

PRE-DESTINATION

“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.” Rom. 8:29

The doctrine of PREDESTINATION as it has been taught in the past can be summarized as follows:

- 1 God has ordained whatever comes to pass.
- 2 He has predestined some men and angels to eternal life.
- 3 He has not done so because He has foreseen either faith or good works in those thus predestined.
- 4 Others (for reasons equally good!) have been foreordained to everlasting death.
- 5 The number of those predestined, is so fixed and definite, that it can neither be increased or diminished.

The key to the meaning of *predestinate* as used in vs. 29 is found in the word *purpose* in vs. 28. God's plan was made known by the prophets through the ages so that it could rightly be said (Rom. 8:30) “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.”

Now we may very properly ask, “Has all this been accomplished?”. The answer must be “No”. Actually the *calling* and the *justifying* must still be future for those who have not yet heard the gospel. To think of these things as having been done before the foundation of the whole world is to completely misunderstand the whole question. But some will contend that the language is in the past tense, and that therefore the things must be regarded as having been actually done. *Come, let us reason together*. Was Christ actually put to death when Isaiah said, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.”? Let us not forget that God “calleth those things which be not, as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). And we

who claim the name Christian are not yet glorified, but we live in hope because "our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that we may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself," (Phil. 3:20-21).

Whom did God predestinate? The answer before us is "whom He did foreknow". We must therefore determine the meaning of *foreknow*, and since the two parts of the word imply *know before* we must begin with the meaning of the word *know*. Two people quarrel and the next day pass each other on the street with no sign of recognition. One complains, "He walked right past me; he didn't *know* me". It is quite obvious that the meaning is *acknowledge*. Jesus uses the word in the past tense with the same meaning when He says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never *knew* you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23).

When Paul asked the question, "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. God hath not cast away His people which He did foreknow" (Rom. 11:1-2). Certainly He has not, for He acknowledged @them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18). See also Ps. 51:17; Isa. 66:2. Whether under the old or the new covenant only the humble-minded and obedient does God acknowledge! It is not a matter of predestinating certain persons but rather persons of a certain character. (Joel 2:12-14).

The second question to ask is "To what did God predestinate those whom He foreknew?" The answer is found in Ephesians 1:4-6: "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, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." The question of Rom. 8:29 is answered in "to be conformed to the image of His Son." God's plan (purpose) from the beginning as given by the prophets was that God's people would be (1) CHOSEN IN CHRIST, (2) PREDESTINATED TO SONSHIP, and (3) CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S DEAR SON. God's people today then are to be conformed to Him who "is the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29) and their hope is in the fact that "He is the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18). Feeble though our efforts may be, we are moving in a different direction from that of the world if we are Christians. If there is nothing of the spirit of Christ in us then obviously we are not His. *Let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith.*

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