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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on  
Wednesday evening 8.10.69

Hymns 276, 66, 60

Reading: Romans 8 (from v.18)

Text: Romans 8.30

"Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified".

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This chapter may truly be said to be one of the most profound chapters in the Epistles; it has a remarkable opening and a remarkable closing as chapters are separated for public reading. It opens with "There is therefore now no condemnation", and closes with the persuasion by the Apostle that there is no separation. This incorporates more than any human words can fully elucidate but it does assure us that there is a distinct people in the purposes of God, for it cannot be said of everyone universally that "There is therefore now no condemnation". It particularises here, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus", and for those everlastingly loved by the Lord there can be no separation, that is no separation from that love that encompasses them and that was from everlasting toward them.

So our subject seems to take us back to an eternal past and carries us on to an eternal future for "whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified", so that there cannot be any separation between predestination and glorification. Nothing can separate the links between, they are like a golden chain that cannot be broken. The eternal God has set apart all His people, and their everlasting happiness and joy is far more than they can realise; for, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"; so that while on the one side we cannot fully visualise the happiness of those that have crossed Jordan's flood, as we say, and have entered their eternal rest, as our late dear sister has, to be for ever with the Lord, for

their happiness surpasses all our conceptions; so on the other hand we cannot comprehend or visualise adequately or fully the condition of the ungodly who live and die in their sins and sink into hell. What an awful contemplation this is. It is enough to shake our very frames as indeed it has done, especially when we realise that as the tree falls so it will lie for ever and ever. O, beloved friends, to be in Christ, to know the Gospel, to know our sins forgiven, to feel that blessed Spirit's witness within that it will be well with us when we come to die, is a blessing beyond all thoughts to safely conclude that God's divine purposes are settled in Himself concerning His dear people. Nothing is left haphazard or at uncertainty with God; moreover, He has predetermined that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose".

For a short time this evening, as I have had this on my mind, I would desire to consider these all-important points. The text is a following on, indicating that something has gone before. So it has. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son". "Whom He did predestinate..."- What are we to understand by this decree of predestination? I believe we may understand it to pre-determine, that is with an immutable purpose, to pre-determine or to decree something that must come to pass in our Lord's time and in the Lord's way. This must take us back in our thoughts to before time, that is before this world was, before the foundation of the world, to the decrees of Almighty God concerning a people that should be formed for His praise. They were predestinated, that is in the Lord's divine purpose He pre-determined that a certain number should constitute the mystical body of Christ from eternity. Moreover, there was a covenant that is termed an everlasting covenant of grace, made with Christ, incorporating them all in a bond that can never be broken. They had a place in the everlasting love of Almighty God, they were loved by Him before they were born - from everlasting. It confounds us, our poor reason cannot grasp eternal realities; but here they are in the Holy Scriptures. Everyone in heaven now was

eternally predestinated in the purposes of God to be there, and everyone of the Lord's people now on earth is predestinated, enrolled as it were in an immutable decree of covenant love. It is more than we can seem to grasp, it is amazingly profound; but we must never try to side-track Scripture, "whom He did predestinate". This can bring us to an experimental feature of the matter. You may say, I would not question the truth of this, I believe that it is clear enough, but what I do question is whether this has incorporated me; whether I have part and lot in the matter of eternal predestination.

Now this must take us to our second point in this verse because where the first is there is sure to be the second sooner or later, "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called". This is the second point; and while it is equally a matter of divine purpose, the calling proves to us the decree of our divine predestination. What kind of calling is this? It is a divine calling. It is not an earthly calling as relating to some vocation in this world, it is a divine calling, and this brings the first ray of light into our souls of the Lord's divine purpose toward us. It is the first evidence or effect of predestinating love, for "them He also called". The Apostle Paul was well aware of what he was writing, for he was called, and for a purpose too. He was called. What kind of man was he before? He was as touching the law a Pharisee, that is to say he was right and blameless in his own eyes, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." That was before he was called. What difference did the call make to him? Just this much difference, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." It is an act of grace when a poor sinner lost and ruined in himself is called out from this world that lieth in wickedness. This proves his divine standing, though he may not feel satisfied upon this point himself, but it demonstrates his divine standing, because it is a link in the chain here. "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called". Not some of them He did and some He did not, but every one of them He called whom He did previously predestinate.

This calling is referred to in verse 28 where the Apostle says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose". This is a feature of divine calling; everyone that is called is called according to the purpose of God. It is an effectual calling too, for it is a link in the chain between predestination and glorification. "Them He also called". O dear friends can we really trace in our poor hearts a call by grace? It may be said that this call flows out of the new birth. We read in the Scriptures about the new birth and what the Lord Jesus says about it, "Ye must be born again". This is imparting a new life that was not there before and flowing out of that new birth is an outward calling. Some may speak of this as a conversion, and so it is because it turns a person round the other way from the course he was pursuing before. "He turns his eyes another way, To Jesus and His blood." O it is a mercy to be called. You may say, How can we know when we are called? Experimentally speaking we may know by the gracious influence and operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It turns us away from the world that lieth in wickedness, it creates an aching void, it brings a conviction of sin, it reveals the condition where we stand, our danger and peril, and moves us to cry for mercy at a throne of grace. These are the effects of being called; and this is said to be a heavenly calling. We are, brethren, says the Apostle partakers of the heavenly calling. It is a calling from heaven, it is that calling of our Father, which is in heaven. It is a Father's calling to His predestinated children, He will call them out of this wicked world, and separate them from it to be a people who shall be formed for His praise. What a wonderful mercy if we know something of this. You may say, I feel dark, uncertain, burdened, troubled and distressed and I groan under a burden of my sins and feel no clear evidence in my poor heart of a heavenly calling. But you do feel an evidence of a heavenly calling if you feel the weight of your sin, and are brought to confess it before the Lord in all humility and repentance. If this repentance is given you with a brokenness of

spirit in confession of your sins before the Lord you bear evidence of a heavenly calling. It is a calling that comes from heaven, and carries you in your petitions and confessions up into heaven. "Them He also called". As we travel on then, if the Lord has called us we shall know and feel something about it, there will be a change wrought in us from what we were, we shall be converted, we shall be new creatures in Christ separated from this ungodly world, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new". "Them He also called". Moreover this good Spirit of the Lord takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto the Lord's dear people; He bears His witness in His own good time to prove this calling. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God", that He has called us out of this wilderness world. "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called". This then is the experimental aspect of the matter; there must be a calling. There must be a quickening, a new birth, the inward movings and operations more or less felt in the heart by that good Spirit of the Lord, "Them He also called".

A third point in the text is "Whom He called, them He also justified". So every predestinated one is called, and everyone that is called by God's grace stands a justified person. "Whom He called, them He also justified". What are we to understand by this great matter of justification? We may consider our state under the law and our state under the Gospel. The Apostle does expressly say that "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight". That is to say that we cannot respond to the claims of the law, to that state of perfection, to be justified upon that basis. The Apostle James says "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all, and we have to feel this, although some people's religion appears to stand on the basis of what they are doing for the Lord, but if we are really stripped and brought down before a just and holy God we shall have to realise that we cannot be justified in a proper sense as intended here by works or what we are doing for the Lord, although we may be doing things, but we shall realise that we can only be

justified by the obedience of Christ. That is the great and grand foundation of our justification. It stands in the righteousness of Christ wrought by His own perfect obedience which is imputed unto us as His own people. What a glorious obedience it is, absolutely perfect in every part.

"In Him the Father never saw  
The least transgression of His law".

His dear people are perfect in Him, they are justified in Him by His righteousness imputed unto them. This will move our hearts to present our bodies a living sacrifice for Christ's sake, for what He has done for us, not as a ground of our justification but from love to Him. It is the obedience of Christ that will present us without spot in that great day. Another point in this justification is the atonement of Christ, for we are said to be justified by His blood, that is by the merit of His blood, that was the ransom price paid to justify us and to deliver us from the wrath to come. There is no salvation without the atonement. Our justification centres in Calvary, in the wounded side and shed blood of a precious Redeemer. Then there is His resurrection from the dead to which the Apostle refers earlier in chapter 4, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification". He was raised again to prove and demonstrate before the eyes of all that His people stand justified in Him. His resurrection was as a ratification of His substitution, the open evidence that it was accepted; when He died His people died with Him, when He rose they rose with Him; they stand therefore in an indissoluble union with Him; and are justified in Him. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified", and this has a point of experience too, for the Apostle states that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God". This is the experimental feature of justification. As to the doctrine, we must go to Calvary to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must go to a living and exalted Saviour, Who represents His dear people before the throne of God. We must have faith in Him, receive Him in our hearts; to be justified by faith is to receive the precious doctrine in the heart and to feel a gracious confidence that we have an interest in

that precious, heavenly, vital doctrine. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God"; that is when you feel it in your soul, when you have that inward witness that you are a justified person. Then there is no cloud between, there is nothing between, He is the light of the morning in your soul, and you rejoice in Him as your portion and feel a sweet peace which passeth all understanding.

Then just this, "Whom He justified, then He also glorified". As you can see, it carries us through, it takes us right the way back to an eternal past, and it carries us up into heaven as though we were there. We are not all glorified yet; many as yet may not be born; but we are all glorified in the predestinating decree of God as though we were there. "Them He also glorified". He will not lose one whom He did eternally choose, He will bring them through, He will be their support, strength and stay in the trials of life, He will fulfil His word, He will be their justification and their glorification. What is this glorification then? "Them He also glorified", it is the glory of conformity which every believer in Jesus will experience one day after he departs this life. His soul will be glorified in the realms of bliss. In conformity to the risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ, ultimately soul and body will be glorified for ever and ever. This will be the glory of open vision, for there we shall see Him as He is. It is a glory of love that will fill us to overflowing like a cup full and overflowing with divine love in the realms of endless bliss. "Them He also glorified". All stands in His divine decree. Nothing will fail, nothing can fail with God. In the prophecy of Isaiah we read of the sufferings of Christ as though they have already been, but they had not then been; and so we read of His dear people's glorification as though it is already accomplished. So it is in the immutable purpose of God; but it will be experienced one day by everyone of the Lord's redeemed children, every lamb in Christ's fold, and so when one departs this life, as our dear sister has, so her soul, her redeemed spirit enters into glory as a lamb in the fold of Christ. Then there will be the resurrection day; you cannot read the Scriptures without realising that the bodies of the saints will be raised; then will soul and body be complete. The Apostle says of the resurrection, "We which are alive and remain shall not prevent them which are asleep. This will be eternal glorification. So that predestination will be consummated in glorification for ever and ever. Amen.