

Recanting Predestination in 473 A.D.
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An interesting piece of theological history relates to the aftermath of the Council of Arles in 473. In this time period when the Infant Baptism was growing in prominence as the very instrument of salvation, there was a certain priest named Lucidus who must have taught predestination. In fact, from his “Letter of Submission” he appears to have held to a limited atonement. These issues are much discussed in Baptist circles today.

His recantation is memorialized in a Roman Catholic historical compendium. It is interesting to consider what views he recanted, and how his recantation was formulated for him by Bishop Faustus of Riez:

“Your correction is the salvation of all, and your decision [is] a remedy. This is why I esteem your sovereign remedy to exonerate myself by accusing my past errors and to return to innocence by a salutary confession. From now on, according to the recent statutes of the venerable council, I condemn with you this opinion:

“That says that the work of human obedience does not have to be united with divine grace;

“That says that after the fall of the first man the freedom of his will was totally destroyed;

“That says that Christ our Lord and Savior did not undergo death for the salvation of all;

“That says that the foreknowledge of God violently compels men unto death, or those that are lost are so by the will of God;

“That says that after having legitimately received baptism are dead in Adam whosoever sins;

“That says some are assigned to death, and others are predestined to life;

“That says that from Adam until Christ none of the Gentiles were saved by the first grace of God, meaning that by the law of nature, looking to the coming of Christ, by virtue of the fact that free will was lost in the first father. . . .” (“Council of Arles, 473: Letter of Submission of the Priest Lucidus”; in Heinrich Denzinger [cited as DS], et al., *Symbolae et definitiones de la foi catholique*, 38th ed. [Paris: Cerf, 1996], DS330-335; translation mine).

This interesting listing of errors goes to the heart of the Gospel. Of first concern is that Limited Atonement was considered an error. Of second concern is that predestination was also considered heresy. Of third concern is the carefully stated affirmation of baptismal regeneration. While some may find fault with Lucidus because of a concern for double-predestination. Yet is

not this argument commonly wielded against the conception of predestination in the first place (Eph 1:3-12).

As evangelists, we are bound to evangelize all men, baptized as infants or not, and trust that they can respond by their free will when the Holy Spirit works through the instrument of the Word of God preached (Rom 10:17). Further, believing in that the way is narrow (Matt 7:12-13) and that only some will be saved (1 Cor 9:22), we must leave the results of our evangelizing to the sovereign will of God, and not generalize God's salvation at the baptismal font of infants—infants who have not responded and can they yet respond to the proclamation of the Gospel.