment." In this you seem to think that grief is no punishment: so you would exhort men to dread grief, but not to fear punishment. Now, why find fault with the brethren for contending for the same things you urge yourself in these sentences? You say, "If they could not get the reward, would they do the work? If they were to go into darkness as a consequence of obedience, would they obey?" I believe the words "The soul that would to Jesus press, Must fix this firm and sure That tribulations, more or less, It must and shall endure."

I believe with Peter, "Though now for a season, if need be ye are in heaviness, that the trial of your faith," etc. Trials will come: we must feel our hearts ache. The path of duty lies in sorrow, often, but in the midst of all there is something sweet and precious. The millions of martyrs who went into the flames were happier than they would have been to have fled from punishment. In fact, their punishment would have been greater had they denied their Lord.

What is a good conscience worth? Who of us would engage in the arduous task of the ministry if our conscience would be easy? So, where men have gone into the fires of persecution, they have had the sweetest and best of all rewards a good conscience. When the prophet felt that he was left alone and that he was in an enemy's land, his conscience was a rich reward to him. Paul says, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. " So Paul labored always to have a good conscience. This is all the "self" we contend for, and these sentiments may make you " sick," but a good conscience was the end the apostle aimed at.

See also {Rom 13:5}, "Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." Also {1Ti 1:19}, "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away have made shipwreck." The Bible abundantly teaches that holy men of old prized a good conscience as of greater reward than gold. Who can have a good conscience in sin? What Christian has not learned that obedience only keeps a good conscience? I hesitate not to say that a good conscience is conditionally enjoyed. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my

love." A dear sister, in opposing the idea that we should hope for reward, said she understood us that money was the reward we aimed at. I asked her if she found any advantage in obedience. She said, "Yes; she felt a good conscience." "Well," said I, "that is your reward." Now, dear brother, this will satisfy me. Let us insist that obedience is better than disobedience; let us insist that the path of duty has more to cheer than the path of disobedience. You quote the words, "Where the word of a king is, there is power." Your remarks about this indicate that you hold that God's commands are always obeyed. You say, "In every case just the measure of grace is given that is needed to be sufficient for us." If this is true, how is it that you say, "I need more grace than any other poor sinner?" If in every case all that is needed is given, I can't understand how you need more at any time than you have. Again, if all his commands are obeyed, you seem unwilling to admit that the Savior invites, or entreats, or persuades. You say, "He calls, and his call is always obeyed." Now, if his commands are always obeyed, how can you say, "I do, or wish to do, what the Lord directs me to do, because he commands it?" If his commands are always obeyed, how is it that you sometimes only WISH to obey?

You say, "I could neither preach nor exhort if I thought the benefit depended on my ability." It occurs to me that if you first explain your doctrine to your people that they can not obey till the command of God comes, and when it does come they can not disobey; that the words in {Isa 26:12}, mean that all our good works are performed by the Lord, and that the words in {Php 2:13}, only express the works God does, and nothing at all for them to do; that there is no reward for their obedience, either in time or eternity; that they can claim no more in their obedience than they can claim in their redemption; that they shall have no reward in time or eternity for anything they do, either mentally or physically; that all gospel rewards are of grace, and wholly unconditional; that the most patient obedience for a lifetime will never secure one moment's peace, or the least conceivable degree of happiness, either in time or eternity; that if one of God's true and called ministers should entertain the thought that a faithful life of a half century among the churches merited so much as a crust of bread, it would be evidence that he was left of the Lord, and that he never could get back till God brought him back; that God promises no advantage for obedience of any kind, either here or hereafter; that the words "obedience," "duty," etc., denote no dependence on the will of man; that Webster, and every other author, is in error about their meaning; that it is exceedingly doubtful whether God's people are moral beings at all; that his government is a spiritual one, and hence very doubtful as to its being a moral one, I should think when all these things are laid before the people, it would be difficult to go about an exhortation.

You insist that the government of Jesus is spiritual, and hence you object to my article distinguishing between the moral and physical governments of God. You insist that the case of Lazarus being raised is parallel with the obedience of a Christian. If this be true, then the will of man is in no sense concerned in obedience. I grant that the will of man is excluded from regeneration, but you go farther and insist that the will has no concern in obedience. I need not cite the numerous places in your article in which you insist that the will of man is unconcerned in the matter of obedience, and this is to deny that God's government is moral. In your effort to steer clear of Arminianism you have landed your bark on the sands of Antinomianism. If you are correct in holding that the choice of man is excluded from his obedience, I grant that the event of Lazarus being raised is parallel with obedience. I will quote one sentence from your article on this subject: "The form of expression in the New Testament never leaves the result [obedience to God's

command] as depending upon the will and choice of man. " I find many such sentences in your article. If a man's obedience to God is parallel with his having gray eyes, his will has nothing to do with it; and so he is neither to blame nor praise for these things; but you as effectually exclude his will from his obedience as it is from choosing the color of his eyes. If a man's will has no more to do with his obedience than it has in the color of his hair, I will confess I ought not to have written about a distinction between the moral and physical governments of God. If you can show that the will is not concerned in our obedience, you will have convinced me that God does not exercise moral government over his people. The planets ever obey, but not from their own will, and you have tried to show that our . obedience is as independent of our wills as the order and regularity of the planets is independent of their wills, and as there is no such thing as vice, virtue, crime, or innocence, among the planets, so on your theory these things have no place among God's people. You quote often the words, "Thou also hast wrought all our works in us; {Isa 26:12}. Also "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." Also "Working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight." Your comment on these texts indicates that you think we are no more concerned in our obedience than we are in our height or the color of our hair. We read of the daughters of men being fair; {Gen 6:2} also that Sarah was fair. Now, while these are good qualities, they are not moral qualities, like chastity, virtue, obedience, etc. And I insist that in your zeal to set aside the choice of men in the matter of obedience, you reduce the moral qualities of men to a level in every way with their physical qualities, in regard to which they exercise no choice whatever. You quote the words, " Even to hoar hairs will I carry you," and so interpret it as to deny the truth of all those texts that speak of God's people as walking {Mic 6:8;Gen 5:24}, etc. But does the New Testament teach, as you insist, that the obedience of God's people is independent of the will? You admit that in the Old Testament obedience is dependent on the will. "If ye forsake the Lord and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt." You seem to admit that in this command the will is concerned. The Saviour says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." Can you see any difference in the form of these two commands ? And if the will is concerned in the one, how can you say that the will is not concerned in the other? Let any one hunt out the commands of God to Israel of old, and lay them down side by side with the commands of God to His people now, and show how or why the will is excluded from our conduct now and was not excluded from their conduct. I am sure the form of expression is the same. It is the same God, and the people of God are now just what they were then, and so now why should God's words to His people mean one thing in the Old Testament, and another in the New? The blessings resulting from obedience in the Old Testament were all confined to time, and the curses for disobedience were all confined to time, and so it is now in the church. I think you are hard pressed if you espouse a theory that requires you to hold that the commands of God in the Old Testament were not all obeyed, but in the New they are all obeyed.

You quote the words, " Where the word of a king is there is power," and your comment shows that you think the commands of Jesus are ever obeyed." You say, "His call is always obeyed." Jesus commands his people, " Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. " These are his own words. {Mat 5:44}. Are these commands always obeyed by his people? And if not, how can you hold that his commands are always obeyed? In your effort to set aside the moral government of God you find it essential to leave nothing in any way dependent on our wills in the matter of obedience, and hence you must hold that his commands are always obeyed. In the New Testament we find such commands as "Be kindly affectioned one to another, in brotherly love

preferring one another; " "Avenge not yourselves;' &,Recompense to no man evil for evil." Are all these commands, and scores of others, always obeyed? On what principle do you hold that all his commands are obeyed? Perhaps you will say that love is the fulfilling of the law." I know we are commanded to love one another, but those who do love each other are commanded still to do other things. If to love God is all that is required of his people, why mention scores of things required of them who already love Him, and how can you say that all the commands of Jesus are obeyed when we love God? Now, if we are not voluntary in our obedience, and if our choice has nothing to do with it, I grant that I was wrong, as you complain, in distinguishing between the moral and physical government of God, and you are correct in holding that God's decree should not be regarded as applying to events in two ways.

Relative to blame, you say: "The cause of blame was before we were born. " If God's government of His people is not a moral government, then I grant that the cause of blame was before we were born. The cause of a tree's bearing bad fruit is found in the nature of its first seed, and to bear bad fruit is a fault, but not a moral fault; but I hold that bad conduct is not such a fault as where a tree bears bad fruit. The one is a natural evil, the other a moral evil. Sin is not merely a physical evil, it is a moral evil and is punishable. Sin, either in saint or sinner, is a moral evil; but if you are correct in holding that the will is not concerned in our conduct, then you are correct in placing the cause of blame before our birth, and you may say before time so far as I am concerned.

Now I will call your mind to what you say of {1Pe 3:10} and {Php 2:1}. Your comment is "Neither of these apostles presents these exhortations as conditions uncertain of fulfillment; unsettling the sure covenant of grace. You certainly hold then that there was no uncertainty about their obeying. Let us notice these exhortations : In Philippians the exhortation you refer to reads, "Fulfill ye my joy, be like minded, being of one accord of one mind, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory." Were these exhortations obeyed by the apostles or early Christians, or are they obeyed by the Baptists now? Was there ever a period of time when God's people obeyed these exhortations entirely'? And so how can you speak of this as not uncertain of fulfillment? I am glad you admit the language to be conditional, as it certainly is if a conditional sentence could be found in the English language. Turn now to {1Pe 3:10}; For he that will love life and see good days let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile," etc. Now do God's people keep this command, and how is it any more certain of fulfillment than commands in the Old Testament were? You admit that some 'uncertainty attended the keeping of the commandments in that time. You say, °That was the form of the legal covenant," "and the conditional expressions made under that covenant are correctly quoted by you," but you reject conditional expressions from the new covenant on the ground that it would involve uncertainty in New Testament blessings. But how can a man who believes in the absolute predestination of all things hold that events are more certain at one period of the world than another? I am glad you admit that there was a moral government over Israel of old, even if you deny it now.

Perhaps you urge that love is all the fulfilling of the law required, but in answer to this I urge that scores of commands are given to those who love God. In this connection you say, "Neither is it of our will that we keep the commandments." I confess that the Ethiopian can not change his skin, etc., but what has this to do with our obedience? The Ethiopian can not change his skin, and this is a physical impossibility, and he is not to blame for not doing so, and if we are no more to blame for doing wrong than a negro is for being black, then you are right in denying the moral government of

God, and right in your article generally; and I did wrong in distinguishing between the moral and physical government of God, and it is no more of our will that we keep the commandments, than it is of the Ethiopian's will that he is black.

You say, "The word invite is never used by him nor concerning him in the Scriptures. He calls, and his call is always obeyed." Now read, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He appeals to them in Christ's stead. Is this always obeyed? And if our wills are in no sense connected with obedience, why does he use the words "beseech" and "pray"? If obedience is of God, just as regeneration is of God, or just as the raising of Lazarus was of God, how is it that Paul uses the words "beseech" and "pray" in urging to obedience, if it is of God as regeneration is of God? While the word "invite" is not used here, yet the words "beseech" and "pray" suggest as much dependence on the will as the word invite would suggest.

I never heard you exhort a congregation. We are told to "exhort young men to be sober minded." How would you do this? Certainly by putting before their minds some reason why they should do so, some benefit or advantage. If it be to glorify God, then this should be put before the young men as the great end they should aim at, and when this end is attained, then the reward is attained. It is not necessary to say, if we believe in placing rewards before the people of God, we put a carnal or fleshly reward before them, by no means. You can not exhort only as you present some end to be gained by the obedience you recommend, and that end is the reward you aim at. If you exhort by telling the people that their obedience will result in no reward of any kind, that the word "reward" does not mean in the New Testament what it does in other books, this would be no exhortation at all. We should exhort one another daily while it is called today. I insist that the word "exhort" suggests a dependence on the will of them exhorted, and it also places some kind of reward before the mind as an inducement to encourage to do the things desired. I do not know what authority you have for saying gospel rewards are not as other rewards are; in fact I deny your authority to change the meaning of words. It would be as wrong to take away the meaning of a word as it would be to "take away from the words of the prophecy of this book;" {Rev 22:18}. I know the meaning of the words reward, "if," obedience, "etc." I see that they are in your way and that you must do something to get rid of them before your theory can stand. They suggest that God's government of His people is moral, disciplinary, parental. They suggest that there is some end, comfort or delight that is in some sense conditional, aimed at by intelligent obedience, and this end, be it what it may, is the reward to be conditionally enjoyed, or attained. The word "if" denotes conditionality, and it is frequently used in the New Testament. You say, "The Savior and his apostles do not say, "If you will," but if you do. It is never used to show a dependence upon the will of the creature," etc. But the Savior and his apostles do say, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," etc. If some dependence is not here expressed, what sentence would express dependence on the will? Also, "If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," etc.

You say, "I have wondered why spiritually instructed men should try to apply them to gospel things which are all made new. That was the form of the conditional covenant, and the conditional expressions are correctly quoted by you." In this you admit that God's people were under a conditional state of things then, but not now, because things were not as certain then as now. How one can hold things uncertain under the old covenant, but certain now, and yet believe in the absolute predestination of all things, I can not see. "How spiritually taught persons can use the

same form of expression touching gospel things that were used under the law," you can 'not see.

If the Israel of old was a type of the church, will we not find some things in the church answering to the things of Israel then? The type for the letter B will not make X; and so, if under the type we find God to have a disciplinary government of Israel, which you admit to be conditional, will we not find something in the antitype answering to it, a parental government with its chastisements and rewards? We are not made heirs or sons by performing conditions, but does not God deal with us as sons, and chasten us when we go astray? You admit this order of things was in the type, and how can you deny its being in the antitype? ,But with many of them God was not well pleased. Now these things were our ensamples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." Read this entire 10th chapter of I Cor. Paul applies the same principle of government that God exercised.. over Israel of old to us and warns us to avoid their sins. You will not say he was not a spiritually instructed man, yet he plainly does what you hold no spiritually instructed man will do. See also {Heb 10:28}, "He that despised Moses' law died under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy?" etc. Here Paul again shows that the conditional covenant that Israel was under illustrates God's discipline over His people here, now, and shows that the antitype corresponds with the type. In conclusion I call your attention to {Heb 2:2-3}, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" etc. Here again Paul applies the principle that prevailed among the Jews to the gospel, and as you admit that to be conditional, how can you deny that there is the same parental and disciplinary government now for us? Your theory makes the first "if " in this text mean one thing and in the last to mean another. Paul not only applies the same principle that prevailed in the government of Israel, but he applies it in the same form of expression. He first described God's government of Israel as conditional, and in language you admit to be conditional, and then applies the same principle to the gospel, and does it in the same form of words, and even the same words, and he was spiritually instructed.

We may well warn our people, "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another. "

I have all my life heard Baptists affirm that regeneration is unconditional and independent of our choice. We become sons and heirs unconditionally, but as His sons we are under a parental or disciplinary government, which is conditional. We may be tried and even burned, but a good conscience can only be maintained by paying the price of its maintenance, and a good conscience is of great value. My own experience is, that doing\_ wrong is widely different from doing right. My dear brother, I would have been glad for your letter and my reply to have both been in the Signs, but you refuse to ask the Signs to print my reply, and also you reviewed and criticised my private letter to you in the Signs, placing your own construction on my letter to you. so that its readers will never see the letter you review. But I will not complain of your public review of my private letter.

I have been plain, but I have done what I esteemed as my duty in this matter. Your brother in hope,

J. H. OLIPHANT.

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

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