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Sermon Study on Eph. 1:3-14

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2:10), viewed as one act, to accomplish the hallowing of His name. It is the reply to the question: How did the Father answer this Petition among us last Sunday? In the meantime He caused His name to be hallowed somewhere in the midst of bloody battle, somewhere by His judgments, somewhere by His grace, somewhere by a miracle, wherever He has recorded His name, in the church, in the school, in the sickroom, in the office.

God's all-glorious name from one point of view cannot be hallowed, that is, it cannot be made more holy than it is, but in our attempts to hallow it there can be progress — in greater frequency and extent, in our hearts, in our life, in our office, in the degree in which we believe, testify, live, through His mercy and grace.

We preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. His name is The Lord Our Righteousness. God's name is hallowed among us only by the name of Jesus, which is above every other name. God's eternal wrath will strike the impenitent, loud-mouthed blasphemer who shocks us by his vain use of the precious name of Jesus Christ. His grace will bless those who adore the holy name of Jesus. For "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him." John 5:23.

(To be continued)

G. H. SMUKAL

Sermon Study on Eph. 1:3-14

Eisenach Epistle for Trinity Sunday

This lesson is one of the *sedes* for the doctrine of election, or predestination. This doctrine is a doctrine for Christians, and its purpose is to strengthen the child of God in his faith and his assurance of eternal salvation. If we fear that our supply of water might run short, we go to the wellspring, and seeing the water gush forth in unabated abundance, we go home satisfied, care-free, happy. If doubts as to our final salvation, as to our endurance in faith harass us, we go with the Apostle to that inexhaustible fountain of grace which from eternity issues forth from that God in whom there is no change and who has called us by His Gospel, and drink deeply from this fountain and return to our daily work with the full assurance that there is plenteous grace for our salvation and with the firm determination by this grace to remain faithful unto the end, knowing who it is that has called us.

V. 3: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*"

Blessed be He that hath blessed us with all blessings. *Εὐλογέω* means to speak well, speak good things. The Apostle exhorts his readers to speak good things of God, to praise Him, to publish aloud His marvelous works. The very fact that God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient reason for magnifying His holy name. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Christian's life. Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20. What would we be without our Lord, the Anointed Savior? Eph. 2:12 gives the answer.

Of this Jesus Christ, God is the God. So Christ Himself as a true human being calls Him, both in His humiliation, Matt. 27:46, and in His exaltation, John 20:17; cp. Eph. 1:17; Rev. 2:7; 3:12. What a glorious God must He be whom Jesus, our Lord, worships as His God! Blessed be He!

This God is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and because of this fact Jesus Christ is our Lord in the fullest sense of the term, our Jehovah, Jer. 23:6. Jesus, our Savior, is that Christ, that Anointed One, Ps. 2:2, set as God's King upon God's holy hill of Zion, to whom God has said: Ps. 2:7. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God's own Son, begotten in eternity; He is like the Father the one eternal I Am; cp. John 8:58. With this Christ Jesus we are united in faith, Eph. 1:1, and therefore the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our Father, v. 2. Blessed be He!

This God has blessed us, has spoken well of us. When God speaks, it is done, Ps. 33:9. He speaks not empty words, but realities, actualities. His words give and impart to us what they say. Num. 6:23-27. If He blesses, we are blessed, 1 Chron. 17:27. God has blessed us in every "spiritual blessing." 'Ev denotes the sphere or area of His blessing. The Apostle has in mind not material and temporal gifts, but gifts that pertain to the spiritual nature of the Christians, that nature engendered by the Holy Spirit; cp. v. 13. This blessing includes everything that has been given to the believer by the Spirit of Christ and of God, and is described in great detail in this letter and particularly in the epistle lesson for Trinity Sunday, chap. 1:3-14. It includes, of course, the first and greatest blessing granted to the readers when they heard for the first time the voice of God speaking good things to them in the Gospel and when by this Gospel they were brought to faith in the Christ, the Author of their salvation; cp. v. 13.

"In heavenly places." 'Επουράνια in this letter always refers to a locality; not the visible heavens, however, but the supermundane heavens, the dwelling place of God and the angels, 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; also of the evil spirits, 6:12. The blessings bestowed upon the Christians are such as pertain to heaven, as originate in heaven and are of the nature of heaven, bring heaven into their

hearts and lives. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, withholding nothing, not even Himself; cp. 2:18; 4:6. "In Christ." All these blessings are connected intimately and inseparably with Christ, so that without Him not one of these blessings exists and in Him every one of these blessings is rooted. "In Christ" is not to be connected with "us," as if the Apostle stressed the fact that we are united with Christ, connected with Christ. While he addresses only believers in Christ, he emphasizes here that all their blessings originate in Christ.

V. 4: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." "According as," καθώς, is used here in a causal or explanatory sense, stating the reason why God has blessed us. On this usage cp. 1 Cor. 1:6; Phil. 1:7; John 13:34. God has blessed us in keeping with, in conformity with, another act of His. The blessing takes place in time, but that is not a haphazard matter, an arbitrary act. No; it is in keeping with another act of God that took place "before the foundation of the world," before the beginning of time, Gen. 1:1, in eternity. He "hath chosen us." Ἐλέγω means to select, or pick, λέγω, out of, ἐκ. Hence it presupposes a number of objects, an aggregate, a mass, out of which some are chosen; cp. Luke 6:13; Acts 6:2-5. The aggregate out of which the Christians were chosen is not named here. Christ calls it "the world," John 15:16, 19. By birth and nature there is no difference between men. All men are born flesh of the flesh; all men belong to the "massa perditā." Out of this mass God has chosen, elected, picked us, says the Apostle, including himself with those whom he had called saints, v. 1, whom He has blessed, v. 3. The middle ἐξελέξατο designates this election as one in which He was personally interested, not a haphazard picking by blind chance. This election is described by καθώς as the basic act in conformity with which God blessed the Christians with every spiritual gift they possess; hence also with the gift of faith which united them with Christ. The καθώς therefore does not only place the election before the granting of faith so that the foreseen faith might have influenced or motivated the election, but this term designates our election as that act in conformity with which God brought us to faith. Hence the phrase "in Christ" cannot be connected with "us" in the sense that God chose us as being in connection with Christ. This construction is not only ungrammatical, since it would have to read ὄντας ἐν αὐτῷ or ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ; it is also contrary to the text and context, which stresses throughout that in His election God was not moved by anything in us, but solely and wholly by His grace, and explicitly states that every blessing experienced by the Christian (and that

includes faith in Christ) came to them in conformity with, as a result of, their election by grace.

Why, then, does the Apostle add "in Christ"? In order to stress from the very beginning that this election was based on the redemptive work of Christ. In Christ and in His work alone God's gracious election of some to eternal salvation and to faith in that Christ is rooted. Without Christ no election and no elect. There is no arbitrary election just as little as there is an election to eternal damnation.

"That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." With the Authorized Version, Luther, the Vulgate, and other interpreters we connect "in love" with v. 4, and not with "having predestinated," v. 5. The latter connection is less satisfactory, for (1) "it is Paul's usual, if not constant, habit to place ἐν ἀγάπῃ after the clause it qualifies, Eph. 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2; Col. 2:2; 1 Thess. 5:13" (Exp. Gr. N. T.); (2) the idea of God's love as the source of His predestination is fully brought out in vv. 5 and 6, so that there would be no necessity for this unique placement of "in love" before the sentence; (3) none of the clauses in this entire section begins with a prepositional phrase. Connecting "in love" with v. 4 makes sanctification the purpose of God's election which Paul has in mind here.

Love is all that God requires in His Law, love toward God and toward man, Deut. 6:5; 10:12, 13; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39; Rom. 13:8-10. In this love we are to be "holy," separate from sin, and "without blame," perfect, flawless; even as God, before whom we are to be perfect, not only before men, is holy and perfect, Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:14-16. This perfection in love, in Christian sanctification, is one of the purposes of our election. It was God's intention that in the midst of this crooked and perverse nation, out of which God chose us, His holy eyes might see holy people, unblamable in love. Blessed be God, who so honored us! Let His election to this exalted position of shining as lights in the world of sin and darkness be to us a constant incentive to walk in holy and unblamable love before Him.

V. 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." "Having predestinated," προορισας, determined beforehand, foreordained. This points back to v. 4: "before the foundation of the world." Before we were born, even in eternity, God has foreordained us to the adoption of children. Υιοθεσία is the term for the legal adoption of children, the θεσία stressing the fact that the child is not a child κατὰ φύσιν, by nature or birth, and the υίο designating this adopted child as one enjoying all the rights and privileges of a true child. By nature we were children of wrath,

but already from eternity God had predetermined to adopt us as His children. The προορίσας, having predetermined, is contemporaneous and practically synonymous with ἐξελέξατο, "hath chosen," v. 4. "God's counsel of election includes the predetermination unto adoption." Stoeckhardt, *Epheserbrief*, p. 48. "No real distinction appears to be made between the ἐκλογή and the προορισμός . . . the idea in the ἐκλογή being understood to be that of the mass from (ἐκ) which the selection is made, and that of the προορισμός the priority of the decree." (Exp. Gr. N. T.) Again the Apostle guards against arbitrariness by adding "by Jesus Christ." We owe our election to the adoption of children to Christ Jesus, who alone has made it possible for God to adopt us and therefore to predetermine us unto such adoption, though, unlike Christ, we are by nature not holy and undefiled but all as an unclean thing, Is. 64:6, of unclean lips, Is. 6:5. The "adoption," of course, is not restricted to the formal act of adoption but includes the state of adoption, membership in the household of God, 2:19, not only as servants but as beloved children, 5:1. "To Himself" connects with adoption and emphasizes the fact that though adopted, we are through Christ God's own, His very own dear children; while not born as the Son out of His nature, yet born of God, John 1:13, through water and the Spirit, John 3:6.

"According to the good pleasure of His will." It was an act, an election, motivated only by the good will, the kindly intent, of His will. Again the Apostle makes it very clear that, on the one hand, it was not a whim, a momentary upsurge for which no reason can be given, that prompted His predestination; it was good will, a purposeful, kind intent of God's will. And, on the other hand, it was an act determined by nothing within man, but by Himself alone. The Lord Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM, who is what He is by His own determination, does what He does because He so wills to do. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy," Ex. 33:19. The election, or predestination, unto adoption is an election of grace, Rom. 11:5, 6. This thought is expanded in v. 6.

V. 6: "*To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*" While vv. 4 and 5 stressed the purpose of election with reference to the elect, their sanctification in love (v. 4), their adoption as children (v. 5), the Apostle now focuses his attention on the purpose of God's predestination as far as He Himself is concerned. He predestinated us unto the adoption of children to the praise of the glory of His grace. In doing what He did, He manifested His grace, His free and unmerited favor, in the most glorious manner possible. No other doctrine shows forth in greater splendor, and praises more highly, the

grace of God than the doctrine that God already in eternity chose out of the mass of lost humanity certain sinners, no better than others, guilty like all others of eternal damnation, and determined to adopt these as His children, to bring them to faith, to bless them in heavenly places with every spiritual blessing that He possibly could give to mankind. Here indeed is mercy eternal, which far transcends all human wisdom and understanding. And what makes this grace still more incomprehensible, but on that very account still more glorious and still more praiseworthy, is the fact which the Apostle now adds.

"Whereby He hath made us acceptable in the Beloved." "Whereby" = on the basis of this grace He bestowed His grace upon us, compassed us with His favor. The Greek term occurs only here and Luke 1:28. As it was pure grace that favored Mary and chose her to become the mother of our Savior, so it is pure grace, the election of grace, God's predetermination, that moved God to adopt us as His children in order that His grace might be praised and glorified, which prompted Him to bless us with every spiritual blessing, v. 3. Thus to shed upon us the full measure of His gracious blessing did not cost Him merely a word, as it cost Him only a word to create heaven and earth and the fullness thereof. He made us acceptable in the only manner in which that was possible, in the Beloved, His own Son, Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Col. 1:3. This Beloved One is the source of all the blessings which God has graciously bestowed upon us, without any merit or worthiness on our part, yea, in spite of our sinfulness and damnableness. That is brought out in greater detail in the next verse.

V. 7: *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."* In Christ we have redemption. ἀπολύτρωσις, a redeeming, a deliverance by payment of a ransom, a release, λύτρωσις, from, ἀπό, the power that held us captive. This power is at once described as the power of sin, which held us in bondage to do its will, to serve it, to produce only sin and iniquity and transgressions, the end of which service is death, Rom. 5:12; 6:16-23; James 1:15. From this sin and its bondage we are redeemed, ransomed, bought back to God with a price, 1 Cor. 6:20, a price no man could pay, Ps. 49:8, but an all-sufficient one for the redemption of all mankind, "His blood," the blood of Christ Jesus, the beloved Son of God. By the payment of this ransom He has obtained an eternal redemption, Heb. 9:12, on the basis of which we now have the forgiveness of sins for which Christ atoned, the remission of the debt which Christ has paid, that debt, that guilt, which would have condemned us to everlasting torment. And all this we have "according to the riches of His grace." All that we

have we owe to God's unmerited love and kindness. This wealth of grace to which we owe the forgiveness we enjoy now, our redemption in the past, even before we were born, is the same grace according to which we were predestinated, v. 5, chosen, v. 4. The election of grace is an election based on God's gracious decree of redemption conceived in eternity and carried out in the fullness of time, just as the eternal decree of our election is carried out in the blessings bestowed upon us for Christ's sake during our life here on earth and in the eternities of yonder world.

V. 8: "*Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.*" This grace God showed us in an abundant manner in all wisdom and understanding. The Christian is no fool, not a person who never knows what to do, always undecided as to what course to take. By God's grace His children are made wise unto salvation. No longer are they in the condition described Eph. 4:18, 19; Rom. 1:22 ff.; 2 Cor. 4:4, but God has shined into their hearts, 2 Cor. 4:6; they understand God's wisdom, which the world regards as folly, 1 Cor. 1:17—2:10. This grace teaches them to lead a life pleasing to God, Titus 2:12; gives them that wisdom which regards sin service as folly, no matter how delightful and profitable it may seem to others; teaches them to regard the things of this world as vanity, Eccl. 1:2, as dung, Phil. 4:1-11; to apply God's Word to every situation they meet, to every difficulty confronting them, and always to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, Rom. 12:2. Stoeckhardt refers in this connection to Eph. 5:15 ff.; Col. 1:9 ff.; Phil. 1:9 ff.; Luke 1:17. Next to forgiveness of sin this gift of a wise, understanding, and obedient heart is the choicest blessing of our heavenly Father. Blessed be God for this gift, and let this grace urge us to make God's Word and will at all times the norm and rule of our life.

As a special example of the manifold wisdom and understanding with which the Lord has so abundantly endowed His children in the New Testament, the Apostle names the knowledge of a mystery, which is of particular importance in understanding God's plan for the salvation of man and which stands in closest connection with the doctrine of election and its implications for the Christian.

Vv. 9, 10: "*Having made known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him.*" The construction of this passage presents difficulties. In my opinion the simplest construction is to regard the first clause as the principal clause,

the infinitive "to sum up" as the content of the mystery, and the other phrases as qualifying this infinitive. We translate: Having made known to us the mystery of His will [namely] according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself for administration of the fullness of the times to add up, sum up as in a heading or chief point, all things in the Christ, both those in the heavens and those upon the earth.

"Dispensation," *οικονομία*, composed of *οίκος*, house, and *νομία*, derived from *νέμω*, to own, rule, manage, denotes the management or government of a home or any business. "The fullness of the times" comprises, according to Gal. 4:4, the New Testament era, the era of fulfillment of all the prophecies spoken in the preceding ages, from Gen. 3:15 to Mal. 4, concerning the fullness of the times, the era of the Christian Church. For this era God had planned already in eternity, and for the administration of this era He had predetermined to "gather together in one all things in Christ." *Ἀνακεφαλαιῶ* occurs only here and in Rom. 13:9. The *κεφάλαιον* is the sum of a column of figures, which was placed not at the bottom but at the top of the column. The purpose of *ἀνακεφαλαιῶσθαι* was therefore not to gather together and so unite what was scattered, but to add into one sum what had been lined up for this purpose, and the chief thing in this procedure was the sum placed at the top, the heading, *κεφάλαιον*. Therefore the noun denotes not only the "sum," *e. g.*, of money, as in Acts 22:28, but also "the chief thing," as in Heb. 8:1. Bauer very properly defines the term: "confining oneself to the chief point to restate a matter, to recapitulate, to summarize." In Rom. 13:9 the two ideas of chief thing and summarizing are united. All commandments add up and are contained in the one chief commandment, love, in which all others are summarized. In the *Letter of Barnabas*, 5:11, we read: "The Son of God came into the flesh in order that the full measure of sin might be 'summed up' for those who had persecuted the prophets." In the enmity against Christ culminating in His crucifixion all the sins committed by the persecutors of Christ and His Word were summed up as in an all-comprehensive climax. Neither here nor in Rom. 13:9 the *ἀνακεφαλαιῶσθαι* retains its meaning of repetition; it is the exact equivalent of our "to sum up, to add up." Hence the Apostle means to say that in the administration of the fullness of the times, of the New Testament era, all things in heaven and on earth may be summed up in one word, Christ.

All things in heaven "summed up in Christ." God the Father, embracing in His protecting love all His children on earth gathered together in His house and sustaining them, body, soul, and spirit, does that because He, the Father of our Lord Jesus, is our recon-

ciled Father in Christ. The Holy Spirit, active in and through the Word in adding new spiritual stones to that spiritual temple He is building up as a habitation of God, does that because He is the Spirit of Christ. The holy angels are not only God's angels, but also Christ's messengers, worshiping Him and eagerly carrying out His missions; cp. Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:7; 12:8, 23; Matt. 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7; Matt. 13:41; 24:31. Our advocate with the Father, 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25; the joy and satisfaction of the souls in heaven, Phil. 1:23, and the sum and substance of their songs of glad thanksgiving, Rev. 5:8-13; the Judge of the quick and the dead, 2 Cor. 5:10; the Brother welcoming His brethren at heaven's gate, Heb. 9:28; Matt. 25:34; the light and glory of that new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:23; John 17:24; Rev. 7:17; in brief, the sum total of all things in heaven pertaining to the administration of the fullness of the times — Christ!

In like manner, all things on earth pertaining to the administration of the fullness of the times are comprehended in that one word — Christ. The Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. 2:5; the body of all shadows, Col. 2:17; the Captain of our salvation, Heb. 2:10; the Author and Finisher of our faith, Heb. 12:2; the end of the Law, Rom. 10:4; the sum total of the believer's life, Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20; the Cornerstone and Head of the Church, Eph. 1:22; 2:21; the Prophet and Revealer of God, John 1:18; the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Heb. 3:1; the King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev. 17:14; the Director of all our ways, 1 Thess. 3:11; the mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. 3:16; the Victor over death, 1 Cor. 15:55-57; the Resurrection and the Life, John 11:25, 26; our Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption, 1 Cor. 1:30; all things add up in that one word — Christ!

In the Old Testament it was Jehovah who was the God of the Covenant, in the New Testament it is pre-eminently Christ, the Anointed One, our Brother according to the flesh, the God-man, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending, with respect to the administration of the New Testament Church of God; cp. 1 Cor. 15:22-28. That is the mystery, unknown to natural man, revealed in the fullness of time, pre-ordained by the Lord in eternity. What this mystery has to do with our election is stated in the next verse.

V. 11: *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."* "In whom" points back to "in the Christ," v. 10. That Christ in whom the administration of the New Testament era is summed up is the same in whom we were also chosen in the ages before time. This is the only time

that κληρώ occurs in the New Testament, and there is no reason why we should deviate with the A. V., Luther, and most commentators from the only sense in which it is used in the entire Greek literature: "to choose," and to force upon it the meaning "to obtain a heritage." The only seemingly valid argument for the latter translation is the connotation of chance, or a "divine fate" which the Greek term might have etymologically, "to choose by lot." Yet the word is also in classical Greek used in the sense of choose, irrespective of any chance or blind fate. And the latter idea is completely excluded here by the preceding and following context. The Apostle had stated in vv. 4 and 5 that we were chosen in Christ; in vv. 6 and 7 he had stated that this election was based on His work of redemption. Now he points out the comforting truth that we were chosen in Him in whom is vested the entire administration down to the least detail of the New Testament era. That is the guarantee that He will carry out to the full the decree of our election. Our salvation from its beginning in eternity before Creation to its consummation in eternity after the end of time rests in the hands of God the Father and of Him who is the Administrator of the New Testament era, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the thought expressed in the next clause.

Being predestinated (cp. v. 5) according to the purpose of Him who works, puts into effect, carries to completion, all things according to the counsel, the well-considered and carefully devised plan, of His will. We note again the exclusion of all chance in God's will. As in all things, so in our fore-ordaining God was not moved by a momentary whim, much less did He act without consideration. Our election owes its origin to careful planning of Him who carries out what He has proposed to do. Our election is sure, resting on Christ's redemption and being, buttressed on the one side by the Son who manages the New Testament era, on the other by the Father whose power "brings to being what His unerring wisdom chose."

V. 12: "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." The Apostle points out the purpose of election and its glorious result with reference both to God, whose grace is praised and glorified by this marvelous act, and with reference to us, who by reason of our election have the honor of being objects of so glorious and praiseworthy a grace. The participial clause links up with "we," ἡμᾶς, and qualifies the pronoun as referring above all to those who have "first trusted in Christ," those believers who had already in the Old Testament hoped for and trusted in the promised Messiah, both hope and trust being expressed by προηλπικέτας. Particularly he thinks of such among his readers as had been believers while still members of the Jewish

Church and were now, like him (hence ἡμᾶς), members of the Church of Christ. The congregation at Ephesus, however, was made up not only of former Jews, but was pre-eminently a Gentile-Christian congregation: cp. Acts 19:8, 9, 17-20, 26, 27. To these former Gentiles, Paul addresses the next words.

Vv. 13, 14: *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."* "Ye also," the former Gentiles. They had heard "the Word of the Truth," "the Gospel of your salvation." While during the Old Testament era Israel was the elect nation of God, Ex. 19:5, 6, the salvation promised to the Jews was preached in the fullness of time to the Gentiles also, and not as a salvation for whose attainment a Gentile had to become a Jew by submitting to circumcision and the rituals prescribed to the Israelites, but as a salvation which is "your salvation," the salvation of all peoples and nations. There is but one salvation for Jew and for Gentile, but this salvation is preached and offered to Gentiles as Gentiles. While coming from the Jews, John 4, it is universal salvation; cf. Acts 15. This proclamation of the Gospel had its desired effect. They also believed in the Word they heard. "In whom" here does not resume the first "in whom" but refers to "the Word" and should be translated "in which." And because they believed the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of their salvation, they were at once, without becoming Jews, sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise; cp. Acts 10:44. The Spirit promised in the Old Testament as a special gift of the New Testament era, Joel 1:28, 29, and promised by Christ to His disciples as their Paraclete, John 14:16, 26; Acts 1:4, 5, had been shed on them abundantly through the Word of Truth accepted by them in faith. Cp. Gal. 3:2. With this Spirit they have been sealed. "We place our seal on what we mean to declare our own over against any alien claims, or what we want to render safe and secure from the hands of others, or what we acknowledge publicly before the eyes of all." (Hofmann, quoted by Stoekhardt, *Epheserbrief*, p. 78 f.) Thus the Christians at Ephesus, though Gentiles by birth, were acknowledged by the Lord Himself as His own, as years before Christ had miraculously acknowledged the Gentile Christians at Caesarea, Acts 10:44 ff. Thus God the Father and His anointed Administrator of the fullness of times had made of Jews and Gentiles one Church by bringing both to faith in Christ and sealing both with the Holy Spirit of promise, uniting both with the Christ and God, the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ, v. 1. And

to this one holy Christian Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles united with Christ, the Apostle turns in v. 14.

"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." The Holy Spirit is more than a mere seal. He is God's own Spirit, whose indwelling makes the Church and the individual Christian God's temple, 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20, because He is the Third Person of the Trinity, inseparably connected with the Father and the Son in one indivisible Being, 2 Cor. 13:14; Deut. 6:4. Since, therefore, with the Holy Spirit God Himself, His heaven, has come into our hearts, He is very properly called the earnest of our inheritance. Earnest money is money paid in advance to bind a bargain. While men may default, God is the God of Truth, 2 Cor. 1:20. "The 'earnest of the Spirit' is mentioned by itself in 2 Cor. 5:5; in 1 Cor. 1:22, as here, it is introduced along with the *sealing* of the Spirit. To the truth expressed by the latter it adds the higher idea that the believer possesses already in reality, though but in part, the life of the future; the inheritance of the present and the inheritance of the future differing not in kind but only in degree, so that even now we have the life and blessedness of the future in the way of foretaste." (Exp. Gr. T., p. 269.)

"Of our inheritance until the redemption." Until, εἰς, unto, denotes the direction to which the pledge or earnest points, the purpose "unto" which it is given. That is redemption; the term as in 1 Cor. 1:30 is here used in the sense of final and full redemption, everlasting salvation. "Of the purchased possession," τῆς περιποιήσεως. This term occurs again 1 Pet. 2:9; the verb Acts 20:18. It is a synonym of περιούσιος; cp. Titus 2:14, which latter term is the usual translation of the Hebrew הַנְּחִלָּה, property, one's own. (Mal. 3:17 the LXX translates εἰς περιποίησιν.) It is used of Israel as God's own people, peculiarly His own from out of all nations; cp. Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; etc. The redemption of God's people is that rest of which Heb. 4 speaks; cp. Is. 25:8; 35:11; 1 Cor. 15:54 ff.; Rev. 7:9-17; chap. 21:22.

"Unto the praise of His glory." Once more, for the third time (cp. vv. 6, 12), the final purpose of God's plan of salvation is named as a fitting conclusion to the whole section which praises and magnifies the glory of God. Yea, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In the standard Epistle for Trinity Sunday, Rom. 11:33-36, the holy Apostle magnifies in awed reverence the unsearchable wisdom of God in His ways and judgments particularly with reference to the doctrine of predestination, of which he had spoken at great length in the preceding chapters. It is this same doctrine to which

he calls his readers' attention at the very beginning of his letter to the congregation at Ephesus. The pastor should not be afraid to preach on this doctrine, which, while it passes human understanding, is clearly revealed in Scripture as a part of that whole counsel a preacher is to declare to his congregation, Acts 20:27. This doctrine may be presented from various angles on the basis of our text.

We praise God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (1) We praise the Father, who has chosen us unto the adoption of children, vv. 1-6. Praise Him by unblamable holiness and love, v. 4 (2) We praise the Son, in whom we have redemption, vv. 6-12. Praise Him by refraining from those sins from which His blood bought us. (3) We praise the Holy Ghost, with whom we are sealed, vv. 13, 14. Praise Him by hearing, believing, and living according to the Gospel through which He speaks to us.—Referring in the introduction to Acts 15:18 and referring briefly to the decrees of creation, preservation, redemption, point out that in regard to our salvation He has not only determined to redeem us, but that our text speaks of a choice, an election, a predestination unto sonship and salvation. *God Hath Chosen Us!* We ask: (1) Whom did He choose? (2) What prompted Him to choose? (3) For what purpose did He choose?—One meets with so many misconceptions of the doctrine of predestination. *What Is the Nature of God's Predestination unto Salvation?* (1) It is not an arbitrary election, but it rests on Christ's redemption. (2) It is not an election on the basis of our works or our faith, for it is an election by grace. (3) It is not an election which breeds neglect of sanctification, for it is an election unto adoption and holiness.—All Scripture is profitable, 2 Tim. 3:16. *Some Practical Uses of the Doctrine of Election.* (1) It keeps us humble by reminding us of our unworthiness. (2) It strengthens our assurance of our eternal salvation. (3) It fills our heart with joy and praise. (4) It incites us to sanctification of our lives.—*The Immovable Basis of the Christian's Assurance of Salvation.* (1) God's election. (2) Christ's redemption. (3) The sealing with God's Spirit.—*Christ the Alpha and Omega of Our Salvation.* (1) In Him we are chosen unto the adoption of children. (2) In Him we have the redemption through His blood. (3) In Him we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

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