

This two-part series of articles will appear in a forthcoming volume of the English journal, *Evangelical Quarterly*. Below are the first pages of each article.

## **Predestination in the Century Before Gottschalk, Part 1**

by Francis X. Gumerlock

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Key Words: predestination, early middle ages, Gottschalk of Orbais, Pelagianism, Sedulius Scottus, Smaragdus of Saint Mihiel, Alcuin of York, Agobard of Lyons

### **I. Gottschalk: A Solitary Voice?**

In the mid-ninth century, a wandering monk named Gottschalk of Orbais (d. 868) sparked a controversy over divine predestination that shook both church and state in central Europe. Gottschalk taught that the will of humans is bound and is freed only through grace, predestination, and particular redemption.<sup>1</sup> Victor Genke, co-author of a forthcoming book containing the translated works of Gottschalk on predestination, summarized his theology in these points:

1. God predestined both the elect to eternal life and the reprobate to eternal death. Accordingly, predestination is one, but twofold.
2. The predestination of the reprobate to eternal death is on the basis of God's foreknowledge of their evil merits.
3. God does not want to save all people.
4. Humankind is divided into two groups, the elect and the reprobate. The elect cannot be lost to God and become reprobate.
5. Christ redeemed only the elect.
6. Since the Fall humans can do only evil. It is only God's grace that enables them to do good.<sup>2</sup>

In the year 848 Gottschalk presented his views at a council presided over by Rabanus Maurus, his former abbot who had been elevated to the bishopric of Mainz. The council declared his views heretical, and sent Gottschalk under custody to Hincmar the bishop of Reims, in whose diocese Gottschalk had been ordained. In 849 the condemned monk was examined by Hincmar and a small council of bishops, where his views were again denounced as heretical. Gottschalk was whipped, defrocked, and forced to burn his writings (which he later rewrote in prison). Afterward, he was imprisoned in the monastery of Hautvillers until his death around 868.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis X. Gumerlock, "Gottschalk of Orbais: A Medieval Predestinarian," *Kerux* 22:3 (Dec 2007):17-34 at 20-25.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Genke and Francis X. Gumerlock, *Gottschalk of Orbais: Translated Texts from a Medieval Predestination Controversy*, 2007 manuscript awaiting final acceptance by a university press in the United States, pp. 89-98. Genke's introduction also summarized Gottschalk's predestinarian teaching as it related to the sacraments, that is, that baptism and the Eucharist are of no avail for the salvation of the reprobate.

# Predestination in the Century Before Gottschalk, Part II

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Key Words: predestination, early middle ages, Gottschalk of Orbais, Pope Hadrian I, Migetius, Elipandus of Toledo, Adoptionist controversy, Ambrosius Autpert

## I. The Preaching of Predestination

Part II of this series continues its challenge of a prevailing notion which says that the century before Gottschalk, a ninth-century monk condemned and imprisoned for his strong predestinarian views, was replete with Semi-Pelagian teaching. Part I demonstrated that Semi-Pelagian doctrine that exalted human freedom and articulated divine predestination as simply God's foreknowledge of human choices, did exist in Carolingian literature between the years 740 and 840. But it also provided evidence that theology extolling the free and sovereign grace of God in salvation from start to finish abounded in that time as well. This part will focus more specifically on predestination in the century before Gottschalk, and show that predestination was not a 'lost' doctrine, rarely discussed or affirmed in the Dark Ages, only to be revived by Gottschalk in the ninth century. On the contrary, predestination as a divine decree that prepares and ensures the salvation of the elect (not simply foresees their free choices) was often mentioned. Some said that such concept of predestination was an apostolic doctrine that should be held by all of the faithful, and others even spoke of predestination to punishment, a thought repudiated by all so-called Semi-Pelagians. These sentiments will be shown through writings associated with a predestination controversy in Spain in which Pope Hadrian of Rome (reigned 772-795) became involved, in literature associated with the Adoptionist controversy, in Apocalypse commentaries of the time, in hagiographies, and in the biblical commentaries of Alcuin.

### 1. *Pope Hadrian and a Spanish Predestination Controversy*

In the late eighth century a debate on predestination broke out in Spain. The chief characters in the controversy were Elipandus of Toledo representing the predestinarians and Migetius leader of the non-predestinarians. News of the controversy reached Rome and Pope Hadrian wrote a letter addressing the problem. Migetius taught in the region of Baetica in Spain, and through correspondence was confronted by Elipandus, bishop of Toledo, about various errors. According to Elipandus, Migetius erred on the doctrine of the Trinity, insisted upon a Donatist-like purity of priests, made rules forbidding Christians to eat with Muslims, was mistaken about the date of Easter, and believed that Rome was the New Jerusalem mentioned in the Apocalypse. About 782, a council in Seville treated his errors, but Migetius did not correct himself nor did the council have