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## A DEBATED SUBJECT.

The subject of predestination has troubled a few of our young students of theology, and we have been requested to give some explanation of it as understood by the Latter-day Saints. It appears that some of them think that if a person was predestined to occupy a certain position, or chosen to perform an important work on earth, he would have no choice in the matter but would be compelled to take the course designed. They do not appear to be able to reconcile the foreknowledge of God with the free-agency of man.

In the Book of Mormon it is shown that men were chosen to occupy important positions in the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, on account of "their exceeding faith and good works." They were "prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God." But before receiving their high calling in the flesh, they were like all other human beings, left free to choose good or evil. They chose the good and refused the evil and became obedient to the laws of God, and all this was foreknown by the Almighty, and so they were predestinated and chosen for those positions—Alma, xiii.

The great characters that have figured prominently in the affairs of this world, whether in war or peace, in the government of nations, in the teaching of religion or in any other capacity in which a marked effect is exhibited on the progress of mankind, were all predestinated to come on earth at the particular time and place for which they were needed, and in those environments which gave them opportunities for the exercise of the powers with which they were endowed. But each one was left to the exercise of that free agency which is the common heritage of all the children of men. None of them was forced to do the work for which he was fitted. Nobody is compelled to do good, or forced to do evil. No matter what influences may be brought to bear in one direction or the other, each person on arriving at the years of accountability can act upon his own volition, and because of that power and freedom, he is a responsible being and will have to give an account for his doings, so that everyone may be "judged according to his works."

The fact that God knows beforehand what people will do, does not affect in any degree the will of His creatures. The commandments and purposes of the Almighty are just, and true, and righteous. His children are required to observe them. He knows beforehand what will occur, but that does not hinder the freedom of action of any human being. It is evident that He knew what our first parents would do when placed in the Garden of Eden, for the remedy was prepared against the consequences of that sin by which death came into the world. Christ was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, having been chosen and predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God, to come at the time appointed to make the atonement which was necessary for redemption from the fall.

The law of God must be proclaimed, no matter how well it may be known that it will be obeyed or transgressed. Obedience or disobedience is the voluntary act of the creature. The law is independent of that action, and emanates from the Creator. His foreknowledge of that which will occur, carries no compulsion in either direction. Adam was free to partake of the forbidden fruit or to refuse it. Jesus of Nazareth was free to do the Father's will in all things even unto death, or to follow the devices and temptations of the Evil One. Yet the Eternal Father understood in the beginning what each would do, and His designs and purposes were prepared with that perfect understanding.

An earthly parent, with his limited foresight, may know from the general disposition of his child that disobedience will follow his paternal instructions. Yet they must be given, and the child will nevertheless exercise its choice and brave the inevitable consequences. The parent does not compel the child to obey nor prevent it from disobeying. A little careful thought will show to a reasoning mind, that the foreknowledge of God or of man does not imply interference with the free agency of any human being.

No matter what may have been taught in the theology of certain schools, it should be clearly understood that no individual was ever predestinated to be saved, or condemned, irrespective of his or her own actions for good or evil. Christ died for mankind which they could not do for themselves. He opened the way, they must walk in of their own free will, or they will not obtain the benefits of His sacrifice. Each one will receive that degree of glory to which he is

entitled by his own works or that punishment he merits for his evil doings. Predestination to an important place in the affairs of the world or of the Church, does not imply salvation or exaltation in the eternal world. In the final judgment all people will be judged according to their own individual works. Justice and mercy will each claim its own, and it will be seen that although "known unto God were all His works from the beginning unto the end," the Eternal Father has never interfered with the free agency of any of His children.

## OUTLOOK AMONG CHURCHES.

A contributor to the Boston Transcript finds the outlook for the new year among four of the larger denominations of this country "promising;" in three it is "fair," and in two, "ominous." Among those with promising prospects are the Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans and Disciples. Among Roman Catholics, Baptists and Jews, the reviewer finds only fair conditions, and in the Protestant Episcopal and Congregational bodies, he says, the signs are ominous.

Classifications of this kind may not be very reliable. They depend mostly on what point of view they are made from. Thus, the Presbyterian outlook is said to be promising, although from other sources, quoted by the Church Economist, it is known that for the year ending the 31st of March last, 2,141 churches, of a total of 7,518, did not have one single addition by "conversion of faith." And of the remaining 5,377 churches, 2,599, or almost one-half, reported five or less additions each. The 2,599 embrace the large body of ordinary and typical churches, outside of favorable conditions and of leadership quality. Of the 2,778 churches receiving five or more, 1,171 received ten or less, leaving only 1,607 that reported over ten accessions during a whole year.

The review does not show that the conditions have materially changed. It states that harmony obtains, that the creed revision does not create a ripple, and that "rarely has an era of greater Presbyterian good feeling obtained." This is, of course, gratifying, and "promising." But is it especially so? Is it worthy of special note that members of a church entertain good feeling toward one another?

As for the other churches, the reviewer quoted says that the Disciples and the Lutherans continue to have phenomenal growth of membership, the latter, however, partly through immigration. The Quakers are cited over their recent peace conference. As for the Catholics, "much is hoped for this year from lay federation, and apprehension obtains generally because of the advanced age of the pope, and the temporal power question involved in the selection of his successor. Growth in membership is steady, but not marked as it has not been marked for some years past." Methodists expect large membership accessions, and will spend much energy in completing the \$20,000,000 fund. Among the Baptists, the reviewer thinks, the "conditions might be better." Contributions are backward, and membership growth presents nothing striking. Religious leaders among the Jews have long deplored the loss to Judaism of their millionaire class. In the Episcopal body, intellectually has gone to an extreme, and in the Congregational, individuality.

Thus is the situation, briefly stated. The reviewer concludes:

"It costs \$200,000,000 a year to maintain the churches of the United States, and to make the usual annual advance. Like the year just closed, there is in the year just beginning nothing very encouraging. Finances are not good, in spite of the prosperous times. In many bodies spiritual enthusiasm is at a low ebb. Parochialism to the detriment of the general work is rampant. Progress is making, but it is quite inadequate to that which leaders in all bodies expected a year ago, or desired to be realized, conditions in the material world being what they are."

Leaving out of consideration the question whether this pen-picture is true in every detail, it may be safe to say that the original is sombre enough to cause serious reflections among all thoughtful observers. With all the elegance of the pulpit, the elegance of worship, and the enthusiasm for "missions" at home and abroad, the tendency that is well characterized as worldliness is threatening to assume preponderance. And this chilling blast is intensified by the theology that commenced by denying the need of ever continued revelation and authoritative guidance, and is about to end, logically, in denying the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

From present conditions there is no escape, except through the power of Him who has proclaimed again, through His messengers, that "a great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men." That work is already spreading throughout the earth, though many who count themselves wise fail to perceive it. It is the work of the Almighty for the redemption of His children, in His own appointed way, which is so different from that which to mere human wisdom appears right and safe.

## WHERE WAS PARADISE?

According to the San Francisco Call, Thorvald Koehl, a Scandinavian scientist, claims that the Garden of Eden was located at the North Pole. On this question a multitude of guesses have been ventured. But Mr. Koehl, it seems, thinks astronomy and legend furnish proofs for his supposition. He says that in the days of our first ancestors, the stars, to their view, moved in a circle. This he claims on the authority of "numerous traditions." His argument then, as synopsized by the Call, runs:

"In the entire world, however, there are only two points where such a phenomenon occurs, namely, at the North Pole and at the South Pole, and the next question to be answered was, in which of these two places was the Garden of Eden located? The learned Scandinavian solves this problem easily. Ancient traditions, he says, tell us that our first parents, when they departed from Eden, emigrated towards the south, and as it would have been impossible for them to go very far in that direction if the Garden of Eden had been located at the South Pole, the

only logical conclusion is that it was situated at the North Pole."

What the traditions are to which Mr. Koehl refers, does not appear. But the scant information of the land of Eden, and the Garden, given in Genesis, appears to be against the North Pole theory, and even if this information be regarded as traditional, it certainly has as much weight as any other tradition.

In Genesis it appears that the Garden was planted "eastward," in Eden. If this means to the east of the country in which the narrative was first written the North Pole is excluded, for that spot is not east of any other part of the earth, but north. Then, when our ancestors were expelled from the Garden, they evidently went east, for the Cherubim with the flaming sword were placed as guards "at the east of the Garden." Cain, too, when emigrating from Eden went east, to Nod. How this can be made to agree with the North Pole theory is not clear. From that region migration must necessarily go south, one would think.

Most scholars who accept Genesis as authentic history, have persisted in looking for the site of the paradise of man in the mountains of Armenia, where the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris are found. They have done so, on the supposition that the river now known by the name of Euphrates must be the one referred to in the geographical description in Genesis under that name. But that is not valid reasoning. It is perfectly conceivable that our early ancestors gave the name Euphrates to a river which flowed through the locality where they lived, and that their descendants gave the same name to another river, on another continent. That is done in modern times, and so it happens that there is a Jordan in America as well as in Asia. It is the same with cities. America has its London and Paris, as well as Europe.

Mr. Plongeon's idea that the original home of mankind was on this continent, is the one that will ultimately prevail among thoughtful men. All the evidences of past civilization here, point in that direction. That eminent archeologist supports his view by very strong arguments. The fact that it is in accord with modern revelation will have due weight with many of our readers, if not with the scientists of the latter days.

## A LAND QUESTION.

A correspondent in Northern Utah desires an answer to the following:

"A homesteaded tract of land, for which he obtained a patent from the government; he then sold to B. a portion of this land, for which he gave him a warranty deed. Subsequent to this, he sold to C. the entire tract for which he gave a warranty deed and also A. gave the patent to C. C. had his deed recorded and has for twelve or fifteen years paid taxes on the entire tract. B. also had his deed recorded subsequently to C's. (From this you will note at the time C. made his purchase, there was nothing on record in the county court to show that A. had sold any portion of this land.)

"After many years C. sold his land to D. which included the entire tract. D. had the matter investigated and found that B. had a portion of his land, and thus discovered that A. had sold to two parties the same tract of land and had given each a warranty deed. Each had the deeds recorded, as you will note, but B.'s was subsequent to C's.

"Kindly note also the fact that during the time C. owned the land he paid taxes on the entire tract. When D. came into possession of the land he also paid taxes on the entire tract. Thus at no time did B. pay taxes on any portion of this land.

"First—Who of these parties would be entitled to the land? Second—In what position does it place A?"

Reply—"First, 'D' has evidently a clear title to the land in question. Under the laws of Utah the recording of a deed is an essential part of the conveyance. 'C' having duly recorded the deed from 'A,' came into legal possession of the entire tract that he purchased. 'B' lost his claim through his own neglect. Equitably he might be considered the owner of the piece of land which he honestly purchased, but legally he is not. 'D' appears to be in lawful possession of the entire tract.

Second, 'A' occupies the position of one who engaged in a fraudulent transaction. The statute of limitations has probably "outlawed" the offense, so that he would be able to escape in the courts the consequences of the wrong; but morally he is responsible, and if a member of the Church he could be brought to account, and if the circumstances were exactly as described, he could be required to make reparation to 'B' if the latter so demanded. A wrongful act is never 'outlawed' in justice or in Church fellowship.

## A VALUABLE PUBLICATION.

While there are canvassers in the field collecting data for biographical works to be published at eastern points, we take the opportunity of reminding our readers that a comprehensive and important work is about to be published in this city, called the "Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia." Historical and biographical data are being collected, and portraits obtained of all the prominent officials in the Church and its various Stakes and missions. The work is being done by Andrew Jensen for publication by the History Company, and circulars concerning it have been sent to the local authorities in the various Stakes of Zion. This is not merely a projected undertaking, but four hundred pages of the first volume are already in print. Attention may be safely paid to the requests for life sketches and photographs to be used in the work, and communications to Andrew Jensen at the Historian's office in this city will receive prompt attention. We think this work will be very valuable to the Church, as well as to the families and friends of those persons whose half-tone portraits and life sketches find a place in the encyclopedia. We commend it to the attention of our people everywhere.

President James J. Hill of the Great Northern may be training for a United States senatorship.

It appears that there are some women in this old world of ours who are not ashamed of their ages. Daughters of 312 are holding a convention in New York.

It isn't nice to be disrespectful, but Prof. Lombard is an instructor in phys-

iology in the University of Michigan who is out with a statement of his belief that the soul is located in the spinal column.

The desire of Congressman Rixey of Virginia to consider ten Schley resolutions in a bunch instead of separately reminds one of taking a dose of disagreeable medicine.

The profits of the United States Steel corporation for ten months is estimated at \$55,000,000. At that rate of income, how long will it take Andrew Carnegie to escape the disgrace of dying wealthy?

A local grocer has been arrested and fined for having dared to have in his possession a barrel of cider that was old and crabbled enough to work itself into vinegar. No wonder there are tramps when people object to cider working.

Postoffice Inspector Wayland of Seattle, Wash., is said to have reported to the department at Washington that a sub-station postmaster ran a lottery in his place of business, because he raffled off a Christmas prize to customers of the store which he was kind enough to let the government use in part for its postal business. The man is liable to lose his job, too, but the wire fails to state whether or not Wayland is to be his successor.

In the new Chinese exclusion bill, a provision is proposed making it obligatory upon Chinese entitled to entrance, to present certificates with their photographs attached. The photographic attachment is likely to prove useless. No doubt the celestials have their individual characteristics, but they are not easy to distinguish among the racial characteristics that predominate, as everyone knows who has examined photographs of Chinamen.

The New York Advertiser says that King Oscar is looking for a cradle and is willing to pay \$2,500 for the right one. In 1730, so the story goes, a German prince sent to Queen Ulrica Eleonora of Sweden a cradle of solid gold as a christening present for her child. The ship containing the present was driven by a terrible gale on the shores of the island of Tjorn, where it became a total wreck. The inhabitants of the island massacred the crew and pillaged the ship, and the cradle was lost. The finder of it will be rewarded, as stated.

It is to be hoped that the gentlemen whose names have been placed on the list of persons selected by the Governor, to take the initiatory steps for the organization of a Commercial Club, will all respond to the invitation, and show by their presence, and influence, and advice, that they take an interest in the business affairs of Salt Lake City. The matter is of sufficient importance to command their attention and time, even if it occasions some little inconvenience. Let the work begin at once and be pushed to a speedy consummation.

There is a story of a Boston woman who lived nearly fifty-two years in a hotel. And all the time she entertained fear that she would perish by fire. Every night of her life she placed on a chair beside the bed, a thick flannel wrapper having many deep pockets, together with a pair of shoes, into which the poor dear expected to slip at the first alarm. All her valuables were within hand reach, and no fire department ever drilled for this expectant lady. And then finally her death came by drowning, an emergency for which she had not prepared.

According to a German statesman, there is close relationship between divorces and suicide. In Prussia, he says, out of 1,000,000 persons 348 women committed suicide after being divorced, as compared with only sixty-one married women, while the men were in the proportion of ten divorced to one married suicide. The inference is that divorce is evidence of unhappiness, which often leads to self-destruction. Many divorced persons, it is further alleged, become insane. In Wurttemberg there are in the asylums 3,024 divorced persons, against 283 married, 416 celibates and 679 widows and widowers. Mental aberration, it is argued, is likely to lead to a crazy choice in marriage, a crazy choice to a divorce and a divorce to that intensification of craziness which is official insanity.

## ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

## Worcester Spy.

We believe in the life to come as an act of faith, and on the same ground we believe in the life that now is. They are not separate, but one. Bishop Spalding of Peoria, one of the most accomplished scholars of the times and a consecrated representative of the Roman Catholic church, truly says: "If all that the heart can desire were given us, the motive of action would cease to exist and life would lose its charm." The life to come holds before us something to be admitted, and so forever wins us. Let us purify our hope—and "see all, nor be afraid."

Northwestern Christian Advocate. Afflictions, even disasters, are not always calamities. That which some persons thought to be the end of their hopes, and ambitions was but the beginning of their greatest usefulness. Had John Bunyan not been imprisoned in Bedford jail the world would not have been blessed with the wonderful story of the "Pilgrim's Progress," of which it is said more copies have been sold than of any other book, except the Bible. The queen of Sweden and Norway was a terrible sufferer, but she was often heard to say that she was thankful that her sufferings came upon her because they taught her what consolation is to be found in religion. The queen is not alone in that experience. God has given to Fanny Crosby in her blindness visions of spiritual beauty which are hidden to others; and Bella Cooke, helpless and pain-stricken for years, has been so comforted with the presence of God's spirit that the story of her life has been an inspiration to thousands.

## The Watchman.

A large proportion of young men do not profess to be Christians, yet believe in the reality of the Christian life. Their reasons for not becoming Christians are independent of their mental convictions, and are founded on a reluctance to assume the obligations, moral and religious, of the Christian life. This agrees with the common observation of Christian workers among young men. Indolence of the Tom Paine type has become rare. The attitude of college men and of public men towards Christianity has completely changed in the last fifteen years. There is no longer any cause for a young

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## Z. C. M. I.

T. G. WEBBER,  
Superintendent.

man to be ashamed to be known as a Christian. It has become respectable and even commendable in the eyes of the secular world.

New York Observer. The modern pilgrim is a larger man than his historic predecessor, and he will have to work hard to become a better man than the forefather was. Plymouth Rock and Waldorf-Astoria may not appear to have much in common. Want and wealth are natural opposites. Yet it should be possible to keep the inflexibility of the uncompromising religionist amid the bewildering whirl of modern life. Material prosperity should not make morality impossible. Yet if the choice must come between the two, give us the pilgrim who has few things, but has God, rather than the favored son of fortune who has all manner of things, but lacks thoughts and spiritual hopes and heavenly desires and final reward.

The Christian Statesman. Local conventions are of great advantage in that they bring national reform principles, in an impressive manner, before different communities. Comparatively few of the Christian people of the country can be brought together in any one place. The most of them can be reached only by the press or by public meetings and conventions. In every community there are moral issues in the sphere of political life which can be seized upon and discussed in the light of the Christian principles of civil government. The liquor problem, the question of marriage and divorce, the observance of the Sabbath, and moral instruction in the schools, are questions that may be advantageously discussed in every place. It can be easily shown that they depend for their solution upon the Christian principles of civil government properly expressed in constitutional and statute law. It would be a blessing to give every town, city and school district throughout the land the benefit of such a convention.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

One feature of the January magazine number of The Great Round World, is a complete review of the leading articles in the January magazines. Each article is cleverly summarized. Another feature is the special article "An Explanation of Wireless Telegraphy," which takes a conservative view of Signor Marconi's recent achievement in signaling across the Atlantic.

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