

PREDESTINATION - ELECTION, FOREKNOWLEDGE, FOREORDINATION

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"Known unto God are all His works From the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18 Many honest minds are somewhat mystified about these subjects. They fail to see the differences between God's works for humanity and His workings with and in men. Therefore, we shall endeavor to clear away the fog. From the fourth century to the sixteenth century, these topics were subjects of the hottest discussions. Augustine was the leading advocate of "irresistible grace," as it was called. Hundreds of years later, Luther and Calvin followed his theological thinking. Arminius arose about 1600 A.D. and introduced the "whosoever" message, or the freedom of man's will. He taught man's side of salvation as well as God's side. He taught that God made full provision for eternal salvation, and mankind had the privilege to either accept it, or reject it. If a sinner accepts God's plan, he obtains eternal life; but if he rejects it, he will experience eternal death-separation from God forever. The Westminster Confession (Presbyterian) expresses the doctrine of Augustine briefly thus- "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." To this are added two guarding statements - "God is not the author of sin, and violence is not offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." Matthew 11:25, 26; Ephesians 1:4; Romans 9:17-22 are the chief Scriptures from which that hard theory was deducted. The impossible harmony between the doctrine as stated and the two supposed safeguards should be evident to every honest mind. How could God foreordain all things that take place and yet not be the author of sin? And how can the creature have any liberty if his conduct was fixed unchangeably beforehand? Their answer to such irreconcilable propositions is, that they are inscrutable; that is, we dare not question nor reason about them. The Augustinian doctrine declared that "the foreknowledge of God implies predetermination. Nothing can be possibly known unless it is fixed or determined. But, who is it that predetermines, unless it be God?" What vague statements learned men make! Gospel truths are simple and appeal to needy, sincere folks. Arminius maintained the following views: Predestination, or election, relating to our salvation, is not arbitrary, or absolute, but dependent upon the foreknowledge of God. "Whom He did foreknow, them did He also predestinate." The passage is to be read forwards, not backwards. The atonement is not limited. It is available for all, even though not applied by all. Everyone is sought by the Holy Spirit; no one has been rendered by a divine decree to be impotent to receive the Gospel. Grace, though indispensable, is not compulsory. Christ stands at the door and knocks at every heart, but He does not break into any man's soul either violently, or by stealth. Yes, grace may be accepted or rejected. "Irresistible grace," one of the five points of Calvinism, is a misnomer. Theologians claim that reason and revelation are the sources of theology. No doubt that is true; but that is why they err. They inject their own reasonings into the Scriptures. God be praised that revelation alone is the fountain of truth. In order to understand this subject of divine election, we must first consider plain, positive fundamental facts set before us in the Word of God. Examine those portions that seem to be opposed to the plain facts, and reconcile them with each other.

In Ephesians 1:11, we learn that before God's act of predestination, was His purpose; and before that purpose, there was a counsel held. Read it-"Predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after (according to) the counsel of His own will." Three words in Genesis 1: 26 are the key to our difficulties. "And God (Elohim, the Trinity) said, Let us make." That counsel purposed a material creation. Accordingly, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He also brought into existence two great intelligences -- angels and man. The angel creatures were strong and brilliant; yet Lucifer and other angels fell. Man, being weak, also fell. Because man was weak, God provided a remedy for his weakness. He brought forth another man, a victorious new creation. This new race in its entire scope embraces every one of Adam's descendants who believes and accepts God's way of salvation -- from Adam to the end of the millennium. Here is a fundamental fact. This new creation appears on the scene in four great groups. The first group includes all saved folks from Adam to Moses. They are called "the sons of God." (Gen. 6:2). The second group are known as Israel. The Lord said to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my firstborn ... let my son go." (Ex. 4:22, 23. Also Hosea II:1). His thought of them is also

expressed in Deut. 7:6: "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all people that dwell upon the face of the earth." First He dealt with them as a huge family; then as a kingdom. Because of their disobedience to God, their position as a nation is suspended during this age.

The third stupendous group appears in their place, called "the church of God." (I Cor. 1:1). Jesus called it "My church." (Matt. 16:18). This Church is termed "the body of Christ." (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Col. 1:18). This section of the new creation includes all saved folks from Pentecost unto the resurrection and rapture of believers at the coming of Christ. The fourth group will include all who will believe on Jesus from the time of the rapture of the Church unto the end of the millennium. They will be a vast company of saved Jews and Gentiles dwelling on the earth. "The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Today, we are particularly concerned about the Church. The predestination of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer is another fundamental fact. (I Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8). He is the only one who was predestinated as an individual. The teaching that certain persons were previously marked out and foreordained to be damned contradicts a multitude of plain Scripture promises and many personal experiences. The meaning of Eph. 1:14 is that God chose a new creation in His Son, which He had predestinated according to His purpose. God's Side and Man's Side
Men recklessly confound the process of God's salvation with His foreordained plan and provision. They are not at all the same. Grace provided a way of salvation, but our faith appropriates it. God planned a perfect and eternal fire escape; but man must by faith avail himself thereof. "God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Eph. 1:11. His predestination was one thing. It occurred in the distant past, before time began. His working out of it is another thing altogether. It is taking place now. What is the counsel of His will? Many portions of Scripture afford plain answers. First: God's will is to save mankind. Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Luke 19:10. "Even so, it is NOT the will of your Father which is in heaven, that ONE of these little ones should perish." Matt. 18:14. None of the little ones were doomed. The following verse is clear and emphatic. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John 6:39. Paul says, "He hath chosen US in Him before the foundation of the world." Eph. 1:4. The word "us" is collective and expresses a company; that is, a company of new creatures in Jesus Christ. With this, Jesus' words agree. He speaks of "all" and "it" which the Father had given to Him. He groups together into one lump ALL the Father gave Him. What can He mean by "all" and "it" but a new race? Then in the next verse, He individualizes, saying, "EVERYONE which seeth the Son and believeth on Him (no exception whatever) may have everlasting life." John 6:40. God's sovereign purpose and choice before time began is declared in verse 39, and the next verse declares who will constitute that company, and on what conditions they may become members of it. Nevertheless, Calvinism claims that some folks are doomed arbitrarily. Later we read, "The Lord is NOT WILLING that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9. This verse expresses a two-fold divine willingness, absolutely opposed to Augustinianism. Hear Paul's verdict: He exhorts us to "pray for ALL men," for God willeth that ALL men should be saved," because "Christ gave Himself a ransom for ALL." I Tim. 2:1-6. In the face of such positive utterances from Jesus Christ and two leading Apostles, how can anyone say that the just God arbitrarily foreordained from all eternity that certain souls should be damned? The scope of God's salvation is unlimited on His side, but men make limitations to their own hurt, by their unbelief. Second. The scope of redemption provided salvation for all mankind without exception. "God was in Christ reconciling the world (not simply certain select ones) unto Himself." II Cor. 5:19. "He reconciled both (Jews and Gentiles) unto God in one body by the cross." Eph. 2:16. The following verse is emphatic: "And He is the propitiation (or mercy seat) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." I John 2:2. Therefore, whose sins were omitted? "In due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life ... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:6-18.

All that were found guilty may be justified fully. The redemption of Christ reached the utmost limit of the wreckage started by Adam's disobedience. "Christ died for ALL," is found twice in II Cor.

5:14, 15. Jesus suffered that "He by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY man." Heb.

2:9. No one was excluded in that reconciliation. "God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. "He that believeth shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." Calvinism teaches that the elect only are influenced to repent and believe the Gospel. Over against this theory stand forth Jesus' tender, but effective words: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. Ah, what has more persuasive power than the death of Christ on the cross? This explains John 6:44, which disturbs some folks. Satan aims to offset that drawing of Christ, and succeeds with some people. The Holy Spirit is striving with all men by means of the drawing influence of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Third. The "WHOSOEVER" proposition is a stunning blow to Calvinism. "Whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) should not perish, but have eternal life; for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent NOT His Son into the world to condemn the world (that is, the people in the world), but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:15-17. We are confronted with overwhelming proofs of God's holy will and of man's free will. First, His love. "God is love." Love is His nature. His love tempers His justice into mercy and grace. He did not and does not, so hate that He condemns certain persons arbitrarily; but "He so loved that He gave." His power and wisdom were shown in creation; but His love is displayed in redemption. Man needed mercy greatly, but did not deserve it in the least. If man had not failed, it would never have been known that God possessed an attribute termed "grace." God "commendeth (exhibits, combines) His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. Divine love gave birth to grace. Divine grace gave birth to redemption through the death of Christ, and redemption gave birth to salvation.

Wonderful scheme! All of that was on God's part, the absoluteness and arbitrariness of divine love. And that love shouts aloud without any other condition, "WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH." Someone has written that "man's responsibility and God's sovereignty are truths divinely revealed in the Scriptures, and a child of God is therefore called upon to accept and believe both, but he is not called upon to reconcile them." We add: They are already reconciled, for those who read the Word wisely. The same writer says further, "That responsibility and choice are generally pressed on unbelievers ... and on the exterior of the gate of life is written, Whosoever will may come, while on the interior is, Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world."

The writer does not understand that God chose a new creation before times eternal. Beautiful sentiments are not always Scriptural. A sinner once came to one holding such a view and expressed his desire to be saved. The minister said, "Go and pray, and if you are elected God will save you." When the jailor cried, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Not only are sinners responsible to believe unto salvation, but believers also are held responsible to walk in the light in order to receive a reward. God does not belittle or mock the responsibility of either. If a sinner repents and believes, God saves him. If a believer walks in obedience, He rewards him accordingly.

Observe also the negative side of divine love. God sent NOT His Son to condemn the world." It is not His nature to condemn. We read before that "it is not His will that ANY should perish." And yet the doctrine of inexorable decrees declares that God marked off certain persons for eternal damnation before Christ died; but it is still true that Jesus said, "Whosoever believeth." A fitting prelude to John 3:16 is, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power (right, or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12.

God's provision of salvation was absolute; but man's attainment of it is conditional. He must believe with the heart on the Savior. Read three other "whosoEVERS"- John 4:13; 11:26; 12:46. Mark the following: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." Acts 2:21. This is an echo from Joel 3. Twice we read that "whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed," Rom. 9:33; 10:11, which is an echo from Isa. 28:16. Thus the prophets agree with Jesus and the Apostles. Finally, the Savior's last word is: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17.

What shall we say to these many challenges to faith? Dare anyone say that they are only challenges to man's ability, because he contends that only the predestined are able to call, or

believe? Who dare say that the God of love and mercy can mock His own blood-bought, helpless creatures, once made in His image? Unthinkable! Unreasonable! Unworthy of God!

Fourth. The multiplied exhortations to "repent" teach the same truth of man's responsibility. John the Baptist shouted, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus Christ gave the same ringing entreaty. Israel were commanded to repent and believe the Gospel of the Kingdom. After the Holy Spirit was given, the apostles sounded out the same forceful message. Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you ... Repent and be converted." Years afterward, Paul exclaimed, "And the times of this ignorance (among the nations) God winked at; but NOW commandeth ALL men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto ALL, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:30, 31. Salvation is granted to everyone who will repent and believe. If Augustine were correct in his theory of absolute and unrevokable decrees, what need was there of repentance? If some folks were inexorably foreordained to be damned, why waste time and energy to command them to do what was impossible for them to do? And if others were predestined to be saved, they would repent without being exhorted to do so. Why agonize in prayer for folks to be saved? Why command them to repent?

In the last book of the Bible, we read seven times the exhortation to repent, and five times that "they repented not." What a farce all that is, if Calvinism is correct. Why command ALL men EVERYWHERE to repent? And what right would God have to judge the world if it is impossible for them to do what He commands? But according to sound doctrine, He may justly punish all who do not believe. If those former theologians were scriptural in their dogmatic decrees, why did they kill time, and one another, in debates? The doomed would certainly be damned anyway, and the elect would certainly be saved, if their doctrine were right. Hundreds of years of quarreling and arguing, and thousands of writings were all in vain. But God be praised! He granted repentance to Israel and to the Gentiles (Acts 5:31; 11:18), so that all men are without excuse. They who accept that privilege, obtain eternal life and shall never perish.

Fifth. The voluntary refusal of men to accept God's proffered plan is further proof of the fallacy of Augustinianism. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, a sin offering lieth at the door." Gen. 4:6, 7. The same Hebrew word is translated "sin" and "sin offering." Calvinism answers Cain's question, saying, He could not do otherwise. He was doomed. But God recognized Cain's free will; that he was angry without cause. There was no fence around his house. Lambs were frisking about for Him, as well as for Abel. He had the privilege and ability to bring an acceptable sacrifice, because his parents had taught them both; but that would have been an admission that he was a sinner. God even showed mercy to Cain afterwards, as if to give him further opportunity to repent and believe.

Pharaoh also, is an example of willful unbelief. The Lord sent plagues upon the land because he refused to let Israel go. When he relented, the Lord heard his cry and lifted the plagues. Romans 9:17, 18 agrees with Exodus 9:16 - "For this cause have I raised thee up for to show in thee my power." God made this statement after Pharaoh had hardened his heart four times. God knew he was not sincere, which he proved by his acts. He made himself a "vessel of wrath" and thus fitted himself for destruction. He relented when he was in dire distress, not because he felt guilty before God. Some thieves repent because they are caught, not because they are guilty before God. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." The same word from God that softens the heart that yields, also hardens the heart that rebels. "A mixed multitude" went up with them. (Ex. 12:38). That implies that some Egyptians turned to God. Pharaoh could have done the same.

The experience of Ananias and Sapphira is a demonstration of the freedom of the human will and of God's right to punish the offender. (Acts 5). They were not compelled to sell their property. Peter said to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God." The crime was not in selling the

possession, but in pretending to give more than they had given. Both he and his wife acted voluntarily. She had the power in her will to disagree with him. Surely their conduct was not foreordained, though it may have been foreknown.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. 23:37, 38. These words are a miniature picture of Israel's attitude toward God and His servants for hundreds of years, and of His patience with them and His repeated endeavors to bring them back into fellowship with Him. "He would, but they would not."

God enquired earnestly through one prophet, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes." Isaiah 5:4. Dare anyone say that Israel was foreordained to disobey God and walk in their own way? Augustinianism certainly cannot deduce the theory of irresistible damnation from Israel's history. It dare not say that "they were responsible but because they were not elected, they could not do otherwise than continue in unbelief." Oh, let no man accuse the God of abounding grace of such unfairness and injustice. No wonder some cannot reconcile God's sovereignty with man's free will and responsibility. Why not believe plain Scripture statements?

PUZZLING PORTIONS PONDERED

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 2:23. This verse expresses the predetermined purpose of God and the freedom of man's will. In the counsel of God, before time began, it was decreed that His Son should take on human flesh and die for the sins of the coming race. He foreknew that it would be so. By the types and shadow of the Old Testament, Israel were taught this basic truth. Then Jesus announced again and again that wicked hands would slay Him, which Peter declared they did so. Accordingly, Judas betrayed Christ into the hands of the Jewish officials. They delivered Him to Pilate, a Gentile civil ruler, who claimed to have authority to crucify or release Him. But Jesus said to him, "Thou couldst have no power (authority) against me, except it were given thee from above." John 19:11. It was God who authorized His death. The question arises, How could Christ count them guilty if His death by their hands was announced beforehand? Who delivered Christ to Pilate? It was Caiaphas, the high priest, who represented all Israel. "Now Caiaphas was he, which gave the counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." John 18:14. The high priest was supposed to understand the meaning of the types and shadows, even as Jesus supposed that Nicodemus understood the new birth. (John 3:10). Caiaphas, by his statement, admitted that Jesus was that Man, though he refused to accept Him as the promised Messiah. His knowledge of the truth, being a Jew, made him more guilty than Pilate, a Gentile. He had "the greater sin." Caiaphas admitted by his statement that he was a sinner and all his people were sinners and needed a savior.

Bear in mind that "all men have sinned;" therefore, all men put Christ to death. The Jews delivered Him to the Gentiles, and they crucified Him - but all wicked hands - your hands and mine, executed the Innocent One. He was "delivered for our offenses." Rom. 4:25. Our sins, as well as theirs, crowned Him with thorns and pierced His side. Observe the phrase, "foreknowledge of God," in our text. He knew beforehand the sinfulness of humanity. Concerning Judas, did he have to betray the Lord? No, he did not have to betray Him; but God and Christ knew that he would. One might add that Jesus said, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." Matt. 26:24. Exactly so; but he could have repented after doing so. The "whosoever" that Jesus had spoken to Nicodemus was at his door also. One of the thieves by Jesus' side on a cross, reviled Him, but afterwards repented and believed. Mark 15:32; Luke 23:40-43. Likewise, the Jewish leaders could have repented and believed for Peter, after reproving them for their cruelty, exhorted them to repent and accept Christ. "All have sinned." All men crucified Christ and all who will, may believe; "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Rom. 10:12. The following words indicate God's unchanging attitude toward Israel. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:21.

ANOTHER PUZZLING CITATION

"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord and believed, as many as were ordained to eternal life." Acts 13:48. The word "ordained" is from a Greek word which means also to arrange, to order, to give orders, to set in array, as soldiers, to draw up in line. Paul gave orders to all the churches. (I Cor. 7:17). A strengthened form of the noun is translated "order, rank, cohort." I Cor. 15:23. A government calls men into service. All hear the order. Some heed the summons; others refuse and suffer the consequences. They all have will power to say, "Yes" or "No." Redemption provided salvation for all mankind. Jesus ordered the Gospel to be proclaimed to all. (Mark 16:15). The Holy Spirit reproves, or convinces man of his sin, and of righteousness and of judgment. (John 16:8-10). As stated before, repentance has been granted to Jews and Gentiles, and God is no respecter of persons. The preaching of "the word of faith" (Rom. 10:8) sets the people in array for salvation. In a word, God has purposed, planned and arranged that everyone may have eternal life by believing the Gospel. Scores of other Scripture citations teach it just that way. They outweigh by far, the apparent arbitrary force of our text. The order of the words in our common version might be construed to mean that all were glad and glorified the Word, but some were not ordained, hence did not believe. Therefore, note the exact order of the Greek, as quoted above. The fact is, they that believed were glad and glorified the Word of the Lord. They prepared their hearts unto the Lord, as in I Samuel 7:3. Faith comes by hearing, and joy comes by believing. Let us study about the Jews who did not believe. (Acts 13:45, 46). They were filled with envy, which gave birth to opposition, dispute and blasphemy. Were they ordained to be and act thus? No, but it was foretold that they would. The apostles said, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." It was the divine order that the message would go to the Jews first; but they thrust the Word from them deliberately and voluntarily, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. That does not mean that the Jews did not think themselves good enough, for they were steeped in self-righteousness; but they refused the worthiness offered to them through Christ. God made the Jews deserving, or befitting, provisionally, by choosing them centuries before to be His peculiar people and by granting them repentance through the death of Christ. By God's will, they were "sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once." Heb. 10:10. Hence, they were absolutely without excuse and truly guilty. By their envious opposition and rejection of Paul's message, they made all God's purposes for them null and void. Like Esau, they counted their spiritual birthright of no value. Sinful man, though religious, is of no value in himself in God's sight; but by accepting Christ, he becomes of excellent worth. A believer is holy in Christ. The freedom of the human will to say, "Yes," or "No," may be seen on nearly every page of the Bible.

A third perplexing portion is Romans 8:29, 30: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." These verses indicate the compass and sweep of part of God's great purposes concerning mankind. They refer primarily to the Church. He knew beforehand who would constitute the Church and what her destiny would be. He foreknew a new creation from its beginning throughout its various stages to its consummation.

How did God foreknow all these things? The Godhead held a council before time began and according to His pleasure, He purposed to do those things. In other words, He did them in His great mind. An inventor makes a machine, say, an automobile. He constructs a model which is an exhibit of the vehicle in his mind. That inventor sees an auto completed, filled with oil and gasoline, with all electric connections, passengers in the seats, and running on the street. Likewise, God saw a spiritual body of people in which He would be glorified, though comparatively few had been born again, justified, and glorified. The phrase, "conformed to His image," proves that a new creation is meant; for very few are thus conformed in their conduct. The Word does not say that God foreknew no other folks; that is, He knew before who would constitute that company. Listen to what is said of Israel, who had failed egregiously: "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Know ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thy altars; and I am left alone, and they seek

my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." Rom. 11:2-4.

Though Israel were His people, as a nation, did He not foreknow that some would not believe? Paul writes: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Rom. 9:31, 32. Also, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom. 11:7. How were these elected? Not by irresistible grace, as Calvinism declares, but by "the obedience of faith." Rom. 16:26. The Lord used every means for the betterment and comfort of Israel; made marvelous promises to them and warned them of disaster if they should be disobedient. He said, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Rom. 10:21. He knew beforehand what would befall them; but He did not foreordain them to be disobedient. Some one may remark, "If God foreknew who would be saved, then they could not do otherwise than believe." His foreknowledge does not affect man's conduct. Our interpretation should not rob men of their freedom of will. If we do, we cannot hold them responsible for their attitude to the truth. Jehovah did not predestinate certain ones to believe, and other certain ones not to believe. Divine election means simply, that God chooses all those who believe on His Son. (John 1:12). "Whom He did predestinate, He also called." This does not say, nor imply, that others are not called. The invitation is given to all men, as proven by various citations named before. Christ died for all. The Holy Spirit convicts and woos all. The Gospel is preached to all. (Mark 16:15). Here again, we meet our generous friend, "Whosoever." We meet him at every turn of the road. Praise God! "Whom He called He also justified." Read Romans 3:24: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Justification was provided by grace; as also this - "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:9). This is provisional also, but this provision must be believed. "Therefore being justified BY FAITH, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. Grace and blood alone do not give peace, but faith in them brings peace with God. All men have been justified provisionally by redemption; but only those who believe on the Redeemer are justified experimentally. Of course, it follows logically, that all who experience divine justification will be glorified with the glorified Christ. Since God "calleth those things that be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17), He may well say, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." He rejoices in the ultimate hope of a glorious finished product of redemption. He foresees no failure, because "He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will."

What about Jacob and Esau? "It was said unto Rebecca, The elder shall serve the younger." Rom. 9:12. This verse and the preceding ones are not fore- ordination, but prophecy. God knew before their birth what these boys would do, and only announced it. He used the two to show that salvation is by grace and not of works. Jacob was religious and sought the Lord. Esau was indifferent to divine things; hence, he sold his birthright. God did not foreordain that Jacob should be saved and Esau to be lost; but His purpose of election was that the promised seed, Christ, should come through Jacob, the younger - typical of Christ, the "second man, the last Adam." The statement, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," has reference to their descendants, or the nations which sprang from them respectively. Study Malachi 1:1-5. God had a controversy with Israel, Jacob's descendants (Rom. 9:6), yet He fought for them and punished Esau's progeny for their opposition against Israel. Afterwards, God chastised Israel for their disobedience. God had every right to put Jacob, rather than Esau, in the royal line. Verses 15 to 18 may seem arbitrary - "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth."

In reading the account of Pharaoh, we see that God showed kindness to Pharaoh day after day, but when he was brought to a place of decision, he hardened his heart and resisted God and His decree. Yes, God raised him up; that is, He answered his cry and did not cut him off immediately. He endured his rebellion with much longsuffering, but finally engulfed him in the sea. God's attitude to all men is plainly shown in Romans 10. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; for the Scripture (the Old Testament) saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed, for there is no difference between the Jew (Jacob's lineage) and the Greek (Egyptians); for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Those Old Testament men are representatives who filled official places.

There are still other citations which may not seem clear. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called you by our Gospel." (II Thess. 2:13-14). "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (I Peter 1:2). The phrase "from the beginning" refers evidently to the time expressed in Ephesians 1:4. And remember that "sanctification" was provisional, and it is also experimental. The Holy Spirit operates in the former and in the latter also. Jesus came to do God's will, "by the which will we were sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once . . . for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:10, 14).

Thus, sanctification - setting apart, separation - was divinely and sovereignly provided and made possible. The Spirit of Grace made all mankind holy provisionally through the death and resurrection of Christ. (Heb. 10:29). Where does the Holy Spirit enter? Answer: "Christ, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. 9:14). Jesus Christ did nothing for us, nor do we receive anything from God apart from the Spirit. Election, or choosing, was made possible for all. Peter speaks of "the blood of sprinkling," which points back to the Cross, and figuratively refers to our cleansing from sin. This is God's provision.

Now comes man's part; for he is not a machine - motionless, unfeeling, lifeless, irresponsible. He is "past feeling" only after he pulls down the blinds of his heart against the light of the Gospel. God chooses folks through "belief of the truth." Faith is awakened by the Gospel call. When men hear that Jesus Christ died for them and rose again, some believe and receive eternal life. When Peter proclaimed Christ as the promised Messiah to Israel, many received his glorious words and thus were elected. The Holy Spirit used the truth to work obedience in their hearts. The power of the Word is expressed by the following: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). Jesus said to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3). From the beginning, God planned to elect those who would believe on His Son.

JESUS' WHOSOEVER JEWEL

"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." John 6:14. Later, Jesus said also, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. The Holy Spirit employs the Cross to influence people to seek after God. It has persuasive power. The Jews of Hebrews 6 were drawn toward Christ. They heard the marvelous word of grace and thereby were "enlightened." They tasted the heavenly gift, the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come;" but they spued out the truth, as cooks sometimes do when something does not taste according to their liking. They willfully, deliberately spurned the glad tidings. They trampled under foot the blood of Christ wherewith they had been provisionally sanctified, counting it unholy, and thus insulted the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace. (Heb. 10:29). Jesus gave them light; then He gave Himself to die for them. Afterwards, Peter rang the changes on the resurrection of Christ, inviting them to repent and believe the Good News. Finally, Stephen laid down his life also, crying to God, "Lay not this sin to their charge." Here is another - "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Does this trouble you? It should not. Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man." His last prayer for His foes was, "Father forgive them; they know not what they do." And Peter exclaimed to Israel, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," and that Name is Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12). God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Illuminator, by various means and many agencies, have sought to bring the light to mankind, striving with them to accept it and be eternally saved.

Here is another problem. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the anti-Christ), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man hath an ear, let him hear." Rev. 13:8. Before time began, God ordained that His Son should die to redeem fallen man; for He knew beforehand that Adam would fail. Therefore these words, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." A new creation is in view here. Christ was not actually slain until 4,000 years after Adam was created. Neither was there a literal book in existence before that time. It was in God's mind and purpose to have such a record, and to inscribe

in it all those who would believe His Word. He "calls the things which be not as though they were." (Rom. 4:17).

He saw from the beginning an entirely new race, a spiritual, supernatural race. But how could our names have been written actually, literally in a book 6,000 years ago - names of folks not yet existing? God's "blueprint," or predestination was collective and independent of man's attitude. To produce a holy new creation, of which His Son should be the Head and Life, was God's good will and pleasure and sovereign purpose. But the participation and appropriation of those grand purposes depend upon individuals.

"WHOSOEVER" is the Divine Safeguard. If God planned and foreknew all that, then only those whom He foreknew, could be saved, one might say. Suppose we say it this way - God could foreknow those only as believers who would believe. He could not know them otherwise. His foreknowledge of individuals was not determined by foreordination. Only His purpose and process were determined. His foreknowledge was determined by future conduct of man. Man's individual choice and responsibility to believe or not believe, were also predetermined. We are confused if we look back to the beginning from our view point. We must think as God does, and look forward from His view point. God's sovereignty and predestination will not interfere with our free will. There is a sort of sovereignty in man's will, being created in God's image. If that sovereignty cooperates with divine sovereignty by believing God's Word and heeding His voice, it will be well with man in eternity.

God's "whosoever will" gives humanity a tremendously wide sweep of privilege, place, power, dominion, and wealth; as we read, "Blessed is the man (infinitely blessed in every detail) that trusteth in the Lord." Viewed from every angle, we must conclude that salvation is by faith and not by fate; by grace and not by arbitration; by choice and not by compulsion. It was planned and provided by the sovereignty of love, and is received and enjoyed by the sovereignty of faith. Another portion of Scripture may be difficult to understand: "My frame was not hidden from thee when I was made in secret, curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them." Psalm 139:15-16. The Psalmist David did not write these words about himself; for he was never in the lowest parts of the earth until he died, then his spirit only went down below the grave. Like many other Psalms, this refers to Christ and includes His spiritual body also. Compare Psalm 2:7: "I will tell of the decree. Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son. This day have I begotten thee." This particular verse is applied by Paul to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Acts 13:33). The entire new creation was in Christ, even as an oak tree, with all its limbs and foliage is in an acorn lying on the ground. Jesus said of Himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John 12:24.

"So also is Christ," the Spiritual Body of people with Jesus as the Head. "God ... hath quickened us (the whole Church) together with Christ (in the grave), and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ." Eph. 2:6. This refers to the Body of Christ. Can you not see how that was all provisional and collective? We, who believe, are all in Christ by faith, but we are not yet actually in heaven; neither were we ever, in actuality, in the tomb. Nevertheless, God reckons us resurrected and seated in heaven.

One further difficult portion. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee." Jeremiah 1: 5. This verse does not mean that Jeremiah was made to order, and other folks came into being by chance. Be it remembered that people are born in response to an original injunction to Adam and Eve before they had sinned. "And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1:28. He gave a similar commandment to the fowls and whales. These creatures were given a nature to reproduce spontaneously, every one after its own kind. That unchangeable law is seen in every species of animal, bird, fish, flower, insect, and tree - every one "after its kind."

Adam and Eve were also created with a reproductive nature, and of course, after their kind. We do

not read anywhere in the Scriptures that the Lord ever revoked or annulled that natural order, or law. Therefore, God indirectly formed every child before it was born and "separated every one from the womb." In some measure, God is responsible for all that happens. Without His will, nothing can ever come to pass, either directive, or permissive. He knows everyone before he exists.

"And before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." This is explained in Hebrews 10:10 - "By the which will (God's will) we were sanctified." How? "Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." All men were included in that provisional sanctification, as indicated by verse 29. Here also, the new creation is in view. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ provided that all who would believe might be separated unto the Lord. By anticipation, Jeremiah became one of them. I have appointed (ordained) thee a prophet unto the nations." When Jeremiah heard the voice of the Lord, he yielded to Him and obeyed and fulfilled his mission faithfully.

Luke 1:15 may be one of the most difficult citations. "He (John the Baptist) shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." Verse 41 sheds light upon it. His mother "was filled with the Holy Ghost" at the greeting of Mary. That was a very exceptional experience; but "hath not the Potter power over the clay?" (Rom. 9:21). God has every right to move out of the ordinary if He wills to do so, but that does not change His ordained purposes. He can reverse or change the law of gravitation, as when He took Enoch, Elijah, Moses, and Jesus up to heaven. God made the sun (or the earth) stand still an entire day for Israel's sake, without wrecking the universe. If He chose to fill a child with the Spirit from his birth, who dare complain?

We have no right, however, to build a theory of irresistible, inexorable decrees upon one or two Scripture citations at the expense of other citations which establish the divine order of procedure. We must compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13), and rightly divide the Word of truth. Therefore, let us not say that John the Baptist could not do otherwise than obey. Rather, let us say that he did not disobey. The Lord knew he would obey. He has told us many things which He foreknew that men would do, but that does not compel them to do so. They have the freedom to do otherwise, which He would have also known beforehand.

GREEK WORDS EMPLOYED

In the New Testament, 12 Greek words are used to translate "ordain." We list these different words and give their meanings; then cite some of the places where they are used.

1. Cheirotoneo means "to elect, or choose by stretching out the hand." It is translated "ordain" in Acts 14:23 and "choose" in II Cor. 8:19. The Revised Version gives "appointed" in both citations.
2. Ginomai means "to become, to happen, to be born." It is rendered "was" in John 8:58: "Before Abraham was," that is, before Abraham was born. It is translated "was made" in John 2:9 and "waxed" (grew or became) Luke 13:19, and ordain" in Acts 1:22.
3. Kathistemi means "to place, or set down," rendered "ordain" in Titus 1:5; Heb. 5:1 and 8:3. The Revised Version has "appointed."
4. Horizo means "to mark off, to divide as a boundary, to dedicate, to appoint," Acts 17:31. It is translated "determinate" (Acts 2:23) and "ordain" (Acts 10:42). It is given "determined" Luke 22:22 and Acts 17:26. (See also, Numbers 11)
5. Kataskeuazo means "to prepare fully, or prepare and build." It is translated "ordain" (Heb. 9:6), "prepare" (Matt. 11: 10), and "build" (Heb. 3:3-4).
6. Krino means "to judge, to decide, to esteem." It is translated "judge" (Acts 13:46), "sentence" (Acts 15:19), "ordain" (Acts 16:4), "esteem" (Rom. 14:5), and "decreed" (I Cor. 7:37). Five different uses of one word.
7. Poieo means "to make, to cause, to work, to accomplish, to execute, to produce, to invent, to compose; hence, to write poetry." Our English word "get" has more meanings and uses than any other in our language; so it seems to be true of "poieo" in the Greek. It is translated "ordain" in Mark 3:14. The noun is translated "workmanship" in Eph. 2:10. The verb is "have made" (Matt. 21:13). It also means to declare, or assume" (John 8:53). It is given as "tarried" (Acts 15:33) and "appointed" in Heb. 3:2. It can scarcely mean to ordain. It is used frequently in compound words.

8. Proetoimazo means "to get ready, or to make ready before, to prepare before, to prepare for one's self, to make one's arrangements." It is translated "ordain" in Eph. 2:10. Good works were part of God's great plan. He made arrangements for them beforehand. It is translated "prepared" in Rom. 9:23. God arranged for Himself vessels of mercy unto future glory. If that preparation was made before time began, it was only in God's purpose and scheme, by which He brought forth a new creation. He showed mercy to all mankind - Jews and Gentiles - by reconciling them to Himself through the death of Christ. Every one that would believe in His mercy and accept the sacrifice He offered, should become "a vessel of mercy." They who would not believe should become "vessels of wrath," who fitted, or prepared themselves for destruction by their deliberate unbelief. All have been, or are being called; but all do not believe. Israel was called as a nation, but Isaiah said, "Though their number be as the sand of the sea, yet only "a remnant shall be saved." (Paul quotes from Isaiah 10:22 in Rom. 9:27). Why? Because they sought righteousness, not by faith in Jesus.

9. Prographo means "to write before, or first, to describe before, to write in public, to give public notice, to appoint by public notice." It is translated "written aforetime" (Rom. 15:4), "wrote afore" (Eph. 3:3), "set forth," or publicly announced (Gal. 3:1) and "ordained" in Jude 4, which is an unfortunate rendering. It was prophesied in writing (the Old Testament), that ungodly men would arise and turn the grace of God into loose living and deny the just despotism of God and the Lord Jesus. Some of the translators evidently were deeply tinged with Augustinianism. It seems that some folks do not want all men to be saved.

10. Pro-orizo means "to mark out publicly, or before." The prefix "pro" means before. Hence, it means to divide, set apart, or set bounds before. It is translated "predestinate" (Rom. 8:29-30), "predestination" (Eph. 1:5, 11), "determined before" (Acts 4:28), "ordained before" (I Cor. 2:7), and "determinate" (Acts 2:23). Jesus was delivered to death for the redemption of mankind according to the specific, or clearly defined counsel of the triune God. Of course, God foreknew that He would die for our sins. He also knew beforehand how Jesus would die; but sinful men designed and determined that. And God, foreknowing the manner of His Son's death, typified it hundreds of years before it happened. (Deut. 21:22-23).

11. Tasso means "to arrange, to set in array, as soldiers, to draw up, in line, to order, to station." It is translated "ordained" in Acts 13:48 and Rom. 13:1, "appointed" (Matt. 28:16), "set" (Luke 7:8). Diatasso is the strengthened form, or use of tasso. The Gentiles in Antioch, who believed, were not ordained in the sense of being decreed arbitrarily. The choice of the people played a part in that ordination.

The passive voice of the verb, as in Josephus, often has the force of the middle voice; hence, it may be read, "as many as arranged, or marshalled themselves to eternal life, believed." They did so by attending the meetings and listening to the Word preached. The Jews marshalled themselves against the truth. Both groups acted freely and spontaneously.

God gave Adam dominion over the earth and every living creature before he fell (Gen. 1: 26, 28), and renewed it after the flood to Noah (Gen. 9:2). He separated the race, nationally, in view of His chosen people Israel. (Deut. 32:8). He never revoked that consignment as indicated in Psalm 8:6. Doubtless, that is Paul's meaning of ordaining the powers (authorities) that be - Rom. 13:1. Hupotasso is rendered "put under" (I Cor. 15:27). Suntasso - "appointed" (Matt. 26:19). Diatasso, "to appoint" (Luke 3:13; Titus 1:5).

12. Tithemi means "to put, to place, to set, to plant, to fix, to settle, to determine, to appoint." It is translated "ordain" in John 15:16 and I Tim. 2:7. It is "set" (Acts 13:47; I Cor. 12:18, 28, "put" (Matt. 5:15; Acts 1:7; 12:4), "appointed" (Matt. 24:51; I Thess. 5:9). Diatithemi is "appointed" in Luke 22:29. Protithemi is rendered "set forth" (put before) in Rom. 3:25.

With most people, our English word "ordain" seems to mean to, utter a cold, inexorable, arbitrary and solemn decree made before man was created. It simply means to appoint, to institute, to order, or issue a decree, to set apart for an official place. Foreknowledge is also misunderstood, being confounded with predestination. God foreknows what He will do because He counselled and purposed to do so before time began. He foreknows what men will do, because He knows human nature and sees the end from the beginning. His foreknowledge does not compel men to do as they do. Foreknowledge gives birth to prophecy, but not to the things prophesied. SUMMARY

Predestination is sovereign, absolute and beforehand, the result of the counsel of God's own will. "Let US make" was entirely independent of the creature. Ordination, appointment and election should not be confounded with predestination, or foreordination. These are dependent, more or less, upon man's conduct. God chooses individuals that obey Him, to fill places of trust (I Tim. 1:12).

Election refers to salvation and is conditioned upon man's faith. "By grace are ye saved." God's way of salvation is absolute and arbitrary. "Being justified freely by His grace" - that is, without man's merit. Grace was displayed through redemption (Rom. 3:24-25); that is God's side. "Saved through faith" is man's side. Faith is the link that connects the needy sinner with the mighty, merciful Savior. "Not of works;" no, there is only one link, and that is faith. "And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Yes. No man believes independently of God; but that faith is not forced arbitrarily into a human breast against a man's will. It is not given to a select few and withheld from others.

Jesus sought to give the scribes and Pharisees faith by explaining to them their own Scriptures, but they refused His sweet words. He said of Jerusalem, "How oft would I ... but ye would not." Faith "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." He assumes the responsibility of doing His infinite part to beget faith, by having the Gospel preached. "Believe" is a transitive verb; that is, faith must have an object to stand on. Men must know whom to believe and for what to believe. God sends folks to proclaim the Glad Tidings, and Mr. Whosoever gets the blessing. Scores of Scripture references combine to prove the freedom of man's will and his responsibility to believe, or disbelieve. Some of these have been quoted or cited in this treatise. Invariably, they who disbelieve suffer for it; but they who believe, are rewarded for their faith. Adam went out from God's will through the back door of unbelief and his progeny followed him. He returned through the front door of faith in a Redeemer, and every one who will, may come in through the same door of faith and become a member of the new creation forever.

Questions. If certain persons will be saved, whether or no, why preach the Gospel? Why warn them against the possibility of being lost? If certain ones were chosen arbitrarily to be saved and others doomed to remain unsaved, how could God proclaim the Gospel to all men justly? If certain ones are marked off previously to be saved, warnings are a waste of time and effort. If some are predestined to be damned, it is inconsistent and unreasonable to offer salvation to them, seeing it is not possible for them to obtain it. Does God offer salvation to sinners on the one hand and withhold it by the other? Does the Bible anywhere say, "Be sure that you are one of the elect before you come to be saved"? What Scriptural right have we even to intimate that certain persons cannot be saved? The Scriptures command us to "GO into all the world and preach the Gospel to EVERY creature." (Mark 16:15). Why? That those who will, may believe the Gospel and be saved. Therefore we know who are the elect - even all those who believe the Gospel. Israel as a nation did not accept Christ as their promised Messiah, "but as many (individuals) as received Him, to them gave He power (authority) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:11-12). From the house top we shout this great verse, if not THE GREATEST VERSE - "God so loved the world (not simply certain select persons), that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him." (John 3:16, 18, 36).

Why all these nine ringing words about believing and not believing, in John 3, uttered by Him who "tasted death for every man? Answer: To prove beyond contradiction that God's "WHOSOEVER," oft repeated, has flayed Augustinianism and Calvinism forever. "FAITH" in that unconquerable "WHOSOEVER" shouts in triumph, "WHOSOEVER will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17).
(THE END)

Dear Master, Thy appointments

To me are sweet,
If I'm but for Thy service
A vessel meet;
In labors more abundant,
Or out of sight,
Thine openings and shuttings
Are always right.
-Max L Reich.

My AMAZING BIBLE

My Bible's a source of surprising wealth;
A storehouse of food, for the spirit's health;
A refuge of peace from a world in strife;
A place of surcease from the storms of life;
A firm foundation beneath my feet;
A shelter and shield from the noonday heat;
An unfailing help in the time of need;

A joy and comfort to all who read;
A book that presents as I read it more,
A friendly Face, and an open Door;
A plan for the man who is down and out;
A goal for the soul that is torn by doubt;
A chart for the heart that has lost its way;
A light in the night, and a guide by day;
A cure that is sure for the sin-sick soul;
A calm and a balm, that can make men whole;
So planned and so grand, that it stands alone,
The greatest Book that the world has ever known!