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Doctrinal Theology.

SOTERIOLOGY.

BAPTISM.

Ritual applications of water to purify persons and things were common among the Jews, and these purifications were called *baptisms*, βαπτισμοί, in the idiom employed in the New Testament. The epistle to the Hebrews refers to these *various baptisms*, διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς,¹⁾ and St. Mark speaks of the Pharisees and their habit of *baptizing themselves*²⁾ before eating, and of their *baptisms of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables*.³⁾ Of such applications of water the Mosaic law said: *This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon*

1) Hebr. 9, 10.

2) εἰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται.

3) βαπτισμοῦς ποτηρίων καὶ ξεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων καὶ κλινῶν.

Exegetical Theology.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION AS TAUGHT IN EPHESIANS I, 3—6.

This text is addressed by an apostle of Christ to a Christian congregation. What St. Paul here teaches, he does not teach in his own name, but in the name of his Master, by whom he was sent and commissioned to preach the Gospel and teach the way of salvation. His doctrine is not human, but divine.¹⁾ To him God had made known the mystery of his will,²⁾ not for himself only, but also for others.³⁾ What he is about to teach is not an esoteric Gnosis, intended for an inner circle, but an article of the Christian faith to be propounded *to the faithful in Christ Jesus.*⁴⁾ What has been revealed to him, the apostle here commits to writing for those who *have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God,*⁵⁾ in order that *when they read, they may understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ.*⁶⁾ Thus is this doctrine made accessible, not only to theologians, but to all Christians who are able to read what is here set forth in words of human speech. But it is from this source that this doctrine must be learned. Not by human speculation and reasoning, but by reading and hearing what God has revealed by his apostles in his word, theologians as well as other Christians may and should learn the mystery of God's will, and a true, spiritual knowledge of these mysteries is obtained from this source only by those to whom God has *given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened.*⁷⁾ Hence this doctrine was not set forth by

1) Eph. 1, 1.

2) Eph. 1, 9.

3) Eph. 3, 3 f.

4) Eph. 1, 1.

5) Eph. 3, 2 f.

6) Eph. 3, 4.

7) Eph. 1, 17 f.

St. Paul when he was brought unto Areopagus, and when he spoke to the philosophers of the university and other superstitious men of Athens who had raised an altar “to the unknown god.”¹⁾ It was a doctrine for Christians in the days of Paul, and it is a doctrine for Christians to-day.

What Paul is about to teach is not an appalling doctrine, to be viewed with fear and trembling, as exhibiting a *tremendum mysterium*. He begins

V. 3: *Εὐλογητός ὁ θεός*. The Greek *εὐλογεῖν*, like the Hebrew בָּרַךְ, means *to bless*, either by deed, as in the subsequent context, *ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς*,²⁾ or by words, *to pronounce a blessing over*—, as τὸ ποτήριον, 1 Cor. 10, 16; τοὺς ἄρτους, Luke 9, 16; or, with God as its object, *to praise*, as Luke 1, 64; 2, 28. Hence, *εὐλογητός*, like the Hebrew בָּרַךְ, with *ὁ θεός*, is, *Praised be God!* In a similar sense, the perf. partic., *εὐλογημένος*, is used, as Matt. 21, 9; 23, 39. Luke 13, 35; 19, 38. John 12, 13. The adjective, still more than the participle, is expressive of the praiseworthiness of Him who *inhabits the praises of Israel*, Ps. 22, 4, and who is *ὁ εὐλογητός* by preeminence, Mark 14, 16; and the words of St. Paul, *Εὐλογητός*, sc., *εἰγ, ὁ θεός*, are part of a doxology expressing what is in the apostle's heart and what he would elicit in the hearts of his readers, that they with him should voice forth the praises of God.

And God is certainly worthy of all praise. Even *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork*. Ps. 19, 2. From the beginning the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God, cherubim and seraphim, shouted for joy, Job 38, 7, voicing forth the praises of their Maker, of his wisdom and power. But it is not the sovereign majesty of God, the almighty Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth, which Paul would here extol. He adds: *καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.

1) Acts 17, 19 ff.

2) Cf. Hebr. 6, 14. *εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε*. Gal. 3, 8. 9. Acts 3, 26.

The absence of the article before *πατήρ* indicates the oneness and sameness of the person described as *ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ κ. τ. λ.*, the Father of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Herewith the apostle opens the theme of his doxology. God as the Father of Jesus Christ is not God as the almighty Maker and Ruler of the universe, but the God of our salvation, who, in his goodness, his love, benevolence, grace, and mercy, has from everlasting provided for the fallen world a Savior, and in the fulness of time sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind. God, the Father of Jesus Christ, is not, as such, made known by the Law, but by the Gospel, which does not reveal God as he demands what we should do in obedience to his righteous will, but as he himself has done and does for us according to his good and gracious will what is needful and conducive to our salvation. It is this whereof the apostle would now speak to those who have not only learned to know God as the Father of Jesus Christ, but have already become subjects in Christ's kingdom of grace, in which Christ is *ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν*, our Lord and our God, whose we are and whom we serve, under whom we live in everlasting righteousness and blessedness. And this not of ourselves. *Ἐὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός*, says Paul, *ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς*: *Praised be God, who has blessed us.* Our *εὐλογεῖν* is but a response to God's *εὐλογεῖν* whereby, blessing us, he not only merits our praise, but renders us capable of praising him.

It should be noted that Paul does not say *ὁ εὐλογῶν ἡμᾶς*, which he might have said with equal truth, but *ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς*. Not present, but past blessings are in the apostle's mind as he writes these words of praise. Before we come to bless God, God has blessed us. This is true also with regard to God's temporal blessings. He has made us, given us body and soul, and preserved us all the days of our lives, given us food and raiment and with fostering care protected us in a thousand ways. For all this we owe him thanks and praises more than we can offer. But again the apostle

lifts up our eyes and hearts to higher things than these, as he continues: ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις. Our life here beneath is divided between two spheres. It is in various ways determined by the σῶμα, our physical nature, and by things pertaining thereto, the σωματικά. According to this phase of our life we are of the earth, and τὰ ἐπίγεια, things of the earth, are conditions of our being and well-being. Of this sphere, also, are the temporal blessings mentioned above, meat and drink, sunshine and rain in due season, and all the manifold gifts of God for which we ask in the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*. But by the new birth there is in us a higher nature, τὸ πνεῦμα, according to which we are πνευματικοί, *spiritual*, subsisting on and determined by πνευματικά, spiritual things, which are not ἐπίγεια, not of the earth or of this world, but ἐπουράνια, *heavenly things*. For the preservation and growth of this spiritual nature, the maintenance of this spiritual life, born of God, of the Spirit,¹⁾ according to which our conversation is in heaven, ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, Phil. 3, 20, being *fellowcitizens with the saints*, Eph. 2, 19, and *seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God*, Col. 3, 1, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us and continues to give us *spiritual blessings*, εὐλογίας πνευματικῆς, which are not ἐπίγεια, John 3, 12. 1 Cor. 15, 40. 48. 49. Phil. 2, 10, but ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, *in what is heavenly*, pertaining to a higher order of things. Such ἐπουράνια are the κλήσις ἐπουράνιος, Hebr. 3, 1; δωρεὰ ἐπουράνιος, Hebr. 6, 4; πατὴρ ἐπουράνιος, Hebr. 11, 16; βασιλεία ἐπουράνιος, 2 Tim. 4, 18. That these spiritual blessings are manifold is also indicated in our text, when Paul says, ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ, *in all manner of spiritual blessing*. But numerous and manifold as these heavenly blessings are, there is, from the first to

1) John 1, 13; 3, 6. 8.

the last, not one which we have not received from God and for which all praise and glory is not due to God and to him alone. As in him we live and move and have our being in our physical existence, so also we owe our spiritual life, and everything thereto pertaining, to God, and to him only. And while God's temporal blessings come to us by the loving-kindness of him who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies and hears the cry of the hungry raven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, Matt. 5, 45, who openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, Ps. 145, 16, God's spiritual blessings are given us ἐν Χριστῷ, not some of them, but all of them, *in Christ*, and in him only. Without Christ, there would be εὐλογία πνευματικαί for the spirits about the throne of God, and ἐπουράνια for the heavenly host, but not a spiritual blessing for fallen man, flesh born of the flesh, and children of wrath by nature, and no heaven and heavenly things for a race of sinners; but a gulf as great as that between heaven and hell would have separated forever between the upper and the nether world. Thus from the very outset, in this first and general part of his eulogy of the goodness of God toward us, the apostle excludes and forever proscribes both Calvinism and synergism from the doctrines with which he is here occupied. He would speak of blessings, divine blessings, not of curse and wrath; of blessings in heavenly things, not of infernal perdition; of blessings bestowed in Christ, not by an absolute decree without Christ as its foundation or determining presupposition. He would speak, on the other hand, of spiritual blessings which, all of them, come from God as his gracious gifts, for all of which God, and He alone, deserves all praise and glory. This he would have us understand and remember even before he states what those blessings are; and therefore he opens the entire section before us with εὐλογητός, *blessed, praised, be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Having stated in general and comprehensive terms that God should be praised for the manifold blessings bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus, the apostle now proceeds to specify and enumerate the various blessings comprised in *πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*. He says

V. 4: *Καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς*—The conjunction, *καθὼς*, like the Latin *siquidem* and *quippe*, introduces detailed specifications, unfolding what has been previously said in a summary way. With *ἐξελέξατο* he names the first of a series of blessings extending from eternity before all time to eternity beyond the end of time. The verb, *ἐκλέγομαι*, occurs twenty times, the adjective, *ἐκλεκτός*, twenty-three times, and the noun, *ἐκλογή*, seven times, in the New Testament. The medial form of the verb indicates a personal interest of the subject in the act or the object upon which it is directed, and which, in the absence of an equivalent form of the verb we may express by *unto himself*. This personal interest appears also where the subject is a human person, as in Luke 10, 42: *Μαρία τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο*, and Luke 14, 7: *τὰς πρωτοκλισίας ἐξελέγοντο*. Mary chose that good part for herself, to be *her* part, and the guests of the Pharisee chose the chief seats for themselves, not for others. And those whom God elected were by such election singled out to be God's own, *ἐκλεκτοὶ αὐτοῦ*, Matt. 24, 31. Luke 18, 7; *ἐκλεκτοὶ θεοῦ*, Rom. 8, 33. Col. 3, 12. Tit. 1, 1. In the same sense *αἰρεῖσθαι* is used, when Paul says, 2 Thess. 2, 13: *εἴλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός*, *God has taken you unto himself*.—Again, the composition of *λέγεσθαι* with the preposition, *ἐκ*, clearly indicates a separation or segregation of the objects chosen *from* among or *out* of a mass or number. A choice of all, a universal election of all mankind, is thus incompatible with the term, *ἐξελέξατο*. *Many be called, but few chosen*. Matt. 20, 16; 22, 14.

The syntactical object of *ἐξελέξατο* is *ἡμᾶς*. This pronoun stands for Paul and his readers, of whom he has in the previous context said, *ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς*. He has described

his readers as ἄγιοι καὶ πιστοὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, v. 1. But it was not their holiness and faith which determined or prompted God in his election. None but ἄγιοι καὶ πιστοὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, *holy and believers in Christ Jesus*, are to consider themselves God's chosen children. Yet they must, all of them, confess with the apostle: *By the grace of God I am what I am*, 1 Cor. 15, 10. In the preceding context he has said that all manner of spiritual blessing has come to us *in Christ*, v. 3. And here, where he has begun to specify and enumerate these blessings, he again points out the determining cause of this first blessing in the series by the adverbial phrase, ἐν αὐτῷ, which stands for ἐν Χριστῷ. That this is indeed an adverbial phrase modifying ἐξελέξατο, and not an attributive phrase qualifying ἡμᾶς, is evident from the absence of the article, τοὺς, which would be grammatically indispensable before ἐν αὐτῷ to make this phrase attributive to the pronoun, ἡμᾶς, so that the reading would be, ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ. See Rom. 1, 15; 2, 27; 15, 1. 2 Cor. 4, 11. 1 Thess. 4, 15. 17. Eph. 1, 19; 5, 33. John 6, 70. Luke 6, 24. 27; 11, 43. 46; 13, 14. 2 Thess. 1, 7. 1 John 5, 13. The connection is ἐξελέξατο ἐν αὐτῷ, as in the previous context ὁ ἐδολογήσας ἐν Χριστῷ. God's election was determined by, based and founded on Christ, the foreordained Savior of sinners and Redeemer of the world. Thus was God's grace *given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*, 2 Tim. 1, 9. Not a particular grace, but the same boundless grace of God which provided a Savior for all men, prompted God in the election of grace, ἐκλογὴ χάριτος, Rom. 11, 5.

This, then, was the order of the divine decrees of redemption and of predestination. Having foreseen the fall of man, which he had not purposed and decreed, God foreordained Christ before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. 1, 20. Acts 2, 23; 4, 28, to be the Redeemer of the fallen race. Then, in Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King, in consideration of his ordained work for man's salvation, and

in every way determined by Christ, God furthermore, also *πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*, chose unto himself by another eternal decree, an election of grace in Christ Jesus, all those who in time, as a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, show forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness unto his marvelous light.* 1 Pet. 2, 9. It is a perversion of this order and of the nature of these decrees when Calvinists teach an absolute decree of election, not in every or any way determined by Christ, and a subsequent decree of redemption conceived as a measure for the execution of the decree of election and restricted to the elect. Says the *Formula Consensus Helvetica: In gratioso autem illo electionis divinae decreto ipse quoque Christus includitur, non ut causa meritoria vel fundamentum ipsam electionem praecedens, sed ut ipse quoque ἐκλεκτός, electus ante jacta fundamenta praecognitus, adeoque primarius ejus exequendae electus mediator; i. e.:* "In that gracious decree of divine election Christ himself is also included, not as the meritorious cause or the foundation preceding election itself, but as himself also chosen and foreknown before the foundation of the world was laid, and thus the primary chosen mediator of its execution." Can. V. Niem. p. 731 f. In this as in other points of doctrine the difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism is fundamental. They differ in their material principles. In Calvinism the cardinal and ruling doctrine, the doctrine which forms the base of all other doctrines, the central doctrine from which all other doctrines radiate and to which they all converge, is the doctrine of the sovereign majesty of God. In Lutheran theology, the theology of St. Paul and all the Scriptures, the center is Christ our Righteousness, *to whom all the prophets give witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Acts 10, 43.

On the other hand, Lutheran theology with St. Paul also excludes all manner of synergism. While its *Soli Deo*

Gloria! is not chiefly and primarily a praise of the sovereign majesty of God, but a praise of God's grace in Christ Jesus, and its *sola gratia* is nowhere a grace of God without Christ, it also emphasizes the *Soli* and *Sola* and rejects everything which would in any way or measure make man a determining factor in his salvation. This applies also to the doctrine of election and predestination. It was not our holiness or anything in our conduct which determined God in his election of grace. The nexus of cause and effect is not such as to place the cause in us and the effect in God, but the reverse. The apostle does not continue in our text: ὄντας ἡμᾶς κ. τ. λ., but εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ. This infinitive clause states the end and aim whereto, not the state, condition, or conduct, in view or consideration of which, God has chosen us. Our holiness and blamelessness is here conceived not as in the knowledge of God, in his intellect, but as in the will of God, not as seen or known, but as willed or intended, by God in the act of election. When God chose us unto himself, he did it with the intent and purpose or in order that by virtue of such election we should be holy and blameless before him. This is the only sense of which the infinitive clause here admits. The assumption that God had chosen us in view or consideration of justifying and sanctifying faith foreseen in his omniscience is not only without foundation in this or any other text, but is thoroughly at variance and wholly incompatible and irreconcilable with the text, which is not ὄντας or ὡς ὄντας, but εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀγίους κ. τ. λ. God certainly knew from eternity who would in time be holy and blameless before him. But this is not the point at issue. The question is, what was the relation of our holiness and blamelessness to God's election, and this question is clearly and conclusively answered in the text. God willed and intended that we should be holy and blameless, and in order that his will should be done, he chose us in Christ. This holiness and blamelessness before God is, also in time, the work

of God. We are holy and pure in the sight of God by faith, which accepts the righteousness procured by Christ through his obedience unto death.¹⁾ This holiness and blamelessness, of which Paul speaks more at length ch. 5, 26, 27, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner and its acceptance by the sinner in justifying faith, was certainly known to God, but known to him as his works are known to him ἀπ' αἰῶνος, Acts 15, 18. The knowledge of another's works or acts may be merely a matter of the understanding. But the foreknowledge of one's own acts always includes or implies a determination of the will, a purpose to perform such works, with the certainty of successful execution. Synergism in the doctrine of election must go hand in hand with synergism in the doctrine of conversion. There is sense in the synergistic assumption of election *intuitu fidei praevisae* only to the extent to which faith is conceived as a work of man. The Lutheran doctrine is, that "the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto; and upon this [divine predestination] also our salvation is so founded that '*the gates of hell cannot prevail against it*' (Matt. 16, 18). For it is written (John 10, 28): '*Neither shall any man pluck my sheep out of my hand.*' And again (Acts 13, 48): '*And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.*'" Form. Conc. Sol. Decl., XI, 8.

It should, however, be noted that, while the decree of election is in force and is being carried out by the salvation of God's elect, the execution of the decree, which is an *opus* or series of *opera ad extra*, terminating without the Godhead, must be distinguished from the decree itself, which is an *opus ad intra*, terminating within the God-

1) Col. 1, 22. Eph. 5, 25—27. Rom. 8, 1. 34. 1 Cor. 6, 11.

head. The apostle says: ἐξελέξατο ἡμῶς . . . πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *he chose us to himself before the foundation of the world was laid.* Before all time, when nothing besides God existed, the election of grace was enacted and complete. Cf. Col. 1, 15 ff. 2 Thess. 2, 13. 1 Cor. 2, 7. God's election before all time is one thing, its execution in time is another thing, and while they are in exact keeping with one another, they must not be confounded. Thus the plan of a building may be, in all its details, in the architect's mind for months or even years before the building itself is erected according to such plan. But the human architect's plan may never be executed. A competitor's plan may gain the preference. God's decrees never fail of execution. *Known unto God are all his works ἀπ' αἰῶνος, from eternity.*¹⁾ He had planned and purposed the creation of the world, of heaven and earth, and *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth.*²⁾ He had decreed the work of redemption; and when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, etc.,³⁾ the foreordained Redeemer was manifest,⁴⁾ delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,⁵⁾ and all was done that the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done.⁶⁾ So firmly was this work of redemption secured by the eternal decree, that it admitted of being taken into account to determine the decree of election. Thus also by this decree of election God has from eternity secured the salvation of the elect in his eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown.

That the decree of election was an enactment of the divine will, whereby God purposed what he would bring about in time, is further elucidated in what St. Paul says

1) Acts 15, 18.

2) Exod. 31, 17. Cf. 20, 11. Rev. 4, 11. Ps. 104, 24. Gen. 1, 1. Acts 17, 26.

3) Gal. 4, 4,

4) 1 Pet. 1, 20.

5) Acts 2, 23.

6) Acts 4, 28.

V. 5. ἐν ἀγάπῃ προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν. — The phrase, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, is, in the English Bible, connected with the preceding verse. This connection is based upon the supposition that the holiness and blamelessness spoken of in verse 4 is a Christian's walk in newness of life, sanctification, the fruit of faith which worketh by love.¹⁾ Remembering, however, that the keynote of the entire context is a eulogy of the goodness of God, who has blessed us with all manner of spiritual blessing, and that the words, ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, would seem to refer to the holiness and blamelessness of justification rather than to sanctification, the mention of *our* love would seem to introduce a notion foreign to and out of keeping with the context. For the same reasons, the connection of ἐν ἀγάπῃ with προορίσας seems in every way preferable. Thus referred, the love here mentioned is the love of God, that everlasting love wherewith he from eternity longed for union and communion with the objects of his holy desire, and which prompted him to choose them unto himself and to predestinate them to eternal bliss and glory. / The aorist participle, προορίσας, here as in many other places, such as Acts 1, 24. Rom. 4, 20. 2 Pet. 2, 5. Col. 2, 13. Phil. 2, 7, indicates coincidence. When God chose his children unto himself, he therewith and by the same act or decree determined their destination. This might have been said by ὀρίσας. Cf. Acts 10, 42; 17, 31. Hebr. 4, 7. It is more emphatically said by προορίσας. From ὄρος, *terminus*, ὀρίζεν is, *to determine*, and προορίζεν, *to predetermine, to predestinate*; and πρό in the compound verb, according to the present context, points to πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, v. 4. Cf. 1 Cor. 2, 7: προὐόρισεν πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων. Followed by εἰς, προορίζεν also denotes an exertion of the divine will, a divine decree.

1) Gal. 5, 6.

The destination to which God predestinated us is *υιοθεσία εις αυτον*, *adoption to him*, the relation to God according to which we are, by adoption, children of God. This again includes faith; *for*, says the apostle, *ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*¹⁾ The Mediator of our adoption, *δια*, *through* whom, according to the divine decree of predestination, we should become children of God, is Christ, the Redeemer, in whom God reconciled the world unto himself as by a Mediator between God and man. That we should receive the adoption of sons is expressly stated as the purpose for which God sent his Son made of a woman, made under the law.²⁾ For this *υιοθεσία δια Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, and for none but this, God predestinated us. "Therefore this eternal election of God is to be considered in Christ, and not beyond or without Christ."³⁾ "For it has been decided by the Father from eternity that whom he would save, he would save through Christ."⁴⁾ The doctrine of predestination, as the doctrine of redemption and of justification, is not Law but Gospel, and the center of the Gospel is Christ, our Righteousness. This is also the doctrine of our text.

This same text, however, again excludes every element of synergism from the doctrine of predestination. Our adoption is purely the work of God. As such it was in the mind of God when he predestinated us, not in view or consideration of, but *εις υιοθεσιαν*, *unto adoption*. God certainly knew, according to his omniscience, who would in time be his children by faith in Christ Jesus. But this is not whereof Paul speaks in this text. It is the divine *προορισμός* whereof he speaks. According to his omniscience God knew from eternity not only who would, but also who would not, be his children by faith in Christ. But "the eternal election of God, or predestination, i. e. God's appointment to salva-

1) Gal. 3, 26.

2) Gal. 4, 4. 5.

3) F. C. Sol. Decl., XI, 65.

4) F. C. Ibid. 66.

tion, pertains not at the same time to the godly and the wicked, but only to the children of God, who were elected and appointed to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says (Eph. 1, 4. 5): He hath chosen us in him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. The foreknowledge of God foresees and foreknows also that which is evil, but not in such a manner as though it were God's gracious will that evil should happen. . . . The beginning and cause of evil is not in God's foreknowledge; for God does not procure and effect or work that which is evil, neither does he help or promote it. . . . But the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes what pertains thereto." 1) In his decree of predestination, "God in his counsel, before the ages of the world, decided and ordained that he himself, by the power of his Holy Ghost, would produce and work in us, through the word, everything that pertains to our conversion. Therefore this doctrine affords also this excellent, glorious comfort that God was so solicitous concerning the conversion, righteousness and salvation of every Christian, and so faithfully provided therefor, that before the foundation of the world was laid he deliberated concerning it, and in his purpose ordained how he would bring me thereto and preserve me therein." 2) All this is implied in the words, *προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.

The words also clearly indicate that God's predestination is in such a way particular that it has for its objects the individual persons whom it concerns. Adoption, *υἰοθεσία*, deals with individuals. No man is made a child of God by the conversion of his brother or his sister. The relation of parent and child is a personal relation, and to

1) F. C. Ibid. 5—8.

2) F. C. Ibid. 44. 45.

this personal relation we were predestinated. God "in his counsel, purpose and ordination not only in general prepared salvation, but in grace considered and chose to salvation each and *every person* of the elect, who shall be saved through Christ, and ordained that in the way now mentioned he would by his grace, gifts, and efficacy bring them thereto [make them participants of eternal salvation], and aid, promote, strengthen and preserve them."¹⁾ "God in his purpose has ordained before the time of the world by what crosses and sufferings he will conform *every one* of his elect to the image of his Son."²⁾

And now, what prompted God to choose us in Christ Jesus and predestinate us to a state of grace here beneath and a state of glory in the world to come? The apostle says: *κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*. Here, as in Rom. 2, 5. Phil. 4, 11. Tit. 3, 5. 1 Pet. 1, 3, *κατὰ* points out the motive or prompting cause. *Εὐδοκία*, from *εὐδοκεῖν*, *to be pleased with—, to find pleasure in—*, Matt. 3, 17; 12, 18. Mark 1, 11. Luke 3, 22. 1 Cor. 10, 5.— Luke 12, 32. 1 Cor. 1, 21. Rom. 15, 26 f. Gal. 1, 15. Col. 1, 19. 1 Thess. 2, 8, denotes *good pleasure*, Matt. 11, 26. Luke 2, 24; 10, 21. Rom. 10, 1. Eph. 1, 9. Phil. 1, 15; 2, 13. 1 Thess. 1, 11. Theodoret circumscribes it by *ἢ ἐπ' εὐεργεσίᾳ βούλησις*, *the willingness to do good*. In verse 9 the apostle says: *κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ*. Here he speaks more emphatically, *κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ*. *According to the good pleasure of his will*, God predestinated us. Will in God is that attribute, according to which he consciously prompts his own acts and is intent upon the execution of his purposes, the accomplishment of his designs, the realization of his counsels.³⁾ What prompted God in predestinating us was entirely and exclusively within God. If we ask, "What moved God to foreordain us?" Paul answers: "His good pleasure." And if we ask, "What

1) F. C. Ibid. 23.

2) F. C. Ibid. 49.

3) Ps. 135, 6. Rom. 11, 34. Job 36, 23. Ps. 33, 9. 10. Is. 46, 11.

prompted his good pleasure?" he answers, "His will." Hence, what is here set forth and made known to us is, later on, described as *mystery of his WILL*, v. 9, and we are said to be *predestinated according to the PURPOSE of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own WILL*, v. 11. Not our will, or any inclination or attitude of ourselves, or anything within us which God foresaw or in his omniscience foreknew, moved or prompted God to predestinate us, but his pleasure, and that pleasure was the pleasure of his will. What God foresaw in us that was good, he foresaw as the gift of his goodness and the work of his power, not as a cause, but as an effect of his good pleasure in the execution of his counsel. Thus he in time *makes known to us*, by the gospel, *the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself*, v. 9. The saving knowledge of Christ and the way of salvation was not an inducement for the good pleasure of God's will toward our predestination, but is in fact, and was in the eternal prescience of God, a free gift of his goodness towards us, prompted by the same good pleasure of his will which moved him to predestinate us. Again, what God foresaw in us aside of what he would himself engender and work in us was evil, and *only evil continually*,¹⁾ not of a nature to induce God to predestinate us to sonship and heirship in the household of faith, but to consign us to perdition and to banish us forever from his face, to *repent that he had made man on the earth*, and to say, *I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth*.²⁾ The disposition in God to bless regardless of the merits or demerits of the objects of his blessing is God's grace. And hence, as in time by grace we are saved through faith, so before all time by grace we were predestinated unto salvation through faith. Thus God's eternal predestination of his saints must redound

1) Gen. 6, 5.

2) Gen. 6, 6. 7.

V. 6: εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ. This is the ultimate end and aim of our predestination. The apostle is again emphatic in his statement. He might have said, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, *to the praise of his grace*, or he might have said, εἰς δόξαν τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, *to the glory of his grace*. But what he does say is: *To the praise of the glory of his grace*. This indicates that our predestination was most emphatically a work of divine grace. The eternal damnation of the devil and his angels and of all who persistently remain in the kingdom of Satan must also redound to the glory of God, the glory of his justice, according to which he, in his holy wrath, metes out just retribution to all who stand unjustified before his judgment seat. Thus will the last great day of reckoning be a *day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*. Rom. 2, 5. But the predestination of God's children was a work of the grace of God, who, not in view of anything that we have done, of our works or conduct, but regardless and in spite of what we have done, ordained us to salvation. And thus the praise of the glory of his grace accrues from the gracious decree whereby he secured the salvation of those who are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves, but as the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.¹⁾

Yet it must also be remembered and maintained that this grace of God could not exert itself in behalf of sinful men to the disparagement of the justice of God; and hereof the apostle, too, is mindful. He continues: ἐν ᾗ ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ. The verb, χαριτώω, occurs but once more in the New Testament, Luke 1, 28, where the angel greets the Virgin: Χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη, which the English Bible renders, *Hail, thou that art highly favored*. This meaning of χαριτώω deserves the preference in our text before another of which the verb admits according

1) Eph. 2, 8 f.

to its formation, viz. *to render lovable*. In the latter signification the verb is formed from χάρις, *agreeableness, amiability*, which would seem less in keeping with the context, which emphasizes χάρις as *divine grace*, that grace where-with God has blessed us before the world was made. This favor he bestowed upon us ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, *the Beloved, υἱὸς τῆς ἀγάπης θεοῦ*, Col. 1, 13, whom in the beginning and toward the end of his public ministry on earth the eternal Father proclaimed as his *beloved Son*, υἱὸς ἀγαπητός, Matt. 3, 17. Mark 1, 11. Matt. 17, 5; whom the Father loved before the foundation of the world, John 17, 23. 24. 26. It was he who turned the Father's heart toward us from everlasting, in view of whose perfect righteousness and atoning sacrifice the love of God encompassed us about. In him, the foreordained High Priest, there was salvation in God's heart before the world was made, and the Father from everlasting heard and granted the sacerdotal prayer of his Son: *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* John 17, 24.

Such is the doctrine of predestination as set forth in this classical text, which is one of the chief seats of this article of Christian faith. The decree of predestination is, according to this text, an eternal act of God, who, for his goodness' sake, and because of the merit and work of the foreordained Redeemer of all mankind, purposed to lead to everlasting life and glory, by the way of salvation designated for all mankind, a certain number of certain persons, and to procure, work, and promote what would pertain to their eternal salvation. The subsequent context deals with the execution of this eternal decree, whereby God, before the foundation of the world, and prompted only by his grace in Christ Jesus, purposed to call, enlighten and sanctify, keep and preserve, by the means of grace, according to the counsel of his will, all those whom, by eternal election of

grace in Christ, the Redeemer of the world, he has chosen from fallen mankind and predestinated to salvation and eternal glory. The execution of this decree and counsel of God must not be confounded with the decree itself. On the other hand, the execution of the divine decree is and must be in full accord with the decree. Human architects, generals, or statesmen, may change their plans or abandon them altogether. But *the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever;*¹⁾ *for he is not a man, that he should repent.*²⁾ Being a decree whereby God would magnify and extol the glory of his grace wherein he has favored us in the Beloved, its execution cannot be an exertion and manifestation of his wrath to exhibit and magnify the glory of his justice, but is and must be in all its parts a manifestation of his goodness, salvation of sinners by grace. Being an election in Christ Jesus, a predestination unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, its execution is and must be determined by Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, and by his vicarious sacrifice. Being a decree of God's good and gracious will, its execution excludes and must exclude all manner of human cooperation and everything of which any man might boast. All this appears in detail from the continuation of this eulogy of the grace of God beginning with *ἐδόξατο ὁ θεός*, v. 3, and ending with *εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*, v. 14. The doctrine of predestination no less than the doctrine of the conversion of sinners, of the justification of believers, of the glorification of saints, is set forth *for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*³⁾

But what of predestination to eternal perdition? It is a subject concerning which our text maintains profound silence. Paul here sets forth election and predestination as among the spiritual blessings wherewith God has blessed

1) Ps. 33, 11.

2) 1 Sam. 15, 29.

3) Rom. 15, 4; cf. Eph. 3, 3. 4.

us, as a manifestation of divine grace, determined by Christ Jesus, the Beloved; an election unto holiness and blamelessness before God; a predestination unto adoption. Nothing more. No supralapsarian predestination unto sin and guilt and the consequences thereof. No infralapsarian predestination of sinners to perseverance in sin and to inevitable wrath and death and damnation. We know, the *argumentum ex silentio* is not in all cases conclusive. If the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination were taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, it would still be Scripture doctrine. Yet it is not without significance that a text which is one of the chief *sedes doctrinae* for the doctrine of predestination speaks only of an election in Christ and unto holiness and blamelessness, a predestination unto adoption, which is to redound to the praise of the glory of God's *grace*, and not a word of a predestination prompted by the punitive justice of God, or determined by his righteous wrath. Hence the various Calvinistic efforts to supply by deductive reasoning from the text what the text neither expressly says nor implies. Hence such arguments as these: as God by a decree of his will determined the temporal and eternal state of the elect, he must also by a decree of his will have determined the lot of the rest of mankind; for without his will nothing can come to pass. Or, if according to the pleasure of his will God elected a part of mankind from the mass of perdition, then by the same decree he passed by the rest of the fallen race and consigned them to endless perdition. — But this will never do in theology, which is not philosophy, a product or system of human reasoning, but the doctrine of holy Scripture. When our Savior says, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,*¹⁾ we are not free to argue: hence, he that is not baptized shall not be saved. Even the statement, he that believeth not shall not be saved, could not claim the dignity of a theological truth, if it were obtained

1) Mark 16, 16.

only by a deduction from the text above quoted. But here we have the clear statement of Christ in Scripture: *He that believeth not shall be damned.*¹⁾ In a theological argument, not only the premises, but also the conclusion, must be taken directly from the word of Scripture, Old Testament Scripture, or New Testament Scripture, from the same text which contains the premises, or from the context, near or remote, or from some parallel text, but from the word of Scripture. Hence, whatever argument may lead or seem to lead to the assumption of a predestination unto sin and death and eternal perdition, such assumption is a rationalistic tenet and must be denied a place in Christian theology as long as it cannot be substantiated by at least one clear and distinct statement of holy Scripture. Thus also this text, Eph. 1, 3—6, was not written and handed down to us as a premise or series of premises from which we should draw our conclusions to palm them off as Christian doctrine. Paul does not say: "I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye argue and draw your conclusions, ye may understand even more than I know or say;" but he says: *I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye READ, ye may understand MY KNOWLEDGE in the mystery of Christ.*²⁾ From what the same apostle has written elsewhere we know, when we read, that even Paul's knowledge of the mystery of predestination was limited to what by revelation God had made known to him of the mystery.³⁾ In Romans 9, 10, and 11, he has at great length exhibited this doctrine of predestination, and his closing statement is: *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*⁴⁾ A Calvinistic summary would have been: "God concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon a few and in just judgment condemn the rest." Paul knows both, the doctrine of a particular election of grace unto righteousness

1) Mark 16, 16.

2) Eph. 3, 3 f.

3) Eph. 3, 3.

4) Rom. 11, 32.

and glory, and the doctrine of God's universal grace and mercy upon all sinful mankind. He asserts the one and he avers the other. *That they agree is out of question. There are no contradictions or conflicting wills in God. How they agree, he leaves to God; for God knows. But what are we to do? Are we to argue and speculate? Paul does not, though he knows that many questions concerning this mystery remain unanswered. Where his knowledge by revelation is at an end, he does not crave more; he does not endeavor to supply from his own mind what was reserved in the mind of God. Nor are we to crave more, or to indulge in hopeless speculation. It was Paul's task to write for our learning what God revealed to him. It is our task to read what Paul wrote, and by reading to learn what was revealed to him. And when we have read what is written concerning the mystery of God's will, we are still to read what the apostle wrote after his knowledge in the mystery of Christ had reached the point beyond which revelation did not go. What does he write? *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*⁶⁾ A. G.*

1) Rom. 11, 33—36.