

## SERMON VI.

*Having predestinated us unto adoption by Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*—VER. 5, 6.

THE coherence of these words with the former stands thus : they contain a second instance of that general of his premised, ver. 3, wherein the Apostle had said that God had blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. Now, as in that verse he mentioneth both an act of blessing us, 'he hath blessed us,' and in the general or total speaks of certain blessings themselves wherewith God hath blessed us, 'with all spiritual blessing in heavenly things in Christ;' so in these following verses he accordingly instanceth in particulars, namely—

1. *Election*, ver. 4.

2. *Predestination*, ver. 5.

Both which are acts of blessing us.

His first instance is in election : 'according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.' Here is the act of blessing, that God chose us in Christ, and so blessed us; for blessing was joined with choosing, as a concomitant of it; God then giving us all spiritual blessings when he chose us, as out of other scriptures I have shewed. So that the meaning is, that then, and in that act of choosing, God thus blessed us; and that particular blessing bestowed by that act is, that we were blessed with a perfect holiness, as it there follows, 'that we might be holy and without blame before him in love.'

The second instance he giveth is predestination : 'having predestinated us unto adoption,' &c. Herein again predestination is the act of blessing, and that from eternity; and adoption is the particular blessing wherewith we were blessed. And this is the fruit of predestination, as perfect holiness is of election.

Now, as an introduction to the opening of these words, you will expect I should first distinguish between *chosen* and *predestinated*, or between God's election and predestination. To choose, is to single and cull out from others, or out of a common lump; and to predestinate, is, in English, to fore-ordain, or fore-appoint to some end. Now, how do these differ, as they were then done by God?

1. It may be there was no difference intended; but the Apostle being to repeat the same thing, or one and the same act, his scope being apart to mention those particular blessings by that one word, as they are bestowed upon us by that one and eternal act of God's love, he takes occasion about them to use two several words or expressions thereof; especially considering that those eternal acts of choosing, predestinating, &c., were all but one entire act in God, even as his essence is one. And yet the Holy Ghost is pleased to express it by two acts; whereof the one notes out one thing more

eminently, and the other another thing, so to convey all of it the fuller unto our apprehensions, according to this latter conception.

2. Some distinguish them thus: that election or choice imports more eminently an act of God's will, for choice is an act of will; but that predestination is an act of his understanding, as working by counsel. So, ver. 11, this seems explained, 'Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will.' But more expressly in Acts iv. 28, 'Whatever thy counsel did fore-determine to be done.' The word is the same that is here, *προώρισαι*. So then the difference here should be, that election imports simply his decree to the end; but predestination should further note God's contrivement or preparation of means to the obtaining of that end.

3. But though other scriptures may hold forth this second difference, yet that it should be here in these two verses intended, I see not. For adoption here is set forth to be an end, as well as holiness; nor are there any means in this verse mentioned. And of the two, holiness is rather a means, or a foundation laid to adoption, than *à contra*; and therefore Rollock rather calls election, as here used, the decree of the means, and predestination the decree of the end. But yet that this notion of his should be the Apostle's scope here, I cannot wholly assent to neither; for the holiness unto which we are here said to be chosen is perfect holiness in heaven, which is the end we are ordained unto, as well as adoption. And, indeed, both of them are *decreta finis*, decrees about the end, as I shall afterwards shew.

Wherefore, the best difference that I can find out, and that is proper to the scope of the text, is, that election, although it be a decree about the end, or at least one main end concerning what God ultimately meaneth to do with us, as well as in predestination; yet together therewith it does eminently note forth a singling or culling out some persons with a special and peculiar love from others of the same rank and condition;\* both out of things possible, which God had in his knowledge, which his power could have made, but he never decreed a being unto, which are as infinite as his knowledge and power are, (and even out of these there is an election,) as also out of all persons, whom he did make and actually give an existence unto, both men and angels, of whom some he laid aside, as in the case of the angels is undeniable. So that election being a preferring of some before others, doth connote the *terminus à quo*, the term or mass of persons *from which*; but predestination more eminently notes out the *terminus ad quem*, the ultimate state *unto which* we are ordained.

And secondly, because by this election, or first calling out from others, we are not ordained to a sole and separate being in ourselves; such as other persons, whom he decreed not to save, are only to have,—they all stand upon their own bottom; but a being *in Christ*, as a Common Person and root to spring in and out of, and that in him we were considered and chosen to be in the very first act of God's choosing us, (as in God's heart we may be said to have stood, although, until converted, we have not an actual being in Christ, according to the rules of the Word, which God will judge us by, but are 'without God,' and 'without Christ,' as chap. ii. shews;) and therefore unto 'chosen' is added 'in him,' that being the first act that gives us a subsistence thus in God's mind, and that in Christ. Hence therefore election, the first act, having thus singled us out from all things, and decreed us a representative being in Christ as members in a head, together with our being,

\* The proper object which election is carried unto are the persons. It is of persons as of persons. He hath chosen us to being us to such an ultimate end, ordained for us

predestination then further imports a second act of ordaining us to a glorious well-being in him, as the end God means to bring us to. It adds adoption, and by adoption is meant the right unto the glory of heaven, as I shall by and by shew you, and this is bestowed upon us as a privilege or dignity—*ἐξουσία*, as it is called, John i. 12—over and above our first being in him; for in him we must first be, ere we can partake of anything through him. Now, election was the first act that did put us into him, and then predestination was that which conveyed unto us all those privileges which we have through him, and union with him, whereof adoption and holiness are the highest and most eminent.

To illustrate this, we must know that things must be purposed to have a being ere they can be supposed to have a well-being from Christ; according to that maxim of him, that is, of the Father, whose work all this is, ‘Of him you are,’ and have a new being, ‘in Christ,’ which Christ is then ‘made to us wisdom;’ and many other privileges we have by him before we can come to have a well-being. In like manner, we must first be supposed to have a being in Christ—‘Of him ye are in Christ Jesus,’ 1 Cor. i. 30—ere we can be supposed to partake of anything from him, or of any extrinsical or intrinsical privilege that is his, or that cometh from him. You know, ere a man can have any privilege in the visible world, he must be a man, that is, a son of the first Adam. God indeed hath given the world to the sons of men, but yet the conveyance and the charter by which they hold it is their coming from Adam by multiplication, as it is Gen. i. 26, 28; so as, before any soul, if you could suppose it extant before it comes into the body, can come to enjoy the right or privilege of anything in this world, it must be by being united to a body that cometh from Adam by propagation, and so it becomes one of Adam’s posterity. So is it here. Before ever you can come to have a right of inheritance in anything of the other world, you must first be supposed to be in Christ. Now, election is that which first gives you a being in Christ, and then God by the act of predestination did appoint you a well-being through him.

Again, look as God in his decrees about the creation did not consider the body of Adam singly or apart from his soul, nor yet the soul without his body, (I speak of his first creation and state thereby,) neither should either have so much as existed, but as the one in the other; so nor Christ and his Church in election, which gave the first existence both to Christ as a Head, and to the Church as his body, which each had in God’s decrees.

And holiness, which is the fruit of election here, is the image of God, and a likeness unto him, which makes us capable of communion with him. As likeness in one man unto another makes him sociable and fit to converse with another man his superior, so holiness for communion with the great God; and therefore the Apostle says, ‘without holiness no man shall see God,’ nor indeed ‘can see him,’ as Christ, John iii. 3. Look as some colours are the groundwork to the laying on of other, and all colours to varnish, so is grace a groundwork unto glory and communion with himself. Look as reason is the foundation of learning, no man being able to attain it, unless he hath reason, so we cannot attain the glory of heaven, which is meant by adoption, till such time as we have holiness, and perfect holiness. ‘Without holiness no man shall see God.’ So that holiness is the image of God, which makes us like unto him, and fit for communion with him; and heaven is but communion with God.

But then, if you ask me what adoption is, it is plainly this: it is a right to the glory of heaven, and that is superadded to holiness. ‘We groan

within ourselves,' says the Apostle, Rom. viii. 23, 'waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies;' that is, till we shall be brought to heaven, and to that full and consummate glory there, which not only the soul, now made perfect, hath, but which the soul and body together shall have when that last part of our redemption is finished, in the resurrection of the body. And therefore it is expressed by the redemption of the body, it being that glorious state that follows thereupon. And this we are by predestination ordained to, as the end that God would bring us unto. And so, some conjoin those two, adoption and glory, Rom. ix. 4, that is, glorious adoption, or adoption to glory. And if you look into 1 John iii. 2, you shall then see another place, where being the sons of God, or adopted, is put for heaven. 'Behold,' says the Apostle, 'what manner of love the Father hath shewed us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, we are now the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; for we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like unto him; for we shall see him as he is;' even the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. So then, adoption contains all the great dignity of a Christian in this life;\* but ultimately, and more especially, as here, that fulness of glory whereby we shall be like to Christ in his glory; according to that in John xvii. 22, 'The glory thou hast given me, I have given them.' In a word, adoption and holiness here are all one with what the Psalmist speaks, 'He will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them,' &c. Perfect grace and holiness, that is the fruit of election; and glory added to grace (that is the varnish of it) is meant by adoption. And so you have the first thing, the difference between perfect holiness and adoption.

But then the main question remaineth, Why is holiness made the fruit of putting us into Christ, or choosing us; and why is adoption or glory made the fruit of predestinating us? for so you see the words carry it.

You shall see a clear reason for this. Holiness must needs be the fruit or consequent of our being chosen in Christ; for it is essential to a being in Christ. It were an absurdity to say that God did ordain a man to be in Christ, and not ordain him to be holy. Because if God ordains him to be in Christ, he ordains him to be a member of Christ, and the spouse of Christ. Now the head and members must be homogeneal, and husband and spouse must be of the same kind and image. When Adam was to have a wife, she must be of the same species, she must have the same image upon her. None of the beasts was fit to be a wife for Adam. God brought them all unto him; but among them all 'there was not found a meet help for him,' Gen. ii. 20, because they had not the same image that he had. And whoever has his being from Adam, must likewise have reason from him, as a necessary concomitant of such a being. So if God chooseth a man in Christ, he must necessarily be holy. And this is the reason why holiness is annexed to our being chosen in him, the ordaining us to be holy being a natural and absolutely essential consequent of our being elected in him.

But then, why is glory the fruit of predestination?

Now I have given you the reason of the first, the second will easily follow. God might have made us perfectly holy in Christ, and not have added glory to it: Rom. vi. 22, 'You have your fruit unto holiness,' says the Apostle. If there had been holiness, there had been fruit enough; but here is more, 'and the end everlasting life.' So likewise, here is glory added to holiness as a further fruit and privilege. Therefore, as God by election

\* There is *adoptio imperfecta* or *incompleta*, namely in the *jus* and title to it that is now bestowed.

putteth us into Christ, so he hath a further business about us ; he predestinated us to glory and to the adoption of sons in him. It is a new grace, and therefore it is expressed to be the fruit of a new and second act, even predestination. *Plus est nos esse filios quam esse sanctos*, (it is Zanchy's speech,) It is a further thing to be sons than to be holy, to have heaven, and be received to the glory of God, than to be partaker of the holiness of God. Predestination therefore is here said to come over us after election a second time. God addeth thereby glory to grace, (as the Psalmist speaks,) as a fresh, new, and second gift ; for gifts both and each are by the Psalmist said to be, 'He will give grace and glory.' Grace or holiness by election, glory by predestination.

And here, ere we go any further, let us pause a little, and view the harmony that is between these things here in the 4th and 5th verses, with what the Apostle had said before and ushered this in by. He began in the 3d verse, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' When I opened those words, I gave this meaning of them, that God is first and originally the God and Father of Christ, and so becomes our God and our Father, according to that in John xx. 17, 'I ascend to my God and your God, to my Father and your Father.' When I shewed you how he is the God and the Father of Jesus Christ himself, I gave this difference, that he was the God of Christ as man, because he chose the human nature unto that dignity. Nay, he chose the second Person to be the Mediator, 1 Peter i 20, and so was the God of Christ by election. But supposing that man to have been once chosen and united to the Son of God, and he becomes his Father by the relation of having begotten his Son ; and that relation becomes natural between his Father and him. But he is not thus to us a Father by a natural relation as to Christ, but wholly by adoption,—which of Christ must not be said,—and so by predestination only, 'who hath predestinated us to the adoption of sons,' with difference from Christ. Adoption in us depends wholly and merely upon predestination and no natural relation. Again, as he is our God so considered, he chooseth us to be holy before him, according to that express saying, 'Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy,' Lev. xix. 2. As he becometh our Father in Christ, he predestineth us to adoption of sons. Here are two relations God beareth unto us in Christ ; he is our God, and he is our Father, so ver. 3. And here are two acts of God towards us from everlasting that proceed from these : namely, election, ordaining us to be holy in conformity to him as our God ; and predestination to the adoption of children, as he that thereby would and did become a Father to us.

I conclude this with what Zanchy observes, with what follows after. The two (saith he) acts of God for us, in this ver. 4 and 5, agree with those words which follow in ver. 6, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' That God should choose us in Christ to be perfectly holy, there was grace ; but that he should add glory and heaven and sonship unto it too, this, says he, is to 'the glory of his grace.' And so he makes an *auxesis* of it, a further heightening of his love, that he not only chose us to be holy, but also predestinated us unto adoption and glory : to the shewing forth, not only of grace, as in holiness he did, that being the image of his grace ; but the glory of his grace, as in adoption, that being the image of his glory. I will not much urge this, as here intended ; I mention it only because he adds it ; and certainly some such aim there might be, in that aspect which these words have to the former. And so I pass to some observations.

*Obs. 1.*—In the first place, from what hath been said, take notice how

absolutely necessary holiness is unto salvation, which will appear to you, out of what I have said, by these four things :—

*First*, Not only that in these thoughts which God had towards us, he did first pitch upon holiness, and then upon adoption or glory ; and so he preferred holiness to glory, and so should we prefer it to all other privileges which we have by Christ ;—

But, *secondly*, that holiness is a necessary and essential concomitant to being in Christ, and all other privileges superadded. There was no thought to be had of being in Christ, without being holy. Look how incongruous and absurd it were to make a beast a son and member of Adam ; so incongruous and absurd were it to make one that is unholy to be a member of Christ. God never at first cast a thought on us to be in Christ, but with an intention that we should be holy. ‘He hath chosen us in him to be holy,’ saith ver. 4.

Yea, in the *third* place, God is not your God, unless you be holy : ‘Be ye holy, as the Lord your God is holy.’ God, as I told you, becomes your God by election, as he becomes your Father by predestination. If, therefore, God be your God, then be you holy as he is holy.

And, *fourthly*, grace is the foundation of glory. There is not a thought to be had of going to heaven without it ; you must first be holy, ere you can be so much as capable of that glory ; for the height and top of it is communion with God, and God is holy.

So you see, from what hath been said of predestination, he hath predestinated us unto adoption ; that is, a sonship in law, in and through Christ, his natural Son. Do but think with yourselves, by way of inference, you that are believers indeed, what your privileges by your being in Christ will rise unto, by considering what is and needs must be included in this little word, *sonship* and *adoption*. No less than all privileges in this world and the world to come, every one of them in the present right to them ; ‘now,’ says the Apostle, now at present, ‘we are the sons of God, but what we,’ by virtue of this our being sons, ‘shall be,’ none in the world, nor we ourselves, can know ; none do or can come to know the consequents hereof. As we say of a mighty rich man, he knows not the end of his wealth ; so we may say of a man’s being an adopted son of God, none knows what this will bring a man to in the end. If a son then an heir, a co-heir with Christ, yea, an heir of God ; to possess and enjoy God, as Christ doth. I say as Christ doth ; for so it follows in that of John, ‘When Christ shall appear, we shall be like unto him ;’ just like in our proportion ; as he enjoys God, so shall we. Yea, and over and above, he shall have *all things* into boot. ‘I will be his God, and he shall be my son ;’ and what further follows upon being a son ? ‘He shall inherit all things.’ God himself hath but all things, and thou shalt have all things too ; and this is to be predestinated unto adoption. Brethren, think of your privileges.

I have expounded what it is to be *chosen in him*, and what to be *predestinated to adoption*.

*The division of the fifth verse :—*

The rest that follows in the 5th and 6th verses is to set forth the causes of this our predestination. I call them causes in a large sense.

1. The *instrumental cause*, Christ : ‘by (or through) Jesus Christ ;’ for in and through a relation unto him it is that we are sons and heirs of heaven, as in that Rom. viii. 17 it is declared, ‘co-heirs with Christ.’

2. You have the *principal efficient cause*, and, in him, the mover of God thereunto, viz., the good pleasure of his will : ‘according,’ saith he, ‘to the

good pleasure of his will.' All is resolved into that, as the supreme first mover of all, and you in your thoughts are to attribute all to that, when you think of your being made holy or happy.

3. The *final cause*, both for whom and for what.

(1.) *For whom*; and the word *εἰς αὐτὸν* is such as will serve either to signify 'for himself,' and so referring unto God the Father, or 'for him,' that is, for Jesus Christ the Son of God, who is also together with the Father one end of this our predestination unto adoption; therefore that which our translators translate 'to himself,' as referring to the person of God the Father, I would likewise render 'for him;' that is, for Jesus Christ; reading the words thus, 'who hath predestinated us to adoption by Jesus Christ, for him' as the second end; *for whom*.

(2.) *For what*; 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' so ver. 6; that is, for the glory of his grace who did predestinate, which is God the Father.

And so you have the rest of these verses analysed to you.

There is nothing questionable herein, but only that I should translate it predestinated to adoption 'for him,' and so to carry it to Christ, that he was intended as one final cause of our predestination to adoption, as well as the instrumental; that is, that it was intended by God that contrived all in it, so as that it should be *for him* as well as *by him*.

I will give you the several interpretations or readings of the words '*for himself*.'

1. There are some would interpret it by *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*; to this sense, that he hath predestinated us 'in himself,' to shew that it was God's sole act immanent within himself, and in that respect to give him the glory of it as the contriver, &c., 'within himself.' But this will not hold; for, first, it is harsh in the phraseology of it, to render *εἰς ἑαυτὸν* by *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*.

2. That God was the cause of predestination, we see how that followeth after, for the Apostle attributeth it unto his will in the next words, 'according to the good pleasure of his will.' And certainly, in so brief an enumeration of causes, he could not use a repetition. And therefore—

3. Others read it, as here our translators have also turned it, 'unto himself,' to this sense: 'Having predestinated us unto adoption to himself,' that is, to be children adopted to himself.

Holy Baines, not being satisfied with this last reading of it, gives two reasons against this interpretation. *First*, saith he, that God did predestinate us to be children to himself, is sufficiently implied in the sole word 'adoption;' for to whom should we be children but to him? Not to Christ. Again, *secondly*, the Apostle, saith he, doth not say that He hath chosen us to be sons in the concrete, but he hath chosen us unto adoption in the abstract; so the words in the original do run. Now, says he, to add 'to himself' unto 'adoption' in the abstract, that is not proper. If indeed he had said, 'He hath chosen us to be sons to himself,' that had been proper; but the words run in that tenor: and therefore Mr Baines, to avoid this, rather chose that interpretation, which yet of all is the worst, 'He predestinated us in himself.'

That translation and interpretation therefore which remaineth is this, that God hath predestinated us either 'for himself' as the end thereof, or 'for him,' namely Christ, as the end of predestinating us to this adoption. And the words will fully bear the one as well as the other; for the preposition *εἰς* doth oft-times signify 'for,' as it doth denote the end or final cause; as in the very next verse, ver. 6, *εἰς ἵπτανον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ*, 'to,' or for, 'the praise of the glory of his grace,' as noting out the final cause. It is

the same preposition there that is here used, as likewise in that Rom. xi. 36, 'All things are of him, and through him, and for him,' *εἰς αὐτὸν*; they are the same words.

But then, if that particle *εἰς* be admitted to signify 'for,' as importing a final cause, the question will be, whether it be for himself,—that is, for God the Father, that he should make himself the end,—or whether it be for Christ, whom the Apostle had mentioned in the words immediately foregoing.

I confess, that when I expounded that verse in my lecture, and long after that, when I first perfected my notes upon that verse, I observed it not, as to such a purpose and issue as I shall now further drive at. But I understood it then as only to intend that we were predestinated to and for Christ, and to the glory of Christ, and so I handled it at large. But seeing the Greek word may as indifferently, with a variation of the aspirate, be rendered 'to himself,' and so refer unto God the Father; and finding that the Scriptures do frequently express God's electing of us by choosing us to himself and for himself, as I found when I lately handled the doctrine of election, (upon Rom. ii. 4–6,) and that there was so much and so great a matter comprehended and contained in that expression; I have been thereby moved to take that interpretation in also, it being a rule I have always measured the interpretation of Scripture by, as I have oft professed, to take Scripture phrases and words in the most comprehensive sense; yea, and in two senses, or more, that will stand together with the context and analogy of faith.

Junius, in his conference with Arminius, apprehended some great matter, beyond what was ordinarily pitched on, to lie intended in that small word. But he not explaining what, but groping at it, Dr Twiss, who wrote the defence of that conference, yet finds fault with him for obscurity, as not knowing what to make of Junius' meaning.

Others, to whose interpretation our translators seem to incline, do give this as the sole sense of these words, that God predestinated us unto adoption of children to himself: so as the whole intendment should be taken up in this particular, that he hath chosen us to be children to himself: the word 'to himself' referring only unto our being children to him; that is, his children.

But, says holy Baines, as I observed, it is not in the Greek said that he predestinated us to be 'sons' to himself in the concrete; but that he chose us to adoption in the abstract. Now, says he, to have added 'to adoption' in the abstract to 'himself,' is not so proper. Of which I have spoke before.

So that I understand the word 'to himself' not primarily or alone to refer to adoption of children to him, but to refer distinctly and as immediately unto his having predestinated us, and separated us to his own great and glorious self, and for and to his great and blessed Son. And that to have been another distinct and larger end of his predestinating us than adoption, over and above, and beyond that. And though that be as a special end mentioned first, yet that is but a more particular and lower end in comparison of this other, of God's predestinating us to himself.

Let us take up his meaning thus, as if he had said, 'He hath predestinated us to adoption,' that is one end, or benefit rather. But, which is more and farther than that, he hath predestinated us even *to himself* also, in the full extent of what that will bear and hold forth. And truly, that which would further persuade unto this is, not only that it enlargeth the scope of the text to the utmost amplitude, but also, that 'by Jesus Christ' comes in



between 'unto adoption' and 'to himself.' Whereas, if he had only intended that we were chosen unto adoption, that is, of children to himself, he would have placed them immediately together, and said, 'He hath predestinated us unto adoption to himself by Jesus Christ;' but he puts 'by Jesus Christ' between the one and the other.

### FOR HIMSELF: THE END OF ELECTION.

I shall, for an enlargement and confirmation of this, run over some places in the Old and New Testament wherein the same expression is singly and in this general sense used, *that God chose us for himself*, and not limitedly unto this one particular, unto adoption to himself.

1. In the Old Testament, Ps. iv. 3, 'Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' What is it to set apart, but to choose and sever from the rest, even as here in the text, to reserve, doth imply?

2. And, secondly, Who was it that he speaks of? David himself, whom elsewhere God had chosen, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20.

3. And, thirdly, For what or whom did God choose him? Not to kingship only, but 'for himself,' says that text. And therein consists the height, the top-glory of our election, as it was of his. The word 'set apart' in the Hebrew signifies *magnifying* or *exalting*; and Ainsworth puts both together, and translates it thus, 'hath marvellously or wonderfully separated.' Now this great and wonderful exaltation lies in his separating, choosing us for himself. To have set us apart for kingdoms, for all the glories found in heaven and earth, had not been so much as to separate us for himself. And agreeing with this is that Isa. xliii. 20, 'My people, my chosen;' so he had styled them. And it immediately follows, ver. 21, 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise;' which latter words are explicative of the former, 'My chosen.' There is a double formation, one in and by regeneration, &c., as that phrase, 'till Christ be formed in you,' shews. But this is but an imperfect formation, as those words also imply. Nor is it all the forming of Christ in us that is yet to be, for it is to be perfected in glory. But there was a foregoing one in God's everlasting decree of choosing us, 'My people, my chosen;' and that is the greatest formation of all. God's eternal choice was the womb wherein this birth was first conceived, and therein perfectly formed as to what we should be for ever. David, speaking of his body, maketh a double formation of it, Ps. cxxxix., first, one in the womb, which God saw and had an eye upon, that it should be done according to his mind and model; and of this he speaks, ver. 15, 'My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.' The other in God's decree, ver. 16, 'In thy book all my members were written.' In like manner there is a double spiritual formation of the elect, and of their souls. One in election, which was the whole of what they should be to his praise; therein it was that we were blessed with all spiritual blessings at once. God cast the mould of all that we should be. All formations in this life are but imperfect draughts wrought by piecemeal, according to that pattern; they are all, to eternity, but several degrees of perfecting and filling up the idea of that first draught in God's heart of what he chose us to be, which he purposed within himself, Eph. i. 11. In that mould were all the prints engraven which we were, by being cast in, to bear the image of. And in this respect he is said in Isaiah to have formed them, 'They shall shew forth my praise;' which is the same tenor of language with Eph. i. 5, 6, 'Having predestinated us to himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace.'

If you desire yet a plainer scripture, wherein this phrase is, *in terminis*, applied unto God's choosing his people as the end thereof, take that in Ps. cxxxv. 4, 'For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.' This for the Old Testament.

In the New you have the same. Besides this in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Rom. xi. 4, 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.' Here is a precedent of election alleged of seven thousand men in Elijah's times, which is thus expressed there by God, 'I have left or reserved to myself,' &c. And this in the fifth verse he expressly terms 'an election of grace:' 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.' His 'even so then' interprets God's mind in that speech of his to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 18, by way of parallel, and manifestly shews his saying, 'I have reserved to myself,' to be all one and equivalent unto, 'I have an election of grace of seven thousand, whom, by virtue of that election and separation to myself, I have kept from Baal's idolatry;' and thereby plainly infers his ultimate end in choosing was an election to himself. But this I have elsewhere more largely opened.

Again, when Christ himself from heaven was pleased to give Ananias an account of his so dearly beloved Paul, the truth of his conversion, to the end to assure him of it he brings forth his own and God's having elected him; from whence, as the original of all, he had now effectually called him, and meant and had designed to employ him in his greatest services. And how doth Christ express his election there? 'He is a chosen vessel to me,' saith Christ, Acts ix. 15.

So then, whether it be God the Father predestinating us to *himself*, or his predestinating by Jesus Christ to *him*,—that is, to Christ,—we have warrant to apply it unto either; and by applying it unto both, we make up the full comprehensive intent of the Apostle in that speech. I shall therefore, in the handling, speak to it—

1. As in relation to God himself.

2. As to Jesus Christ.

1. *For himself*; that is, *God the Father*.—What it carries with it as it relates to God the Father.

(1.) It notes out a special propriety: 'These I have chosen or reserved for myself,' is as to say, 'These I have laid my hands upon to be mine.' In that of Isa. xliii. 21, fore-cited, he had said just at the verse before, 'The beasts of the field shall honour me;' that is, they in their kind. And in another place, Ps. l., he sets his mark upon them, (as men do on their cattle;) they are his, ver. 10, 'For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills: I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine,' and so shall honour him in their kind. Ay, but these are my people, my chosen; I have formed them for myself, &c., and are therefore dignified by being styled 'the first-fruits of his creatures,' James i. 18. Consecrated to him out of the whole, Jer. ii. 3, 'Israel is holiness to the Lord, the first-fruits of his increase.' Observe—

First, That he, the great God, though most blessed of himself without any of his creatures, and needed not have made them; yet he says of the whole lump, 'Ye are mine;' as if a rich man should say of his goods of his own getting, 'These are my increase.' But—

Secondly, Of his chosen people he says, 'These are the first-fruits of my increase, and holiness to the Lord.' Not only denoting their duty of de-

voting themselves, and all they are, unto his glory; but furthermore, it denotes his consecrating them to himself, as Num. xviii. in the type explains it. Our Saviour Christ, in John xvii. 9, makes a great matter of this, of God's taking them to be his: 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.' He had spoken before of a world of other men, whom he professeth not to pray for, but limits himself to that peculiar company who were his by election, the first-fruits of the whole; 'who,' says he, 'were thine,' and therefore also *mine*. By so vast a difference made between them and the world, as that he should profess to lay out the strength of his mediation for them, and not for the other; and that upon this ground and motive, 'For they were thine, O Father!' He gives it as the reason that moves him so to do; and that which Christ considers in our behalf, as that which had wrought so great and special an affection to us, how greatly ought it to affect us! Now, how is it that they are made his but by choice and election? For otherwise all the world is his. And you have this in Paul likewise, 'The Lord knows them that are his.' Which special propriety set upon them, and owning of them as his, is equivalent as to say, they are God's elect, Rom. viii. 33.

(2.) It is a choosing us to be *holy before him*; a consecrating us unto his service and worship. And this is especially instanced in and aimed at in Rom. xi. 4, which I fore-cited. 'These,' says he, 'I have reserved to myself,' whilst he left the rest unto the worshipping of Baal; but these I have reserved to cleave unto and worship me in purity and in truth. And besides what is here, heaven is an everlasting, perpetual worship of God. Thus also in Paul's instance, Acts ix. 15, there is his particular designment unto bearing Christ's name and sufferings for him; for which he is, in a special manner, set out as a chosen vessel: 'He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'

(3.) It is to choose them for *his glory*. For his glory, as manifested, is said to be himself; which therefore, he says, 'he will not give to another.' And here, in the following verse, it is added, 'unto the praise of the glory of his grace.' Of which I have spoken elsewhere, as it is conjoined with his choosing us for himself. But—

(4.) That which I most pitch upon as intended in this expression, is his designing us to the nearest *oneness* and entire communion with himself.\* A man chooseth goods, and dwellings, and servants for his use, and kings used to make a collection of rarities and precious things for their special delight, Eccles. ii. 8. Yea, but to choose a spouse, a familiar intimate friend, (as Zabud is called Solomon's friend, 1 Kings iv. 5,) imports something higher. And further, it is one thing for a king to choose to such or such an office or dignity, as to choose his lord chancellor, treasurer, chief justice, &c.; that is a choice unto things, to places, and but to outward privileges only: but it is another thing to choose his wife, to lie in his bosom, to be one flesh with him, and another self with himself; or an intimate companion, to be as one soul with him. This latter is to choose to and for himself, and for his own person, and unto the highest communion with himself, and a participation of himself; the other is but to outward honour, and for his business, his

\* This head I have largely run out upon in that part of a discourse about election, 'That God hath made it his top and ultimate design in election to ordain us unto a super-creation, union with himself, and an immediate communication of himself;' unto which I refer the reader for the rest.

service, and the like. It is in such choices for himself, in which the grace and favour of a king in choosing is most seen and shewn ; that is a choice indeed !

2. *For him ;* that is, *for Jesus Christ*.—In the interpretation before, I said the words *εἰς αὐτὸν* would bear either ‘for himself,’ as referring to the Father, or ‘for him,’ referring to Jesus Christ, last mentioned. And the Holy Ghost intended both these senses ; but yet, if we were to choose but one, this would make me think Christ rather to be here intended than God the Father, because the Father’s being the end of predestination unto adoption, follows after ‘to the praise of the glory of his grace,’ namely, of the Father, whose free grace is thereby magnified ; although it must be also acknowledged that his ordaining us for Christ is to the glory of his grace also.

So then let us consider whether it may not be intended of Christ, *εἰς Χριστόν*, ‘for Christ,’ for which there are these reasons :—

1. The words *αὐτὸν* and *αὐτὸν* are promiscuously used, either for *him* or *himself*.

2. I find that many copies do so read it, *εἰς αὐτὸν*, ‘for him,’ even for Christ. So the Vulgar edition, and so some interpreters of all sorts do carry it, as Cornelius à Lapide, the Jesuit ; Vorstius, Stapulensis, Castilio, Lubin, and others.

3. And, to conclude all, there is this reason for it : If Jesus Christ were in predestinating us aimed at by God, as an end thereof, as I shall presently make good unto you, then certainly he may be supposed to come in here. And so he doth. Where the Holy Ghost sets himself to enumerate all the causes of predestination, he mentioneth God the Father as the end of it, over and above, or besides, in those words, ‘to the praise of the glory of his grace ;’ and if Christ should not come in here, he should come in nowhere, as a final cause. He cometh in as a Common Person, that is, as our Head, in those words, ‘having elected us in him ;’ also, as a means, in those words, ‘having predestinated us unto adoption by him ;’ but as an *end*, together with his Father, nowhere cometh in, unless here, by translating these words, *εἰς αὐτὸν*, *for him*.

I come now to some observations, the first of which shall be a general one ; there being three following more particular, to make up this general one, which is this :—

*Obs.*—See here the fulness of Jesus Christ. We are elected in him, so says ver. 4, as a Common Head ; so we are predestinated to adoption by or through him, so saith ver. 5 ; and we are predestinated likewise for him, as it follows in the same verse. He is made in God’s aim the end for which he did predestinate us, as well as the glory of his own grace. Take notice of Christ’s fulness, these three things being attributed unto him—in him, through him, and for him ; that is his honour. But the Father hath this peculiar honour above him, that all things are said to be ‘of him ;’ so, Rom. xi. 36, ‘Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.’ Now, in Christ, and through Christ, and for Christ are all things, but not of Christ. God the Father, as he is *Fons Personarum*, the fountain of the other two Persons, so he is the fountain and first mover of all the works of the other Persons—their motion comes from him. You have the same thing expressed, by way of difference, between God the Father and Christ, 1 Cor. viii. 6, ‘There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.’ So also, 2 Cor. v. 18, ‘All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself

by Jesus Christ.' I will only cast in this further observation, that as here, in the matter of election about our salvation, the honour of these three are given Christ,—in him, through him, and for him,—so the same three are likewise attributed to him to express his influence into the matter of creation and common providence towards all creatures. In that Col. i. 16, (an epistle of kin unto this,) *ἐν αὐτῷ, δι' αὐτοῦ, εἰς αὐτὸν πάντα*—in him, for him, and through him all things are said to be created; of which I have spoken elsewhere.

This general being premised, I come to the particulars that here make up Christ's fulness.

I have before explained to you how we are chosen in him, and shall now further open what these two hold forth of glory unto Christ, that we are predestinated to adoption 'through him,' and 'for him.'

These words, *εἰς αὐτὸν*, will first of all bear this sense, *ad illius exemplum*, after his example or pattern; and if that phrase should not bear so much, yet this will, 'being predestinated to adoption through him.' The meaning is, that Christ being the natural Son, we are made sons *like him*, even as, in many other things, in that which he is in himself, we are made the like in him, and conformed therein to him. Is he chosen? so are we, thus ver. 4. Is he beloved? so are we, ver. 6. He first, and then we in a conformity to him; even as he is a Son, so are we in him, ver. 5.

1. The first particular then is, that Jesus Christ was set up by God as the *exemplary cause* of us in our predestination. The meaning whereof is this: I will (says God) make those whom I choose in Christ to be like unto him; he shall be their pattern. He is my natural Son, and I will make them my sons through him.

To prove that this is intended in this our being predestinated to adoption through him, I will only give that place in Rom. viii. 29, 'Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son;' that is, God did set up Christ as the prototype and principal masterpiece, and made us as little copies and models of him. That Christ came, and took frail flesh in this world, and suffered unto death as he did, therein we were his patterns; he was conformed unto us in that. He had never come into this world had we not first fallen into sin, and brought a frailty upon our nature: Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,' (that is, of the frailty of man's nature,—flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,) 'he himself likewise took part of the same.' Here now our frailty is made the pattern of his. So likewise, Rom. viii. 3, 'He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Because we sinned, and so subjected ourselves to frailty, therefore God made his Son like us. Mark the phrase there used, God sent him 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' But though we were patterns to Jesus Christ himself in all matters of frailty that befell him in his way to heaven,—wherein yet, in another sense, he is a pattern to us, in regard of the measure of afflictions wherein he exceeded, and therefore we are said to be conformed to him in sufferings,—yet I speak in respect of what was the consideration upon which God's ordaining of Christ unto afflictions and frailties was first founded, and that was, because we had sinned and become frail; and so, forasmuch as we partook of flesh and blood, he took part of the same. But take Christ as now in his glory, and invested with all his privileges as he is the Son of God, and as perfectly holy, &c., and thus he is our pattern. 'We are now the sons of God,' saith the apostle, 'but it appears not what we shall be; but this we know, we shall be like him when he shall appear.' I could amplify this unto you in the first and

second Adam's conformity one to the other, from that place, 1 Cor. xv. 49 : as we are conformed to the image of the first Adam—he was earthly and we are earthly ; so we are to be conformed to the image of the second Adam—he is heavenly, and so are we to be.

And as Christ was thus set up by God, as our pattern and exemplar in our predestination, so—

2. He was set up as the *means or virtual cause through whom*, that is, by virtue of whom, God would adopt us by union with him. Jesus Christ, you know, is himself God's natural Son ; but how shall we come to be sons ? God putteth us into Christ, he chooseth us to be in Christ, to be married to him, and he betrothed us to him from everlasting ; for Jesus Christ then betrothed himself unto us, when in election he undertook for us with his Father ; and so we become sons-in-law unto God. So that Jesus Christ is the instrument, or rather virtual cause by or through whom God makes us sons. Even as a woman comes to be a man's daughter-in-law by marrying his son, or by his son's betrothing himself to her ; so are we sons-in-law unto God,—as the word 'adoption' plainly signifieth,—even by a positive law ; and this by marriage with his Son, which makes the relation nearer and stronger than those kind of adoptions among men do, when marriage with a child is not added to it.

Now, how is this being adopted through him to be understood ? Of being made sons through his merits, or through the mere relation to his person ?

I answer, through the relation to his person, and Christ's being a Son. I am in this of learned Mr Forbes's mind, that adoption, as primitively it was in predestination bestowed upon us, was not founded upon redemption, or Christ's obedience, but on Christ's personally being God's natural Son. Our justification indeed is built upon his obedience and sufferings, as ver. 7 hath it, 'in whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, through his blood.' But our adoption is through his being the natural Son of God, and we his brethren in relation to his person. To explain this : God ordained us to communion or fellowship with Jesus Christ in all things, so 1 Cor. i. 9, and so to partake of all his dignities, and whatever else in him we were capable of ; as of all things in him, so likewise things even as they are in him, both in respect of order,—that in that order they are in him, are they also intended unto us,—and also in such manner as that which is bestowed on us doth answer to what is in him ; and likewise in respect of causation, that anything which we have answering unto what is in him, is still founded upon that which is in Christ answering thereunto.

Now, as this privilege, to be the natural Son of God, was first in Christ himself, and was the foundation of merit in him ; so this grace, to be God's adopted son, is first intended and founded upon his being God's natural Son ; and then after that was intended what is the fruit of Christ's merit, namely justification founded upon his obedience.

Only let me add this caution, that we having indeed lost all our privileges, Christ was fain to purchase them anew. And so indeed it is true that adoption and all the rest are the fruits of his merits, as actually they come to be bestowed. Therefore the Apostle, Gal. iv. 5, saith, that he redeemed us, 'that we might receive the adoption of sons ;' mark the phrase, that we might *receive* adoption. Our sins and bondage under the law and curse of it were an obstacle and impediment why God could not actually bestow adoption. And so indeed it is true, that our receiving adoption depends upon redemption ; yet still intended it was, and founded upon our

relation to Christ's person as he is God's natural Son, and we married unto him. And so, when sins are by his merits done out of the way, then this comes to take place. And so justification is by Junius rightly called *via adoptionis*.

Now then, election that gave us relation to Christ, did put us into him; God chose us in him. And then came predestination, and gave us this privilege. Is Christ my Son? says God. They shall be my sons, too; they shall be like him. Is he my heir? They shall be heirs, and co-heirs with him. And this may help to solve that question among divines, whether adoption or justification be the first benefit. For, I answer, that in God's intention of bestowing it from everlasting in predestination, adoption is the first, as being founded upon our mere relation to the person of Christ; and this without the consideration of merit. But for the actual bestowing it upon us, pardon of sins goes first. We are redeemed from under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and that God might own us as such; so, John i. 12, to as many as believed he gave this privilege, that they should be the sons of God.

Now, take notice of this difference, to see your privilege yet further, as you are in Christ. Adam was created holy, perfectly holy; and, Luke iii. 38, we read that he was the son of God, but nowhere that he was the son of God by adoption through Christ. In the 38th of Job, the angels are called 'morning stars' and 'sons of God;' but nowhere are they called such by adoption through Christ. They were sons indeed, *per gratiam creationis*, because God made them, and in his own likeness, and so by creation was their Father. But they are not sons *per gratiam adoptionis*, especially not *in Christo, vel per Christum*, as divines speak. They are not sons by the grace of adoption, nor sons-in-law of God by being married unto Christ. No, this is proper only to believers. Now consider the greatness of this privilege. What, says David, is it a small thing to be son-in-law to a king? You may haply be a king's favourite or creature, as the term is; he may make you great; but to make you his son-in-law by marriage of his daughter, this is a further and more royal privilege. The angels are God's favourites and creatures; he made them what they are. But we exceed them; we are his sons, by being put into his Son Christ, and by a relation to his person. To which of all the angels hath it at any time been said, You are adopted sons through Christ? And which of them hath Christ called brethren? I will not say it is the meaning of that place, Heb. xii. 22, (I will but suggest it,) 'You are come,' says the Apostle, 'to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven.' Why are we called God's first-born,—for the Apostle seems to intend the church of elect men as distinct from the angels, for he had mentioned them before,—but because that as Jesus Christ is called God's first-born comparatively unto us, he being God's natural Son, so it may be that we are called God's first-born in comparison of the angels, in regard that we have a higher privilege of sonship than they have? For we are sons through Christ. God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of sons through Christ.

And so I come to the third thing in the text, that as we are predestinated unto adoption *through* Christ, so also *for* Christ. So that Jesus Christ is likewise the end which God set up in predestinating us to this adoption and glory, and to perfect holiness. And this is the highest honour of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a point of some difficulty, and therefore I shall somewhat the longer insist upon it.

The meaning of it is this. God having a natural Son, the second Person in the Trinity, whom he would make visibly glorious in a human nature, through an union of it with this divine nature, or second Person,—which human nature should by that union become his natural Son,—now upon the glorifying this second Person did God's decree primarily pitch; and for his greater glory, ordained us to be adopted sons through him, and as brethren unto him; for should he be alone? No; God will have his natural Son to have fellows; and therefore he predestineth others *for* him, to be his companions; thus, Ps. xlv. 7, they are called. 'God,' saith the Psalmist unto Christ, 'hath anointed thee above thy fellows,' or peers. As, Zech. xiii. 7, the man Christ Jesus is called God's fellow, so in this psalm we are called Christ's fellows. And therefore God hath predestinated us to adoption of sons, as *through* him, so *for* him, that he might have company in heaven—to what end you shall see by and by. He is God's fellow; we are his fellows. He is God's natural son; we are sons by marriage with him. John xii. 24, Jesus Christ compares himself to a seed, which, saith he, if it dies not, it remains alone. His speech implies, that he was loth and had no mind to be in heaven alone; No, says he, I will have fellows there. Christ was to have company in heaven with him. And you shall see how this tended to the glory of Christ; for he is made the end of this decree of us and our adoption—

1. To greaten his glory and excellency the more, by comparison with younger brethren, that his glory might the more appear, as by comparison things do; in that he is, as Rom. viii. 29, 'the first-born among many brethren.'

2. God did ordain other sons besides him, for him as the end, that there might be those about him who might see his glory and magnify him, as you have it John xvii. 24. God had given Jesus Christ, by choosing him to the union with our nature, an infinite glory. Now, says Christ there, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' And, in 2 Thess. i. 10, it is said that Christ shall be 'glorified in his saints, and made wonderful in them that believe.' Those that believe are for this end, that Christ may be made wonderful in them, and also to them. And at the 10th verse of that 17th of John, 'I am,' says Christ, 'glorified in them.'

3. God thus ordained us to adoption that Christ might be glorified by being the cause of all our glory by adoption, and in that all we have, we have it *through him*, as it is here. And reason good that he should be the end of all, through whom we were to have all, and that we should be for him. So, Rom. xi. 36, they are conjoined, 'Through him, and for him, are all things'—namely, through and for God, of whom the apostle there speaks. And so it is said of Christ, *διὰ αὐτοῦ*, and *ἐν αὐτῷ*, as being therefore *for* him, because *through* him. In Col. i. 16, you read that God created all things 'in him' and 'for him.' I have shewed, in another place, that it is meant of Christ, as supposed to have a human nature. And it followeth at the 18th verse of that chapter, that 'he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' God set him up to be the head of the body; and if he be the head of his members, he is then their end. This I gather out of 1 Cor. xi. 3, compared with ver. 9: 'The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.' Part of the meaning whereof is, that God ordained Christ for himself, man for Christ, and woman for man; which is manifest by comparing this with



what is said at ver. 9, 'The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man;' he having said before, that the head of the woman is the man. He speaks this indeed of Christ's priority to man in common by the law of creation. Therefore he says, 'The head of every man is Christ,' not believers only. Yet I may well draw the like argument from that his common natural relation of headship to every man, into this his special relation of being a head to his Church: that if he be their head, that then they were created for him; they were ordained for him, and not he for them. Adam, you know, was Christ's type. Now he was not made for Eve, but Eve for him. And look what Adam was in creation, that was Christ in election, when we were put into him. God first made Adam; and then, seeing it was not fit for Adam to be alone, he brought Eve as a companion for him. So did God bring the Church unto Christ as a meet companion for him, for it was not meet that he should be alone; and so we were chosen *for* him. As therefore the woman is called 'the glory of the man,' in the same 1 Cor. xi. 7, so are the saints called 'the glory of Christ,' 2 Cor. viii. 23; and John xvii. 10, 'I am glorified in them,' says Christ, &c. So that in election Christ held the primacy, the firsthood,—as in dignity, so in order,—in that we were ordained for him. And so it follows in the conclusion of all, in that Col. i. 18, 'that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.'

Now to enlarge this a little. In the decrees of election, the consideration of Christ, as to assume man's nature, was not simply or only founded upon the supposition or the foresight of the Fall, as if occasioned only thereupon. For besides what the former explication of those words, that we were 'chosen in him,' does afford; this also, that we are 'predestinated for him' as the end of all, gives a sufficient ground against such an assertion. Now, mark my expression. I say, *not only* upon the consideration and foresight of the Fall; and that upon this ground, that all things were predestinated and created for him. Whereas to bring him into the world only upon occasion of man's sin, and for the work of redemption, were to subject Christ unto us, as he was to be incarnate and hypostatically united to a human nature, and to make us the end of that union, and of his personal dwelling in that nature. Whereas he, as so considered, is the end of us, and of all things else. This were also to have the person ordained for the benefits (as redemption, heaven, &c.) which we were to have by him, which are all far inferior to the gift of his person unto us, and much more to the glory of his person itself. His person is of infinite more worth than they all can be of.

Neither yet, on the other side, do I, or dare I, affirm that Christ should have been incarnate, and assumed our nature, though man had never fallen; because all things are ordained to fall out no otherwise than they do. God therefore never made such a single decree alone, that Christ should come into the world, but as always having the Fall in his eye, and his coming to redeem also. I account that opinion as great a chimera and fiction as many of those school questions and disputes, *What should have fallen out if Adam had stood?* &c., which are cut off with this, *That God never ordained his standing.* This is all that I affirm in this point, that God, in ordaining Christ, the second Person, to assume a human nature, had not Christ in his eye only or chiefly as a redeemer, but withal looked upon that infinite glory of the second Person to be manifested in that nature through this assumption. Both these ends moved him; and of the two, the glory of Christ's person, in and through that union, had the greatest sway, and that so as even re-

demption itself was subordinated to, and ordained for the glory of his person, as the end of all first and chiefly intended.

I shall open it unto you thus. When God went about to choose Christ and men, he had all his plot before him in his understanding, through the vast omniscieny of that his understanding, (by divines called his *Simple Intelligence*;) which represented unto him, as this plot which his will pitched upon, so infinite more frames of worlds which he could have made; and all these he must be supposed to have had in his view at once, afore ever his will concluded all that was ordained to come to pass. Now, he having Christ, and the work of redemption, and us, and all thus before him, the question is, which of all other projects he had most in his eye, and which his will chiefly and primarily pitched upon to ordain it? I say, it was Christ and the glory of his person. God's chief end was not to bring Christ into the world for us, but us for Christ. He is worth all creatures. And God contrived all things that do fall out, and even redemption itself, for the setting forth of Christ's glory, more than our salvation.

And the reasons for this are—

1. (Out of ver. 6.) That Christ is God's beloved, and beloved for himself. And *Deus unumquodque amat prout illud amabile est*,—God loves every thing according to that degree of loveliness that is in it. Now Christ, or the second Person dwelling in that human nature, is *per se amabilis*, amiable for and of himself, and so is by God *eligibilis per se, et propter se*, of and for himself, as being an absolute good, which no other creature is. Whereas the work of redemption performed by Christ was not *per se amabile*, not loved or pitched upon for itself. But that which gives the loveliness unto it is a remedy for sin, as Rom. vi. 10, and in that respect the goodness of it is not absolute and intrinsical, but accidental; but the goodness, the loveliness that is in Christ's person, is absolute, and in itself such. And therefore, to have ordained it for this work only, had been to have lowered and debased it.

2. (Out of ver. 5.) The grace of the hypostatical union infinitely transcends that of adoption. The being God's natural Son far surpasseth our being his adopted sons, and therefore was in order ordained first. And therefore it is that, as the text also hath it, we are said to be predestinated unto adoption through him; that is, through him as God's natural Son, and that as supposed man. For unto him as God-man is it that we have this or any other relation.

3. Yea, thirdly, the work of redemption itself was ordained principally for Christ's glory, more than for our salvation. In Phil. ii. 7, the Apostle tells us, that Jesus Christ took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient to the death (there is the work of redemption;) 'wherefore,' saith he, 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,' &c. The plot of redemption therefore was subjected to the glory of Christ, and not Christ to it.

4. Now, fourthly, I might shew that then, when God took into his counsel and foreknowledge all his works projected by him, and this of Christ's assuming our nature as one among the rest, it was Christ's due that he should be the end of all, and that all God's decrees should be so framed as to make him the end of all, as well as God's own glory. So that in this there was that respect had unto Christ in those decrees of God, and he was so made the end of all therein, as no mere creature, no not the most eminent, could have been. There is a transcendency on Christ's part in this, that holdeth good in no creature. God might have made the angels and the elect, and not ordained the angels to serve the elect. That one creature

is any way made the end of another to serve it, was a matter of liberty unto God, and depended merely upon his arbitrary institution. But if God will ordain Christ and a world, angels and men elect, or whatever else together with him, it is due that God's decrees about all these be so shaped and cast that all should serve him; for they must all be his inheritance, and so he must be set up as the end of them all. And this is such reason as no man can deny. But I have spoken to this upon Col. i. 16, 17. That which I shall further add to this point, and which is more proper to this place, is, whether Christ's glory was considered by God as a motive unto God in predestinating, as God's own glory was. I know orthodox divines do grant that Christ was set up as the end of all things predestinated, who yet dispute and doubt whether Christ was so considered of God in the act of predestinating as to be the motive to move God's will to predestinate us, and ordain all things else with Christ. For, say they, nothing out of God is or can be any motive to him to predestinate; for he purposeth all things in himself.

For the resolution of this, I say—

1. That it is certain that the only determining or first moving cause that inclined God's will to predestinate both Christ and all things else with him, was his own will. He was so happy in himself, that he needed not that glory which is manifested in and by the union of the second Person with a human nature.

2. Yet, secondly, it is as certain that, so far as the manifestation of the glory of all or any of his attributes did or might move him to predestinate us, or ordain any of those works which he hath ordained, so far might the glory of the second Person move him to manifest it in and by this union, which was the highest way of glorifying him. In the sixth verse you read (and so in the thirteenth) that God predestinated us 'for the praise of the glory of his grace;' that is there made an end that moved him. Now, what is the glory of his grace? It is but the glory of one of God's attributes. Suppose then you put instead of it, 'to the praise of the glory of his Son.' Is not a person of the Trinity as near to him as one of his attributes? Is not his Son as much to him as his grace? Certainly he is. And then he might as well aim at the highest glory of the second Person, which ariseth from this personal union, as at the glory of his grace in predestinating us. Thus, John v. 22, 23, 'God hath given all judgment to the Son, that all might honour the Son as they honour the Father.' He therefore took his Son's glory into consideration, as well as his own.

And whereas it is objected, that nothing *out* of God can move God, it is true he predestinates all things by his own will and essence, even as he understands all things by his essence; so as that only was the cause that cast that determination in his will to the decreeing anything at all; yet so as, notwithstanding, the praise of the glory of his grace or power, &c., must be said to have moved him in the act: and this, although this praise of his glory be a thing out of himself,—as indeed it is, for it is that shine or result of his glory that arises out of all in the hearts of angels and men. But though this praise be not essentially God, yet it is God's; it is relatively his, and it is his peculiar. And so to say that it moves him in predestinating, is all one as to say that himself moves himself. For this praise relates to himself, and so he is said to make all things for himself, that is, for the praise of himself; which praise yet is not himself essentially, but his relatively. Now, even so the glory of the second Person, to be manifested in the human nature through that hypostatical union, is a thing out of God. It

is not the person of his Son, but is relatively his Son's; and so moves him in the same order that the praise of the glory of his grace did. Only, to prevent mistakes, take in these four cautions:—

*First*, That take the human nature which was assumed, and that as in God's simple intelligence it came up before him, as all ours did, and it was not anything in that human nature that moved him to predestinate it, or any thing else for it. Nor was the glory of that human nature made the end in the act of predestinating; but it was the glory of the second Person only, which God saw might be more fully manifested in this personal union than any other way: that was it that moved him, and that was made the end of all. For otherwise the assuming of a human nature was as mere an act of grace as to predestinate any of us was. Yea, Christ might have assumed (take all things as they lay in a possibility before him) any human nature else unto that dignity, as well as that which he did assume.

The *second* caution is, That much less were Christ's merits considered as any motive unto God. They are but actions which are means of Christ's glory, and so far less than the glory of his person, and so are to him but as God's works are to himself. It was therefore the glory of his person alone that can, in the business we now speak of, be any way called a motive.

And that, *thirdly*, not *unto* the act, but *in* the act; for as for the act itself, God's will cast it beyond the force of the simple consideration of any such extrinsical glory that could arise unto him or any of the three Persons. Nothing without himself raised up that will in him; only, *inter prædestinandum*, in the act of predestinating, he set up this glory of the three Persons as the end for which he contrived and ordained all things: which must needs be; for if the *terminus*, or purpose of his will, was works without himself, then the encouraging motive to those works is suitably short of glory, which ariseth to him out of these.

And, *fourthly*, That Christ and his glory was set up as the end, is not to be understood as if God by one single act or decree did first predestinate Christ and his glory, and then by a new and distinct act chose us for him. But, that God having his whole platform, both about him and us, in one entire view before him, predestinated all by one entire act; yet so as in predestinating us, he was moved by the glory which Christ should have in us, whom he predestinated together with us, as both his end in predestinating us, and our end also; and accordingly did mould this whole contrivement so as we and all things else might most advance the glory of Jesus Christ, as was his due.

## SERMON VII.

*According to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*—VER. 5, 6.

I COME to those other two causes mentioned in the text; as—

1. The efficient and principal cause that cast it; and that is merely the ‘good pleasure of his will.’

And, 2. here is another motive, besides the glory of Christ before-mentioned; and that is, ‘the praise of the glory of God’s grace.’ ‘According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.’ The one is mentioned first, as that which did only cast the act, and move God to predestinate; the other, as that which yet moved him in the act itself.

Now, for the explication of both these in general, you may thus conceive the difference between them. God, blessed for ever, deliberating, as it were, with himself whether he should make any creature or no, whether he should decree any children unto himself, or his Son to take human nature; that which cast the matter was merely the good pleasure of his will. He might have been blessed for ever without this; he needed not have cared to make so much as one creature, nor to ordain the second Person’s assumption of a human nature to glorify him. He needed not that external praise of the glory of his grace that ariseth from us. He was glorious enough without all this. What cast it then? Nothing but the good pleasure of his will. Here is God’s prerogative and blessedness.

And the reason why nothing but God’s own will could move him to it is, because all that the creature can be to him, or do for him, falleth short of him, and of the glory due unto him. Neh. ix. 5, ‘Bless the Lord your God: blessed be his glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.’ God is above all blessing and praise; for him, therefore, to aim at the praise of his grace, this was not motive sufficient to determine his will simply to do it. It was his own will that merely cast it, only it being determined to predestinate creatures, it propounded to itself the praise of the glory of God’s grace, wisdom, and other his attributes; and so they move him in predestinating, though not to predestinate.

More particularly, for the first, *the efficient, determining cause of predestination.* If you observe it, it is not only put upon God’s will, but upon the ‘good pleasure of his will;’ so saith the text. And this also is to be confined only to that part of his decrees of election, and predestinating men unto salvation; so as, between those decrees and all other there is this difference, that when other things, and making of other creatures are spoken of, the decrees about them are only put upon his will; as Eph. i. 11, ‘He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will’—barely ‘his own will.’ But when he comes to predestinate and to save poor creatures by Christ, there comes in the ‘good pleasure of his will,’ as the determining cause. ‘He predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will,’ κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶτος αὐτοῦ,—that is, this is the strength, the height

of his whole will ; this is the chief pleasure of it, even to predestinate us for Christ. Piscator, upon Matt. xi. 26, where the same word is used that here we meet with, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent ones, and revealed them to babes ; even so, Father, it pleased thee,' *ὅτι οὕτως ἐγένετο εὐδοκία ἑμπεσοῦν σου*—therefore, says Piscator, reprobation is an act of God's good pleasure of his will, as well as election is.

My answer to this is, first, that when he there thanks his Father, and says it was his good pleasure, this hath not relation so much unto God's reprobating others as to his revealing of those things unto these babes ; only this his good pleasure towards them is set off by his hiding it from others whom he reprobateth. The like manner of speech we have in many other scriptures, both in the Old Testament and the New ; as, Rom. vi. 17, when Paul says, 'God be thanked ye were the servants of sin, but now have obeyed,' &c., his thanking God hath no reference at all to their having been the servants of sin, simply as such considered, but unto their having been now converted, and so obeyed, &c. ; only, comparatively, the mercy of their conversion is set forth by their having been the servants of sin. So here, Christ gives thanks only for the converting of these babes, and not for the reprobating of any. Only he mentions their reprobation and rejection, as that which made this benefit the greater, and his good pleasure in shewing his free grace the more visible and apparent.

But, secondly, whatever God willeth may in a general sense be called his good pleasure ; for if it did not please him, he would not will it. But still it is not said there, as here it is, that it was the good pleasure of his will. The phrase there hath not that *adjectum*, that addition to it, that here it hath. The meaning whereof is, that of all the things that God willeth, this alone (comparatively) is his good pleasure. He is pleased with nothing that he willeth so as he is with this. It is true he damneth men, but he doth it as a judge that condemneth a malefactor with a kind of regret and displeasure. And this may be truly said of it, that it is a mixed action. God hath something in him that moves him to the contrary, for he loveth his creature ; only other ends prevail. But when he cometh to save men, here is the good pleasure of his will ; his whole heart is poured forth in this : Jer. xxxii. 41, 'I will assuredly establish them with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.' God, when he shews mercy, when he predestinates unto glory, he doth it with his whole heart ; there is nothing in him to contradict it ; here is no mixture in this, all that is in him agreeth with it. It is therefore not only according to his good-will, but it is the top and height of his will ; the most pleasing thing unto him of all the things that he willeth. It is 'according to the good pleasure of his will.'

Thus you have that which is the chief cause, which I call the determining cause—namely, the will of God, 'the good pleasure of his will ;' that was it that caused him to predestinate.

Now, let us come to the other, *the end that moved God*, even 'the praise of the glory of his grace.' And here, for explication, take notice of the difference between the 'glory of his grace,' and the 'praise of that glory.'

This 'glory of his grace,' here spoken of, is that glorious attribute itself, which is God's essence, which was in itself glorious, and had continued so, though no creature had been predestinated. But the 'praise of that glory' is that holding forth of the glory of this grace, that men might praise it, and give glory to it. So, then, conceive thus of it. The Lord had grace in him, glorious grace ; that was his essence. And that which moved him to predestinate us was, that this grace of his might be praised. This is the mean-

ing of these words, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' It is all one with what you have Rom. ix. 22, 23, 'He was willing to make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.' God had riches of glory in him : yea, but, saith he, I will make it known. This was it that moved him ; yet not so but that he could have done otherwise, he needed not to have cared for it. But his will determining to go forth of himself to glorify himself, he will do it to purpose ; he will lay open all the riches that are in him 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' as here you have it.

And the reason of this is, because as *bonum est sui diffusivum*, all goodness is communicative of itself, so glory is manifestive of itself, even as the light is ; and this moves him to manifest this his glory.

You must know that God hath a double glory : an *essential glory*, namely, that of his attributes, as of wisdom, all-sufficiency, grace, &c. ; and he hath a *manifestative glory*, whereby the glory of all these attributes is manifested unto the world. And this may move him ; in that, although it be not his essence, yet it is his relatively, though not essentially.

Now observe further, that only the glory of God's grace is mentioned by the Apostle, when he speaks of that which moved him to predestinate. Why doth he not say, To the glory of his holiness ? or, To the glory of his justice or power ? All these were and are manifested in the things purposed in election too ; but he sheweth his holiness elsewhere, and his power and justice elsewhere. He sheweth his holiness in making the law, his power in making the world, his justice in throwing men to hell. But his grace he shews nowhere so much as in the predestination of his children, and what he hath predestinated them to. He sheweth all his attributes therein, and grace over and above all the rest. Therefore that is here singled out and alone mentioned, especially because the act of predestinating itself, that is simply and only from free grace. And therefore you still find, that wherever election is spoken of, it is put upon his grace ; both in that he chooseth freely, seeing nothing in the creature to move him, and in that he therein puts a difference between his elect and others. And therein lies the *formalis ratio* of grace, Rom. xi. 5, 6, 'There is a remnant according to the election of grace ; and if by grace, then it is no more of works.' Other men God left, to deal with them according to their works ; but in predestinating his children, he dealeth with them according to his free grace in Jesus Christ.

To come now to some observations.

*Obs. 1.*—You see that God is a glorious God : he hath glorious grace, so saith this text. He hath glorious power, so Rom. vi. 4. He hath glorious mercy, so Rom. ix. 23. All his attributes are glorious. 'Shew me thy glory,' said Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 6. Then 'the Lord passed by and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,' &c. This is God's chief glory ; his essential attributes are his glory.

*Obs. 2.*—You see that which moved God, in doing all that he doth, is his glory. He predestinated us for the glory of his grace ; and certainly if in this, then in all things else he aimeth at his glory. If God should not, in all that he doth, aim more at his own glory than at our salvation, he were not a holy God. For what is holiness in God ? It is that whereby he aimeth at himself ; and he should descend from his being holy, if he should aim at our good more than at his own glory. This you have Isa. vi. 3, 'One angel cried unto another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory.' God was to shew himself to be a holy God ; that is, he was to glorify himself ; that is the meaning of it. And therefore of all sinners he hates a proud man ; 'He resists the proud,' because he is a com-

petitor with God himself for glory, and contends with him for that which is most dear unto him, and his own prerogative alone, which the great and glorious God of all things cannot endure. And therefore of all sins God hateth pride and vain-glory; for all glory is his due, and justly belongeth to him alone.

*Obs. 3.*—You see that God was so perfect in himself that he needed not to have made any world, nor predestinated any unto the adoption of sons; for it was merely the act of his own will. Though his own glory moved him in the act, yet it was his will that cast and determined the act itself. If God will manifest himself, he will do it like God; he will make his own glory the end of all; and it becomes him so to do. He should not be a holy God else. But yet the thing that cast it was his will; because he could have done otherwise if it had pleased him, Rom. xi. 35, ‘Who hath given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?’ All that the creature doth is nothing to him. Paul challengeth all the creatures. Bring in your bills, saith he, and if you can say you have added anything unto him, you shall have it recompensed unto you again. All the righteousness that the angels have in heaven, and that the saints have on earth, what is it? It is nothing to him. Job xxxv. 7, 8, ‘If thou beest righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy righteousness may profit a man as thou art,’ but it can never profit God, he is blessed in himself. Nay, I go further; our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ added nothing unto God by all that he did or suffered. It is true he sets forth the glory of God, but he addeth nothing to God. Ps. xvi. 2, ‘My righteousness reacheth not to thee.’ It is Christ that speaks those words, for that psalm is a psalm of his resurrection, and is quoted to that purpose by the Apostle, in Acts ii. 25–28. Now, says he, my goodness extends not to thee, O Father; it only reacheth to the saints that are on earth, to do them good; but as for thee, thou art above it. Therefore it must needs be God’s own will, and his mere will, that moved him to predestinate any. Fall we therefore down before this great God, in that he minded us to choose us, notwithstanding he was completely happy in himself before the world was, and could have continued so still, and all his works add nothing unto him; for if they did, he would have made them sooner, he would certainly have created them from everlasting. But he let almost an eternity of time run out, ere he put forth his hand to make any of them, for indeed he had no need of them. The three Persons delighted one in another from all eternity, and needed no companions else save themselves. God cared not for what the creature could add unto him. Nothing moved him to elect us but merely the good pleasure of his will.

*Obs. 4.*—You see here that God predestinated us ‘for the praise of the glory of his grace.’ God’s glory therefore is more interested in our salvation than our own good is, for not our benefit comes in here, in the mention of what moved God, but the praise of the glory of his grace only. You think it so difficult a thing to work God off to save you. Why, he hath that in him which moveth him now, and did move him from everlasting to do it! He hath the glory of his own grace to move him to it. This is to us the greatest ground of security in the world, that God’s glory is interested with our good: Eph. i. 12, ‘That we should be to the praise of his glory who first believed on Christ.’ Wilt thou come and believe? Thou canst not do God a better turn; for this advanceth the praise of the glory of his grace; and God is for this reason more moved to save thee than thy heart can be to be saved thyself.

*Obs. 5.*—I told you it was the highest pleasure of his will; nothing pleased



him so as this. Observe then, that of all things else which God purposeth, this, even to shew grace to poor sinners, pleaseth him the most. He willet many things, and he works all things by the counsel of his own will; but this is according to the good pleasure of his will. There are many scriptures to this purpose. 'In these things,' speaking of acts of mercy, 'I delight,' Jer. ix. 24. 'Mercy is his delight,' Micah vii. 18. Yea, his delights are said to have been in this before the world was, Prov. viii. 31; where besides this there is nothing else mentioned.

*Obs. 6.*—Observe that God hath set up his Son, 'for him,' saith ver. 5; and his own free grace, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,' saith ver. 6. These two are to share the glory between them; even Jesus Christ and himself. If Christ had not been his Son, and equal with himself, he would never have done it. No creature shall have a share in this glory, but all things are ordained for his Son, and for the praise of the glory of his own free grace. And accordingly, he hath wrought faith in our hearts to give all the glory unto free grace and to his Son. If you had been saved by love, that would have been diminishing from free grace and from Christ; and so would works and duties. But faith, that is a principle fully suited to God's own intent; which is, to set up his Son and free grace, and to magnify these two. You shall find in Scripture that God is said to be 'all in all,' and so is Christ said to be 'all in all' too. For these two share all the glory between them, that so men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, as I said even now. In 1 Cor. viii. 6, the Apostle says, 'To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him;' (as you have it in your margins;) 'and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' Here, you see, they share it between them; only with this difference, that all things are said to be *of* God, and *by* him too; but all things are not said to be *of* Jesus Christ, but only *by* him.

We have seen and explicated two of those blessings intended to us, and bestowed on us from everlasting. *First*, election in Christ to be perfectly holy, as we shall be in heaven, for God looked at his works as he would like them to be at last; and, *secondly*, predestination to that glory that adoption, or being a son of God, bringeth with it. Now follows a *third* benefit: 'wherein,' saith the apostle, 'he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' This I am now to speak to; and so to proceed—

*Ἐξαίρωμεν*, 'He hath made us accepted.' I must open the force and signification of this word first. It is as much as if he had said, he hath made us *caros*, 'dear,' to him. Out of God's free grace he hath made us pleasant unto him in the beloved; so saith Calvin. The Papists, they would have the word to signify God's bestowing inherent grace of holiness upon us, and making us gracious or holy; and that which perverts them in this their interpretation is, their aiming to magnify the virgin Mary, for the word here in the original is used but once besides in all the New Testament, and that is Luke i. 28, 'Thou art highly favoured,' &c. It was spoken by the angel unto Mary. So we translate it; but they read it, 'Thou art full of grace.' They will needs carry this word to inherent grace in us, that so by this the fulness of grace in the virgin Mary may be extolled; that she being, and that God foreseeing her so full of grace, had therefore chosen her to be the mother of Christ. But the word is, in respect of us, a passive word, and indeed a made word, usurped by the apostle himself for his purpose; and there in Luke signifieth this, that God made her acceptable to him, and cast an infinite favour upon her; and this is proved by what is said in ver.

30 of the same chapter, 'Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God.' It was not that she had grace in her, but that God had cast grace and favour upon her; so that the meaning of the word is, he hath rendered us acceptable or gracious; or, most fitly in one word, he hath *ingratiated* us. The meaning is, not that God foresaw grace in us, but that he cast his favour upon us, and settled his delight in us—he made us dear, precious, and delightful to himself. And this to be the meaning of the word, and not that, as the Papists would have it, appears—

*First*, Because the apostle had mentioned the blessing of inherent holiness before, 'to be holy before him in love;' and also mentions conversion and regeneration, the imperfect work of faith and holiness in this life, afterwards, in ver. 18.

And, *secondly*, it appeareth likewise by what followeth, 'in his beloved;' that is, as he hath loved Jesus Christ, and delighted in him, so in this his beloved he loveth, pleaseth himself in, and delighteth in us. This is the meaning of his making us accepted in the beloved.

In the interpretation of these words, I have not a little been troubled unto what rank to refer this blessing: whether I should refer it to a part of justification, (which, we know, consisteth of these two particulars, forgiveness of sins and acceptation of our persons,) and so this to be a part of our justification in Christ, bestowed upon us in time here in this life; or whether I should interpret it of an action of God passed towards us from everlasting, (such as are election and predestination,) and that action as including also a blessing principally intended to our persons unto everlasting, and after this life, such as I have shewed you perfect holiness and adoption to be. I confess, in the end I inclined unto the latter, and found that Zanchy is with me in it; and I will give you these reasons for it, why it is not meant so much of that acceptation of our persons which is a part of justification,—though it may include that also, and that acceptation of our persons is the fruit of this,—but rather referreth to an eternal act towards us, and an eternal blessing, even to eternity, to be bestowed on us. For, *first*, it runneth in the same key with the other two, 'he hath blessed us,' and 'he hath chosen us;' so 'he hath accepted us'—they are all spoken in the time past; whereas, when he cometh to redemption or justification, he changeth the phrase and tense, 'in whom we *have* redemption.' Therefore, I cast this, 'having accepted us,' into the former rank, with having chosen and blessed us from eternity, as noting out three prime instances of God's eternal love.

*Second*, The order of the apostle's ranking of it, and his bringing of it in, would argue that he did not intend to speak of that acceptation of our persons which is a part of justification.

For, first, it comes in before forgiveness of sins, whereas that acceptation of our persons unto justification of life follows upon forgiveness, and doth necessarily first suppose it.

And, secondly, it is not only mentioned before forgiveness, but redemption comes in between it and forgiveness.

So that, I say, I rather account it to be one special act of God's love done towards us from everlasting, such as election and predestination was; and so it implieth both a third act and a third blessing, of the same sort with the two former.

It is not that acceptation of us which is the second part of our justification, for that is expressed by an accounting us righteous in Christ as our righteousness, and some such thing should have been put in as the ground of it; but this is an acceptation of our persons in Christ as he is God's beloved, and simply refers thereto, and so unto Christ's person as God's beloved one.

But then the question will be, both what distinct act of God's this is, differing from election and predestination, and what differing blessing it is from perfect holiness and adoption unto glory?

In the first place, some say, that it imports that love of God which was the foundation both of God's choice and of his predestination; that he hath therefore chosen and predestinated us, because he hath accepted us, that is, set his love upon us, in his beloved Son.

But that was supposed in God's *choosing* us; for *dilectio præsупponitur electioni*, as Aquinas well speaks. Yea, and this is also sufficiently expressed in the words foregoing, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace;' that is, of this his free love borne to us.

Again, this acceptance of our persons is not, as here it succeeds, that love or acceptation upon which he chose us, but is a branch or fruit following of it, and distinct from the act of his choosing us; it hath not an identity or sameness of act with choosing us itself. Though it is put forth in and together with choosing us,—yea, though it be said to have been in the beloved, Christ,—yet that first love that caused him to choose us, and not others, was immediately carried unto us in the act of choosing us as unto Christ himself, and moved him to choose our individual persons as immediately as he was moved to choose Christ himself; only, he was pleased to choose us in Christ, as a foundation or ground which he planted us into when he chose us, and by choosing, or when he chose us, he put us into Christ. But being thus chosen in Christ, then this fruit followed upon it, to accept us in Christ, as his beloved for ever after.

I take it, therefore, not so much to be an antecedent love to the election of our persons, as a consequent love or complacency, as I may so call it, or delighting in us, and accepting of us through his beloved, when he had chosen us in him, and set us into him; his delight even then was with the sons of men, Prov. viii., in his forethoughts about them.

And here I take not *antecedent* and *consequent love* in the Jesuitical or Arminian sense, whereby God should be said to love us with such a consequent love as ariseth from a foresight that we will believe, and so chooseth us, and in that sense should be said to choose us in Christ. There is a two-fold love—*amor beneplaciti* and *amor complacentiæ*, an old distinction.

First, a *love of good will*, whereby God doth bear a good-will to us, and so resolveth to choose us and give us to Christ; and this is spoken of in the former verse, 'He hath chosen us in him, according to the good pleasure of his will.'

And, secondly, there is a *love of acceptation* or *complacency*, or of delight and resting in what he hath done. God thereby delights himself in the creature which he hath thus set up and chosen in Christ, and this from everlasting, as I shall shew you by and by. It is called in Zeph. iii. 17, a 'resting in his love,' and supposeth election first. When God hath chosen us, he takes delight in and is infinitely well pleased, both with this design and contrivement he hath towards us, and with our persons also, as considered in and through his beloved Son; even as a father that means to bestow his son upon such a woman, first takes a liking to the woman, (here is the love of good-will,) which makes him choose her for his daughter, and pitch upon her, rather than upon any other, to make her his son's wife. But yet, when he hath betrothed her to his son, then he loves her with another and a further kind of love—he accepts her, he delights in her, and hath a complacency in her, as considering her to be his daughter, as wife unto this his son. This I take to be the orderly joining and meaning of these two words, 'having pre-

destinated us unto adoption,' and 'accepted us in his beloved,' the latter act following upon the former.

The next question is, how this act of God towards us may be said to have been *from everlasting*; and how God may be said to have delighted in us before we were?

1. For this, that God did put forth such an act from everlasting, consider that scripture, Prov. viii. 30, 31. If you read the verses before, Christ tells you there what God and he did before the world was. 'I,' says Wisdom, or Christ, 'was by him, I was brought up with him, and I was daily his delight; rejoicing always before him in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.' All this was from everlasting, for read ver. 25-27, and he saith, 'it was before the mountains were settled, or the hills brought forth,' &c. So that Christ did then look upon us as delightful unto him, and God did the same in his Son.

2. For the clearing of it, we must remember what was said before; that when once God had first chosen us in Christ, look how far it may be said we had a being in him. So far God might take, and did take a view of us, as represented existing in him; and so please himself with us, as so viewed and considered, and look upon us with a gracious eye; and also rejoice and comfort himself in what he had done for us. And by this our representative being as in Christ, I mean not that kind of being before God which all other creatures he meant to produce had in their several ideas or appearances in his thoughts. But we further had a representative being in Christ, who actually stood before God, or 'by him,' as Solomon's word is. This representation becometh then real, when made in him and by him, by his undertaking to stand for us, and as in our stead undertaking as our head to represent us. And this gave us a real being in Christ, and as far differing and excelling those ideas of other creatures as the images or shadows of men, pictured for the ghosts of men when they are dead, do from those drawn with the brightest orient colours in oil, which painters make to set out men alive to the utmost life that may be. And by way of difference, we call the first but shadows; and such were the ideas of all other creatures in the mind of God, in comparison to what the elect had in God's mind, being set in Christ, who gives a being of him, yea, and in Christ Jesus. But still I must remember you of these two things I so often mentioned, that my meaning may be understood:—

The *first*, that this benefit of acceptation of our persons in the beloved I refer to those other antelapsarian benefits, severed from those of redemption, as hath been all along inculcated; that is, as flowing to us from Christ as our head of union with God; and to us as considered as purely creatures and abstractly before sin befell us, in that supernatural state which we were, at the first sight of us by him, ordained unto as creatures, and our persons also considered as one with Christ.

The *second*, that it is that acceptance of us in Christ which comes and flows merely from the person of Christ as God-man.

From which you may observe, that when the Apostle saith, God hath thus accepted us in the beloved, he doth not say that this acceptation of us is in the blood of the beloved, or the merits of the beloved. It is not so founded, but it is founded upon our relation to his person. God had chosen us in him to have relation to his person; and so, Jesus Christ being beloved, God accepteth us in him, for this our relation's sake unto him as the principal beloved. As a father when he hath betrothed his son unto a woman, he loves her for the relation she hath to the person of his son; so

doth our God. This acceptance of us, even of our persons from everlasting, it is founded upon Christ's being beloved. And therefore you shall find, that the love wherewith God loved Christ, and the love wherewith he loved us, are said to be one and the same love, John xvii. 23, 'That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' We were so represented by Christ, and considered in him, that we made up one Christ mystical; as the head and the body make up but one man.

Again, this seems to be some special favour and peculiar grace unto the sons of men elect, and not to the angels, as here it is spoken of. The angels, we read, are elect, 'the elect angels;' but we nowhere read of them that they are elect *in Christ*. Likewise that they are the sons of God, by creation namely; but not adopted sons through Christ, as we here are said to be. And so they are highly favoured of God; but nowhere that they are accepted in the beloved, as here we are said to be. It may be said, they are highly favoured as menial servants to God, but not as sons adopted. Many courtiers were in high favour with Saul; but David speaks of his being son to him as an higher matter by far. As in nobility there are higher ranks than other, so among the nobles in heaven. The angels, it may be said, God hath loved them with a special love, and he hath loved Christ and both from eternity; but it is nowhere said, that he hath loved the angels as Christ said there, 'Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.' And how special a privilege this is I shall express to you by this similitude. The sun, you know, shines upon all the world; but if you take a burning-glass and hold it in the point of union or concentration, between the shining sun and something that you would have inflamed, hereby the sunbeams are contracted, and do fall upon that object with a more intense heat and fervour, even to an inflammation of it; and this by reason that the beams were first contracted in the centre of the glass, and then diffused and with more vehemency darted upon the object under it. Thus God loveth all his creatures; his love is 'over all his works,' so the Scripture expresseth it; but he loves them not in his beloved, he accepts them not in him. But now for the sons of men elect, that Son of God, who is his beloved, contracts all the beams of God's love into himself; they fall all upon him first, and then they through him shine and diffuse themselves upon us all, with a ray infinitely more strong and vigorous than they would have done if we had been considered in ourselves alone. And this is the advantage of being accepted in the beloved. God loves us with the same love wherewith he loved his Son.

To come now unto some observations from hence.

*Obs. 1.*—Observe here, that Jesus Christ is God's beloved in an eminent manner. Look, as God put all light into the sun, and that diffuseth and communicateth light unto all the stars; so Jesus Christ hath contracted all the love of God to himself, and through him it is diffused upon us. He is *Υἱὸς τῆς ἀγάπης*, the Son of his love, as he is called, Col. i. 13. You read it translated there 'his dear Son;' but the Greek hath it 'the Son of his love.' Christ hath, as it were, engrossed all God's love unto him: 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Yea, indeed and in truth God is not well pleased with any of the creatures, but as they have relation to him and are his servants. Otherwise, he findeth folly in his angels, Job iv. 18. They would not have pleased him, had they not come under his Son, and had relation unto him some way or other, and subserved for his glory. In loving his Son he loved them; but he loveth us as being

planted into him. The Trinity could not please itself out of itself. He is the beloved.

*Obs. 2.*—Is Christ thus God's beloved, with and in whom he is so fully pleased; and is he not thy beloved, as it is in the Canticles? What is the matter? Is thy narrow soul more curious about an object for its love than God himself is? Oh, let him be to each of us our beloved! If he be God's beloved, he may as well be thine. Is he able to satisfy God's vast thoughts; and is he not able to satisfy thee, poor creature? God himself is satisfied and at rest in him: 'I was daily his delight,' says Christ, Prov. viii.; and wouldst thou be happier than God is? Is he God's beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and wilt thou be pleased in anything else save Christ?

*Obs. 3.*—Observe that Christ is said to be 'the beloved' simply in and for himself, and 'in whom we have redemption' comes afterward, as a super-added thing. So that, set aside the work and benefit of redemption that is to be had in and by Christ, and there is a loveliness in his very person beyond all, for which we should desire him. You that are sinners do love him because he hath redemption for you, and so you have need of him; and you do well so to love him, for he deserves it. But yet, let me tell you, *Est aliquid in Christo formosius salvatore*,—There is something in Christ more beautiful, more amiable and glorious, than his being a Saviour. God cannot love him for any benefit of redemption by him; and yet he is God's beloved. He is *primum amabile*, loved for himself; and so let him be to thee.

This is the first sort of observations from hence.

A second sort is this:—

*Obs. 1.*—If thou art in Christ, fear not sin; for God from everlasting saw all thy sins, and yet, for all that, he continued to accept thee in his beloved, It altered his mind not a whit. He was so much pleased with his beloved, that though in his own prescience he foresaw what we would be, yet, having chosen us in his Son, he accepteth us in him; and so, now that we actually exist and sin against him, he, notwithstanding, finds so much contentment at home in his Son, having him by him, that he can patiently bear with us, and please himself in Christ. And so, though he see thee sinful for the present, and foresaw thee sinful from everlasting, yet he still accepts thee in his beloved. And the reason is, because Jesus Christ is more beloved of him than sin is or can be hated by him. If ever sin should come to have more interest for hatred in the heart of God than Christ hath for love, thou mightest well fear: but he hath accepted thee in his beloved, therefore be not thou afraid.

*Obs. 2.*—Hath God accepted thee, and rendered thee thus dear unto himself in his beloved? No matter though the world hate thee. The world shall hate you, says Christ, John xvi. 33: 'In the world you shall have tribulation;' but it is no matter, 'in me you shall have peace,' &c. God accepts thee in Christ; he renders thee dear unto himself in his beloved.

*Obs. 3.*—Go therefore unto God, to be accepted only in and through his beloved. Here is the greatest and strongest argument for it that can be. It is said before, in ver. 4, that God chose us unto perfect holiness, and ordained us to perfect glory, and to be sons to him, ver. 5, and both these as we shall one day be in heaven. And yet, after both these, the acceptance of our persons in the beloved comes in as a third and distinct benefit; so that all this would not have pleased him so much as one look upon us in his beloved. It is not perfect holiness, nor that complete glory which we shall

have in heaven, that makes us accepted with God comparatively to this, to be considered and accepted in the beloved. And wilt thou now go and bring thy imperfect graces and menstuous duties? Art thou in glory yet? Art thou perfectly holy? If thou wert, yet consider here is a third benefit besides all these, 'He hath accepted us in his beloved;' which let thy soul look out for, notwithstanding all thy grace and holiness.

And so I have gone over the three first blessings, which are eternal ones, and absolutely pitched upon our persons in the relation we have to the person of Christ. God *chose us* to be in him, and because he is holy, we must be holy: holiness, therefore, is essential to our being in Christ. God *predestinated us* in Christ, therefore we must be sons, as he is; and so we are predestinated to adoption in him, his natural Son. And then, God hath *accepted us* in his beloved; and therefore as he loveth him, so he loveth us. All these three blessings are not founded so much upon the merits of Christ as upon the relation we have unto his person. And they are the blessings which were first and absolutely intended to our persons, simply in the relation which by election we had given us to the person of Christ.

And so much for the sixth verse.

Come we now to the mercies which we have in relation to Christ's merits, couched in these three following verses:—

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*—VER. 7–9.

The Apostle here changeth the key of his language: 'He hath chosen, he hath blessed, he hath accepted.' This was his language before; but here he beginneth to alter it. Here he varies the tense, and says, 'In whom we have redemption,' &c. Because he comes now to a new sort of blessings, therefore he speaks in a new key. And so interpreters almost generally observe.

Now for the general analysis, both of all these words from ver. 4, and likewise of these blessings.

There are two sorts of divisions, which these words and the former may be cast into.

The *first* is a *trichotomy*, or dividing of them into three parts.

You know there are three Persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And these three Persons have three several works:—

1. *The Father's work* was to choose, to predestinate, and to accept in his beloved. His work therefore is in the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses.

2. *The work of the Son* is redemption, &c.: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood,' ver. 7, &c. It is not meant of redemption passive, or which we receive as the fruit of his having redeemed us; but of that redemption active, which was in him, and wrought by himself. And therefore it is not said '*by whom*,' but '*in whom* we have redemption through his blood.'

3. And then *the Holy Ghost's work* is the application of all these unto us, when the Spirit doth in and by conversion bring home all these to our hearts. And this you have in the 8th and 9th verses, 'Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will,' &c.—This is one division whereinto you may cast these verses and the blessings mentioned in them.

But there is a *second*, and that is a *dichotomy*, or division of them into two parts.

There is one sort of blessings from the 4th verse to the 7th, and another sort of blessings from the 7th verse to the 10th. And so, as there are three Persons, and their works described to be three, so there are also two triplicities of blessings, as I may so call them.

The first three are such blessings unto which God absolutely chose us in relation to Christ's person. And they are—

1. *Perfect holiness*, ver. 4.

2. *Perfect glory*, or *adoption*, ver. 5.

3. *Acceptation of our persons* in and upon that our relation to his beloved, ver. 6.

But then, secondly, there are three other blessings, founded upon our relation to Christ through his *merits*. As—

1. *Redemption*, taking it in the largest sense for whatever redemption may extend to ; for redeeming us as well from misery as from sin, and for the purchasing of all those blessings which we had forfeited : 'In whom we have redemption through his blood,' ver. 7.

2. *Justification* ; which is one fruit of redemption : 'The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,' ver. 7.

3. *Vocation*, or *calling us* ; which is the work of the Spirit : 'Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence ; having made known to us,' &c., ver. 8, 9.

Calling, you know, is either external or internal. *External* is the preaching of the gospel ; that you have in the 9th verse, 'Having made known to us the mystery of his will.' *Internal* is the working faith and holiness in us ; which is mentioned in the 8th verse, 'He hath abounded to us in all wisdom,' the principle of faith ; 'and prudence,' which is the principle of holiness, as interpreters carry it.

Now, observe what is common to these two several sorts of blessings.

*First*, They come from God's decree, both the three latter and the three former. How this is true of the three former you have already seen. We were elected to be holy, and predestinated to adoption, according to the good pleasure of his will, &c. And the three latter do depend upon the same good pleasure of his will from everlasting : 'In whom we have redemption, &c., according to the good pleasure of his will,' ver. 9. So that God's good pleasure is as well the fountain of these three latter sort of mercies, and therefore cometh in the rear of them too, as it was of the three former. And so Erasmus saith that this, 'according to the good pleasure of his will,' referreth as well unto redemption and forgiveness of sins, as it doth to calling us and giving us wisdom and prudence.

*Secondly*, They have this likewise common unto them, that there is *free grace* in them both. For the Apostle speaking of the first sort of blessings, he saith, 'He hath chosen us, and predestinated us, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved ;' and then coming to the other sort of blessings, at the 7th verse he saith, 'We have redemption and forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' And then it follows, 'In which,' namely, grace, 'he hath abounded toward us,' in converting us also, ver. 8. So that still here is free grace in both.

And, *Thirdly*, They are both sorts *in Christ*. God chose us in Christ, predestinated us through Christ, and accepted us in the beloved : there is the first sort. 'In whom we have redemption, and the forgiveness of sins through his blood :' there is the second sort. We have all in and through



Christ, both the one sort of blessings and the other. These are common to them all.

But before I come to expound these words in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, and give you observations out of them, give me leave from the connexion, and the Apostle's thus ranking these blessings into these two sorts, to give you in my transition between them the greatest matter of note—that I know of—I can commend to you, and it shews their distinction.

In these verses (take them all together from the 4th verse to the 10th) the Apostle seems to hold forth unto us two several parts of God's decree—two *desigus* contained in it; and these framed according to those two ranks of blessings before-mentioned. There are two parts, I say, of the mystery of God's will towards us from everlasting; two contrivements that God had towards us poor creatures; and both of them, as you will see in the handling of them, infinitely glorious.

The one is, the *decree of the end* that God hath ordained to bring us unto, *decretum finis*.

The other is *decretum viæ*, or *medii*, the *decree of the way* through which God leads us in bringing us to that end. Divines use to distinguish them thus, terming the one *decretum intentionis*, the decree of God's utmost intention to us: the other *decretum executionis*, the decree of his executing or bringing about the things intended, and is likewise by them called *decretum mediorum*, but I rather call it *decretum viæ*. The distinction is common among divines; but I find but few that apply it unto this scripture, though some do it. And we shall see these words naturally to part themselves into these two decrees:—

1. Here are God's decrees concerning the *end* unto which he meaneth to bring us, or about what he meaneth to do with us, and make us to be at the last. He intendeth to make us perfectly holy and perfectly glorious, like his Son; he meaneth to delight in us for ever, as considered in his beloved. And these decrees the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses do contain.

2. Here are the decrees of the *way* unto this end; that is, of what shall fall out to us in his leading us through this way unto this end—namely, perfect holiness, glory, &c.—and of what shall betide us ere we come to enjoy all this. The Apostle plainly intimates unto us, that we shall fall both into sin and into misery, and so have need of a Redeemer. This same Head we were chosen in must come to redeem us, and our sins must be forgiven, and we must be called, and must have faith; and all these things wrought in us before we can come to heaven. This is the decree of the means, *decretum viæ*, as the other is *decretum patriæ*, (*via* and *patria*, you know, is an old distinction;) and this latter is expressed in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses.

For this distinction itself, you shall find it founded upon Scripture; as Heb. ii. 10, where the Apostle, speaking that God had ordained Christ to be the author, captain, and leader, ἀρχηγός, of our salvation, says, thus it became him 'in bringing many sons into glory.' So we translate it. The words in the original are πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα, 'in leading many sons unto glory.' Here you see is the glory which God means to bring us unto as the end, and here is a way implied through which he leads us unto that glory. Here is the Canaan, and here is the wilderness through which we are to pass unto it. And as we are thus ordained to an end, and led through a way unto it; so is our Redeemer too. You shall find the Scripture speaking in the same language concerning him also. So, Ps. cx. 7, the Psalmist, speaking of Christ, tells us what he shall be in heaven, ver. 1, 'Sit thou at my right hand,' &c.; but before he comes thither, 'he shall drink of the brook in the

way.' Our Saviour Christ is ordained to drink of fulness of pleasure in heaven at the end. 'At thy right hand,' says Christ, Ps. xvi. 11, which psalm was written of him, 'are pleasures for evermore : ' rivers of pleasure, as they are called elsewhere. But he must drink of a bitter cup before he comes thither ; he must ' drink of the brook by the way.' So that God had another decree about him too, even the decree of the way.

Now, to sum up all ; if you speak of what God hath ordained us unto as the end and issue of all, it is contained in the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses : to be perfectly holy, and perfectly happy, and for God perfectly to delight in us ; this is the end and upshot unto which God meaneth to bring us.

But by the way, to make the end and conclusion of all the more illustrious, God, in and by the same everlasting decree, ordained to permit the fall of these his elect. So that instead of these three, perfect holiness, perfect glory, and perfect acceptation with God, he throws you into a condition wherein you are perfectly unholy, perfectly unhappy, and perfectly hateful unto him, as in yourselves considered. This is an accident that falls out by the way ; you shall see who will cure it presently. Instead of perfect holiness, here you have nothing but sin ; instead of glory, and being the children of God by adoption, you have nothing but hell, and then being the children of wrath ; and instead of being accepted by God, you are made a curse : ' Cursed is every one that continueth not in all that is written in this book to do it.' This curse seizeth upon all mankind, and upon yourselves although elected to the contrary. Here God's first design about the end unto which he means to bring us, seems utterly dashed and spoiled ; and we are as far off from all that glory intended as possibly could be imagined. And what does God order then ? Even that this Christ, God-man, he in whom he chose us, and he to be a Head unto us from everlasting, who is the ' Captain of our salvation,' as he is called in that place before-named ; that he should come and take frail flesh, come ' in the likeness of sinful flesh,' and become our Redeemer : ' in whom we have redemption through his blood.' Through him, says God, I will forgive all their sins into which they are fallen, (as the word here used for sins fitly expresseth it, *παράπτωματα*,) and though they have nothing but unholiness, wickedness, and unbelief in them, yet I will abound towards them in all wisdom and prudence, and turn them unto me, and that in this life ; and then bring them to that perfect holiness and glory, and to that perfect acceptation with me in the world to come, that I have ordained them unto.