

# THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE IN THE LIFE OF JAMES A. HARDING

By Bradley S. Cobb<sup>1</sup>

Before being asked to speak on this topic, I knew basically nothing about James A. Harding. I *assumed* Harding University was named for him, but didn't know it for certain. I had no idea that he co-founded the Nashville Bible School, which is now known by the name "Lipscomb University," along with David Lipscomb. And I had no idea that researching for this lecture would so radically change my thinking on the doctrine of Providence.

Not knowing Harding's views on the issue, I first assumed I was supposed to go through his life and find things that I thought (or that he thought) were providential. But as I read through his biography,<sup>2</sup> the topic became obvious. To quote Dabney Phillips:

The deep trust in God that motivated the evangelist James A. Harding was perhaps equaled by few pioneer gospel preachers. He possessed an unwavering belief in God's providence, a faith that led him to give his life [to] preaching and teaching the gospel, after receiving little financial compensation for his work.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Background Information***

To set the stage and give some quick background information, James A. Harding was born in 1848, in Winchester, KY, the oldest son of James W. and Mary Harding.<sup>4</sup> His parents' home welcomed regularly "such men as Alexander Campbell..., Barton W. Stone..., Benjamin Franklin, editor of the *American Christian Review*, David Lipscomb..., John T. Johnson, Aylette Rains, Moses E. Lard,"<sup>5</sup> and many others.

Soon after his baptism, James W. Harding began preaching to some smaller congregations around their home. Moses E. Lard came to preach a meeting in Winchester, and shortly before the meeting, he looked to James W., and told him, "Brother Harding, you are going to preach tonight." After some back-and-forth, he did get up and preach, and five requested to be immersed into Christ. This created in him a confidence to spread the gospel, and over time, he turned over management of his business to others so he could spend more time evangelizing.<sup>6</sup> He was already "a successful gospel preacher before the birth of his son."<sup>7</sup> James A. Harding later said of him:

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was presented as a lecture at the 2024 Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship. It will appear in print in *The Quarterly: A Magazine for the Church of Christ*, Vol. 8, No. 2, April 2024.

<sup>2</sup> *The Eyes of Jehovah: The Life and Faith of James Alexander Harding* by Lloyd Cline Sears (his grandson-in-law)

<sup>3</sup> Phillips, Dabney, *Restoration Principles and Personalities* (University, AL: Youth in Action, Inc., 1975), p. 263.

<sup>4</sup> Sears, Lloyd Cline, *The Eyes of Jehovah: The Life and Faith of James Alexander Harding* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1970), pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Boles, H. Leo, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1932). Pp. 364-365.

My father, J.W. Harding, is in his seventy-eighth year, and still preaches constantly. He travels twelve thousand miles every year and leads many people to Christ... Few people have ever been so kind and thoughtful to aged and infirm parents as he has been to his mother and stepfather; and the Lord has not forgotten. He never forgets his promises.<sup>8</sup>

The last part of that quote forms the entire basis for James A. Harding's view on God's providence: *God never forgets His promises*.

At thirteen years old, James A. Harding was baptized by Moses E. Lard. At eighteen years old, he attended Bethany College, the college created by Alexander Campbell, though brother Campbell had passed on to his reward earlier that year.<sup>9</sup> He finished the four-year course in just three years.<sup>10</sup>

Once, when he was 26 years old, he was asked to preach a "protracted meeting." He balked at the idea, saying he "had no evangelistic sermons." This didn't sit well with the brother who had asked him.

"No sermons!" Adams exclaimed, in disgust. "Why, you have been brought up in the church all your life. You have also attended Bethany College and have your degree. You have been preaching since you were nineteen. If you can't hold a meeting, you ought to be shot. Now shut your mouth, get your horse, and come on out and hold that meeting."<sup>11</sup>

After the death of his infant son, followed soon after by the death of his first wife due to tuberculosis, he dedicated all his time to preaching the gospel wherever he had the opportunity. H. Leo Boles says of him:

His field of activities gradually widened until his labor were almost nation-wide. For seventeen years he labored wholly in evangelistic work. During this time he preached on average about ten sermons in a week. Oftentimes for months he would preach two sermons a day. He traveled in twenty-two States and in two provinces of Canada. His travels extended from Winnipeg to Florida and from New York to Texas. ... During these seventeen years he held more than three hundred protracted meetings of more than three weeks' duration. ... One year he spent six and one-half months in meetings in Nashville."<sup>12</sup>

Here's the part that's important to our topic. During this time, Harding *never asked for money from the churches*. His belief in God's providence was too strong for him to do that, which to him would show a lack of faith in God's promises.

Harding believed in a "special providence." He never preached for a "stipulated" income. However, he increased his giving eleven times, so that toward the end of his life, he gave sixty percent of his income to the Lord. One well-known quotation from Harding was, "My

---

<sup>8</sup> Sears, *The Eyes of Jehovah*, pp. 4-5, most likely quoted from *The Christian Leader and the Way*, the religious periodical which James A. Harding co-edited.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Boles, *Biographical Sketches*, pp. 365-366.

work contract is found in Matthew 6:33.”<sup>13</sup>

Even during his time with Nashville Bible College as President, then as Superintendent, and later as President of Potter Bible College, he “never accepted salaries... only room and board.”<sup>14</sup>

This might seem odd and extreme—and as much as I admire it, I admit I would have a massively difficult time following through with those convictions (“the laborer is worthy of his hire”). But this all ties in to Harding’s belief in providence. So let’s consider the topic.

### ***Different Kinds of Providence***

In an article from 1904, where he opposed some statements of David Lipscomb, Harding made a distinction between general providence and what he called “special providence.”

What is meant by “special providence”? A providence is a providing; a special providence is a special providing; a general providence, a general providing. For instance, God has said: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22).<sup>15</sup> This is a clear case of general providence. Now read the story of the bringing back of the ark from the land of the Philistines (1 Sam. 5-6) for notable illustrations of special vengeance and special providence. Two milch cows, that had never been broken to work, were hitched to a cart on which the ark of God was. Their sucking calves were taken from them to their homes. And the cows left their homes and their calves, being without drivers, and without turning to the right hand or to the left they went straight to Israel, to Beth-shemesh. This is a clear case of special providence. In some way that we understand not, God influenced those cows to take that ark home.<sup>16</sup>

After quoting many of the promises of God, Harding went on to point out:

These promises seem to me to be simple, clear, unmistakable. To my mind, they teach beyond the possibility of a doubt that if a man believes in God, becomes a member of his kingdom, his church, and works for this kingdom with all diligence, he will be fed and clothed, supplied with all things needful. And this applies to the wife as well as to the husband, to the pew as well as to the pulpit, to parent and child, to the poorest widow as well as to the richest deacon. It applies to all the children of God in proportion to their trust in him and their devotion to the interests of his cause. If a man trusts in God, but does not work for his kingdom, he has not complied with the conditions, and even the trust is defective; if he works for the kingdom, but does not trust in God for the blessing, he has not complied with the conditions; and even his works are not what they ought to be; he need not expect the blessing.<sup>17</sup>

He concludes the article by saying:

If the passages quoted in this article, and the hundreds of others like them scattered through-

---

<sup>13</sup> Phillips, *Principles and Personalities*, p. 265.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> All verse references in this article have been updated to modern usage. The original here, for example, read Gen. viii. 22.

<sup>16</sup> *The Christian Leader and the Way*, Vol. 18, No. 11 (March 15, 1904), pp. 8-9. See complete article in Appendix A.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

out the whole Bible, mean what they say, then whosoever enters God's holy church and faithfully devotes his life to the study of his Word and to the building up of his kingdom, will be cared for; God himself is pledged to see that he is.

The covenant, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," is good; and, every one who believes in truth, and is baptized in fact is saved, forgiven. Just so the covenant, "Seek ye first the kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," is just as good and just as universal. There never was a failure, on God's part, in either one of these, nor can there ever be. He could no more lie in the one case than in the other; and to fail in the one case would be just as much a lie as in the other.

So for Harding the word "providence" means simply "providing." And if we take this rather obvious definition as our guide, then perhaps our ideas about "providence" would be much clearer, biblically. Jesus said God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and the rain to fall on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45). This is God providing something for all mankind. We almost never use the word "providence" to describe this general action, but that is what it is.

But what about *special* providence? This was Harding's way of saying that God has made promises to take care of His faithful followers (Matthew 6:33), and any way He does that is His special providence, promised and provided only to faithful, dedicated, active Christians.

### ***Trusting in God's Promises vs. Trusting in Money***

Harding's view of providence also caused him to have a different view of money than most today. Early in his full-time evangelistic work, a wealthy friend once told him, "I cannot preach, but I can make money. That is my gift. You can preach, but evangelizing as you do, you will not receive much money. So just let me know when you need any money, and I will be glad to let you have it."<sup>18</sup>

That sounds like a great deal, right? Harding thought so for a while. He took the man up on the offer and told him he would pay back the \$25 in sixty days. The man said he'd rather give him fifty, and that it wasn't a loan, it was a gift. Harding said:

Numbers of times I went to him for money and he always let me have it with pleasure. But after a while my mind was especially attracted to the verses in the Phillipian letter: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God . . . And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."<sup>19</sup>

...I had been trusting to man rather than to God and ... henceforth I expected to go to the Lord with my wants, and look to him for what I might need.<sup>20</sup>

His radical trust in God's providence rubbed some people the wrong way. For instance, this was one of his main objections to the Missionary Society, which "had recently been organized, as its sponsors claimed, partly to give ministers financial security."<sup>21</sup> In addition, they would be in

---

<sup>18</sup> Sears, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38,

charge of directing where the ministers would work. He would later say, “For my part, I had rather look to the Father for support and trust him to direct the work.”<sup>22</sup>

His stance gave many the distinct impression that he was saying located preachers were not trusting in God, but were instead trusting in man. He clarified his meaning, in essence saying it is fine for a person or a congregation to decide to pay a preacher for doing “his duty diligently to God in discharge of his proper work as a preacher... He should not, however, make the performance of his duty conditional upon their promise to pay.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, he encouraged men to preach, trusting in God to care for their needs, and if the church is the vessel that God chooses to use, fantastic—but if they aren’t able to pay, preach just the same. It was the pre-arranged agreement for salaries that, to him, showed a lack of faith in God.

But this still didn’t satisfy many, who “felt it was a reflection on them. . . some spread reports that Harding received secret support, that he preached for wealthy churches, or that he was an outright hypocrite.”<sup>24</sup>

He replied that his previous month’s evangelistic work had cost, in travel and advertising, \$37.10. In total, he had been given \$1.50 from the congregations. He then explained that one couple he and his song-leader had stayed with had handed them \$13, and a Christian had mailed a check for \$25, while another man had given them \$10—giving them enough to cover the expenses, and to get to their next meeting. He then said:

If I had needed more money I would have received it. It is not necessary for a man to carry money about in his pockets that he has no need for; the Father furnishes it as it is needed. He always sends a sufficiency too, and sends it by the time it is needed, though sometimes my faith almost gives way. It is hard to wait undoubtingly when you are hundreds of miles from home, without a dollar, preaching in a little log school house back in the woods among half a dozen or so of brethren, every one of whom is poor, and every one of whom thinks that you, being a Kentuckian from the “Blue Grass,” are rich—it is hard to trust unfalteringly under such circumstances, especially when at such a time a letter comes from one’s wife, saying, “My money is about gone, and I don’t expect you can send me any, but if I can get some sewing, I will try to run matters here for a while.” Your meeting closes. You start for the train without money enough to pay your way to the next point (unless you borrow or make your wants known, neither of which should be done). Upon reaching the station, where is also the post office, you receive a check for \$25, and then a letter from your wife, saying, “I have received a few dollars from an old debt of yours, and have made a little money sewing, and therefore, my dear, you need not be disturbed about me.”

His parenthetical thought, “unless you borrow or make your wants know, neither of which should be done,” gives us an insight into Harding’s view of providence. He wasn’t opposed to accepting money from brethren, as he considered it an incident of God’s special providence. But he was truly opposed to *asking for* money, because he believed it showed a lack of faith in the promises of God.

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

### ***Concluding Thoughts***

The hardest thing about doing a lecture like this is not the research (which I really do enjoy), but deciding what to leave in and what to take out. There are so many examples and quotes from his biography, as well as from the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*, and *The Way*, and *The Christian Leader and the Way*—if I had included all I wanted to, I'd never be invited back.

In 1910, L.S. White challenged his friend Harding to a written debate on the issue of “Trusting in God,” to which Harding agreed. He said:

It is a question which many very good Christians have failed to study thoroughly, and, as a result, they have missed much of the peace and joy of the Christian's life and much of its usefulness.

Harding did not believe you had to understand God's special providence to be saved. But he says your life would be much richer and full of peace if you did. For him, the matter was simple: God made promises to the faithful Christian—do you believe Him or not?

To trust God is to hear what he says, believe him, and do what he tells you, being assured that he will fulfill his promises. When these conditions are fulfilled, the promises are always promptly given. There never was a failure in such a case; nor can there ever be because God “can not lie.”<sup>25</sup>

This is a belief he lived by, and never had cause to abandon it.

When countered that even Paul had hunger, nakedness, beatings, etc., Harding affirmed that trials are required to help us grow—and thus God is providing for us still. James agrees:

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse trials, knowing that the trying of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2-3)*

In the end, I find myself *mostly* agreeing with brother Harding. Throughout the years, my family has never gone hungry, and there have been more than a few times when financial blessings just seem to appear out of nowhere when we need it most. But because God does not give direct messages to people, telling them to go give money or loan a truck to someone, they may never know of the need—unless we share our struggles with each other.

May we all resolve to trust God more, for He cares for us, and will provide for us if we “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

---

<sup>25</sup> Harding, James A., “Harding – White Discussion: Harding's Second Article,” *The Christian Leader and the Way*, April 26, 1910, p. 9.

APPENDIX A:  
THE JAPAN MISSIONARIES AND SPECIAL PROVIDENCE  
(BY JAMES A. HARDING)<sup>26</sup>

What is meant by "special providence"? A providence is a providing; a special providence is a special providing; a general providence, a general providing. For instance, God has said: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).<sup>27</sup> This is a clear case of general providence. Now read the story of the bringing back of the ark from the land of the Philistines (1 Sam. 5-6) for notable illustrations of special vengeance and special providence. Two milch cows, that had never been broken to work, were hitched to a cart on which the ark of God was. Their sucking calves were taken from them to their homes. And the cows left their homes and their calves, being without drivers, and without turning to the right hand or to the left they went straight to Israel, to Bethshemesh. This is a clear case of special providence. In some way that we understand not, God influenced those cows to take that ark home. Observe the fact that no man connected with the case had any more miracle-working power than you or I. No miracle was wrought by, or through, any man in this case. But in some way that we can not explain those cows were influenced to take that ark home.

Before the apostles cast lots for a successor to Judas Iscariot, they prayed: "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:24-25). Doubtless these two men were the only ones who had the qualifications (see verses 21 and 22), and they wanted the Lord to decide between them as to which should become an apostle; and, doubtless, he did it. Just as he influenced those cows in a way incomprehensible to us, so he influenced the casting of the lots.

Hundreds of illustrations of this working of God, that is so incomprehensible to us, could easily be given from the Old and New Testaments. The following are a few of the many hundreds, that could be given: God influenced Absalom to reject the wise counsel of Ahithophel, and to follow the foolish counsel of Hushai, to his own destruction, in answer to David's prayer. Read 2 Sam. 15:30 to 17:14. Notice especially David's prayer (15:31) and its answer (17:14). Read the story of Joshua's battle with Amalek (Exod. 17:8-16). Though Moses was far away on the top of the hill, as long as he held up his hand, Israel prevailed; but when he let down his wearied hand, Amalek prevailed. So Aaron and Hur held up his hands,

---

<sup>26</sup> This article appeared in *The Christian Leader and the Way*, Vol. 18, No. 11 (March 15, 1904), pages 8-9. We have made slight changes in the formatting (verse references, Bible quotations, and quotations from other sources are set apart), but not in the content.

<sup>27</sup> All verse references in this article have been updated to modern usage. The original here, for example, read Gen. viii. 22.

while he sat on a stone, till the sun set; and Joshua gained a great victory. In this case also God influenced men in ways that we can not understand. While Moses' hands were up, he gave success to Israel; when they were down, he gave success to Amalek.

Notice how Abraham got a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24). No man of sound mind can read the story, and believe it, without seeing and believing that here is a notable case of special providence. No sensible man can doubt this without doubting the truthfulness of the story. If God did not specially provide in the selecting of Rebecca, the story is manifestly fictitious. It is one of those pious lies which make the Bible so much more delightful to the destructive critics than it used to be when they thought it was all truth of God. Queer folks, those critics! I do not see how any right-minded person could take more pleasure in pious, benevolent lies (if there are any such things) than in God's pure truth.

Every seventh year was a sabbath for the land under the law. In it there was no sowing, no reaping; the land was to be idle. Every fiftieth year was a jubilee; in it also there was to be no sowing, no reaping, no gathering of grapes, and so on. This brought two years together in which the land was to lie idle. What would the children of Israel do for food? Listen! God talked to them thus: "If ye shall say, 'What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase'; then will I command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, ye shall eat the old store" (Lev. 25:20-22). Here was a strange thing: Every time the sabbatical year and the jubilee came together, as long as Israel was faithful, God caused the earth to produce enough in the sixth year to last for three years. A marvelous special providence.

Another, fully as amazing, was this: Three times every year, (1) at the feast of the passover, (2) of pentecost, and (3) of tabernacles, all the males among the Jews were to appear before Jehovah and his sanctuary. This, of course, left the remote parts of Israel fully exposed to any enemy who might choose to invade it. The wives, children, and possessions could easily have been taken, they were defenseless, had not God made provision for them at these particular times. He said: "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year." See Exod. 22-24. Jehovah so influenced the hearts of Israel's most bitter enemies, that they had no desire to take their lands at these times. A marvelous special providence! I believe one could easily find a thousand cases of special providence in the Old Testament. The lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, Saul, David, and his sons who reigned after him, are full of illustrations of special providence and special vengeance. They were written for our learning that we may know God richly blesses those who put their trust in him, and that he curses those who turn from him. The world does not see this, because it looks at everything in a false light. It calls a man prosperous whether he is sick or well, happily married or cursedly married, blessed by good children or cursed by bad ones, if only he has much money and is making much more. "Oh," say these money-worshippers, "he is doing so well; he is very prosperous; he made a thousand dollars last week." They do not think of his dyspepsia, of his drunken son, his quarrelsome wife, nor of the curses of the poor whom he has oppressed. It is not possible for any man, whether rich or poor, to be happy, if he lives a selfish life. The more like Christ a man is, the fuller of "love, joy, peace; long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control," he is; for this is the fruit of the Spirit. (See Gai. 5:22-24.) To such a man



these words of God surely apply: "To them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

These reflections have been suggested by an article which appeared in the Gospel Advocate of February 18, written by Brother Lipscomb. The judgment had been expressed in that paper that a number of churches were able and willing to support evangelists in the field, if suitable men could be found to go. Brother Smith published the necessities of Brother Bishop and his need of help, as evidence that the churches were not willing and ready to give. Brother Lipscomb does not think this case proves the unwillingness of the churches, but he accounts for it thus:

We have not had the least confidence in the success of the methods adopted by these missionaries in Japan. They have boasted that they trusted in the Lord, and did not look to his churches or his people, through whom God works, to help them. To reject or neglect God's means of doing a work is to reject God himself. So we teach on other subjects, and so we believe in this. God promises to bless a Christian blacksmith in this world's goods; but the promise is fulfilled by making the Christian blacksmith a more prompt and faithful workman, and more steady and economical in his habits, than the blacksmith not a Christian. If he is this, he will prosper more than the unchristian one. If the blacksmith's religion does not make him a better smith and a more reliable and economical man than his unchristian fellow-craftsman, God does not propose to help him. On the other hand, God says that if a Christian will not work, neither shall he eat. This does not sound much like helping him unless he helps himself. A man must use the means God has provided, or God will not bless him.

I am sure Brother Lipscomb misunderstands, and hence misrepresents, the brethren in Japan. They do not "boast" that they trust in the Lord, nor do they expect God's blessings except through the means which he has ordained, and upon their compliance with the conditions which he has prescribed. Nor are they idle good-for-naughts, lounging around doing nothing. They are diligently laboring to build up the kingdom of God. They are working faithfully for God, and therefore they expect to eat.

These brethren believe that if they will trust in God, and do good, they will be fed. They believe they will be fed without their being persistent beggars. And they rely upon such words of God as these:

*"Trust in Jehovah and do good;  
Dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.  
Delight thyself also in Jehovah;  
And he will give thee the desires of thy heart" (Psa. 37:3-4)*

If they comply with the conditions, they will get the blessing.

Brother Lipscomb says: "I tried to get the brethren to lay their work before the churches, and to get them to contribute regularly to the work. They thought this was asking the churches to go God's security to perform his promises." Well, it does look a little like that to me, especially when I consider the matter in the light of such Scriptures as these:

*"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. . . And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7, 9).*

*“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:21-22).*

*“Seek ye not what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Yet seek ye his kingdom and these things shall be added to you” (Luke 12:29-31).*

These promises seem to me to be simple, clear, unmistakable. To my mind, they teach beyond the possibility of a doubt that if a man believes in God, becomes a member of his kingdom, his church, and works for this kingdom with all diligence, he will be fed and clothed, supplied with all things needful. And this applies to the wife as well as to the husband, to the pew as well as to the pulpit, to parent and child, to the poorest widow as well as to the richest deacon. It applies to all the children of God in proportion to their trust in him and their devotion to the interests of his cause. If a man trusts in God, but does not work for his kingdom, he has not complied with the conditions, and even the trust is defective; if he works for the kingdom, but does not trust in God for the blessing, he has not complied with the conditions; and even his works are not what they ought to be; he need not expect the blessing.

I have great confidence that Brother Lipscomb will fulfill any financial obligation which he may take upon himself. If he were to say to a young preacher, "If you will devote your time for a year to preaching in the most destitute and the poorest fields you can find, I will see you get fifty dollars each month," I would confidently expect the young man to get the money if he did the preaching. If I should find him spending weeks at a time visiting rich churches, persuading them to give liberally to Brother Lipscomb each month that he might be sure to furnish the fifty dollars, I would say to him: "You are losing time; you are breaking your part of the contract; you are showing a lack of faith in Brother Lipscomb; and if he finds out what you are doing, you will not be likely to get the fifty per month."

Brother Lipscomb talks as though the preacher should trust in both God and the churches, and be careful to make covenants with both. It is all right for them to trust God, provided they can induce the churches to become systematic givers to their work, he seems to think. But if they trust God, but endeavor to make no such arrangements with the churches, he has "not the least confidence" in the success of their methods. Had that young man referred to in the preceding paragraph refused to preach in the poor, destitute fields until he had induced a number of churches to contribute to his support through Brother Lipscomb, he would have manifested a lack of confidence in him, and would have freed him from the obligation to give fifty dollars each month. Just so, if a preacher will not go into a destitute field to work till some church or man who has the cash guarantees his support, he shows he does not believe what God has plainly said. He is putting his trust in man, not in God. And this reminds me of the passage that it behooves us to remember. It reads thus:

*"Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah. For he shall be like the beast in the desert, and shall not see when*

*good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose trust Jehovah is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots by the river, and shall not fear when heat cometh, but its leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drouth, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jer. 17:5-8).*

*“Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his loving kindness” (Psa. 147:11).*

If those brethren in Japan, McCaleb, Fujimori and Bishop, have their eyes turned from God and learn to trust more and more in men, we may expect them to come to want and, very likely, hire out to some missionary society; but if they trust in God, and with cheerful, happy hearts work for his kingdom, God will see to it that they are cared for. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

*“Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in anywise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say,*

*‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear:*

*What shall man do unto me?’*

*Remember them, that had the rule over you [the faithful ones of the olden time], men that spake unto you the Word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and forever” (Heb. 13:5-8).*

If the passages quoted in this article, and the hundreds of others like them scattered throughout the whole Bible, mean what they say, then whosoever enters God’s holy church and faithfully devotes his life to the study of his Word and to the building up of his kingdom, will be cared for; God himself is pledged to see that he is.

The covenant, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” is good; and, every one who believes in truth, and is baptized in fact is saved, forgiven. Just so the covenant, “Seek ye first the kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,” is just as good and just as universal. There never was a failure, on God’s part, in either one of these, nor can there ever be. He could no more lie in the one case than in the other; and to fail in the one case would be just as much a lie as in the other.

My hope for the missionaries in Japan is that they may put their trust in God, not in man; that they may look to God, not to man; leave it to him to send the means that you may give all your time to the work.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boles, H. Leo, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate) 1932.

*The Christian Leader and the Way* (James A. Harding, editor) 1904-1910

Phillips, Dabney. *Principles and Personalities in the Restoration Movement* (University, AL: Youth in Action Inc.) 1975.

Sears, Lloyd Cline. *The Eyes of Jehovah: The Life and Faith of James A. Harding* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company) 1970.