

Predestination & Election

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Compliments of:

Agape Chapel Ministries

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CHAPTER II.

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

“THE VERY ELECT”—*Matthew XXIV. 24.*

- (a) *Make Thy Chosen People Joyful*” (Prayer Book).
- (b) “*That it may please Thee of Thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect*” (Burial Service).
- (c) “*To teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family; to seek for Christ’s sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever*” (Ordination Service).

With such extracts before us it may well become an ordained minister of the Establishment to set before those who care to read, what God’s word has to say about “the very elect.”

In the first place, I will note the words used by the Holy Ghost to express the truth underlying our subject, viz., predestinated and elect.

I. PREDESTINATED. The Greek word used is one from which we get ‘horizon.’ Hence the meaning is a boundary. This has a prefix ‘pro’ (=before) added, and thus we obtain the thought of a boundary determined

beforehand. 'Horizon' is found eight times in the Greek New Testament.

- (1) Luke xxii. 22.—"The Son of Man goeth as it was determined."
- (2) Acts ii. 23.—"Him being delivered by the *determinate* counsel and foreknowledge of God."
- (3) Acts x. 42.—"It is he which was *ordained* of God."
- (4) Acts xi. 29.—"The disciples *determined* to send relief."
- (5) Acts xvii. 26.—"*Hath determined* the times before appointed."
- (6) Acts xvii. 31.—"That man whom he *hath ordained*."
- (7) Rom. i. 4.—"*Declared* (m. determined) the Son of God with power."

(8) Heb. iv. 7.—"Again he *limiteth* a certain day."

From these instances we find that the Greek word 'horizon' means determination, ordination, limitation. Whatever be the subject spoken of, there is the idea of a fixed settled boundary.

On six other occasions the word 'pre-horizon' is used, viz :

- (1) Acts iv. 28.—"To do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel *determined before* to be done." This is part of the Apostles' prayer. The subject is the crucifixion of "thy holy child Jesus." The vile conspirators, Herod and Pontius Pilate, are named. Gentiles and Jews are gathered together to execute their foul deeds. Beyond this, the inspired word reveals the glorious truth that even these things were 'pre-horizoned'—determined beforehand by the wisdom of God.

election in as full detail as space has permitted, and all the important Scriptures bearing upon the subject have been collated and expounded. My heart's desire is that the Holy Spirit may bless the perusal to the reader, according to the purposes of His grace and for the edification of His elect.

17. James II. 5.—“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?” This is a remarkable statement from the lips of James. The blessed effects of election are here declared to be double, (1) rich in faith, (2) heirs of the kingdom, and a third characteristic is appended, “love.”

18. I Peter I. 2.—“Elect.” There can be little question but that the word “elect” ought to go with the word “strangers,” and that the sentence should be read “Peter to the elect sojourners of the Dispersion.” I need scarcely add more here than to remind the reader that among the Israel elected to national privileges, there was the spiritual Israel elected to glory. These spiritually elect ones had grace and peace promised to them in the mind of God, and communicated by the Holy Spirit in obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. A glorious covenant again secures endless happiness!

19. 2 Peter I. 10.—“Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” This is the Holy Spirit’s counsel through Peter to the ‘brethren.’ God has elected them from eternity. After regeneration, it behoves them to have the question of their election settled in their own minds by infallible proofs. These evidences are the fruits mentioned in previous verses and enumerated in Gal. v. 22-25.

20. 2 John I, 13.—“The elect lady . . . thy elect sister.” We note individual election once more. It is interesting and instructive to observe that election, walking in truth, love to one another, and abiding in the doctrine of Christ are inseparable.

My task is now completed. My sole object has been to set forth the precious doctrines of predestination and

(2 & 3) Rom. VIII. 29, 30.—“He also *did predestinate* . . . whom he *did predestinate*.” This chapter is the Divine summary of the plan of man’s justification before God. The persons here indicated are ‘pre-horizoned.’ God has once for all settled their everlasting position “according to purpose.”

(4) I Cor. II. 7.—“The wisdom of God . . . the hidden wisdom which God *ordained before* the world unto our glory.” Here we have the salt-seasoned speech of a child of God ‘pre-horizoned’ before all times.

(5) Ephes. I. 5.—“*Having predestinated* us unto the adoption of children . . .”

(6) Ephes. I. 11.—“*Being predestinated* according to the purpose of him . . .”

The six-fold repetition of the one word “us” in verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, is of great significance in settling the question of the individual predestination of each member of the flock of Christ.

In carefully examining these passages for the meaning of this word “predestinated,” the only scriptural conclusion is that every person and event referred to were determined beforehand by the purpose, hand, and counsel, of the blessed Trinity.

2. ELECT, CHOSEN.—These two words are expressed by one in the Greek, with the exception of Matt. XII. 18, and 2 Thess. II. 13. The word, with its correlatives, occurs 51 times, but for our purpose we need examine only those passages where the word is translated ‘election, elect, chosen.’ These number 30, from which the root meaning is found to be ‘a picking out, a selection.’

ELECT.—Matt. XXIV. 22, 24, 31; Mark XIII. 20, 22, 27;

Luke XVIII. 7 ; Rom. VIII. 33 ; Col. III. 12 ; I Tim. V. 21 ; 2 Tim. II. 10 ; Titus I. 1 ; I Peter I. 2 ; II. 6 ; 2 John 13.

ELECTION.—Rom. IX. 11 ; XI. 5, 7, 28 ; I Thess. I. 4 ; 2 Peter I. 10.

CHOSEN.—Matt. XX. 16 ; XXII. 14 ; LUKE XXIII. 35 ; Rom. XVI. 13 ; I Peter II. 4, 9 ; Rev. XVII. 14.

CHOSEN.—Acts IX. 15.

Take the last passage to illustrate the meaning of the word. Paul is said to be “a chosen vessel,” or, as it might be translated, “a vessel of election.” He was “picked out” or “selected” from all others to bear the Lord’s name before both Gentiles and Jews.

KINDS OF ELECTION.

My main object in this sermon is to show what is written in Scripture concerning God’s predestinating and electing purposes. I find that seven kinds of election are revealed.

I. OF ANGELS.—I Tim. V. 21.—“I charge [thee] before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the *elect angels*.” Scripture tells us that angels are divided into two classes : good and evil. The good are the elect ones. Their goodness springs solely from their election, and it is this election alone which secures their eternal happiness. Their work is one of praise and worship with respect to God the Father. (Psa. CXLVIII. 2). It is one of service as well as of worship to God the Son (Psa. XCI. 11 ; Heb. I. 6), and one of ministration to the necessities of the saints (Heb. I. 14). Well indeed has Toplady written :—

14. 2 Thess. II. 13.—“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.” I explained the Greek word used here for “chosen” on page 30, where it has reference to Christ. The power is God ; the period is “from the beginning” ; the predication is “chosen” (i.e., gripped) ; and the purpose is “salvation.”

In the concluding portion of this verse, there are (1) the new nature and (2) the evidence. So that we have here a complete summary of salvation from eternity to eternity.

(1) God chooses from the beginning.

(2) God calls by the Gospel.

(3) God sanctifies through the Spirit (i.e., gives the new birth).

(4) God gives the evidence (faith and thanksgiving).

(5) God bestows the blessings (salvation and glory), and all is through the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15. 2 Tim. II. 10.—“I endure all things for the elect’s sakes.” Paul was undoubtedly a “good minister of Jesus Christ.” The one purpose in his ministry was “the salvation of souls” (I Peter I. 9), but this was limited to the souls of the elect ; and, in cognisance of the purpose of Jehovah, he sought their spiritual welfare. His patience was always in association with the Word (v. 9), and his aim was “the salvation in the possession of Christ Jesus,” which he desired them to reach.

16. Titus I. 1.—“According to the faith of God’s elect.” This “faith” is a precious gift belonging only to God’s elect. Paul was a servant and an apostle “according to faith and knowledge,” both of which are fruits of the Spirit and can come only from the new nature.

Notice also the four final aims of the "spiritual blessings."

- (1) "The praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6).
- (2) "The dispensation of the fulness of times" (v. 10).
- (3) "The praise of his glory" (v. 12, 14).
- (4) "The redemption of the purchased possession" (v. 14).

Let the reader carefully study these lines of thought, and the conclusion arrived at will be that every blessing flows from the pre-arranged covenant between the Persons of the glorious Trinity. The whole salvation of the elect rests solely with Jehovah. It is the Father who purposes, the Son who performs, and the Spirit who perpetuates this salvation in the hearts of the elect.

12. Col. III. 12-17.—"As the elect of God." This beautiful portion deals with the evidential character of God's family. They are chosen to be "holy," and here we have their spirituality delineated. How very necessary it is to notice that election and good works go hand in hand! The former produces the latter; the latter always follow the former. It is all simply a matter of cause and effect. Election is the cause, and "bowels of mercy," etc., are the result. Reader, has God elected thee? Try the spirits whether they be of God. Examine thyself by these fruits of grace to see if thou art in the faith.

13. 1 Thess. I. 4.—"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." How did they know it? They knew it by the revelation in the Word and through its preaching. In verse 5 we have the four concomitants of election: (1) word, (2) power, (3) Spirit, (4) assurance.

Thy ministering spirits descend
To watch while Thy saints are asleep;
By day and by night they attend,
The heirs of salvation to keep.

Thy worship no interval knows;
Their fervour is still on the wing;
And while they protect my repose,
They chant to the praise of my King.

The evil angels are "the angels which kept not their first estate" (Jude 6), "the angels that sinned," whom "God spared not, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter II. 4).

Blessed election! It ensures the bliss of the elect angels, and gives them the privilege of ministering to the needs of "the heirs of salvation." Are you and I, dear reader, reaping benefits from it? Let us note the immutability of this election. There is not one elect angel in hell, nor a wicked one in heaven.

II. OF JEWS.—Deut. VII. 6.—"The LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself." Undoubtedly this passage refers to the *national* election of the Jews. The cause of this election is stated both positively and negatively. It was because "The LORD loved you" (verse 8). It was not on account of numbers, for they were the "fewest of all people" (v. 7); neither was it because of their righteousness, for they were "a stiff-necked people" (Deut. IX. 4-6).

The election was both absolute and unconditional. Look at the historical facts. Abram—their progenitor—is an idolater (Josh. XXIV. 2). In the distinguishing and

discriminating love of God, he is commanded to leave his home, country, and friends, and through grace he obeys the calling. He receives many gracious promises. "I will make of thee a great nation" is the promise—*the pre-destination*—of the nation (Gen. xii. 2). He is now constituted "heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13), and he receives the sign of this covenant (Gen. xvii).

In process of time the family becomes a nation, which afterwards is enslaved in Egypt. Then "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Ex. ii. 24). Through Moses and Aaron He declares to the people His predestinating purposes. "I have established my covenant . . . I have heard the groaning . . . I have remembered my covenant . . . I will bring you out . . . I will rid you out . . . I will redeem you . . . I will take you to me for a people . . . I will be to you a God . . . I will bring you in unto the land" (Exod. vi. 4-8). The elect people became a redeemed people.

But further, God brought His elect nation out of Egypt into the wilderness to be a "holy" people, as it is written "Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. xiv. 2).

Thus we have an elect nation, a redeemed nation, a sanctified (i.e., separated) nation.

Consider that remarkable prayer by David, "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, [even] like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things

scripture, containing these three words thrice repeated, has special reference to the character of the elect. They are the foolish, the weak, the base things of the world. As a rule, the world's pleasures, pursuits, and profits are not theirs. In all this, there is the glorious purpose of God, excluding all boasting on the part of the elect.

11. Eph. i. 3-14.—This portion is the climax of our subject. Its first word is "Eulogised"—"Blessed (Greek, eulogised) [be] the God and Father." The eulogy is because of "spiritual blessings." The blessings are all in Christ, thus :—

"In Christ Jesus . . . faithful" (v. 1).

"In him . . . chosen" (v. 4).

"In the beloved . . . accepted" (v. 6).

"In whom . . . redemption, forgiveness" (v. 7).

"In whom . . . inheritance" (N.B. *we*) (v. 11).

"In whom . . . inheritance" (N.B. *ye*) (v. 13).

"In whom . . . sealed" (v. 13).

Every blessing is treasured up in our glorious Lord. Notice the magnificent enumeration of God's purposes following the word "according to" which denotes the source and author of the blessings.

PURPOSE.

- v. 6. The good pleasure of His will. Predestination and adoption.
- v. 7. The riches of His grace. Redemption and forgiveness.
- v. 9. His good pleasure, purposes, &c. Knowledge of the mystery of His will.
- v. 11. The purpose of Him. Predestination.
- v. 13. The counsel of His own will. All things.

BLESSING.

is stated in ix. 21 : "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" The only answer can be, "Yes, he has." Paul then declares that God has divided mankind into "vessels of mercy" and "vessels of wrath."

Turning to the objector, he questions him—If God is pleased to make such distinctions, "who art thou, O man, that disputest with God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (v. 20). God is sovereign; He does whatever pleases Him. Jacob and Esau have their futures predetermined before their life's actions are performed. Jacob is loved; Esau is hated. The carnal mind charges God with unrighteousness. To this the regenerated nature answers, "God forbid." God has mercy and compassion on whom He will; and consequently it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth."

In the elect nation there will be a spiritual Israel; "a remnant shall be saved" (ix. 27), "a remnant according to the election of grace" (xi. 5). A national election avails nothing for eternal glory; it is only as elected in Christ that we shall benefit hereafter. Well might the apostle conclude with the words, "O the depth! O the depth! how unsearchable!" "For of Him (as source) and through Him (as channel), and to Him (as end) [are] all things: to Him (m) [be] the glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33, 36.)

9. Rom. xvi. 13.—"Salute Rufus, the chosen in the Lord." Note the individual election mentioned here.

10. I Cor. i. 26-29.—"God hath chosen." This

and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, (from) the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel [to be] *a people unto thee for ever*; and thou, LORD, art become their God" (2 Sam. vii. 23, 24).

Even in their national rejection, through Isaiah Jehovah still calls them "Israel mine elect" (xlv. 4), and through Amos (iii. 2), contemporary with Isaiah, He yet says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos iii. 2). Even though this elect nation crucified the Messiah, yet the inspired words of the apostle Paul are that "his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom. x. 1). This is followed up in Rom. xi. 1, 2, with the question, "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I (emphatic) also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, [of] the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." No! No! God's election pledges will never be broken. Divine election will ever secure for its objects every blessing designed. In the eleventh chapter, too, the position which Israel holds in the affections of Jehovah is clearly revealed in the following words:—"As touching the election, [they are] beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. xi. 28). Then follows the Divine aphorism, "The gifts and calling of God [are] without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). Such indeed is the scriptural account of national election.

III. OF A TRIBE.—"For the LORD thy God hath chosen him (Levi) out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister

in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever" (Deut. xviii. 5).

Notice again, that election is to privileges and blessings. "The LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in His name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him" (Deut. x. 8, 9). See also xxi. 5.

That all this sets forth another and more glorious election will be seen later on; but with its typical nature I am not now dealing. My object here is to point out that the tribe of Levi occupied a most prominent position in the carrying out of God's purpose with the elect nation. This position was not given on account of anything meritorious in Levi, for he is described as an "instrument of cruelty" (Gen. xlix. 5); but it was all according to the covenant (Mal. ii. 4, 5; Ps. lxxviii. 68).

IV. OF A CITY.—"The place which the LORD shall choose" (Deut. xii. 14, 18, 21, 26; xviii. 6). The LORD says to Solomon, "I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there" (2 Chron. vi. 6). David wrote, "The LORD hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His Habitation" (Ps. cxxxii. 13).

This election gives great pointedness to the numerous references to Jerusalem and Zion throughout the Bible. Why should Solomon speak of the bride, "Thou art beautiful, O my love . . . comely as Jerusalem" (Cant. vi. 4), except it were on account of her election? Why, again, should Paul speak of the "Heavenly

Notice that God had His infinite mind fixed upon His foreknown ones irrespective of anything else. It is all on account of His purpose, not according to man's privileges or performances. To our limited understanding this foreknowledge of God precedes predestination. Having then foreknown His elect, He predetermines that they shall have the like form "of the likeness of His Son;" i.e., God foreknew His children in His own mind, and designed that they should be like their original Pattern in character and destiny. What wonderful revelations are given to us here! Oh, to bow the head in self-abasement and to lift up the renewed heart in gratitude for such glorious truths!

7. Rom. viii. 33.—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Paul is now concluding his argument respecting the justification of God's elect by grace. He puts this question interrogatively, to enhance the force of a negative answer. 'To lay anything to the charge of' has reference to debt. Who dare say that God's elect owe a single farthing? His own Son has been surrendered; God has not abstained from bruising him. Shall *He* condemn, who has actually acquitted? The debts of the elect have been cancelled; the innumerable sins of the chosen have been laid upon Him, and "as many as were ordained to eternal life" are at liberty for ever.

8. Rom. ix.-xi.—These chapters deal fully with the subject of predestination. The national election of Israel to civil blessings is clearly stated; but it is to the spiritual election to eternal glory to which I would specially direct attention. The basis of God's election

6. Rom. viii. 29.—“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of His Son.”

It will be necessary to examine carefully the word translated ‘foreknow,’ which has been adopted into the English language in the word ‘prognosticate’ and its cognates. It means ‘to have an insight beforehand,’ and refers to experimental knowledge based upon union. It occurs in the following passages :—Acts II. 23, xxvi. 5 ; Rom. viii. 29, xi. 2 ; 1 Peter I. 2, 20 ; 2 Peter III. 17. From these we find that ‘foreknowledge’ is attributed both to God and man.

Take first the two passages which refer to man. Paul says (Acts xxvi. 5) that the Pharisees had full personal acquaintance with his life from the very outset. Peter writes to the “beloved” (2 Peter III. 17) concerning the prophetic events about to happen, and speaks of the knowledge of these things which they (the “beloved”) had prior to their occurrence.

Now look at the passages which refer to God. The Father foreknew the Son, i.e., He knew beforehand what He himself determined to do. God the Father had settled in His own mind “before the foundation of the world” that Jesus Christ should “shed His precious blood.” When the time came, Peter was deputed to declare this purpose of Jehovah. “Whom He did foreknow.”—God has a personal peculiar interest in His people previous to their creation. ‘Whom’ and ‘them’ are most important and emphatic words in this passage. It is the people—the individuals—who are foreknown. No mention is made of gifts or graces.

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Jerusalem” (Heb. xii. 22) and the aged John of the “New Jerusalem,” the “Holy Jerusalem” (Rev. xxi. 2, 10), except it be to unfold the untold blessings of predestination and election?

V. OF INDIVIDUALS.

- (a) Moses—“Moses his chosen” (Ps. cvi. 23).
 - (b) Aaron—“Aaron whom he had chosen” (Ps. cv. 26).
 - (c) David—“I chose David” (1 Kings viii. 16).
- To this section may also be added the passage “Blessed (is the man whom) thou chooseth” (Ps. lxxv. 4).
- (d) Apostles—“Of them he chose twelve” (Luke vi. 13).

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John xv. 16).

The purpose of Apostolic Election is stated by our Lord to be fourfold :—(1) That they should be with him. (2) That he might send them forth to preach. (3) To have power to heal sicknesses. (4) To cast out devils (Mark III. 14, 15).

So far, what has been written refers primarily to privileges, to positions, to portions during this life ; and, even with reference to these, the Divine principle of Ex. xxxiii. 19 is exemplified—“I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

God blesses one nation and leaves the rest. He selects one tribe out of that nation to perform certain holy actions, and pronounces judgment upon all who attempt to usurp that authority. He chooses one city where He is pleased to dwell, and there never has been, nor can be, a city like Jerusalem. He appoints certain

men to perform His pleasure, and equips them with suitable gifts. Thus we see that the sovereignty of God, and His election to earthly privileges, are both absolute and arbitrary. These are but types and illustrations of the great and blessed truth of predestination and election to eternal happiness, the elucidation of which we are now about to give.

PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION TO ETERNAL LIFE.

“ Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God’s purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through Grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.”—*Article xvii. (Church of England).*

“ By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

“ These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

“ Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of

The strength of this Scripture lies in the meaning of the word ‘ordained.’ As the Greek word is found but eight times it may be as well to give the full list. The following are the passages:—Matt. xxviii. 16; Luke vii. 8; Acts xiii. 48, xv. 2, xxii. 10, xxviii. 23; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xvi. 15. The word properly means to place—to place in a certain rank or order. It is derived from the arranging or disposing of a body of soldiers in regular order by the commanding officer. Carefully examining the above texts, I find that five English words are used to express the meaning of this word: (1) appointed, (2) set, (3) determined, (4) ordained, (5) addicted. The word does not refer to any internal disposition, but it has the idea of ordering from some external source. In the case of a soldier, this mandate proceeds from the superior officer. In the case of a Christian, the order originates in the mind of God.

It was God who appointed the place of His people. It was He who made the selection of His sheep. This is His predestination. This is His election. “As many as were ordained to eternal life”—One and all are passive in the settlement of their salvation; God arranged all before their births. After their predestination, and in God’s own appointed time, they receive their blessings, and as evidence of the certainty of their election—they believe. In the instance now under consideration, Paul the Apostle had been divinely commissioned to preach the gospel. The Holy Spirit had caused the ordinands to be born again. From this new life there flowed new hopes, and “the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ” testified to its reality.

3. Luke xii. 32.—“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” In these advisory words Jesus designates His own by the title “little flock.” The passage literally translated is “little ‘little flock.’” It is a diminutive of the one flock (A.V. fold) of John, x. 16. It occurs but three times—Acts xx. 28, 29; 1 Peter v. 2, 3. The allusion is to the ‘twos and threes’ of the one election of grace, drawn together by the Holy Spirit, and consoled by Jesus with the comforting thought of their eternal security.

4. John xvii. 2.—“As many as thou hast given him.” The given ones! How significant a title for the elect! What glorious gifts are associated with these given ones! Note the expression “the hour is come” (v. 1). What hour? It is the predestinated hour appointed by the Father, agreed upon by the Son, and here attested by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The gifts enumerated are (1) power, (2) life, (3) men, (4) things, (5) words, (6) word, (7) glory. All are associated with the elect of God, with both the Shepherd and the sheep. What is the Lord’s declared desire in His final prayer? “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” What is the purpose? “That they may behold my (emphatic) glory which thou hast given me.” What is the reason? “For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (v. 24). The best comment upon these declarations of the Saviour is the language of the 53rd chap. of Isaiah, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (v. 11).

5. Acts xiii. 48.—“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of His glorious grace” (*Chap. III., Westminster Confession of Faith*).

Such are the declarations of faith, made by the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Independent Churches in the United Kingdom; and their ministers are bound by oath and covenant to preach and teach in accordance thereto. In the Church of England the following declaration has to be made at the ‘reading-in’: “I assent to the thirty-nine articles of religion which I have now read before you. . . . I believe the doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God.” With these solemn assurances before us, we now turn to the Scriptures to see what is written therein.

VI. THE ELECTION OF CHRIST.—“Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well-pleased.” (Matt. xii. 18). This is a quotation from Is. xlii. 1. The word translated “chosen” is very significant. It means ‘gripped.’ God in His condescension tells us He has laid fast hold of Jesus, whom He calls “My servant, my beloved, mine elect.” He refers to Christ’s sacred humanity. Surveying the whole human race, none can be found to undertake the stupendous work of Redemption. God purposes to have a family to proclaim His glory. This is “His good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.” (Ephes. i. 9). It is also “the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus” (Ephes. iii. 11). Jesus Christ is the one elected to perform the necessary work of redemption. Immediately prior to His incarnation, our Lord addresses

His Father. "A body hast Thou prepared me . . . Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5, 7). This was settled ages before it took place, for Ps. xl. prophesies of the event, and Gal. iv. 4 informs us that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." Moreover, the very words which Christ had to use were given to Him by His Father, for He declares, "I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, *even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak*" (John xii. 50). The rulers at the cross testified to the same truth when they exclaimed, "He saved others, let Him save Himself, if He be the Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke xxiii. 35).

Such, indeed, is the testimony concerning the election of Christ to perform the work of "saving His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21).

VII. THE VERY ELECT.—"Insomuch that, if (it were) possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. xxiv. 24). Our Lord refers three times in this chapter to the 'elect.' Speaking of the great tribulation at "the end of the world," He says that there shall be a *diminution* of the days—"For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (v. 22). There will also be a *deception*. Christ assures us, however, that, whatever false prophets may do to others, "the very elect" cannot be led astray (v. 24). The third occasion refers to the work of the elect angels who shall "gather together his (the Son of man's) elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (v. 31).

Who are these elect? How did they become elect? Why are they the very elect? To what are they elected?

Am I indeed, one of the elect? How shall I know it? These are questions deserving our closest scrutiny, and to their elucidation I now turn the reader's attention.

1. Matt. xi. 25, 26.—"I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Jesus is here exulting in His Father's performances. He acquiesces in the hiding and revealing purposes of sovereign grace. The life of a child of God indeed manifests the grace of election, but the election of grace originates solely in the free and willing purpose of Jehovah.

2. Luke x. 20.—"But rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The seventy had returned full of joy at the performance of good deeds. Power had accompanied their declaration; even demons had felt their superiority. Naturally they rejoiced at this. But there is a better rejoicing—one of "names written," and that "in heaven." Ability to perform good deeds cannot bring us into heaven. God alone does that. It must be by the handwriting of Him who inscribes our names in life's fair book, in reference to which Paul was commissioned to write, "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and (with) other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3). The result of being in "the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8, xxi. 27), is that we are yokefellows, helps, fellow-labourers.