

for the very purpose of showing forth His power through him; and has He not said that He hardened his heart that he might not let Israel go, even though he beheld the mighty miracles that were performed by Moses and Aaron."

Looked at from one standpoint, these passages of Scripture would seem to give color to the idea that there is foundation for this doctrine of predestination, and that before the birth of Esau and Jacob there had been a foreordination or a predestination by which the lives of the two men were determined, and the course that they should take had been ordained by God, so that each had to follow a certain line of life to accomplish his destiny.

The difficulty that many people have in considering this subject is that they confound foreknowledge with foreordination. Because God foreknew that Esau would serve his brother Jacob, He knowing the end from the beginning, it does not follow that because of this foreknowledge and because He revealed this fact to Rebecca, it was His design, or that He had predetermined, that these children, yet unborn, should each take the course that he did. Esau and Jacob had their agency. So with all of us; yet our Heavenly Father knows beforehand everything concerning us and what our lives will be. There is nothing hidden from or unknown to Him concerning the earth and its inhabitants. Everything that will take place is known beforehand to Him. By the spirit of prophecy, therefore, He predicts events that shall take place and works that men and nations will accomplish. He knew before these children were born upon the earth the course that both Jacob and Esau would take, and was able to foretell to the mother that the elder would serve the younger, and that the younger would be the greater and the better man. "But," says one, "He says that 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated'"—as though God before they were born had loved one and hated the other; before they had committed any act to cause the feeling of love or to prompt the feeling of hatred, He had expressed Himself in that manner.

This is not the case, however. This expression was not made by the Lord before the birth of these children. It was Malachi, the last of the Prophets whose record in the Bible has come down to us, who made this expression concerning these two men. After they had lived upon the earth, after they had accomplished their labors, the Prophet Malachi, in speaking of them and of the blessings that had descended upon Israel, and speaking by the Spirit of the Lord and for the Lord, made this expression: "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Of course, it was easy to declare this then, after they had finished their work on earth. There was no impropriety in it, for the judgment was then pronounced upon them. The works of Jacob had been those which God loved. The works of Esau had been those of which God did not approve.

Therefore this could be said of them with perfect propriety and impartiality, and without conveying the idea that Esau, helpless in the presence of a fate to which he had been foreordained, had no alternative but to perform the works which were so displeasing to the Lord.

In the case of Pharaoh, the Lord raised him up, no doubt, for the express purpose of showing forth His power. He knew Pharaoh before he was born. He knew his character and spirit. He knew that which he would do. Therefore, to show forth His might and to accomplish His purposes—not by taking away Pharaoh's agency—not by compelling him to do that which he did, but by leaving him to the free exercise of his agency—He spoke as He did concerning Pharaoh and declared that He had raised him up for that express purpose. He placed him on the throne of Egypt at a time when it was necessary in order to fulfil the predictions that had already been made respecting the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. In order that the children of Israel might go forth with mighty power and with the exhibition of great miracles, God so arranged and prepared events that a spirit, such as this Pharaoh was, should occupy the throne of Egypt, so that His glorious ability to save His people and to fulfil His word might be made manifest to the nations of the earth, and that the story thereof should go down through all the ages of time, to be told as long as there should be men upon the earth to relate the story or to hear it; and in order, too, that His chosen people, the children of Israel, might know that He had brought them forth with mighty power and with an outstretched arm, that it might never be forgotten by them nor their children after them.

But it was not that God foreordained this man to commit this wickedness and to oppose His work. I would like you to clearly understand that foreknowledge is one thing and foreordination or predestination is another, and there is a great distinction between the two. They must not be confounded one with the other. Is it not plain that God does possess foreknowledge? But does it necessarily follow that, because He knows that a spirit when it takes a mortal tabernacle will follow evil courses, He ordains that soul to that end, or predestines him to be the wicked man he becomes? Such a doctrine is abhorrent to every principle of righteousness and justice and to all that God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the holy Prophets have said concerning our Great Creator. That men are foreordained there can be no doubt entertained by those who believe the Gospel; but not to be damned. Every human being is ordained to be saved, if he will be. If he is damned, it is because he chooses the path that leads to condemnation.

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

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image

of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

It is plain from these words of Paul that the Lord, by His foreknowledge, saw that certain spirits would love God, them He did "predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," "them He also called; them He also justified." They were, doubtless, foreordained to come forth and be ministers of righteousness on the earth.

The Savior, while in the flesh, chose twelve men to be His apostles. He ordained them. Eleven of them were true and faithful men. One of them was a hypocrite and a thief, and afterwards a base traitor. Does not our experience in this Church prove to us that Judas might be all this without being predestined to be so vile? Have we not seen in our day men violate the commands of God in—what some might term—little things, and go on, step by step, from one degree of sin to another, until they would betray the Lord's anointed? And can any who were familiar with such cases, and who watched the gradual descent of these men to evil, doubt for a moment that they had their agency? They chose to commit sin. They had their agency in doing so. They did not repent, and the most dreadful results followed.

God knew His Son Jesus Christ before He was born in the flesh, and He was ordained before the foundation of the earth was laid. He was the Lamb slain, we are told, before the foundation of the earth. That is, it was known that He would be slain; it was known that a generation would be found upon earth at the time the Savior came who would be so hard in their hearts that they would reject Him and crucify Him. God foreknew this. He predicted it. We have the record of it. Isaiah predicted it with great plainness, and other Prophets alluded to it. Moses predicted that the Lord would raise up a Prophet like unto himself—referring to the Son of God. And in the Book of Mormon we find a great many predictions recorded with the utmost plainness concerning the life of the Savior, the persecutions that He should endure, and the death that He should suffer. This was revealed by the spirit of prophecy. God, in His infinite knowledge, understanding and comprehending the end from the beginning, knowing the hardness of heart of that generation, inspired His servants the Prophets to predict this, and they foretold it with the utmost accuracy. But you must not imagine that because of this those who murdered the Savior were predestined or compelled to do what they did. On the contrary, they did it because they wished to do it. In the exercise of their agency they chose evil rather than good. They hated virtue, they hated purity. Full of the traditions of their fathers, they hated the Son of God, and they hated Him to prison and to death.

We must always remember that