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A MINISTER FOR THE TIMES.

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Rapid changes in people's thinking, in their ways of doing things and in their social situations are making new problems for the minister. These changes are so numerous and they come so unexpectedly that theological education and ministerial service find difficulty in keeping pace with them.

Ministers are supposed to be students all their lives. It is not sufficient that they keep their faces buried in books; they must study men and tendencies, not only in the church, but without as well. Part of the purpose of their training is to fit them for doing just this thing. The minister is no different from other men in this respect. Others are meeting constantly changes which require quick adaptations. Some of these changes have been almost revolutionary, particularly in business and educational fields. The minister can claim no exemption. When altered ways of doing things in the church and altered types of thinking in the pew confront him, he must be prepared for them and must know how to deal with the problems they create.

Changes which lay upon the minister the severest test are not those near the surface nor are they changes which affect the church only. They have to do with the world in all aspects, with the universe indeed, and with men's thinking thereupon. This is one reason the minister is in danger of missing their significance. He is engrossed in his own work, always tempted to live apart, more or less, from the common currents of life and to maintain a certain aloofness from interests which usually engage the eager attention of others.

That is our trouble. The darkness is in us. Back of all our cramping limitations, the old, old problem of sin. "But we see Jesus"; and, with Paul's appropriating faith, we are taught to say, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me", and the darkest glass is cleared.

"I am the light of the world," He said. And so He is. "Now we see through a glass, darkly . . . but we see Jesus." And, seeing Him, we see enough. "There is always light enough to get home by."

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION.

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The second volume* in the proposed ten volumes of Dr. Warfield's collected writings deals with the following subjects: Predestination; The Foresight of Jesus; The Spirit of God in the Old Testament; The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity; The Person of Christ; God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; The Christ that Paul Preached; Jesus' Mission according to His Own Testimony; The New Testament Terminology of Redemption; Christ our Sacrifice; The Biblical Notion of Renewal; The Biblical Doctrine of Faith; The Terminology of Love in the New Testament; The Prophecies of St. Paul; The Millennium and the Apocalypse.

These articles bear all the usual marks of the exhaustive learning and profound thought of the leading Calvinistic theologian of the first quarter of the twentieth century. The doctrines set forth are Biblical doctrines. They are the work of a Biblical exegete of the first water, who has quarried out of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and materials

*Biblical Doctrines. By B. B. Warfield, Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, 1887-1921. Oxford University Press, New York. 663 pages. \$4.

out of which he constructs and reconstructs the doctrines with which he deals.

In all this work, this scholar, in the very forefront of all the scholars of his age, at once for the breadth and the minuteness of his researches into the rise—the production—the teaching, the character and trustworthiness of these Scriptures, handles them as of ultimate and absolute authority—as the very Word of God in all that they teach. It ought to do, and would do, if consideringly read, much to confirm the faith of the Christendom of our day.

His method in discussing his themes may be conveniently instanced in the paper with which the volume begins—that on Predestination.

This article, of sixty-five pages, falls into five divisions: I. The Terms; II. Predestination in the Old Testament; III. Predestination amongst the Jews; IV. Predestination in the New Testament; and V. The Bible Doctrine of Predestination.

Of his discussion of terms, it is enough to say that it is illuminating, adequate, and that his inductions are based on a comprehensive grasp of the Scriptures bearing on the subject.

In treating predestination in the Old Testament, he shows that no survey of the terms used to express it can convey an adequate sense of the place occupied by the idea of predestination in the religious system of the Bible; that it is fundamental to the whole religious consciousness of the Biblical writers, and that it is so involved in all their religious conceptions that to eradicate it would transform the entire Scriptural representation. He calls attention to the nature and implications of such formative elements in the Old Testament system as its doctrines of God, Providence, Faith, and the Kingdom of God. He shows that Israel entered on its national existence with a vivid consciousness of an Almighty personal Creator and Governor of heaven and earth—the initiative of which consciousness Israel always referred to God—a personality of illimitable power, wisdom, grace and holiness—the free determiner of all that comes to pass. He

shows that the Old Testament saints, standing over against God not merely as creatures, but as sinners, found no ground of hope save in the free initiative of Divine love. "At no period of the development of Old Testament religion was it permitted to be imagined that blessings might be wrung from the hands of an unwilling God or gained in the strength of a man's own arm" (p. 11). It was ever taught that "all that comes to man in the spiritual sphere also is the free gift of Jehovah."

This lesson is particularly "emphasized in the history of the establishment and development of the Kingdom of God, which may well be called the cardinal theme of the Old Testament". It is not the product of man's effort in seeking God, but the gracious creation of God Himself, working in history to carry out His purpose to recover fallen man to Himself. "To this end He preserves the race in existence after its sin, saves a seed from the destruction of the flood, separates to Himself a family in Abraham, sifts it in Isaac and Jacob, nurses it and trains it through the weakness of its infancy, and gradually moulds it to be the vehicle of His revelation of redemption, and the channel of Messianic blessings to the world. At every step it is God, and God alone, to whom is ascribed the initiative and the most extreme care is taken to preserve the recipients of the blessing consequent on His choice from fancying that these blessings come as their due, or as a reward for aught done by themselves, or to be found in themselves" (p. 12.)

"The specific teaching of the Old Testament as to predestination naturally revolves around the two foci of that idea which may be designated the general and special or, more properly, cosmical and soteriological predestination; or, in other words, around the doctrine of the Divine decree and the Divine election. The former, as was to be expected, is comparatively seldom adverted to—for the Old Testament is fundamentally a soteriological book, a revelation of the grace of God to sinners. Predestination is implied in the primordial idea of God as an Almighty Person. It is postulated from the beginning and continually finds more or less clear

expression. Throughout the Old Testament, behind the processes of nature, the march of history and the fortunes of each individual life alike, there is steadily kept in view the governing hand of God working out His preconceived plan—a plan broad enough to embrace the whole universe of things, minute enough to concern itself with the smallest details, and actualizing itself with inevitable certainty in every event that comes to pass” (p. 13).

The Old Testament writers had been given to conceive the loftiest type of pure concrete theism—to see in God a person; like other persons purposeful in His acts, but, unlike other persons, all-wise in His planning and all-powerful in His performing, “predetermining all that comes to pass in the universe”, down to the least detail. They profess that they know Him only in part, that they deal with a person so far above human persons that we can follow His movements only in a halting fashion; that “His thoughts are not as our thoughts and His ways as our ways” (Isa. 55:8).

“How God governs the acts of free agents in the pursuance of His plan, there is little in the Old Testament to inform us; but that He governs them even in their most intimate thoughts and feelings and impulses is its unvarying assumption: He is not only the Creator of the hearts of men in the first instance, and knows them altogether, but He fashions the hearts of all in all the changing circumstances of life; keeps the hearts of all men in His hands, turning them whithersoever He will (Prov. 21:1), so that it is even said that man knows what is in his own mind only as the Lord reveals it to him (Amos 4:13). The discussion of any antinomy that may be thought to arise from such a joint assertion of the absolute rule of God in the sphere of the Spirit and the freedom of the creaturely will, falls obviously under the topic of Providential Government rather than under the Decree: it requires to be adverted to here only that we may clearly note the fact that the Old Testament teaches, as they did not hesitate to affirm the absolute sway of God over the thoughts and intents of the human heart, could feel no embarrassment in the inclusion of the acts of free agents within

the all-embracing plan of God, the outworking of which His providential government supplies" (pp. 19-20).

He teaches us that even the growing legalism among the Jews in the intertestament period could not easily erase the profound religious conception of the relation of God to the works of His hands; but that by degrees, as the idea of the law more and more absorbed the whole sphere of religious thought, and piety came to be thought of more and more as right conduct before God instead of living communion with God, they began to think of themselves increasingly as their own saviours, and to magnify the human will, till at length heathen self-sufficiency became dominant among them."

He shows that New Testament teaching concerning predestination is abounding: He considers, first, Christ's own teaching as recorded in the Synoptics, then His discourses found in the Gospel according to John, then successively the teaching of James, of John, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Paul's Epistles. In each case he shows how the doctrine of predestination is involved in Jesus' and in the Sacred writers' doctrines of God, Providence, Faith, the Kingdom of God; he points to the pervasion of all their teaching with this great doctrine, and considers specific statements of it made by them. From the data provided by the Synoptists and those presented by the Apostle John he carries us to the conclusion that our Lord does not teach a "predestination" that is carefully adjusted to the foreseen performances of the creatures, and as little to a "decree" which may be frustrated by creaturely action, or an "election" which is given effect only by creaturely choice: to our Lord the Father is the Omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth, according to whose pleasure all things are ordered, and who gives the Kingdom to whom He will (Luke 12:32, Mark 11:26, Luke 10:21). Certainly it is the very heart of our Lord's teaching that the Father's good pleasure is a *good* pleasure, ethically right, and the issue of infinite love; the very name of Father as the name of God by preference on His lips is full of this conception; but the very nerve of this teaching is that the Father's will is all-embracing and omnipotent" (pp. 37, 38).

"It was reserved, however," he reminds us, "to the Apostle Paul to give to the fact of predestination its fullest New Testament presentation. This was not because St. Paul exceeded his fellows in the strength and clearness of his convictions, but because, in the prosecution of the special task which was committed to him in the general work of establishing Christianity in the world, the complete expression of the common doctrine of predestination fell in his way and became a necessity of his argument" (p. 45).

After showing how Paul's soteriological concern determines, in the main, his allusions "to the all-determining hand of God", he expounds the three chief passages in which the great Apostle sets forth "his fundamental teaching as to the relation of salvation to the purpose of God", viz., Rom. 8:29, 30; Rom., ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters, and Eph. 1:1-12.

Under his fifth head under this subject, Dr. Warfield begins: "A survey of the whole material thus cursorily brought before us exhibits the existence of a consistent Bible doctrine of predestination, which, because rooted in, and indeed only a logical outcome of, the fundamental Biblical theism, is taught in all its essential elements from the beginning of the Biblical revelation, and is only more fully unfolded in detail as the more developed religious consciousness and the course of the history of redemption required" (p. 60).

In the effort to let the reader see the nature of Dr. Warfield's work in this volume, we have used up the space allowed; and yet have not touched the fifteen other highly excellent pieces of work.

Of these sixteen articles all save two were produced since 1904; and ten of them since 1914. They are fresh papers on great subjects by a prince of exegetical theologians. They are commended to the perusal of every thoughtful young man who desires to learn, and to hold the truth, and is willing to consider the presentation of these themes by a scholar, learned and fair, if conservative.