

**Ten Reasons NOT To Reject Word-of-Faith Teachings**  
**A Response to the tract written by Tricia Tillin Titled “Ten Reasons To Reject**  
**Word-of-Faith Teachings”**

**Reason 2: It Promotes the Promise-Keeping God Who is Faithful to His**  
**Covenant**

Arthur W. Pink, who wrote (in my opinion) one of the worst dissertations on God’s sovereignty,<sup>1</sup> added some balance to the subject when he later wrote, “It is a very great and serious mistake to conceive of the sovereignty of God as swallowing up all His perfections, and to attribute all His actions unto the mere exercise of His imperial will.”<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the mistake that Tillin and other Word-Faith critics make when they emphasize God’s sovereignty and omnipotence above His faithfulness and integrity.

It’s possible that Tillin’s understanding of sovereignty leans towards Calvinism, though I cannot be certain of this. Hyper-calvinism rejects the fact that when God created man, He gave him a nearly unlimited amount of autonomy, and made man a co-ruler with Him (Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:5, 6; see also Luke 10:17-20; Rom. 5:17; Eph. 2:6).

By making this decision, God, to some degree, placed limitations on Himself. The Arminian theologian, Jack Cottrell says, “In a sovereign act of self-limitation God thus limited the way in which he would exercise his own authority over the world.”<sup>3</sup> This demonstrates the Arminian/Wesleyan influence on Word-Faith teachings.<sup>4</sup>

God has sovereignly chosen to allow men to influence Him by their actions. Those who embrace a hyper-Calvinist view of God’s sovereignty deny that the actions of men have an effect on God in spite of the Bible’s teaching that He desires to have reciprocal relationships with man (Ex. 32:9-14; 2 Kings 20:1-7; Isa. 1:18-20; 43:25, 26; Jer. 18:7-10; Micah 6:2; Matt. 7:7-11; Mark 11:25, 26; James 1:5; 4:2, 8; and others).

Because God has sovereignly chosen to have reciprocal relationships with men, He has made covenant promises and invites us to claim them (1 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:12; 11:33; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4). He has made these promises dependent upon our faith and prayer (2 Chron. 7:14; Ezek. 36:37; Matt. 7:7-11; 21:21, 22; Mark 9:23; 11:24; Heb. 11:6; James 1:5-7; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14, 15). If we do not pray and believe, we should not expect to receive (Mark 6:5, 6; James 1:5-7; 4:2).

To encourage our participation in these reciprocal relationships, God has bound Himself by covenant to perform the very promises that He has made (Psalm 89:33-36; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:12-19). Because of His holiness and integrity, God cannot lie (Ps. 89:35). Therefore, once He makes a statement, He is bound to its performance when His conditions are met (Num. 23:19). God makes a binding oath concerning His promise in order to strengthen our faith:

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<sup>1</sup> Pink, Arthur W. **The Sovereignty of God**, Accessed at <http://www.pbministries.org/books/>

<sup>2</sup> Pink, Arthur W. **Practical Christianity**, Chapter 13: *Enjoying God's Best*, Accessed at <http://www.pbministries.org/books/> (Last accessed: 24 February, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Cottrell, Jack **What The Bible Says About God The Ruler** (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1984), p. 119. It is to be noted that Cottrell is critical of some elements of faith teaching (see pp. 146-150).

<sup>4</sup> For example, Hagin writes, “Years ago I read a statement John Wesley made and it stayed with me. Wesley said, ‘It seems God is limited by our prayer life – that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him.’” See Hagin, Kenneth E. **The Art of Prayer**, 1992, p. 57

*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 upon the hope set before us: (Heb. 6:17, 18)*

Verse 18 in the New Living Translation says, “God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind.” An oath is “a statement by which people give assurance that they have spoken the truth or by which they obligate themselves to perform certain actions.”<sup>5</sup> God binds Himself to His promises and actually performs them (Jer. 1:12; Luke 1:38-45; Rom. 4:21). Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist and, ironically, a Calvinist, said the following:

Moreover, on the throne of grace, God is again bound to us by His promises. The covenant contains in it many gracious promises, exceeding great and precious promises. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt. 7:7). Until God said that word or a word to that effect, it was at His own option to hear prayer or not, but it is not so now. If true prayer is offered through Jesus Christ, His truth binds Him to hear it. A man may be perfectly free, but the moment he makes a promise he is not free to break it; and the everlasting God will not break His promise. He delights to fulfill it.<sup>6</sup>

Tillin accuses the faith teachers of proclaiming the Creator as “... a weak 'faith-being' who is at the mercy of His own universal laws.” Yet, God has settled His Word in Heaven and has magnified it above His very name (Psalm 119:89; 138:2). The critics who adhere to a meticulous view of God’s sovereignty believe that God is “above” keeping His Word. In His sovereignty He can decide not to keep His promises and do the opposite of that which He promised. Yet, God has said that He cannot lie; therefore He is obligated to perform His Word when conditions are met.

If mere humans did what the “sovereignty” doctrine does with God, we would not call them *sovereign* but *liars, covenant breakers, unreliable, and unpredictable*. Yet, when these things are attributed to God, we prefer to call this “sovereignty.” Spurgeon wrote, “When I come to God in Christ, to God on the mercy seat, I need not imagine that by any act of sovereignty God will set aside His covenant. That is impossible.”<sup>7</sup>

Word-Fathers believe that God is true to His Word and that, though He is *sovereign*, He is also a *Covenant Keeping God*. Copeland acknowledged that, “God is sovereign. But a sovereign God has given us His sovereign promise.”<sup>8</sup> This principle of sovereignty and covenant cooperation is seen in Ezekial 36:37: “*Thus saith the Lord*

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<sup>5</sup> Achtemeier, Paul J. (Editor) **Harper’s Bible Dictionary** (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), p. 716

<sup>6</sup> Spurgeon, Charles **The Power of Prayer in a Believer’s Life** (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books), pp. 27-28

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Copeland, Kenneth **You Do Have a Say**, Found [here](#). Commenting on John 5, Kenneth Hagin wrote concerning God’s sovereignty, “You see, God initiated something on His own. *He is a sovereign being*. If He wanted to send an angel down there by an act of *His divine sovereignty*, trouble the waters, and heal somebody that way, He could. He didn't have to write to someone on earth to endorse it!” (**Seven Things You Should Know About Divine Healing**, p. 57)

*GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*” Boldly claiming God’s promises does no damage to His omnipotence and sovereignty since He was the One who established this procedure.

This boldness in taking God at His Word and claiming His promises has been referred to as the *law of faith* (Rom. 3:27; Heb. 11:6). Because faith is associated with power, some faith teachers speak of the “force of faith” (Mark 11:23; Eph. 1:19). Due to the Faith teachers’ belief that we can hold God to His promises and boldly claim them, Tillin and others accuse them of teaching “laws which even God has to obey in order to create and run His universe.”

Yet it was God who *sovereignly* obligated Himself to His promises and made them conditioned upon our faith and prayer. God Himself has established the *laws of reciprocity*, which are mentioned throughout Scripture (Job 4:8; Prov. 1:31; 11:18; Hosea 8:7; 10:12; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; Gal. 6:7-9; James 3:18).

The Word-Faith proponents are not the first to advocate this understanding of faith. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century revivalist, Charles G. Finney, taught that God worked by “laws” that He established:

God establishes and manifests his own truth, to make man know and see that he is the God of truth, by coming out and demonstrating it by his conduct. He has limited his operations; they are controlled by certain laws both of nature and of grace. He has wisely limited himself to a certain order and way of doing things. Now, let me say, in the next place, that he likes to rebuke infidelity. His heart is greatly set upon the results which he has promised--those things which must result from his coming forth and demonstrating his truth. He holds us responsible for placing ourselves in such a position as to come within the conditions, the fulfilment of which are indispensable to his coming forth, in the established and revealed order of things, to establish his truth before the world.<sup>9</sup>

Some years later, a respected Baptist preacher, F. B. Meyer, wrote in a similar vein:

... it is necessary, before these laws of the spiritual world operate on our behalf, that we should definitely and by faith appropriate them. There is no promise which does not require to be claimed ... so we must not complain that the laws of the spiritual world do not bring us help unless by faith we appropriate their service.<sup>10</sup>

Even strong Calvinists such as A. W. Pink were forced to recognize the supernatural laws that God has established. Pink wrote, “It is an unalterable law of the Divine government that as we sow, so shall we reap. That principle is enunciated and illustrated all through the Scriptures.” Pink made it clear that to understand this was not an infringement upon God’s sovereignty:

The formation and the effectuation of God’s eternal decrees are in no wise affected by man: he can neither delay nor hasten them. But the present government of this world by God is, in large measure, affected and determined by the actions of men (His own people

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<sup>9</sup> Finney, Charles G. **Proving God**, Sermon found at [http://www.gospeltruth.net/1849-51Penny\\_Pulpit/500619pp\\_proving\\_god.htm](http://www.gospeltruth.net/1849-51Penny_Pulpit/500619pp_proving_god.htm) (Last accessed: 17 February, 2005)

<sup>10</sup> Meyer, F. B. **Devotional Commentary on Philippians** (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1979), p. 251

included), so that in this life they are, to a very considerable extent, made to reap according as they sow, both in spirituals and in temporals.<sup>11</sup>

Because He is *the Lord of Recompenses and rewards* (Jer. 51:56; Heb. 11:6), He is obligated to reward men's actions when they are consistent with His conditions.

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<sup>11</sup> Pink, *Practical Christianity*