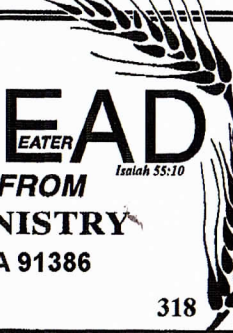


“generated from above” (Gk.-*gennaō anōthen*) in order to see (perceive, understand) the Kingdom of God. (See **Seed & Bread** No. 093, *Concerning ‘Born Again,’* No. 094, *Generation From Above*, and No. 095, *Lessons From Nicodemus*.) Calvin was right in understanding that we cannot come to God or understand the things of God on our own. Without the generation of God’s truth in our lives, we would be without hope. Thank God though, because God *does* generate His truth in us. He did this for Nicodemus, and He is doing this for us today. Once generated by God, we do have the ability to respond favorably toward Him; we can make a choice to trust and believe Him. It’s unfortunate that Calvin didn’t realize that our God is a big and powerful God; He is more than able to overwhelm our sinful, rebellious state by interjecting Himself into our lives. He did all that was needed at Calvary and He is doing all that is needed today to draw us to Himself. This is done through His Holy Spirit and through His apostle for today, the Word of God.

Calvinism grew from the misplaced notion that mankind is so utterly and totally depraved that he has no ability to respond to God’s love and grace. Assuming this was true, it was then deduced that God must choose or “predestine” whom He wills to go to heaven. Assuming this was true, it was then deduced that He has chosen or “predestined” whom He wills to go to Hell. Assuming this was true, it was then deduced that mankind has no free will and that God has ordained EVERYTHING to be. This one simple mistake was built upon and grew to be what became known historically as “Calvinism.” When this un-Biblical doctrine is coupled with another un-Biblical doctrine, that of eternal conscious torment, men are compelled to believe that God created the bulk of mankind for only one possible destiny: to be punished for all eternity in an agonizing pit of Hell fire. It’s bad enough when it is taught that this is a result of men rejecting God’s free gift, but it is a heinous error to teach that this is because God chose or “predestined” it to be so. One incorrect doctrinal understanding feeds another, and still another. This perception of the God of all glory, the God of all love, the God of all grace, is repugnant to me and I CHOOSE to have no part in it.



MORE
SEED & BREAD
FOR THE SOWER & FOR THE EATER
Isaiah 55:10
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM
THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY
 P.O. Box 1609, Canyon Country, CA 91386
 Otis Q. Sellers, Founder
 318

CALVIN’S MISTAKE

By Robert Juneau

One of the most objectionable teachings in Christendom to me is that of predestination or Calvinism, named after John Calvin, the early reformer responsible for setting forth the idea. Otis Q. Sellers wrote a comprehensive indictment of Calvinism in **Seed & Bread** Nos. 103, *Divine Election*, and 160, *Concerning Predestination*. In these articles, he reveals the true meaning of the Greek word *proorizo*, pronounced pro-or-id’-zo, translated “predestined” in Romans 8:29 and Ephesians 1:5, 11. It is important to recognize that most Bible translators have been advocates of predestination and election, which has greatly contributed to the popularity of this teaching.

When a wrong interpretation of a Biblical passage has been made, it usually leads to subsequent mistakes and then conclusions are built on suppositions. To quote Mr. Sellers: “So the problem they have created calls for the manufacture of other theological doctrines in the hope of solving the problem and dispelling the trouble” (**Seed & Bread** No. 094, *Generation From Above*). Calvin did this by presupposing the total depravity of man, which teaches, “As a consequence of the fall of man, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin as a result of their fallen nature, and apart from the efficacious grace of God, are utterly unable to choose to follow God, refrain from evil, or accept the gift of salvation as it is offered.” Just as any building needs to stand on a solid foundation, Christian doctrine cannot stand if built upon a mistaken idea. Once this statement was accepted, many more conclusions began to arise as a consequence.

We all agree that our sinful state causes selfish motives, ungodly desires, and evil deeds, but it is a different thing altogether to say that mankind has no ability to embrace God’s grace and receive His free gift of salvation. What value would any gift have if the intended recipient had no ability to acknowledge or receive it? Does it make sense that God would come to earth, sacrifice Himself for all mankind on the cross, knowing all along that

The **SEED & BREAD** Bible-Study leaflets are published as often as time and means permit and are sent free to all names on THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY mailing list. Send us your name. There will be no obligation, solicitation or visitation. Additional copies of any issue available on request.

ISSUE NO.

318

Published
August 2017

not one for whom He had done this had any possible chance of receiving the benefit of such a wondrous work?

The Bible is replete with characters who responded favorably to God. Many examples of virtuous, upright, God-fearing men and women can be found in Scripture, but Calvinists insist this is because they were already “predestined” to be so. When someone responds by faith to God’s gracious offer of salvation today, the Calvinist insists that they were already predestined by God to become believers. Engaging someone on this subject results in a futile, twisted, paradoxical discussion. Of course, the only thing that matters is whether or not this is a truth from the Bible.

After becoming convinced of the total depravity of man, Calvin built upon this non-Biblical notion as his writings state: “Without predestination no one would be saved.” The Calvinistic-based Westminster Confession of Faith states: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” Calvin’s original premise of the total depravity of man, by reason, means that God Himself must choose us, and we are told that He did so before the creation of the world. This puts our response to God’s love and grace in the shadow of having already been predestined for salvation long before we were born.

Calvin’s mistakes continued to mount. The Westminster Confession also states: “God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.” They paint themselves into a corner with the first part of this statement by saying that God ordains EVERYTHING to be. This makes God responsible for all sin, evil, and unrighteousness in the world. It makes God responsible for the fallen state of man and for all blasphemy and slander against Him. They feel that they have a satisfactory answer to all this with the second part of this statement, but anyone of average intelligence can see it for what it is: nonsensical double talk.

In support of Calvinism, it has been stated, “Calvin felt he had found the key to his theological interpretation in John 6:65.” This is an unwitting admission that Calvin’s idea concerning predestination preceded any Biblical support for it. Any authoritative Biblical teaching must begin with discovery from Scripture, followed by scrutiny, analysis, and Scriptural comparisons to ascertain its validity. Like many within religious circles, Calvin got this backwards. John 6:65: **Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.** We are told that this means no one can receive for himself God’s free gift of salvation, no one can decide for themselves to become a believer in all that Christ has done for them. Men and women are incapable of responding favorably to God’s love and grace unless the Father had long before predestined it to be so.

Twenty verses earlier in John 6:44, 45 the Lord said: **No one can come to**

Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught by God.” Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Christ declares that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws Him. He proclaims that all are taught by God and anyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Him. This reveals the fact that all of Israel should have known who Christ was if they had indeed “heard” and “learned” what the Father was teaching them throughout the Old Testament period. I believe this also refers to when all of Israel was taught and enlightened by the Holy Spirit during the period covered by the Book of Acts. Reaching every Israelite living at that time with the Gospel was the whole purpose of the Acts Period, the early “blade” stage of the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:26-29).

Just a few verses later in John 6:70, Christ says that He chose His twelve closest disciples, yet He calls one of them a devil. Does this mean, because God had chosen him, he was predestined for salvation? God chose Israel as the nation of people through which He would accomplish His will on earth. Does this mean that God predestined every Israelite for salvation? When God chose men, it had nothing to do with being predestined to salvation; it was either for service to God or for a position out of God, but was never for salvation from God.

How can we reconcile the verse that says the Father *draws men to Christ* with the verse that says *no man can come to Christ unless it has been granted him by the Father*? Imagine a father deciding to throw a birthday party for his young son. The father invites all of his son’s friends to come and be part of the festivities, but only ten children respond to his invitation by attending. The birthday boy is so excited to have ten of his friends at his party and proclaims, “Thank you for celebrating my birthday with me! I am so grateful that my father has given you all to me today.” The child is thankful that his father gave him ten of his friends to join in the celebration. Without the father’s invitation, no one could have attended, and even though many more children were invited, these ten children were the ones that were “given” to the son by the father. These ten children who decided to come to the party came by their own choice; they were not predestined, chosen, or hand picked by the boy’s father.

Like this, the whole of Israel was invited to be part of all God was doing through Christ; to miss this is to miss a major objective of the New Testament. The ones who were faithful to “hear” and “learn” from the Father or the Holy Spirit were among those whom the Father “gave” to the Son. The entire world is invited to partake in God’s Gospel of grace today; to miss this is to miss a major objective of the Dispensation of Grace. We who respond favorably to the Gospel message of salvation are the ones whom the Father “gives” to Christ. I have to wonder, within Calvinism, who are the “whosoever” of John 3:16?

Another doctrinal truth that Calvin was missing was how it is that God reveals Himself to us. In John 3:3 the Lord told Nicodemus he needed to be