

AN ESSAY
ON THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD,

DEDICATED TO, AND A LEGACY FOR,

THE
BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST,

ON SUGAR CREEK, Y. D., S. C.

By their long standing Pastor,

JOHN ROOKER,

NOW IN THE 84TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

*By free and sovereign grace,
Exemption of all creature merit;
Or condemnation must surely be the case,
Whoso'er good works you may intend—J. Rooker.*

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PREFACE.

I shall here give a very short sketch of my life, and then the reason of my publishing the following treatise.

I was born the morning of the 12th of March, A. D. 1755, in Northumberland county, in the Northern Neck of Virginia; my father was a full blooded Irishman, although American born; my mother's father was of the Welsh descent, by the name of DAVIS; her mother was of the English descent, by the name of HAMMOND, among the first settlers of Virginia. I remained in Northumberland and Richmond counties until February, 1774, then came to Bule county, (now Warren,) in North Carolina, and served two years in the capacity of a teacher of reading, writing, and arithmetic. In March, 1776, went a volunteer soldier in the American army, against the Scotch tories, which were defeated. In August following, went a volunteer soldier to Kentucky, and warred against the Indians until October, 1777, then returned to Warren county, North Carolina, bought a wagon and team, drove them two years and sold them. On the 20th of April, 1780, married ANNA HAWKINS, daughter of JOHN HAWKINS, Esq. On the first day of September, 1782, joined the Baptist church in Warren county. North Carolina, and in April, 1783, began to preach. Novem-

ber, 1790, came to South Carolina, York district. In 1792, the first day of May, the Baptist church of Christ, called the Sugar Creek Church, was constituted by ABRAHAM MARSHALL, of Columbia county, Georgin, consisting of thirteen members, and on the same day five more joined, by a declaration of their faith in Christ JESUS. With them (so long as they lived,) I continued a member and a pastor, and with the rest ever since.

We were settled in the midst of a Presbyterian congregation, by whom we were much persecuted, although their minister, Dr. M'REE, ever treated me with politeness and friendship, whose urbanity is well known.

For the honor of God and His cause, I have written the following Essay, and for the instruction and comfort of His faithful people, that they may not be seduced by the abounding errors, superstition, bigotry, and delusive fallacy of the Papists, Unitarians, Universalists, Armenians, and Antinomians.

My earnest prayer is, that God may bless my feeble efforts for His declarative glory—the establishing of His people in truth—and I am fully rewarded. And to His great name shall be the praise and glory everlasting—AMEN.

ESSAY, &c.

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.—*Psaln xlv. 10.*

THE existence of God is clearly manifested by the works of Creation, Providence, and the Sacred Volume. How beautifully is His transcendent glory described in the 19th Psalm, where the concave surrounding the earth with its shining orbs, never varying from its annual and diurnal rotations, loudly declares the omnipotence and providence of Jehovah. The Psalmist, in the 8th Psalm, breaks forth in astonishment, and says, "How excellent is thy name in all the earth." His name is declared in his communicable attributes, *Wisdom, Power, Justice, Holiness, Truth, Mercy, and Love.* His power displayed at the Red Sea, when Moses bade Israel to stand still and see the salvation of God. God's power and providence in feeding Israel with manna through the wilderness forty years; also, His providence at Mount Sinai, where Jehovah condescended to be with Moses forty days and forty nights, giving him the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws, for the government of the Jews, until Shilo, or the blessed Jesus, came. Exodus 19, and 20th chapter. Again, what a display of God's providence and omnipotence in shielding His chosen tribes by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, for shade and light in all their meanderings in the barren sands in Arabin, under a vertical sun. Again, an astonishing display of His almighty power and providence at the river Jordan, in stopping its impetuous current, and causing it to stand as a heap, until all the host of Israel passed over, dry shod, on the borders of the promised land. Once more, His sovereign power in causing the walls of Jericho to fall prostrate at the sound of rams'

horns, shewing that He could work by such instruments.

What an astonishing display of the wisdom and power of Jehovah, in the formation of this earth on which we sojourn, with all things pertaining to it, with wonder and amazement, as far as our limited views will admit. We behold a beautiful variety of mountains and vallies, groves, rivers, and plains, a fertile soil clad with trees, shrubs, plants, and herbage, of various forms, sizes, and virtues—some for timber, some for regaling the senses, and some for medicine, some aromatic and odoriferous, some emetic, others cathartic, &c. &c.—all in a small plat of ground.

How surprising to behold the feathered tribes in their different size, hues, and qualities, cutting the air, and flying from sprig to sprig, with their vernal melodies and notes. With wonder we behold the fountains, rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans, in their windings—particularly the great mystery of the flux of the sea in its ebbing and flowing regularly every twelve hours, wherein are found innumerable animals of various sizes, hues, and forms, with their finny, scaly, and shelly coats—from the enormous whale down to the diminutive minnow—all of which, with the whole creation, is ascribed to the second person of the adorable Trinity.

From various passages of the Holy Scriptures this Almighty Sovereign is a triune God, composed of three persons, (or offices,) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal, and coessential.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a mysterious doctrine, which we could know nothing of were it not for the revelation in the Scriptures of revealed truth—but it is thus revealed—secret things belong to God—but things revealed belong to us and our children.

It is impossible for finite beings (and such are we,) to comprehend infinitude, and God is infinite, as in Isa. 9 and 6—"Unto us a child is born—a son is given—and the government shall be upon his shoulders. He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace."

John 1 and 1, 2, 3—and 1 John 5 and 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one."

Christ's human soul was the first created being—for it is said "He is the beginning of the creation of God." As it is further said, "He shall have the preeminence in all things." He was the first that arose from the dead. All of which proves Him to be the mighty God, the everlasting Father, &c. &c.

This mighty God bears the appellation of Jehovah, self-existing, (the incommunicable name of God,) which the ancient Hebrews held in such reverence, they did not pronounce it, but, instead of it, read the word Adonai.

It denotes the eternal existence of God, and it is explained in Rev. 1, 4, and 8, and 4, and 8, and 11, and 17.

Jehovah-Jireh, "The Lord will see or provide." Gen. 22, and 14. Jehovah-Nissi, "The Lord my banner." Exod. 17 and 15. Jehovah-Rophi, "The Lord healeth." Exod. 15 and 26. Jehovah-Shalom, "The Lord send peace." Jud. 6 and 24. Jehovah-Shammah, "The Lord is there." Ezek. 48 and 35. Jehovah-Tzidekenu, "The Lord our righteousness." Jer. 23 and 6. All these titles belong, and must be ascribed to the second person in the adorable Trinity. Jehovah-Jesus, who is coeternal, coessential, and equal, with the first person in the Trinity—His heavenly Father—and fully adequate to covenant with Him for the redemption of his chosen people.

In the redemption covenant, the Father gave the Son a select people, called the elect of God, with every necessary to bring them to a knowledge of their interest in this covenant in due time. Also, a body of human nature, pure and holy for the immaculate soul, to enter into, with all the fulness of the God-head, bodily; having all power in heaven and in earth.

The Son, on his part, agreed to become surety for the definite people given Him; to take on Him human nature, (as above,) to magnify the law and make

it honorable by fulfilling the precepts, and paying the penalty, by which He became the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe on Him.

The Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, prepares and brings the elect to a knowledge of their interest in the blessed covenant of redemption, which is clearly shewn by the following passages of the Holy Scriptures. Gen. 12, 1, 2, 3, and Gen. 17 and 11. "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin: and shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Rom 4 and 11. "Now he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." This we learn from Moses and Paul, who knew better than we do, that circumcision was not a covenant at all; but a token and sign of the covenant of redemption, for a sign is not the thing signified. Gen. 9, from the 8th verse down to the 17th verse. When God showed Noah the token of His covenant by a rainbow in the cloud.

Exod. 34 and 28 "And he (Moses) was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water: and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant: the ten commandments. And I said, I will never break my covenant with you." 1 Kings 19 and 10. "And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant." 2d Kings 13 and 23. "And the Lord was gracious unto them; and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them; because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." 1 Chron. 16 and 15. "Be ye mindful always of his covenant." Psalm 25 and 14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant. He will ever be mindful of his covenant." Isa. 42 and 6. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness; I will hold thy hand; I will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isa. 54 and 10. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not de-

part from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isa. 54 and 9. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto thee; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Isa. 56 and 4. "For thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in my house, and within my walls, a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." Isa. 59, 20 and 21. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." Jer. 31, 32, and 33. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Jacob, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they break, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant I will make with the house of Jacob, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and *will be their God, and they shall be my people.*"

Here we have a clear distinction between the abrogated covenant of *works*, and that of redemption by *faith in Christ*.

Zech. 9, 11. "As for thee also, by the blood of *thy* covenant I have sent forth *thy* prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Here, God the Father, speaking to God the Son, agrees according to promise, in the everlasting covenant, to send forth (or bring out) the people given to him in the covenant:

agreeing with Psalm 110 and 3. . " *Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.*" "For all power in heaven and in earth was committed into his hands," as in Matt. 28 and 18. Psalm 40 and 2. David sheweth the deplorable situation sinners are in, by a horrible pit; and that it is the power of God that extricates them, and not their own efforts.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews clearly shews, in beautiful contrast, the vast disparity between the two covenants—that of circumcision, and that of redemption—from the beginning to the end of the 10th chapter, shewing the insufficiency of the one, viz., circumcision, and the full sufficiency of the other: for Christ's atonement made a complete salvation for all believers. The first made nothing perfect, but the second, by one offering, forever perfects them that are sanctified, or set apart thereby.

The Triune Sovereign of the universe, after He had formed the earth and all things pertaining thereto, except man, said, "Let us" (in our united capacity as one God,) "make man in our image, after our likeness." Gen. 1 and 26. There we learn man was made in the image and likeness of God. Then he surely was innocent, holy, and harmless: and God gave him dominion over all animate and inanimate beings, to call them by what appellation he saw proper, and placed him in a very eligible situation, in the fertile and fruitful garden in Eden, where he might regale himself with all the delicacies and fruits thereof, except one tree only—giving him sufficient warning of the dreadful consequences of disobedience, even death, (temporal.) God also gave him a meet or fit, i. e., a suitable companion, to render him more completely happy, in which state or situation man could have sweet communion with his Creator, and his spouse, and was in amity with the whole creation; his mind was serene, tranquil, and calm. There was no fear, horror, or dread, upon him. There was peace, harmony, and union, with all animate creation, in their primitive rectitude. But, alas! alas! man by his disobedience fell from his primeval

state of glory, and became wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and horror and dread fell on his mind. He saw himself naked, and endeavored to clothe himself with fig leaves, and hide himself from the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God.

Adam, by rebellion, was thrust out of the most eligible spot of this torrefactive globe, to till a sterile field of thorns, thistles, &c., and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. His mind at enmity with and against the best of beings, with whom in rectitude he had sweet communion. His degenerate offspring became haters of God and of one another, like a set of gladiators, thirsting for, and brewing their hands in, each other's blood. Or, like a company of maniacs, raving and dancing in their chains. The beasts also, became ferocious, and devoured one another. Alas! what an awful change on all this lower creation. It would be entirely irrational to suppose that man is now in his primitive state, (as some deluded men do believe,) for it would be inconsistent with the nature of a good and gracious God to push such a set of dissipated beings into existence. Yet Jehovah, who is ever mindful of his covenant, condescends to look with compassion on his degenerate creature man, and gave him a gracious promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the beguiling serpent's head.

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity which God sends to reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, enlightening the dark understanding, subduing the perverse and stubborn will, and draw the obdurate affections from things earthly, sensual, (and what is worse,) devilish, and set them on things heavenly and divine, by clearly showing them that they are sinners under the curse and condemnation of God's righteous law, which causes them to retract their wicked ways and renounce their former conduct, and betake themselves to religious duties and solitude, with a determination resolving to do something to satisfy the demands of God's holy law, in order to screen themselves from His stern justice, and recommend them to the favor

and friendship of God. But, alas ! they ere long discover the innate evils of their hearts, which are desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, and full of the depravity and corruption of their fallen nature, which causes them almost to despair of ever being saved. Their actual sins, or evil practices, they can suppress, (except thoughts,) but to change their nature, or hearts, is entirely out of their power, which discovery brings them low at the feet of Jesus, and causes them to cry for mercy. They cannot see how a just and immutable God can save them. They read, without holiness no man can or shall see the Lord ; and without faith it is impossible to please Him ; and would go into keen despair, was it not for the everlasting arm underneath. In such extremity, or almost hopelessness, God is pleased to give the soul to see that Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every soul that believeth, and that He can be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus, who has, by his active and passive obedience brought in a righteousness consummate to the demands of justice. The soul having this view will lie at the feet of sovereign mercy, and cry, Lord, save or I perish. The devil and all his emissaries, (wicked men,) cannot drag or drive such a soul so enlightened, from the feet of the blessed Jesus. God will, at an unexpected moment, (to the soul,) enable it by faith to believe and rest on the blessed hope set before it, and feel an inexpressible love to God shed abroad in the heart, and greatly rejoice in his benign salvation. Such a soul may exclaim with the apostle Peter 1 and 1, 8 and 9. "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Isa. 12 and 1. "O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thy anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation : I will trust, and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation" Again, Isa. 61 and 10 "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation : He

hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.
Also, with the poet—

*"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear."*

With the poet Hart—

*"I'm rich, my Lord hath made me so;
Nor would I guess at riches know."*

The soul being brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, shall persevere unto the end, as clearly appears in John and Jude, and many other scriptures. John 6 and 37, 38, 39, and 40, and chapters 10, 17, &c. Job 17 and 9. "The righteous shall hold on his way." Job 13 and 15. "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." Psalm 11 and 3. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" 2 Tim. 2 and 19. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his" Psalm 87 and 1. "His foundation is in the holy mountains." Prov. 10 and 25. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation." Isa. 45 and 17. "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." In verse 25,—*"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."* John 6, 37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Verse 44. "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." Verse 54. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Verse 65. "And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my father." Prov. 24, 13, and 14. "My son, eat thou honey because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off." Here the wise king of Israel makes a comparison between the natural and supernatural palate.

It is well known that honey has a very agreeable taste—so wisdom, (which means Christ,) has to the believing souls, and their expectation is eternal glory, and has God's promise that it shall not be cut off. David says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." So the apostle, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, &c. Also, the prophet Isaiah 43 and 2. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." This was literally seen when Israel passed through the Red Sea and the river of Jordan. Also, the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, in the fiery furnace; so all God's chosen people; though they pass the floods of affliction and persecution, and all the fire of temptation, they shall safely come through, for a faithful God hath promised it. Prov. 24 and 16. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." Micah 7 and 8. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise; when I set in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me." John 6 and 37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and them that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." In this chapter the Lord hath declared four times, that he will raise up all that the Father gave him in the everlasting covenant between them, which clearly proves the doctrine of unconditional election and final perseverance of all his chosen people. John 10, 26, 27, 28, and 29. "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." 30th verse. "I and my Father are one." Rom. 8 and 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Gal. 4 and 6. "And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son unto your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Heb. 6, and 17, 18, 19, and 20. "Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Here we have God's oath and promise, both immutable; firmer than the heavens above, or the earth beneath, for the security and consolation of God's dear chosen and spiritual Israel.

Heb. 10 and 39. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul."

Thus, according to my judgment, (and I think the judgment of every judicious and scripture reading person,) I have, from scripture and sound logic, proved the sovereignty of the Triune God. His everlasting covenant of redemption for his elect in Christ Jesus, the depravity of fallen man, his recovery through grace by effectual calling, and final perseverance unto eternal glory and endless felicity.

HYMN.

1. What makes mistaken men afraid,
Of sov'reign grace to preach?
The reason is, (if truth be said,)
Because they are too rich.
2. Why so offensive in their eyes
Doth God's election seem?
Because they think themselves so wise,
That they have chosen him.
3. Of perseverance why so loth,
Are some to speak or hear?
Because, as masters over sloth,
They vow to persevere.
4. Whence is imputed righteousness,
A point so little known?
Because men think they all possess
Some righteousness their own.
5. Not so the needy helpless soul
Prefers his humble pray'r:
He looks to him that works the whole,
And seeks his treasure there.
6. His language is, "Let me my God,
"On sovereign grace rely:
"And own 'tis free, because bestowed
"On one so vile as I.
7. "Election! 'tis a word divine;
"For, Lord, I plainly see,
"Had not thy choice prevented mine,
"I ne'er had chosen thee.
8. "For perseverance, strength I've none,
"But would on this depend,
"That Jesus having lov'd his own,
"He lov'd them to the end.
9. "Empty and bare I come to thee,
"For righteousness divine:
"O may thy matchless merits be,
"By imputation, mine!"
10. Thus differ those, yet hoping each
To make salvation sure:
Now meet men would approve the rich,
But Christ has blest the poor.

Dear beloved brethren—Having given you the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, I will now admonish you to read the Holy Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments, with care and earnest prayer to God ; to give you seeing eyes, hearing ears, and obedient spirits to his heavenly counsels ; that you may be able to admonish one another to love and to good works, ever endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and to maintain good works for necessary uses, that God may be glorified, and you have a conscience void of offence. Look well to the 18th chapter of the gospel by St. Matthew ; the 12th chapter of the epistle to the Romans ; the 12th and 13th of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; the 2d chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians ; and the 4th to the Galatians ; together with all the Epistles. There you may be taught how to demean yourselves in every station of life that God in his providence may place you.

Be careful to keep a strict gospel discipline in the church. When discipline is neglected, churches decline and become like the Lacedæmon church, with many others, and thereby have their candlestick removed, and become extinct, which is a sadful thing. Be careful to give due attention to your church covenant engagements, in all your leisure time from lawful secular concerns ; be closely engaged in prayer, reading, and meditation ; be careful to see that proper attention be paid to your minister and the poor in the Church ; live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you ; resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you ; use all diligence to make your calling sure. Add to your faith, virtue ; to virtue, knowledge ; to knowledge, temperance ; to temperance, patience ; to patience, godliness ; to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity. If these things be in you and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May God of his infinite mercy, enable you so to do, that you may have your evidences bright for immortal glory. And may He bless my feeble labor for your furtherance in the divine life, and His praise and glory in the sincere prayer of your aged servant,

J. ROOKER.

August 5th, 1830.