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Predestination Extremism

There is a historical record of various notable figures who, though they were staunch advocates of literal, true doctrinal interpretations, especially the Calvinistic gospel, that for some hard to understand reason, also had very extreme beliefs about predestination, that far exceed the conventional conservative theology on the subject.

"Double predestination is absolute, it is decreed with no reference to the merits or faults of the person saved or damned". Per Univ. of Oregon website. That is not only a simple statement, part of it is simply not true. Predestination of the elect for salvation is without merit, but predestination to damnation is for fault, the sin of the person.

I recall reading the commentary on the subject by John Gill, wherein he had made statements which went beyond the traditional Calvinist interpretation of foreordination of the elect, and damnation of nonbelievers for their sin. I took exception to the things he said which I believe were wrong, and made notes accordingly in the margin of the book.

For example, Gill said, "God is the first cause and last end of all things", to which I made note, "except sin and evil". Reference is also further made, "of his ordering and disposing of all things to answer ends of his own glory". Also, "in all, the glory of his wisdom, Justice, truth, and goodness, is conspicuous: but this is chiefly, if not solely, to be understood of God's decrees and purposes". My note on the foregoing, is "not all decrees and purposes, but specific ones, excluding sin and evil".

Gill proceeded to remark that, "Everything is appointed of God, he has foreordained whatever comes to pass; there is a purpose for everything under the heavens, and a time fixed for the execution of it". In my marginal note, I said, "What about free will, Adam's, and all others, who are appointed to be lords of the earth, with delegated dominion over everything"?

And then, there is a statement from John Calvin saying that God has foreordained everyone, either for salvation, or condemnation! And that general statement, compared to his reformation work, defending the true gospel, which doesn't include the extreme view of damnation being predestinated for some, without cause! A quote from Wikipedia reads, "Christians who follow teachers such as John Calvin generally accept that God alone decides the eternal destination of each person without regard to man's choices, so that their future actions or beliefs follow according to God's choice". According to which, includes man's evil actions, as well! Why is that not blasphemy, in effect?

Until recently, I did not know that Calvin's belief of predestination went beyond the traditional monergistic interpretation that God foreordained the salvation of the elect, without merit, and the damnation of the rest of mankind, for the cause of their sin!

Another well respected bible commentator, especially on the life and prophecy of Daniel, was Philip R. Newell, who made the following terse theological statement, that it is a "*fact that every moment of every hour of every day of every year of our lives is positively scheduled in advance and foreknown to God in its exact quantity*". There cannot be anything more completely predestinarian than that, but there is no scriptural support for any such exaggerated, incredible stretch of imagination.

Gill, who, in speaking further on the verse, Prov. 16:4, continues with this, "the final state of all men, good and bad, is fixed by the Lord; and all this is *for himself*, which some render, *to answer to himself*; all creatures are made to answer to his original design in making them, to the laws of their creation, and to answer his ends and purposes, and which is ultimately his own glory". That statement, in itself, may be generally all right, and not specifically advocating the extremism, in question.

Stating the verse under question, it reads, *The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*. Then, whether he realized it or not, Gill qualified the extreme position he had taken in this passage, with the following comments relating to the predestination of individuals.

Quoting further, "It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of scripture, that God made man to damn him, nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination: God made man, neither to damn him, nor to save him, but for his own glory; and that is secured, whether in his salvation, or damnation; nor did or does God make man wicked, he made man upright, and he (man) has made himself wicked; and, being so, God may justly appoint him to damnation for his wickedness, in doing which he glorifies his justice".

I believe that the latter explanation of the doctrine of predestination is the only logically right interpretation, and that the premise of God being the cause of all things, good or evil, is untenable, and impossible to reconcile with established doctrine, including the voluminous references to the nature, and works of God. The whole radical concept demeans both God, and man!

To extend the original, literal theology beyond its logical limits, by radically mischaracterizing God in His authority, will, and purposes, is scripturally indefensible, and little more than imaginary speculation. Why would a respected theologian venture out into uncharted waters by conjecturing that God has such autonomous authority and control, that everything that ever happens in the universe is caused, scheduled, and executed by Him? Or, in today's terms, pre-programmed to take place!

The theory negates everything of life as we know it! Nothing could occur that is independent of God's controlling action. For instance, what good is it to have a brain, if you can't freely use it, etc., etc., etc. It is so extreme to me, that it doesn't seem worth thinking about, or trying to visualize. Even science fiction, and moviemakers, with all the exaggerated ideas they can conjure up, haven't gone that far, yet!

I suppose those who have believed the incredible assumption, have never thought it through enough to see how impossible it is even to imagine that it could work! But, then to put it in print, and propagate it as true doctrine is even more baffling to me. I have tried to see if I could be missing something on the plus side of such a theoretical postulation on the subject of predestination, but I don't see how there could be anything to support the claim, or even suggest

plausibility!

It definitely bothers me to have to be at odds with such respected, and renowned proclaimers of biblically sound gospel doctrine. It seems strange too, that, as far as I know, there hasn't been much other advocacy for, or criticism of, the extreme postulation they declared to be true.

Oddly, too, I don't believe they went beyond the theoretical, and gave any illustrations of how such a micromanaged system of controlling the world would work, practically! Is it not because it is so mind-boggling, and farfetched that it defies imagination, let alone explanation?

It would be well to note here, that the philosophies of fatalism, or determinism operate on the same totalitarian predestination principle! Fatalism - stresses an acceptance of future events as inevitable. Determinism - belief that the future is fixed, specifically due to causality. It does not usually imply the existence of a supernatural being, and is more often scientific. Calvinist Christian - the extreme concept, that all occurring events have been already willed at the beginning of the universe, by God.

A statement, among many like it, from an article in an equivocal website, reflects the foregoing belief, "His (God's) infinite wisdom and power allows them (people) to think they act freely and independently, even while He so governs them that they accomplish His precise will". It makes human beings appear as mere puppets, or pawns!

All of which is so out of character for God, that it defies logic to even consider, let alone believe it, with all the biblical revelations there are about God--His holy nature, supreme authority, infinite power, personal attributes, and other perfections, and the record of His vast works, and institutions, including the planned cooperative involvement of man!

Why, when the scriptures tell us that man was made in His image (likeness) with necessary limits, and exceptions, would anyone think God would *robotize* man to be a mere instrument in His hands, and mind, and who would be unable to do anything not programmed, and technically executed by Himself?

God isn't just about unlimited ability, and total control. He is also a God of love and compassion, wanting and willing to share part of His universe, by creating human beings to inhabit, and have the free will privilege, and responsibility (subject to His will) to carry out dominion over the earth, and development of all of its resources, plus unlimited opportunities for success, fulfillment, and happiness.

Adam (that is, man) was created in God's image with an innocent free will, and the promise of immortality for obedience to the test God had established for him in Eden. As Genesis tells us, Adam (and his descendants) were to be lords, and stewards of the earth, to have dominion over everything in the world!

If that description of man's responsibility, and privileges, does not depict true free will, and activity, then the words are meaningless, and we are left with a paradox of futility and confusion of truth about God, and man.

I recently read some of the material published in the previously mentioned website that exhibited the extra-predestinarian philosophy, in the suspect guise of monergistic Christianity. I responded to the commentary on Prov. 16:4 about God creating all things, "even the wicked for the day of evil", and then on the belief that it was God's purpose for Adam and others to sin, to glorify His justice, as well as His purpose to save some, to glorify His love, and mercy.

There were also other subjects which the author wrongly reacted to; after which I concluded that his stance on the subject of extreme predestination, making God the cause of all things, good or bad, righteous or evil, does such violence to the scriptural revelation of God, and His works, that the author in question is definitely fatalistic, or deterministic in his beliefs.

It is, therefore difficult for me to take for granted that he is actually a Christian! But, even if he is, I believe he is a heretic, and dangerous for Christians to be associated with. He obviously is not a Calvinist, and that is cause enough not to trust his gospel "doctrine".

The irony of the situation, is the title of his website listing, "Grace + Anything = Heresy, which of course, is right, but what does he mean by grace, and does he

really understand what constitutes heresy? Especially when he remarks about , "God's outward means of grace, which we (he) understand(s) to not be related to eternal life at all".

His evident belief in fatalism, or determinism, even as the methodology of a supernatural being, is contrary to the real nature, and creative works of the true God, revealed throughout the scriptures. Whoever the commentator envisions as the cause, and execution of all the events, and happenings of the universe, must, to him, be some kind of impersonal, supernatural being, that is in fact nothing more than a philosophical, imaginary conception!

The God I know, love, and revere, however inadequately, is certainly not to be identified with some abstract idea, i.e., inevitability, for which there is no logical explanation, or evidence, or record. The theory makes no more rational sense, than the preposterous, futile fantasy of natural evolution.

Why, otherwise reputable, doctrinally sound men of God would allow themselves to leap from knowledge to conjecture, or from fact to fiction, and espouse an illogical concept of total predestination of every detail of every living, and physical thing in the universe--is incomprehensible, when it contradicts nearly everything the Bible so completely, and convincingly reveals about God, and man.

