



## Scriptures and Doctrine :: On Predestination by John Wesley

On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/2/28 0:35

[Image: <http://www.watchword.org/images/stories/wes.jpg>]

### On Predestination

by John Wesley

Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: -- Whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Romans 8:29, 30

1. Our beloved brother Paul," says St. Peter, "according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:15, 16)
2. It is not improbable, that among those things spoken by St. Paul, which are hard to be understood, the Apostle Peter might place what he speaks on this subject in the eighth and ninth chapters of his epistle to the Romans. And it is certain not only the unlearned, but many of the most learned men in the world, and not the "unstable" only, but many who seemed to be well established in the truths of the gospel, have for several centuries, "wrested" these passages "to their own destruction."
3. "Hard to be understood" we may well allow them to be, when we consider how men of the strongest understanding, improved by all the advantages of education, have continually differed in judgment concerning them. And this very consideration, that there is so wide a difference upon the head between men of the greatest learning, sense, and piety, one might imagine would make all who now speak upon the subject exceedingly wary and self-diffident. But I know not how it is, that just the reverse is observed in every part of the Christian world. No writers upon earth appear more positive than those who write on this difficult subject. Nay, the same men, who, writing upon any other subject, are remarkably modest and humble, on this alone lay aside all self-distrust,

And speak ex cathedra infallible.

This is peculiarly observable of almost all those who assert the absolute decrees. But surely it is possible to avoid this: Whatever we propose, may be proposed with modesty, and with deference to those wise and good men who are of a contrary opinion; and the rather, because so much has been said already, on every part of the question, so many volumes have been written, that it is scarcely possible to say anything which has not been said before. All I would offer at present, not to the lovers of contention, but to men of piety and candour, are a few short hints, which perhaps may cast some light on the text above recited.

4. The more frequently and carefully I have considered it, the more I have been inclined to think that the apostle is not here (as many have supposed) describing a chain of causes and effects; (this does not seem to have entered into his heart;) but simply showing the method in which God works; the order in which the several branches of salvation constantly follow each other. And this, I apprehend, will be clear to any serious and impartial inquirer, surveying the work of God either forward or backward; either from the beginning to the end, or from the end to the beginning.

5. And, First, let us look forward on the whole work of God in the salvation of man; considering it from the beginning, the first point, till it terminates in glory. The first point is, the foreknowledge of God. God foreknew those in every nation, those who would believe, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. But, in order to throw light upon this dark question, it should be well observed, that when we speak of God's foreknowledge, we do not speak according to the nature of things, but after the manner of men. For, if we speak properly, there is no such thing as either foreknowledge or afterknowledge in God. All time, or rather all eternity, (for the children of men,) being present to him at once, he does not know one thing in one point of view from everlasting to everlasting. As all time, with everything that exists therein, is present with him at once, so he sees at once, whatever was, is, or will be, to the end of time. But observe: We must not think they are because he knows them. No: he knows them because they are. Just as I (if one may be allowed to compare the things of men with the deep things of God) now know the sun shines: Yet the sun does not shine because I know it, but I know it because he shines. My knowledge supposes the sun to shine; but does not in anywise cause it. In like

manner, God knows that man sins; for he knows all things: Yet we do not sin because he knows it, but he knows it because we sin; and his knowledge supposes our sin, but does not in anywise cause it. In a word, God, looking on all ages, from the creation to the consummation, as a moment, and seeing at once whatever is in the hearts of all the children of men, knows every one that does or does not believe, in every age or nation. Yet what he knows, whether faith or unbelief, is in nowise caused by his knowledge. Men are as free in believing or not believing as if he did not know it at all.

6. Indeed, if man were not free, he could not be accountable either for his thoughts, word, or actions. If he were not free, he would not be capable either of reward or punishment; he would be incapable either of virtue or vice, of being either morally good or bad. If he had no more freedom than the sun, the moon, or the stars, he would be no more accountable than them. On supposition that he had no more freedom than them, the stones of the earth would be as capable of reward, and as liable to punishment, as man: One would be as accountable as the other. Yea, and it would be as absurd to ascribe either virtue or vice to him as to ascribe it to the stock of a tree.

7. But to proceed: "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." This is the Second step: (To speak after the manner of men: For in fact, there is nothing before or after in God:) In other words, God decrees, from everlasting to everlasting, that all who believe in the Son of his love, shall be conformed to his image; shall be saved from all inward and outward sin, into all inward and outward holiness. Accordingly, it is a plain undeniable fact all who truly believe in the name of the Son of God do now "receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls;" and this in virtue of the unchangeable, irreversible, irresistible decree of God, -- "He that believeth shall be saved;" "he that believeth not, shall be damned."

8. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." This is the Third step: (Still remembering that we speak after the manner of men:) To express it a little more largely: According to his fixed decree, that believers shall be saved, those whom he foreknows as such, he calls both outwardly and inwardly, -- outwardly by the word of his grace, and inwardly by his Spirit. This inward application of his word to the heart, seems to be what some term "effectual calling:" And it implies, the calling them children of God; the accepting them "in the Beloved;" the justifying them "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

9. "Whom he called, them he justified." This is the Fourth step. It is generally allowed that the word "justified" here is taken in a peculiar sense; that it means he made them just or righteous. He executed his decree, "conforming them to the image of his Son;" or, as we usually speak, sanctified them.

10. It remains, "whom he justified, them he also glorified." This is the Last step. Having made them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," he gives them "the kingdom which was prepared for them before the world began." This is the order wherein, "according to the counsel of his will," the plan he has laid down from eternity, he saves those whom he foreknew; the true believers in every place and generation.

11. The same great work of salvation by faith, according to the foreknowledge and decree of God, may appear in a still clearer light, if we view it backward, from the end to the beginning. Suppose then you stood with the "great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and tongue, and kindred, and people," who "give praise unto Him that stretch upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever;" you would not find one among them all that were entered into glory, who was not a witness of that great truth, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" "not one of all that innumerable company who was not sanctified before he was glorified. By holiness he was prepared for glory; according to the invariable will of the Lord, that the crown, purchased by the blood of his son, should be given to none but those who are renewed by his Spirit. He is become "the author of eternal salvation" only "to them that obey him;" "that obey him inwardly and outwardly; that are holy in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation."

12. And could you take view of all those upon earth who are now sanctified, you would find no one of these had been sanctified till after he was called. He was first called, not only with an outward call, by the word and the messengers of God, but likewise with an inward call, by his Spirit applying his word, enabling him to believe in the only-begotten Son of God, and bearing testimony with his spirit that he was a child of God. And it was by this very means they were all sanctified. It was by a sense of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, that everyone of them was enabled to love God. Loving God, he loved his neighbor as himself, and had power to walk in all his commandments blameless. This is a rule which admits of no exception. God calls a sinner his own, that is, justifies him, before he sanctifies. And by this very thing, the consciousness of his favour, he works in him that grateful, filial affection, from which spring every good temper, and word, and work.

13. And who are they that are thus called of God, but those whom he had before predestinated, or decreed, to "conform

to the image of his Son?" This decree (still speaking after the manner of men) precedes every man's calling: Every believer was predestinated before he was called. For God calls none, but "according to the counsel of his will," according to his Orothesis, or plan of acting, which he had laid down before the foundation of the world.

14. Once more: As all that are called were predestinated, so all whom God has predestinated he foreknew. He knew, he saw them as believers, and as such predestinated them to salvation, according to his eternal decree, "He that believeth shall be saved." Thus we see the whole process of the work of God, from the end to the beginning. Who are glorified? None but those who were first sanctified. Who are sanctified? None but those who were first justified. Who are justified? None but those who were first predestinated? Who are predestinated? None but those whom God foreknew as believers. Thus the purpose and word of God stand unshaken as the pillars of heaven: -- "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." And thus God is clear from the blood of all men; since whoever perishes, perishes by his own act and deed. "They will not come unto me," says the Savior of men; and "there is no salvation in any other." They "will not believe;" and there is no other way either to present or eternal salvation. Therefore, their blood is upon their own head; and God is still "justified in his saying" that he "willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth."

15. The sum of all is this: the almighty, all-wise God sees and knows, from everlasting to everlasting, all that is, that was, and that is to come, through one eternal now. With him nothing is either past or future, but all things equally present. He has, therefore, if we speak according to the truth of things, no foreknowledge, no afterknowledge. This would be inconsistent with the Apostle's words, "With him is no variableness or shadow of turning;" and with the account he gives of himself by the Prophet, "I the Lord change not." Yet when he speaks to us, knowing whereof we are made, knowing the scantiness of our understanding, he lets himself down to our capacity, and speaks of himself after the manner of men. Thus, in condescension to our weakness, he speaks of his own purpose, counsel, plan, foreknowledge. Not that God has any need of counsel, of purpose, or of planning his work beforehand. Far be it from us to impute these to the Most High; to measure him by ourselves! It is merely in compassion to us that he speaks thus of himself, as foreknowing the things in heaven or earth, and as predestinating or fore-ordaining them. But can we possibly imagine that these expressions are to be taken literally? To one who was so gross in his conceptions might he not say, "Thinkest thou I am such an one as thyself?" Not so: As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways. I know, decree, work, in such a manner as it is not possible for thee to conceive: But to give thee some faint, glimmering knowledge of my ways, I use the language of men, and suit myself to thy apprehensions in this thy infant state of existence.

16. What is it, then, that we learn from this whole account? It is this, and no more: -- (1) God knows all believers; (2) wills that they should be saved from sin; (3) to that end, justifies them, (4) sanctifies and (5) takes them to glory.

O that men would praise the Lord for this his goodness; and that they would be content with this plain account of it, and not endeavour to wade into those mysteries which are too deep for angels to fathom!

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by yoadam (), on: 2010/2/28 1:45**

Greg,

Wesley hated predestination. Wesley's view of men has man predestinating themselves to salvation. This is called "predestination according to foreseen faith." In Wesley's view, God looks down the corridors of time and sees who will believe the gospel, and who will not-- and then predestinates them to salvation / damnation based on their free choice. This is no predestination at all! The reality, is that if God really did look down the corridors of time to see who would choose Him, all men would say "No!" because they are "dead in trespasses and sins" and "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." and therefore everybody would get what they deserved. Eternal Damnation. This is no good news and no predestination at all. And to hold that some men would choose yes, and thereby be predestinated to glory, implies salvation by works-- (for it makes one's eternal salvation dependent upon his own choice, apart from God's irresistible grace-- which is contrary to the scriptures: John1.13 "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Rom9.16 "16So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.")

As an alternative to Wesley's view above, I suggest people read the following excerpt in which Spurgeon presents the biblical view of what is meant by Paul when he says "foreknowledge." It reads as follows:

Quote:

-----"No hint is given in the text of foreseen virtue any more than of foreseen sin, and, therefore, we are driven to find another

meaning for the word. We find that the word "know" is frequently used in Scripture, not only for knowledge, but also for favor, love, and complacency. Our Lord Jesus Christ will say, in the judgment, concerning certain persons, "I never knew you," yet in a sense he knew them, for he knows every man; he knows the wicked as well as the righteous; but there the meaning is, "I never knew you in such a respect as to feel any complacency in you or any favor towards you." See also John 10:14-15, and 2 Timothy 2:19. In Romans 11:2, we read, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew," where the sense evidently has the idea of fore-love; and it is so to be understood here. Those whom the Lord looked upon with favor as he foresaw them, he has predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. They are, as Paul puts it in his letter to the Ephesians, "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."

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-C.H. Spurgeon "Glorious Predestination" sermon 1043 (<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/1043.htm>) <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/1043.htm>

Also a very edifying read is Iain Murray's article on the controversy that took place between the two primary revivalist preachers of the first great awakening, George Whitefield and John Wesley. It can be read here:

(<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley/murray.htm>) <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley/murray.htm> and Whitefield's letters refuting Wesley's blasphemous (that's right, in the sermon, Wesley actually says "VII. Predestination is a doctrine full of blasphemy." and "II. The doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God.") sermon "free grace" can be read here: (<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley.htm>) <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley.htm>

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/2/28 8:24**

Interesting take on the subject from Wesley. Indeed, though I don't agree with everything he said about Romans 8 here, Wesley does bring up something that those who are more Reformed in their theology often miss with this passage. "Predestined" here is not at all being used to say that God eternally decrees some damned and some saved. To say such a thing about this passage is to do violent injustice to it. The Scriptures may teach such elsewhere, but, not in this passage.

In Romans 8 we read God predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is, God had an eternal intent in our salvation: To make us more and more like Jesus, to be fully conformed to His image. In context, that is to life a life freed from sin, freed from the law, free from the power of death, and instead, to live a life free in the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made "more than conquerors" over everything in this world, as we await our bodily resurrection.

That is what Romans 8 teaches... in context. Perhaps Paul teaches what our Reformed brethren insist he does in Romans 9-11. But, he's definitely not teaching what they say he does thus far in Romans 8. To say that he does is to read one's theology into the context of the chapter, and miss Paul's entire point. Not to scorn or provoke to anger my Reformed brethren, but, their deficient reading of this text explains more about the deficiency of their own theological view, which usually has the inability to read "victory over sin" as being the hallmark of the normal Christian life. It's something they have a tendency to violently oppose in the name of the five solas. Depending exactly on what school of thought one embraces, Reformed thought has a tendency to view us as living a life continually enslaved to sin and bondage, instead of giving us a life of Spirit-filled victory, and abundant fruit bearing, as we reflect greater and greater the image of Christ in this life: which is the very purpose we were "predestined" to and "called."

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/2/28 9:37**

There is one God and John Wesley is his prophet - William Booth

could not help myself on that one (smile)

this i thought was beautiful.

Quote:  
-----Far be it from us to impute these to the Most High; to measure him by ourselves! It is merely in compassion to us that he speaks thus of himself, as foreknowing the things in heaven or earth, and as predestinating or fore-ordaining them. But can we possibly imagine that these expressions are to be taken literally? To one who was so gross in his conceptions might he not say, "Thinkest thou I am such an one as thyself?" Not so: As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways. I know, decree, work, in such a manner as it is not possible for thee to conceive: But to give thee some faint, glimmering knowledge of my ways, I use the language of men, and suit myself to thy apprehensions in this thy infant state of existence.  
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**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/2/28 9:45**

O that men would praise the Lord for this his goodness; and that they would be content with this plain account of it, and not endeavour to wade into those mysteries which are too deep for angels to fathom!

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I believe that closing statement of Wesley is important. Calvinistic thinking really takes on thinking from God's perspective and not man's. Though through some of scripture God exhorts us to try and think like Him and consider "His ways" but that does not mean we can figure out His perspective and way's of things fully or even grasp 1% of them! We must be content that He is God and we are not. That "His ways are higher than our ways."

All I know is the Scripture emphatically and consistently exhorts for men to "believe" and "repent" and for the gospel to be proclaimed in the entire world. That man is granted a free-will to choose Christ. God of course is involved in the entire process but there is still free-will involved.

Oh that the gospel would not be hindered by such reverse thinking, Oh that all men would come to repentance and a knowledge of the truth.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley, on: 2010/2/28 11:29**

It's not that God foreknew the specific individuals who would choose good or evil. This has nothing to do with the context of the letter to the Romans. The destinies of specific individuals was not even the question back then. The question was whether the gentiles could receive salvation and not only the Jews.

The concept of God's foreknowledge in regards to salvation is NOT the foreknowledge of what specific individuals will choose. It is the hugely important message that God foreordained and foreknew from the beginning that he would draw the WHOLE WORLD to himself, that fellowship with him would NOT be a racial issue, that men of every nation will be invited into his eternal kingdom. This is what God foreknew. That he would be a Father to the righteous regardless of whether they descend from Jacob, Isaac, Noah, Adam. It is the foreknowledge that he would elect the entire group of the saints as a collective whole. The choice to be a saint is up to each individual. The foreknowledge is regarding the collective election of such people NOT which particular individuals will choose to enter in.

The idea that God foreknows the eternal destinies of individuals before they choose is not even scriptural.

That idea is the source of all the confusion about predestination. There is no need to be stumped by the concept of foreknowledge in scripture because it is referring to God's plan to elect the international body of saints as a whole, not to individually foreknow who goes to heaven or hell. What a stumbling block this idea has been for people.

**Re: , on: 2010/2/28 12:42**

Stay tuned for "Calvinists in the Hands of an Angry God" by Muttonchops Mathers.

**Re: , on: 2010/2/28 13:09**

Hey KingJimmy,

Quote:  
-----In Romans 8 we read God predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is, God had an eternal intent in our salvation: To make us more and more like Jesus, to be fully conformed to His image. In context, that is to live a life freed from sin, freed from the law, free from the power of death, and instead, to live a life free in the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are made "more than conquerors" over everything in this world, as we await our bodily resurrection.  
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I hear this case made all the them. God predestines believers to be conformed to the image of His Son. However, it says those God has predestinated are those He CALLS. Those He's called are justified. So essentially God is saying the same thing here as he says in Romans 9.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be

e the firstborn among many brethren.

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.

**Re: , on: 2010/2/28 13:13**

Hey Greg,

I'm a little confused. You came against Calvinist for posting threads on this subject and seemed to want people not to post on this. But you post threads on this very subject. Did things change?

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/2/28 13:23**

Quote:  
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I hear this case made all the them. God predestines believers to be conformed to the image of His Son. However, it's says those God has predestinated are those He CALLS.  
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Notice, the text does not say this is step 1, step 2, step 3. This text is not an ordo-salutos, as is it is commonly made into being. It does NOT say God predestines, then after doing that, He calls, then after doing that He justifies, and then after that He glorifies. Rather, this text instead of saying the steps God does "next" is telling us the things God does "also." Do you see the difference?

God is the God who predestines us. He also calls us. He also justifies. He also glorifies. Indeed, this should be especially evident in Romans 8:30 where the word "also" appears 3 times. "Also" is different than the non-existent "next" that is read into the text. Those who are saved He does all these "also's" to. I am predestined, I am also called, I am also justified, and I am also glorified. And notice, glorification here is not relegated to merely a future event that is to happen "next." It's a present reality we experience in Christ.

\*edited for some typos\*

**Re: , on: 2010/2/28 13:43**

I don't know KingJimmy. Seem's like the Lord is clearly building on each topic. Just a plain reading of the text would lead one to believe that the order is established by the Lord.

Looking at the way you view this passage you would at least have to say that being called, justified, and glorified Follow being predestinated. Seems that much is at least clear

\*\*edited to add\*\*\*

**Re: - posted by bible4life (), on: 2010/2/28 16:23**

Yoadam great reply i completely agree. I don't think according to scriptures we can justify that men in their dead sinful state can come to God, but i believe the calvinistic doctrine that when a man becomes born again God gives them a new heart and a new will as a new creature who desires now out of the new will he has given to them to freely repent of their sins and trust Jesus. I think that is what they teach about being born again. So at one time our wills were always to choose sin and would not choose God being dead in our sinful nature, but now regenerates and now out of our free will we choose God but want to, so yes we do choose God out of our free will but it is after he regenerates us otherwise we wouldn't choose him because we are dead and do not desire God. Whether you can decide against God when he does this is unknown or if he actually effectually calls everyone the same i don't know but as Greg says he calls all men to repent and believe the gospel and we preach as and witness as if that can be anybody, nobody knows Gods will for who is to be saved. Their is mysteries we will never know.

**Another View from a Saint Passed - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/2/28 19:53**

Here is a short piece from Mr. Spurgeon on the Romans 8:29 passage (at least the part Mr. Wesley's exegesis hinged on). The excerpt is from a sermon called (<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/1043.htm>) "Glorious Predestination:"

You will have noticed that in this chapter, Paul has been expounding a very deep inward, spiritual experience. He has written concerning the spirit of bondage, and the spirit of adoption, the infirmities of the flesh, and the helpings of the spirit; the waiting for the redemption of the body, and the groanings which cannot be uttered. It was most natural, therefore, that at a deep spiritual experience should bring him to a clear perception of the doctrines of grace, for such an experience is a school in which alone those great truths are effectually learned. A lack of depth in the inner life accounts for most of the doctrinal error in the church. Sound conviction of sin, deep humiliation on account of it, and a sense of utter weakness and unworthiness naturally conduct the mind to the belief of the doctrines of grace, while shallowness in these matters leaves a man content with a superficial creed. Those teachings which are commonly called Calvinistic doctrines are usually most beloved and best received by those who have had much conflict of soul, and so have learned the strength of corruption and the necessity of grace.

Note, also, that Paul in this chapter has been treating of the sufferings of this present time; and though by faith he speaks of them as very inconsiderable compared with the glory to be revealed, yet we know that they were not inconsiderable in his case. He was a man of many trials; he went from one tribulation to another for Christ's sake; he swam through many seas of affliction to serve the church. I do not wonder, therefore, that in his epistles he often discourses upon the doctrines of foreknowledge, and predestination, and eternal love, because these are a rich cordial for a fainting spirit. To be cheered under many things, which otherwise would depress him, the believer may betake himself to the matchless mysteries of the grace of God, which are wines on the lees well refined. Sustained by distinguishing grace, a man learns to glory in tribulations also; and strengthened by electing love, he defies the hatred of the world and the trials of life. Suffering is the college of orthodoxy. Many a Jonah, who now rejects the doctrines of the grace of God, only needs to be put into the whale's belly and he will cry out with the soundest free-grace man, "Salvation is of the Lord." Prosperous professors, who do no business amid David's billows and waterspouts, may set small store by the blessed anchorage of eternal purpose and everlasting love but those who are "tossed with tempest, and not comforted, are of another mind." Let these few sentences suffice for a preface. I utter them not in the spirit of controversy, but the reverse.

Our text begins by the expression, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," and many senses have been given to this word "foreknow" though in this case one commends itself beyond every other. Some have thought that it simply means that God predestinated men whose future history he foreknow. The text before us cannot be so understood, because the Lord foreknows the history of every man, and angel, and devil. So far as mere prescience goes, every man is foreknown, and yet no one will assert that all men are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus. But, it is further asserted that the Lord foreknow who would exercise repentance, who would believe in Jesus, and who would persevere in a consistent life to the end. This is readily granted, but a reader must wear very powerful magnifying spectacles before he will be able to discover that sense in the text. Upon looking carefully at my Bible again I do not perceive such a statement. Where are those words which you have added, "Whom he did foreknow to repent, to believe, and to persevere in grace?" I do not find them either in the English version or in the Greek original. If I could so read them the passage would certainly be very easy, and would very greatly alter my doctrinal views; but, as I do not find those words there, begging your pardon, I do not believe in them.

However wise and advisable a human interpolation may be, it has no authority with us; we bow to holy Scripture, but not to glosses which theologians may choose to put upon it. No hint is given in the text of foreseen virtue any more than of foreseen sin, and, therefore, we are driven to find another meaning for the word. We find that the word "know" is frequently used in Scripture, not only for knowledge, but also for favor, love, and complacency. Our Lord Jesus Christ will say, in the judgment, concerning certain persons, "I never knew you," yet in a sense he knew them, for he knows every man; he knows the wicked as well as the righteous; but there the meaning is, "I never knew you in such a respect as to feel any complacency in you or any favor towards you." See also John 10:14-15, and 2 Timothy 2:19. In Romans 11:2, we read, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknow," where the sense evidently has the idea of fore-love; and it is so to be understood here. Those whom the Lord looked upon with favor as he foresaw them, he has predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. They are, as Paul puts it in his letter to the Ephesians, "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will."

I am anxious not to tarry over controverted matters, but to reach the subject of my sermon this morning. Here we have in the text conformity to Christ spoken of as the aim of predestination; we have, secondly, predestination as the impelling force by which this conformity is to be achieved; and we have, thirdly, the firstborn himself set before us as the ultimate end of the predestinations and of the conformity.—"that HE might be the first-born among many brethren."

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by boG (), on: 2010/2/28 22:44**

Quote:  
-----The idea that God foreknows the eternal destinies of individuals before they choose is not even scriptural

That idea is the source of all the confusion about predestination. There is no need to be stumped by the concept of foreknowledge in scripture because it is referring to God's plan to elect the international body of saints as a whole, not to individually foreknow who goes to heaven or hell. What a stumbling block this idea has been for people.

Benjoseph, this is out-right wrong. You are correct that Predestination "is referring to God's plan to elect the international body of saints (ie. believers) as a whole," or that is, Christ is the Elect of God. Those who are therefore in Christ by faith are made partakers of the election according to the promise. But to imply that God is in some respects surprised or confused or uncertain about future events is absurd. That is the false teaching of Open Theism.

Wesley rejected that presumption perfectly when he said,

Quote:  
-----It should be well observed, that when we speak of God's foreknowledge, we do not speak according to the nature of things, but after the manner of men. For, if we speak properly, there is no such thing as either foreknowledge or afterknowledge in God. All time, or rather all eternity, (for the children of men,) being present to him at once As all time, with everything that exists therein, is present with him at once, so he sees at once, whatever was is, or will be, to the end of time.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by boG (), on: 2010/3/1 0:02**

Yoadam, although your response had great corrections, it also had no bearing on Predestination as taught by Wesley.

Quote:  
-----Wesley hated predestination. . . .

"VII. Predestination is a doctrine full of blasphemy."  
"II. The doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God."

This is terrific example of misrepresenting another person's beliefs. You are guilty here of dishonest proof-texting. Next time please read the article in question before attempting to persuade others with such rude assumptions.

To quote the opening portion of this very sermon, Free Grace by John Wesley,

Quote:  
-----First. It is free in all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man; no, not in any degree, neither in whole, nor in part. It does not in anywise depend either on the good works or righteousness of the receiver; not on anything he has done, or anything he is. It does not depend on his endeavors. It does not depend on his good tempers, or good desires, or good purposes and intentions; for all these flow from the free grace of God; they are the streams only, not the fountain. They are the fruits of free grace, and not the root. They are not the cause, but the effects of it. Whatsoever good is in man, or is done by man, God is the author and doer of it. Thus is his grace free in all; that is, no way depending on any power or merit in man, but on God alone, who freely gave us his own Son, and "with him freely giveth us all things.

But it is free for ALL, as well as IN ALL. To this some have answered, "No: It is free only for those whom God hath ordained to life; and they are but a little flock. The greater part of God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. The more God hateth; and, therefore, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally. And this he absolutely decreed; because so was his good pleasure; because it was his sovereign will. Accordingly, they are born for this, -- to be destroyed body and soul in hell. And they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, without any possibility of redemption; for

what grace God gives, he gives only for this, to increase, not prevent, their damnation."

-----

Wesley loved the doctrine of Predestination and held a high esteem for it. However, he did hate that doctrine of 'double predestination' as understood to mean God foreordained some few to eternal life and the many to eternal torment without any consideration of foreseen deeds, faith, or sin. Thus Wesley hated, as do I, that variety of Predestination which often entirely ignores or is irreconcilably severed from God's righteous Justice. The very same Justice that the Scripture declares from beginning to end that in 'accordance to the deeds done in the flesh' shall we enter into either heaven or hell — "and this in virtue of the unchangeable, irreversible, irresistible decree of God, -- "He that believeth shall be saved;" "he that believeth not, shall be damned." (This is one of those superb quotations for those who think Arminianism is a rejection of irresistible grace.)

And, on a side note, concerning George Whitefield's letter to Wesley, if you would like I can provide some criticisms that would indicate what appears to be Whitefield's tendency to over-exaggerate and immoderately impose rebukes upon others without first verifying witnesses or determining all the details needful for a sound judgment. This is not to say Whitefield's rebukes were wrong; but, just as Yoadam's corrections, they are not necessarily applicable to the recipient of those rebukes. Thus have I found from an unexpected source when I came across The History of Harvard University (vol. 2) that includes details surrounding the Whitefieldian Controversy (this book may be read online).

In further discussion of the relation between Foreknowledge and Predestination, another Wesleyan theologian, Daniel Whedon, writes:

Quote:  
-----"If God's omniscient foresight of all that is or is not in the future is the effect of God's determination, then an \*attribute\* of God is created by an \*act\* of God. ... If God's foreknowledge depends on his determination, and must wait until after its existence, then he can have no foreknowledge of his own acts, and must wait for present or \*post-knowledge\* of them." (pp.225-226)  
-----

This is an important distinction, especially when considering Romans 8:29, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." Foreknowledge is consistently acknowledged in Scripture as logically prior to Predestination. And this is expected when we agree that every Act of God (ie. Predestination) is contingent upon and proceeds from the summation of God's Attributes (ie. Foreknowledge).

So then what might it be that God foreknows? Whedon also adds the following,

Quote:  
-----"If by the absolute perfection of God's omniscience that one train of free events, put forth with the full power otherwise, is embraced in his foreknowledge, it follows that God foreknows the free act, and that the foreknowledge and the freedom are compatible." (p.229)  
-----

This statement is notably in accord to the Confessions of the Reformers, as well as most all Reformed theologians. Such as the following excerpt from Apologetics to the Glory of God (pp. 44-45) by John M. Frame demonstrates.

Quote:  
-----The doctrine that God foreordains and directs all events is generally regarded as Calvinistic, and I am not embarrassed to be called a Calvinist. However, other Christian traditions also accept this doctrine, sometimes in spite of themselves. Take Arminianism for example. The Arminian makes much of human "free will," insisting that our free decisions, especially those of religious significance, are not foreordained or otherwise determined by God. He seeks thereby to reinforce the doctrine of human responsibility (a doctrine with which, in itself, the Calvinist has no quarrel). But the Arminian also recognizes (1) that God foreknows the future exhaustively, and (2) that He has created the world knowing what the future will bring. For example, before the foundation of the world, God knew that Joe would make a free decision to become a Christian. Somehow, then, before Joe was born, God knew of his free decision. So even at that time, Joe's free decision must have been inevitable. Why was it inevitable? Not because of Joe's free will, for Joe was not yet born. Not because of God's predestination, because the Arminian denies that possibility from the outset. It would seem that the inevitability in question had some source other than either Joe or God.

But ultimately God's predestination remains the key element. For God is the one who (1) foreknows Joe's decision and (2) creates the world in such a way that Joe's decision will be made. The decisive factor is God's foreknowing creation. Creation is what sets the whole universe in motion. Is it too much to say that God's foreknowing creation causes Joe to make the decision he makes?

Thus, even Arminianism implicitly concedes the Calvinist point without admitting it. Therefore, some Arminians today have abandoned the premise that God foreknows everything and have moved to a view more akin to that of process theology. But this move is exceedingly dubious scripturally.

I am personally not familiar with an Arminianism that rejects "divine determinism." Moreover, in my opinion, process theology is altogether disgusting and immoral.

I would also like to mention that many lay-person Calvinists that I have known would not particularly agree with Mr. Frame on his analysis. Pragmatically most Calvinists may agree with Frame, but by definition they often tend to falter towards fatalism. As such, rather than hearing Frame's developed system of Predestination in a casual conversation, one is often prone to hearing something more akin to this: For God is the one who (1) creates the world in such a way that Joe's decision will be made. Eh? What happened to God foreknowing Joe's free decision? It is not proper to jump from the beginning to the end and give no attention to the rest of the complementing parts. For even though by skipping to the end we get the same conclusion, we do not arrive there by the same path. Short-cuts like that will necessarily distort our perspectives.

As it is, I really like the definition which Prof. Frame has provided here; it also reminds me of Dr. A. W. Tozer's instruction on the Sovereignty of God:

Quote:  
-----"God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it. If in His absolute freedom God has willed to give man limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say, "What doest thou?" Man's will is free because God is sovereign. A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so."  
-----

And this is in perfect peace with the predetermined design of God by His sovereign Providence. Therefore, it is certainly not too much to say that God's foreknowing creation causes 'Joe' to make the decision he makes; that is, so long as we recognize the proper tension for what it is when God "causes" a free decision.

**Re: On Predestination by B.B. Warfield - posted by savannah, on: 2010/3/1 1:01**

On Predestination by B.B. Warfield

A great man of the last generation began the preface of a splendid little book he was writing on this subject, with the words: "Happy would it be for the church of Christ and for the world, if Christian ministers and Christian people could be content to be disciples-learners." He meant to intimate that if only we were all willing to sit simply at the feet of the inspired writers and take them at their word, we should have no difficulties with Predestination. The difficulties we feel with regard to Predestination are not derived from the Word. The Word is full of it, because it is full of God, and when we say God and mean God-God in all that God is-we have said Predestination.

Our difficulties with Predestination arise from a, no doubt not unnatural, unwillingness to acknowledge ourselves to be wholly at the disposal of another. We wish to be at our own disposal. We wish "to belong to ourselves," and we resent belonging, especially belonging absolutely, to anybody else, even if that anybody else be God. We are in the mood of the singer of the hymn beginning, "I was a wandering sheep," when he declares of himself, "I would not be controlled." We will not be controlled. Or, rather, to speak more accurately, we will not admit that we are controlled.

I say that it is more accurate to say that we will not admit that we are controlled. For we are controlled, whether we admit

it or not. To imagine that we are not controlled is to imagine that there is no God. For when we say God, we say control. If a single creature which God has made has escaped beyond his control, at the moment that he has done so he has abolished God. A God who could or would make a creature whom he could not or would not control, is no God. The moment he should make such a creature he would, of course, abdicate his throne. The universe he had created would have ceased to be his universe; or rather it would cease to exist-for the universe is held together only by the control of God.

Even worse would have happened, indeed, than the destruction of the universe. God would have ceased to be God in a deeper sense than that he would have ceased to be the Lord and Ruler of the world. He would have ceased to be a moral being. It is an immoral act to make a thing that we cannot or will not control. The only justification for making anything is that we both can and will control it. If a man should manufacture a quantity of an unstable high-explosive in the corridors of an orphan asylum, and when the stuff went off should seek to excuse himself by saying that he could not control it, no one would count his excuse valid. What right had he to manufacture it, we should say, unless he could control it? He relieves himself of none of the responsibility for the havoc wrought, by pleading inability to control his creation.

To suppose that God has made a universe-or even a single being-the control of which he renounces, is to accuse him of similar immorality. What right has he to make it, if he cannot or will not control it? It is not a moral act to perpetrate chaos. We have not only dethroned God; we have demoralized him.

Of course, there is no one that thinks at all who will imagine such a vanity. We take refuge in a vague antinomy. We fancy that God controls the universe just enough to control it, and that he does not control it just enough not to control it. Of course God controls the universe, we perhaps say-in the large; but of course he does not control everything in the universe-in particular.

Probably nobody deceives himself with such palpable paltering in a double sense. If this is God's universe, if he made it and made it for himself, he is responsible for everything that takes place in it. He must be supposed to have made it just as he wished it to be-or are we to say that he could not make the universe he wished to make, and had to put up with the best he could do?

And he must be supposed to have made it precisely as he wished it to be, not only statically but dynamically considered, that is, in all its potentialities and in all its developments down to the end. That is to say, he must be supposed to have made it precisely to suit himself, as extended not only in space but in time. If anything occurs in it as projected through time--just as truly as if anything is found in it as extended in space--which is not just as he intended it to be--why, then we must admit that he could not make such a universe as he would like to have, and had to put up with the best he could get. And, then, he is not God. A being who cannot make a universe to his own liking is not God. A being who can agree to make a universe which is not to his liking, most certainly is not God.

But though such a being obviously is not God, he does not escape responsibility for the universe which he actually makes--whether as extended in space or in time--and that in all its particulars. The moment this godling (not now God) consented to put up with the actual universe--whether as extended in space or as projected through time, including all its particulars without exception--because it was the best he could get, it became his universe. He adopted it as his own, and made it his own even in those particulars which in themselves he would have liked to have otherwise. These particulars, as well as all the rest, which in themselves please him better, have been determined on by him as not only allowable, but as actually to exist in the universe which, by his act, is actually realized.

That is to say they are predestinated by him, and because predestinated by him actually appear in the universe that is made. We have got rid of God, indeed; but we have not got rid of the Predestination, to get rid of which we have been willing to degrade our God into a godling.

We have passed insensibly from the idea of control to the idea of Predestination. That is because there is no real difference between the two ideas at bottom. If God controls anything at all, of course he has intended to control it before he controls it. Exactly the control which he exerts, of course he has intended to exert all along.

No one can imagine so inadvertent a God, that he always acts "on the spur of the moment," so to speak, with no manner of intention determining his action. Providence and Predestination are ideas which run into one another. Providence is but Predestination in its execution; Predestination is but Providence in its intention. When we say the one, we say the other, and the common idea which gives its content to both is control.

It is purely this idea of control which people object to when they say they object to Predestination; not the idea of previous

ness, but purely the idea of control. They would object just as much if the control was supposed to be exercised without any previous intention at all.

They ought to object much more. For a control exercised without intention would be a blind control. It would have no end in view to justify it; it would have no meaning; it would be sheerly irrational, immoral, maddening. That is what we call Fate. Say intention, however, and we say person; and when we say person we say purpose. A meaning is now given to the control that is exercised; an end is held before it.

And if the person who exercises the control be an intelligent being, the end will be a wise end; if he be a moral being it will be a good end; if he be infinitely wise and holy, just and good, it will be an infinitely wise and holy, just and good end, and it will be wrought out by means as wise and holy, just and good as itself.

To say Predestination is to say all this. It is to introduce order into the universe. It is to assign an end and a worthy end to it. It enables us to speak of a far off divine event to which the whole creation is moving. It enables us to see that whatever occurs, great or small, has a place to fill in this universal teleology; and thus has significance given it, and a justification supplied to it. To say Predestination is thus not only to say God; it is also to say Theodicy.

No matter what we may say of Predestination in moments of puzzlement, as we stand in face of the problems of life--the problem of the petty, the problem of suffering, the problem of sin--it is safe to say that at the bottom of our minds we all believe in it. We cannot help believing in it--if we believe in God; and that, in its utmost extension, as applying to everything about us which comes to pass.

Take any occurrence that happens, great or small--the fall of an empire or the fall of a sparrow, which our Lord himself tells us never once happens "without our Father." It surely cannot be imagined that God is ignorant of its happening--nay, even if it be so small a thing as the fall of a pin.

God assuredly is aware of everything that happens in his universe. There are no dark corners in it into which his all-seeing eye cannot pierce; there is nothing that occurs in it which is hidden from his universal glance. But certainly neither can it be imagined that anything which occurs in his universe takes him by surprise. Assuredly God has been expecting it to happen, and in happening it has merely justified his anticipations.

Nor yet can he be imagined to be indifferent to its happening, as if, though he sees it coming, he does not care whether it happens or not. That is not the kind of God our God is; he is a God who infinitely cares, cares even about the smallest things. Did not our Savior speak of the sparrows and the very hairs of our heads to teach us this?

Well, then, can it be imagined that, though infinitely caring, God stands impotently over against the happenings in his universe, and cannot prevent them? Is he to be supposed to be watching from all eternity things which he does not wish to happen, coming, coming, ever coming, until at last they come--and he is unable to stop them?

Why, if he could not prevent their happening any other way he need not have made the universe; or he might have made it differently. There was nothing to require him to make this universe--or any universe at all--except his own good pleasure; and there is nothing to compel him to allow anything which he does not wish to happen, to occur in the universe which he has made for his own good pleasure.

Clearly things cannot occur in God's universe, the occurrence of which is displeasing to him. He does not stand helplessly by, while they occur against his wish. Whatever occurs has been foreseen by him from all eternity, and it succeeds in occurring only because its occurrence meets his wish.

It may not be apparent to us what wish of his it meets, what place it fills in the general scheme of things to which it is his pleasure to give actuality, what its function is in his all-inclusive plan. But we know that it could not occur unless it had such a function to perform, such a place to fill, a part to play in God's comprehensive plan.

And knowing that, we are satisfied.. Unless, indeed, we cannot trust God with his own plan, and feel that we must insist that he submit it to us, down to the last detail, and obtain our approval of it, before he executes it.

Least of all will the religious man doubt the universal Predestination of God. Why, what makes him a religious man is, among other things, that he sees God in everything.

A glass window stands before us. We raise our eyes and see the glass; we note its quality, and observe its defects; we speculate on its composition. Or we look straight through it on the great prospect of land and sea and sky beyond. So there are two ways of looking at the world. We may see the world and absorb ourselves in the wonders of nature. That is the scientific way. Or we may look right through the world and see God behind it. That is the religious way.

The scientific way of looking at the world is not wrong any more than the glass-manufacturer's way of looking at the window. This way of looking at things has its very important uses. Nevertheless the window was placed there not to be looked at but to be looked through; and the world has failed of its purpose unless it too is looked through and the eye rests not on it but on its God. Yes, its God; for it is of the essence of the religious view of things that God is seen in all that is and in all that occurs. The universe is his, and in all its movements speaks of him, because it does only his will.

If you would understand the religious man's conception of the relation of God to his world, observe him on his knees. For prayer is the purest expression of religion and in prayer we see religion come to its rights.

Did ever a man pray thus: "O God, Thou knowest that I can do as I choose and Thou canst not prevent me, Thou knowest that my fellowmen are, like me, beyond Thy control, Thou knowest that nature itself goes its own way and Thou canst but stand helplessly by and watch whither it tends"?

No, the attitude of the-soul in prayer is that of entire dependence for itself, and of complete confidence in God's all-embracing government. We ask him graciously to regulate our own spirit, to control the acts of our fellowmen, and to direct the course of the whole world in accordance with his holy and beneficent will. And we do right. Only, we should see to it that we preserve this conception of God in his relation to his world, when we rise from our knees; and make it the operative force of our whole life.

I know, it is true, an eminent theologian who will shake his head at this. God cannot control the acts of free agents, he says, and it is folly to ask him to do so. If we go gunning with an unskillful friend, he may awkwardly shoot us; and it is useless to ask God to protect us; he simply cannot do it. If we are at work at a dangerous machine by the side of a careless companion, he may destroy us at any moment, and it is useless to ask God to avert the mishap; God cannot do it.

If this were so, we certainly would be in a parlous case. Or rather the world would long ago have broken down into chaos.

Every religious man knows full well that it is not so. Every religious man knows that God can and will and does control everything that he has made in all their actions, and that therefore-despite all adverse appearances-it is all well with the world.

All well with the world, which is moving steadily forward in its established orbit; and all well with us who put our trust in God. For has he not himself told us that all things-all things, mind you-are working together for good to those that love him? And how, pray, could that be, except that they all do his bidding in all their actions?

**Re: , on: 2010/3/1 9:02**

Predestination by B.B. Warfield

God predestined me to think this is unintelligent heresy. He gets all the glory.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by boG (), on: 2010/3/1 19:31**

Quote:

-----God predestined me to think this is unintelligent heresy. He gets all the glory.  
-----

I agree with you, Benjoseph, there are a few fundamental errors with Warfield's teaching. However, as for your comment, could I not simply regard that God predestined you to be deceived by a lie? Therefore you are being prepared for destruction and God will have His glory, one way or another. Consider this as a challenge that when you argue do so prudently.

Quote:  
-----And he must be supposed to have made it precisely as he wished it to be, not only statically but dynamically considered, that is, in all its potentialities and in all its developments down to the end. That is to say, he must be supposed to have made it precisely to suit himself, as extended not only in space but in time. If anything occurs in it as projected through time--just as truly as if anything is found in it as extended in space--which is not just as he intended it to be, why, then we must admit that he could not make such a universe as he would like to have, and had to put up with the best he could get.

Well, then, can it be imagined that, though infinitely caring, God stands impotently over against the happenings in his universe, and cannot prevent them? Is he to be supposed to be watching from all eternity things which he does not wish to happen, coming, coming, ever coming, until at last they come--and he is unable to stop them?

Why, if he could not prevent their happening any other way he need not have made the universe; or he might have made it differently. There was nothing to require him to make this universe--or any universe at all--except his own good pleasure; and there is nothing to compel him to allow anything which he does not wish to happen, to occur in the universe which he has made for his own good pleasure.

Clearly things cannot occur in God's universe, the occurrence of which is displeasing to him. He does not stand helplessly by, while they occur against his wish. Whatever occurs has been foreseen by him from all eternity, and it succeeds in occurring only because its occurrence meets his wish.

-----

This line of argument is on the right track but takes a huge detour mid-course. Notice that Warfield is using the language: 'better' and 'best.' This is a derivative of the philosophy which embraces the belief that God created the 'best of all possible worlds' (John Piper is an example of a modern theologian who holds this view).

So what does this idea lead us to believe? Well, that God was very pleased with sin! God took great pleasure not only in the effects of sin but also in the control of sin and in making His pure creatures sinful. Moreover, this means God in fact immorally, as Warfield states it, "perpetrates chaos"; God, thus being in 'control,' is the author or cause of sin. It may therefore be further argued that since God is in 'control' of sin it is not 'chaos.' I reply with John Calvin and the Reformers:

The following is from The Doctrine of God, Chapter 9, "The Problem of Evil," by John Frame. Copied from Desiring God ministries.

Does God 'cause' Sin?

Quote:  
-----*Causes* is another term which has led to much wrestling by theologians. . . . Reformed writers have . . . denied that God is the cause of sin. **Calvin teaches, "For the proper and genuine cause of sin is not God's hidden counsel but the evident will of man,"** though in context he also states that Adam's Fall was "not without God's knowledge and ordination." Some other examples:

Quote:  
-----See that you make not God the author of sin, by charging his sacred decree with men's miscarriages, as if that were the cause or occasion of them; which we are sure that it is not, nor can be, any more than the sun can be the cause of darkness.

It is who created, preserves, actuates and directs all things. But it by no means follows, from these premises, that God is therefore the cause of sin, for sin is nothing but anomia, illegality, want of conformity to the divine law (1 John iii. 4), a mere privation of rectitude; consequently, being itself a thing purely negative, it can have no positive or efficient cause, but only a negative or deficient one, as several learned men have observed.

-----

According to the Canons of Dort, "The cause or blame for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is not at all in God, but in man" (1.5).

-----

Thus, in rebuttal, if by 'chaos' (ie. lack of conformity) we mean the act of sin then we have a proper agreement to "anomia, illegality, want of conformity to the divine law (1 John iii. 4), a mere privation of rectitude; consequently, being itself a thing purely negative, it can have no positive or efficient cause, but only a negative or deficient one." Does this mean that

the creatures are running beyond the bounds of God's Sovereignty? Absolutely not; but it certainly must change our understanding of Sovereignty from a purely 'hard determinism' (ie. intentional fatalism).

Quote:  
-----And if the person who exercises the control be an intelligent being, the end will be a wise end; if he be a moral being it will be a good end; if he be infinitely wise and holy, just and good, it will be an infinitely wise and holy, just and good end, and it will be wrought out by means as wise and holy, just and good as itself.  
-----

This is merely another way of defining God as a Pragmatist — that is, the 'ends' justify the 'means'. To restate it, God took pleasure in causing His creatures to be defiled in order to the end that He might redeem them from His own purposeful actions. How this might ever be explained to help us understand 'mercy' is beyond all reasonable minds.

Quote:  
-----I know, it is true, an eminent theologian who will shake his head at this. God cannot control the acts of free agents, he says, and it is folly to ask him to do so. If we go gunning with an unskillful friend, he may awkwardly shoot us; and it is useless to ask God to protect us; he simply cannot do it. If we are at work at a dangerous machine by the side of a careless companion, he may destroy us at any moment, and it is useless to ask God to avert the mishap; God cannot do it.  
-----

The concluding remarks are just one poorly framed argument after another.

"God cannot do it." This is an extreme belief equivalent to the Arminian form of Hyper-Calvinism.

Quote:  
-----If this were so, we certainly would be in a parlous case. Or rather the world would long ago have broken down into chaos.  
-----

And this is exactly what did happen at the Fall. Again, this is not contrary to the context of God's Sovereignty. However, it should be noted because Warfield is speaking in extremes, by 'chaos' he is more likely referring to some idea of Process Theology or annihilationism (ie. that all things would cease to exist).

Quote:  
-----Every religious man knows full well that it is not so. Every religious man knows that God can and will and does control everything that he has made in all their actions, and that therefore-despite all adverse appearances-it is all well with the world.  
-----

I agreed with everything until the "it is well with the world." That is quite an optimistic exaggeration.

Quote:  
-----All well with the world, which is moving steadily forward in its established orbit; and all well with us who put our trust in God. For has he not himself told us that all things—all things, mind you—are working together for good to those that love him? And how, pray, could that be, except that they all do his bidding in all their actions?  
-----

Notice, "All well with the world" and "all well with us who put our trust in God." Does Warfield mean by 'world' the universe as differentiated from humanity? If that is the case, then he has purposely ignored the circumstances of every single reprobate sinner. It is not surprising that he does this; as that would immediately raise the core of all controversy against this particular teaching of Predestination.

In essence, if God has declared and predestined all things according to the good-pleasure of His will then God must take

e pleasure in the death of the wicked, for He has purposed and intended them for destruction. Disagree with me if you wish, but that is the conclusion of this teaching of Predestination, as presented by Warfield; in direct opposition to Ezekiel 33:11, "As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (cf. Ezekiel 18:32). How then are we to understand the 'pleasure' of God in determining the death of the wicked?

**Re: , on: 2010/3/1 19:47**

Quote:  
-----could I not simply regard that God predestined you to be deceived by a lie? Therefore you are being prepared for destruction and God will have His glory, one way or another.  
-----

In answer to your question, you could only regard me as being deceived if you were predestined to regard me as such. And even if you were predestined to warn me of my delusion I could only wait and see if I was predestined to heed the warning. I can't believe I was predestined to write this post... I hope I'm predestined for a glass of water soon.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by boG (), on: 2010/3/1 19:53**

Quote:  
-----In answer to your question, you could only regard me as being deceived if you were predestined to regard me as such. And even if you were predestined to warn me of my delusion I could only wait and see if I was predestined to heed the warning. I can't believe I was predestined to write this post... I hope I'm predestined for a glass of water soon.  
-----

Exactly. The problem being you have made an entirely Emotive argument. Rather than utilizing proofs and reason, you have brought forth statements intended to provoke an emotional response. Such that, if I read your comments and go "Ew! that doesn't feel right. That's not what I want to hear!" Then you have successfully tickled the flesh of my ear instead of bringing Scripture reason to light upon my soul.

Moreover, please, do not disregard the doctrine of Predestination simply because many have abused it so perversely.

**Re: , on: 2010/3/1 20:42**

Quote:  
-----Exactly. The problem being you have made an entirely Emotive argument.  
-----

Why is it a problem if it was predestined to be that way? Who are you to question what comes to pass or label things problematic?

Quote:  
-----Rather than utilizing proofs and reason, you have brought forth statements intended to provoke an emotional response.  
-----

I couldn't help it.

Quote:  
-----Such that, if I read your comments and go "Ew! that doesn't feel right. That's not what I want to hear!" Then you have successfully tickled the flesh of my ear instead of bringing Scripture reason to light upon my soul.  
-----

I was just carrying the view to its logical conclusions in context. I don't blame you for your slightly demeaning reaction though because you can't help it.

Quote:  
-----Moreover, please, do not disregard the doctrine of Predestination simply because many have abused it so perversely.  
-----

That's too bad that you were predestined to go through all the trouble of saying that because I can't really do anything about the fact that I believe in free will. Do you think I'll be predestined for that glass of water soon?? I'm getting so thirsty... Oh no... What if I get dehydrated? What do you think I should do?

**Re: - posted by wind\_blows, on: 2010/3/1 20:57**

Quote:  
-----That's too bad that you were predestined to go through all the trouble of saying that because I can't really do anything about the fact that I believe in free will. Do you think I'll be predestined for that glass of water soon?? I'm getting so thirsty... Oh no... What if I get dehydrated? What do you think I should do?  
-----

---

Is this in any way edifying to the body of Christ. People from all over the world come to this site, both saved and unsaved, please pray before you post. How does this shine the light of Jesus to the lost, your post comes across as mocking another believer?

in Him  
Ellie

**Re: - posted by imnowhere, on: 2010/3/1 21:17**

Somewhat surprised that the two Arminian posts were made after so many warnings of how fleshly they are by the two that posted them.

Also surprised that now the scoffing, ridicule and slander is being tolerated.

Not surprised at the blatant contradictions nor the advertisement of such incredible theological ignorance.

The first reply to Greg by Yoadam was based on substance.

Posts like those of Benjoseph illustrate the level at which the two sides are able to debate at.

The site moderators ask you before you post that you consider praying and ask the Lord if you have the right spirit to serve others in the body of Christ before posting and pressing the submit button. Please also look at these scriptures: Matthew 12:36 (But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.), James 1:26 (If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.), Colossians 4:6 (Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.).

**Re: , on: 2010/3/1 22:35**

I love you boG. (and not in a predestined sort of way) :)

I might not post in this thread anymore since others think I'm mocking you personally. I guess it just wasn't meant to be, friend.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/3/2 0:05**

There have been posts about calvinist 100's of times on sermonindex. and brethren have been able to pick out some of the extremes and take what was good.

the same with other views everyone should be able to benefit from something like this. Oh that we would humbly acknowledge we can't figure out God! and His doctrines fully!

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by Fouby, on: 2010/3/2 0:36**

Does anyone out there like philosophy at all?

Lets just pretend for a second like we are discussing something without our preconceived notions already predetermining the outcome.

Lets define some terms.

So basically we have something called Time, now time as we know it is a term used to describe the concept of a progression of events (Some would say Time is a construct, but to agree with that statement does not attest to the fact that the word time is made up, but that time itself is created by our perception). One main point of this argument is the argument against infinite regression #2: An infinite regression backwards of events or sequence of events (time) is not possible, because today or a dependent event or being has occurred or is occurring and this would not be possible if there was an infinite regression preceding it Because infinity is insurmountable. You can't get past it by definition.

Now we tend to use the word God a lot without care of his amoral (or "physical" attributes). One of His divine unfathomable attributes is His Eternal Being. Now Eternal does not mean infinitely old, because that would require an infinite amount of time to have passed already which as mentioned previously is impossible. Eternal refers to God's Transcendence, that He transcends the order of events (time) and creates time and all other portions of creation. Another key feature of God that comes into the equation is that God is the uncaused first cause, that He is the Creator.

Point 1 is God is outside of Time.

Point 2 is God is the Creator.

Handy argument for transcendence

This is usually poorly explained as some sort of deism... But is to properly be understood in terms of Trinitarian Revelation, God's actions within time must be understood somehow, other wise This statement nullifies any divine actions within time (including the traditional view of Creation). We must Understand that We define the Homocousion (the infinite one essence of God comprised of the Trinity) as the External or outside of time revelation (The Father), The internal physical (inside time) revelation of God through creation and the Life of Christ (Jesus), And the internal spiritual (inside time) revelation of God (Holy Spirit).

Considering the things previous stated:

This is a much heavier thought than you have thought before.

Check it out

If God is creating time from an outside of time perspective, how can God create without knowing exactly how that will effect the future?

We tend to view God as one who did not "For-see" His creative act, and it fell, and He had to pay the price of the cross to redeem it again. I appologize for the rhetoric

If God sees the future and the past from an outside perspective, than He must know the effects that every molecule has on the "solid object" of the future. There can be no fluidity in future events from the Divine Creator's perspective.

God, the unity of the trinity, must be the perceiver of the fullness of creation from the first moment of creation.

How could Christ not be the lamb Slain from the foundation of the earth? How else could we be judged but from the book of life which was written before the foundation of the earth?

It is not that I am a staunch old churchmen why I read the bible and preach the sovereignty of God. I am 20, I am at university voraciously searching for the truth. And I can not imagine a possible universe any other way other than a determinist perspective.

God new what He was getting Himself into when He created the world, He knew what He was getting us into as well.

That brings us some pretty good light to read Romans 8:29-30

Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: -- Whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

To Foreknow is axiomatic from an eternal perspective, as well as "predestinate" would be the same as to "create" from a

n eternal perspective.

All of this said, I would ask for someone with good reason and logic to convince me otherwise, because right now I can not even imagine another possible possibility.

**Re: - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2010/3/2 5:12**

I find that those with an appreciation for the grandness of God find rest in His sovereignty...

While those with a higher view of man's freedom value the sovereign hand of God less.

People enjoy making a dogmatic / false model of Calvin, and proceed to vilify that model for whatever reason... I would propose the reason being that they do not enjoy their freewill being stripped from them... as if they have anything of their own to begin with...

"What do you have that you have not received, and if you have received it why do you boast?"

lol... I digress.

Ultimately the question boils down to whether salvation is completely reliant upon God, or does it partly originate from man? We know that Scripture clearly states God acts for His own glory, and that no flesh shall glory in His presence.

I'm glad that sanctification is a gift of God, as salvation was / is / will be... because if it was left up to me, I would remain stagnant in my sinful state, without any desire to move towards Him.

May God grant us the willingness to obey Him... For me in my flesh, there is no good thing.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/3/2 6:30**

Myself think there is a need for balance, it is fully possible to be convinced Wesley are "right" on his view of predestination, and have sweet fellowship with someone who thinks Spurgeon was right, also it is fully possible to discuss these things without anything should get "ugly", personal remarks etc.

I think it is healthy to talk of these things if..... if done in a right way, since its a dear subject to us, the doctrines of God and his ways, we easily get "excited" and want to share our opinion of what scripture says, but we should be doing so in the uttermost cautiousness and prayerfulness, i enjoy something i heard brother Zac Poonen say in a message. He said something like "when i pray i am a calvinist, when i preach i am arminian."

what he went on to say and explain was when he prays he prays to a sovereign God that will do all things he pray in faith for, no good praying to a God and ask him to save someones should if it is all up the human to decide for himself whether he wants to be saved or not, and when he preach he preached as an arminian urging men to make a decision to come to the Lord, surrender their lives etc"

Of course brother Poonen explained much more in better words, but i dont remember what video it was from, i hope i got his "point" explained true to the message, i will post video later if i find it.

But i think it is true for us all, when we pray for God to save someone we pray trusting his sovereignty, when we preach we preach and try by Gods grace to open their eyes by his spirit so they can see their need and cast themselves upon Christ.

EDIT: the video where poonen shares his "balanced view"

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?vOpHI7pEI4tw>) Part 1

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?vkCuvPdKRqLs>) Part 2

**Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2010/3/2 8:42**

I speculate this won't go anywhere, but, I think a parallel emphasis to everyone's "opinion" of God's mind on this matter should be a focus on what Scripture says. If I read 1John2:29 in parallel with 1John 4:7 in parallel with 1John 5:1, I come to the inescapable conclusion that God's act of regeneration precedes our love for God, precedes our practicing righteousness and finally and most importantly for this discussion, precedes our believing. If this is a correct interpretation, then Romans 8:29, and multiple other texts suggesting individual election/choosing/ordaining/predestination by God tend to make sense in the total.

Regeneration, as I see in 1John5:1, precedes faith. If someone wants to apply human logic in addition to spiritual interpretation then in either case the inescapable conclusion is that God elects some and not all and this election is manifested in regeneration of some and not all and God thereby gives faith to some and not all and this regeneration is on the basis of God's good pleasure not on the basis of foreseen faith; especially if faith is a gift of God in the first place which is also Scriptural. That is not an argument for a system of theology, but rather simple Scripture interpretation

**Re: , on: 2010/3/2 10:36**

Quote:  
-----There have been posts about calvinist 100's of times on sermonindex. and brethren have been able to pick out some of the extremes and take what was good.

the same with other views everyone should be able to benefit from something like this. Oh that we would humbly acknowledge we can't figure out God! and His doctrines fully!  
-----

Brother Greg,

Seem's like John Wesley believed he had this figured out. I still find it confusing that you would kinda rebuke and forbid people from posting articles on this subject and then post them yourself. So are people free again to start posting articles on different views than this one?

**Re: Fouby, on: 2010/3/2 11:12**

Dear Fouby

You've got to spend less time with Jacob Boehme and more time with substantial theosophical literature, like "The Four Spiritual Laws" or anything else by Campus Crusade. Arminian theology is thoroughly logical: We are separated from God by our sins, but He loves us, so He punished His Son for our sins instead, which makes it legal for Him to forgive us. Now we have to save ourselves by making a decision to accept Him as our Savior.

However, as our thoroughly logical Calvinists will point out, you cannot avail yourself of this salvation if you are not one of the Elect. The Limited Atonement was not for the whole world, because if Jesus accepted the punishment for everyone's sins, God could not send anyone to hell because it would be unjust to punish both the sinner and the Savior.

So you see that one thing Calvinists and Arminians can agree on is that God's moral governance must be circumscribed by lawyerly logic to prevent Him from drifting off into injustice. This is all you need to know to be a good evangelical theologian.

Re: - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2010/3/2 13:33

Quote:

-----Now we have to save ourselves by making a decision to accept Him as our Savior.  
-----

Save ourselves?

What does that even mean?

If I could save myself I would become a Buddhist or a Hindu, I wouldn't need Jesus.

Say somebody is drowning out in the ocean, but they're unconscious.

Are you going to wait until they wake up and tell you, "Save me!"?

Or lets say your child runs out into the street to pick up a ball, and a truck is barreling down the road about to run them over. Do you wait for the child to turn to you and save himself?

Or do you run out and tackle the child out of the way and take the hit of the truck yourself?

If we save ourselves, it is no longer a salvation, but an agreement, or a transaction.

"Jesus is my broker."

Re: , on: 2010/3/2 14:40

IWantAnguish,

The Bible writers believed you must be born again to be saved because they did not have the benefit of modern jurisprudence, like Arminians do. If sinners were not capable of obeying God and keeping His commandments *before* receiving a new nature, it would be unjust for God to condemn them for not keeping His commandments. How could we be guilty of breaking God's Law if we were incapable of keeping it in the first place? Therefore we save ourselves by deciding to stop making bad decisions. For more sound theology please visit Campus Crusade's website.

Re: - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2010/3/2 16:26

Why would it be unjust for God to condemn fallen man?

Are you the judge of objective morality?

You are under the assumption that God is in the debt of man after creating mankind.

God does not owe mankind anything.

Adam sinned, and we fell in Adam, thus when Christ died under the penalty of sin, all who are in Christ are saved by association with Christ.

Can't God choose to do what He wants to do with His creation?

To create some for honor, and others for dishonor?

Doesn't it state in the Bible that God chooses some and passes over others?

Does it not also state that God loved Jacob and hated Esau? and that when Esau sought after repentance with tears that he could not find it?

**Re: , on: 2010/3/2 16:55**

Yes, the Bible teaches all those things, but the Bible writers did not have the Moral Illumination that Jacobus Arminius had.

Remind me to post the sermon "Calvinists in the Hands of an Angry God" by the legendary Methodist circuit rider, Muttonchops Mathers.

**Re: - posted by TimmyJoe, on: 2010/3/2 17:27**

Quote:  
-----O that men would praise the Lord for this his goodness; and that they would be content with this plain account of it, and not endeavor to wade into those mysteries which are too deep for angels to fathom!  
-----

The Sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man! O' what a great mystery indeed!

**Re: , on: 2010/3/2 18:51**

Quote:  
-----That is the false teaching of Open Theism.

Wesley rejected that presumption perfectly  
-----

Sorry boG, I didn't see this reply of yours.

I don't agree with Wesley on this topic.

**Re: - posted by IWantAnguish (), on: 2010/3/2 19:04**

Quote:  
-----Yes, the Bible teaches all those things, but the Bible writers did not have the Moral Illumination that Jacobus Arminius had.  
-----

I hope you're trolling / joking.

This thought directly contradicts 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

**Re: , on: 2010/3/2 20:22**

Me, a troll? I'll have you know that I am a direct descendant of Muttonchops Mathers (known to the Indians as "Thunderlips"). The man used to wade through the congregation beating sinners with a cudgel. He would gallop along with his ivory-handled revolvers and shoot wine jugs out of the hands of drunken Calvinists. Like his hero Wesley he was thunderously flatulent and one time while preaching "Calvinists in the Hands of an Angry God" at a brush arbor meeting, he broke such massive wind that it was ignited by a paraffin lamp and nearly burned the place down. After that word got around that when Muttonchops Mathers preached on hell you could almost see the flames and smell the burning sulphur.

So if you think a man of my lineage is here to joke around, think again, brother!

**Re: dear LoinGirder - posted by Fouby, on: 2010/3/2 21:40**

Wow, I never thought about it like that...

Oh wait, Yes I have, and you haven't answered anything... You might have well have made this statement to a paper cup, because that doesn't accomplish anything either.

Thanks for judging God and stepping in for me, I was afraid to think for myself for a moment.(sarcasm heavily emphasized).

Re read what I posted and try again, - I am not talking about the color of the box, or the smell of the box, I am talking about whether it is a box or a sphere....

You happen to have not only differed to a more knowledgeable source(.....), also you have made a red herring argument (irrelevant) and you told me what to think instead of engaging in a thought.

**Re: Young Grasshopper, on: 2010/3/3 0:02**

Young Grasshopper,

Philosophers love sophistication, but it is better to always think of the simplest thing first:

1. Please read the post directly above yours.
2. Apply Occam's Razor.

**Re: On Predestination by John Wesley - posted by boG (), on: 2010/3/3 1:44**

Benjoseph, I am actually an ardent supporter of a Biblical doctrine of free-will. Especially when considering myself to be a self-titled Wesleyan-Arminian. Perhaps it was I who was not clear enough in my cautioning. I am persuaded that a self-originating will (ie. free-will) is not in contradiction to Predestination. However, I am definitely not in agreement with Edwards redefining of "free" in his Treatise on the Will.

The point being, I just want to encourage you to embrace and search out the doctrine of free-will in its context of Predestination. I would recommend a personally favorite book for studying this complex topic: John Forbes, Predestination and Free Will and the Westminster Confession of Faith. (This book may be read free online, Google Books.) Even if you only read the first chapter, it will be extremely beneficial to you.

**Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/3/3 4:22**

Quote:

-----boG wrote:

The point being, I just want to encourage you to embrace and search out the doctrine of free-will in its context of Predestination.

Did Jesus expressly teach this?

Me personally, I think a lot of us are going to stand before Christ with piles of ashes around us... when we could have had gold.

God bless you,

Re: , on: 2010/3/3 8:06

Hi boG,

I don't know what you mean by a "Biblical doctrine of free-will". We don't need the Bible in order to understand free will properly.

Predestination of free choices is an oxymoron. There is no such context of predestination in regards to free choices.

Also, infallible foreknowledge of future free choices is self-contradictory. There is no such context of foreknowledge in regards to free choices.

Let me know if I'm misunderstanding you.