

Thoughts on Predestination

November 14, 2015



Commentary by Elder Bill McCarthy

Well-meaning people have widely different beliefs as to many doctrines of the Bible, especially that of PREDESTINATION. Below are what I have labeled as a **CORRECT** belief (that we totally agree with) and some examples of **NOT CORRECT** beliefs (held by honorable men but with which we respectfully disagree).

CORRECT

Thoughts on Predestination

By Elder Walter Cash

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The scripture teachings on this subject form a solid foundation for the principal doctrines held by Primitive Baptists, and for that reason ought to be kept prominently in mind when treating upon the salvation that was accomplished in the coming of Christ Jesus into the world as a sin-bearer and sacrifice for sin.

The conditional systems of the world are at variance with the scriptural references to predestination so plainly that they can be set aside without difficulty, and hardly need notice. But those who believe in salvation by grace have need to keep these scriptures before them, and see that their teaching and practice are in harmony with them.

The passages where the term is used are so clear that there is no escape from the fact stated, that God’s predestination reaches to the salvation of individuals. The passage in the Ephesian letter is both comprehensive and positive, and reads: *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love;*

having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Eph 1:4,5.

In this it is stated that the saints at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:1), were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before God in love. Electing them in Christ Jesus was God’s way of taking away the blame that was against them as sinners, and making them holy, he having predestinated them to be his children.

As those who were thus adopted were sinners, the descendants of Adam, and embraced in his fall, they must be freed from their state of condemnation, and made holy. This was to be accomplished through Christ Jesus, who was to redeem and cleanse them through his blood, thus making them acceptable. All this was to be done because of God’s grace, and it is therefore “*to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*” Eph 1:6.

The word “predestinate” is used in Paul’s letter to the church at Rome with the same meaning and import as in the Ephesian letter:

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

“For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born 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.

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”
Rom. 8:28-31.

This scripture affirms that God fixed the destiny beforehand of those whom he foreknew. However, this foreknowledge of God cannot be thought to refer to the **omniscience** of God, which is an attribute of his, in which all things and persons are comprehended from eternity. Rather, here the apostle had under consideration the saints for whom intercession is made (Rom. 8:27), those whom he foreknew were such as he foreknew in his grace in the redemption in Christ Jesus in his purpose of salvation. They were not foreknown as believers, or for any righteousness that they would possess. . . .

In “conforming” those who were predestinated there must be a work done for and in them, so “*whom he did predestinate, them he also called.*” This doubtless refers to regeneration. And “*whom he called, them he also justified.*” They were “*justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*” Rom. 3:24. And those who were foreknown, predestinated, called and justified are to be glorified.

“*What shall we then say to these things?*” Rom 8:31. The apostle evidently refers here to the things just enumerated. These are the “all things” that work together for good to the elect of God, who are called according to his purpose, and who manifest the evidence of this in that they love God.

The passages noted above are the only scriptures where the word predestinate is used, and in its connections refer to an act of God before time. This act is followed by other acts: **election** in

Christ, **calling** by his spirit, **justification** in his judicial office as judge, and **glorification** in the final work of salvation.

NOT CORRECT

Thomas Paine, Founding Father (1737-1809):

“The first expression [of [Rom 9:18-21](#)] says, “*Therefore hath he (God) mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*” As this is ascribing to the attribute of God’s power, at the expense of the attribute of his justice, **I, as a believer in the justice of God, disbelieve the assertion of Paul.** The Predestinarians, of which the loquacious Paul was one, appear to acknowledge but one attribute in God, that of power, which may not improperly be called the Physical attribute.”

W.G.T. Shedd (1820 – 1894), Noted Commentator:

“In the Pauline conception, **predestination . . . includes both the holiness that is to be rewarded with life, and the sin that is to be punished with death.**”

John Calvin (1509 – 1564):

Institutes, Book Third, Ch 21, ¶5

“By **predestination** we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but **some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation**; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”

Isaac Livingston, TV Minister:

“God’s people are **predestinated** to live a holy life as Jesus has lived so that God may glorify them as he has glorified Christ in heaven. **God** commands all people, **picks the obedient ones, and he predestinates them to live as Jesus has lived as a man. They that live such a life will inherit the kingdom of heaven.**”