

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 3.-Of God's Eternal Decree.

III. By the Decree of God, for the manifestation of his Glory, some men and Angels¹ are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death.²

Question 1.—*In what sense are the words “predestination (προορίζω-prooridzo),” “foreknowledge (προγινώσκω-proginosko),” “election (ἐκλογή-ekloge)” and, “purpose (πρόθεσις-prothesis)” used in this mystery?*

Answer.—To predestinate signifies to determine something concerning things before they take place and direct them to a certain end. It is used by authors in three ways: 1.) More widely for every decree of God about creatures and most especially about intelligent creatures in order to their ultimate end. 2.) More specifically for the counsel of God concerning men as fallen either to be saved by grace or to be damned by justice (which is commonly called “election” and “reprobation”). 3.) Most specifically for the decree of election, which is called the “predestination of the saints.”

Question 2.—*Doth this word embrace only election, or doth it embrace reprobation as well?*

Answer.—That the word embraces both is demonstrated by the following considerations: 1.) The Scripture extends the word προορίζειν [*prooridzein*], (predestination), to the wicked acts of those reprobates who procured the crucifixion of Christ—“the son of man goeth κατὰ [*kata*-according to] το ὄρισμένον” [*horismenon*-the appointment or decree] Luke 22:22; Acts 4:28. Herod and Pilate did nothing but what “the hand and counsel of God προώρισεν [*proorisen*-pre-appointed or pre-decreed], to be done.” 2.) The Scripture uses equivalent phrases when it says that certain persons are appointed to wrath, 1 Thess. 5:9; 1 Pet. 2:8; fitted to destruction, Rom. 9:22; ordained to condemnation, Jude 4; made unto dishonor, Rom. 9:21; and for the day of evil, Prov. 16:4. If reprobation is described in these phrases, why can it not be expressed by the word “predestination?” 3.) Because the definition of predestination (*viz.*, the ordination of a thing to its end by means before it comes to pass is no less suitable to reprobation than election).

The second word which occurs more frequently is προγινώσκω [*proginosko*-foreknow or to know beforehand]. Paul speaks of it more than once: “whom he did foreknow,” Rom. 8:29; “he hath not cast away his people which προέγνω [*proegno*],” Rom. 11:2; and they are called elect “according to the foreknowledge,” 1 Pet. 1:2.

Question 3.—*Is this “foreknowledge” a bare theoretical knowledge, or is it practical (i.e., does it indicate a simple knowledge of the future, or does it embrace the will of God)?*

Answer.—When the Scripture uses the word προγινώσκω [*proginosko*], in the doctrine of predestination, it is not in the former sense of bare foreknowledge whereby he foresaw the faith or works of men. The reasons are as follows: 1.) Bare foreknowledge is not the

¹ 1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:41.

² Rom. 9:22, 23; Eph. 1:5, 6; Prov. 16:4.

cause of things, nor does it impose order or method upon them, but finds it out. 2.) Nothing could be foreseen by God but what he himself had granted and which would so follow predestination as the effect, not indeed precede it as a cause. In this sense, Christ is said to have been foreknown (προεγνωσμένου-*proegnosmenou*), *i.e.*, foreordained by God “before the foundation of the world,” 1 Pet. 1:20. Sometimes it is taken for both the love and election of God, Rom. 8:29; Rom. 11:2; other times more strictly for his love, 1 Pet. 1:2. Both are practical and not mere theoretical expressions.

Third, we must explain the word ἐκλογή, (*ekloge*-election), which now and then occurs. Sometimes it denotes a call to a political or sacred office, 1 Sam. 10:24; John 6:70. Sometimes it designates an external election and separation of a certain people to the covenant of God, Deut. 4:37. But in our discussion we take it in its sense of election to eternal salvation. In this respect, it may stand for the elect themselves, Rom. 11:7, or, formally for the act of God electing, Rom. 9:11.

Question 4—*Is the term “election” stricter than predestination?*

Answer—Yes. All can be and are predestinated; but all cannot be elected because he who elects does not take all, but chooses some out of many. The election of some necessarily implies the passing by and rejection of others, Matt. 20:16; Rom. 11:7. Hence Paul uses the verb εἵλατο [*eilato*], to designate election, which implies the separation of some from others: “God from the beginning εἵλατο [*eilato*-elected],” 2 Thess. 2:13.

Fourth, πρόθεσις [*prothesis*], is often used by Paul in the matter of election to denote that this counsel of God is not an empty and inefficacious act of willing, but the constant, determined and immutable purpose of God, Rom. 8:28; 9:11; Eph. 1:11.

Question 5—*Was there a predestination of angels?*

Answer—Yes. The Scripture expressly testifies of a predestination of angels when it speaks of “elect” angels, 1 Tim. 5:21. Their reprobation is also asserted in several places, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; and an eternal fire is declared to have been prepared for them from eternity, Matt. 25:41; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:10; 20:10.

Question 6—*Were the angels elected in Christ?*

Answer—No. Because, 1.) The Scriptures (which calls Christ the Mediator between God and men, 1 Tim. 2:5) never says so; further it expressly denies that Christ took on himself the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, Heb. 2:16. 2.) Because every mediator supposes discordant parties (for he is of two, Gal. 3:20), but there was no disagreement between God and the angels—the elect angels kept their first estate. 3.) It behooves a mediator to be connected with both parties (which cannot be said of Christ and the angels). 4.) Christ is the Mediator of those whose propitiation and advocate he is, 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 John 2:1, 2. But since these acts are concerned only with sinners, they cannot have place with respect to angels.

However, Christ may rightly be said to be the “head of the angels,” in respect of dominion and government because even the angels are under him as Mediator (as their Lord and King) to whom they minister preserving and defending his church, Heb. 1:14. In this sense, the angels and powers are said to be subject to him, 1 Pet. 3:22.