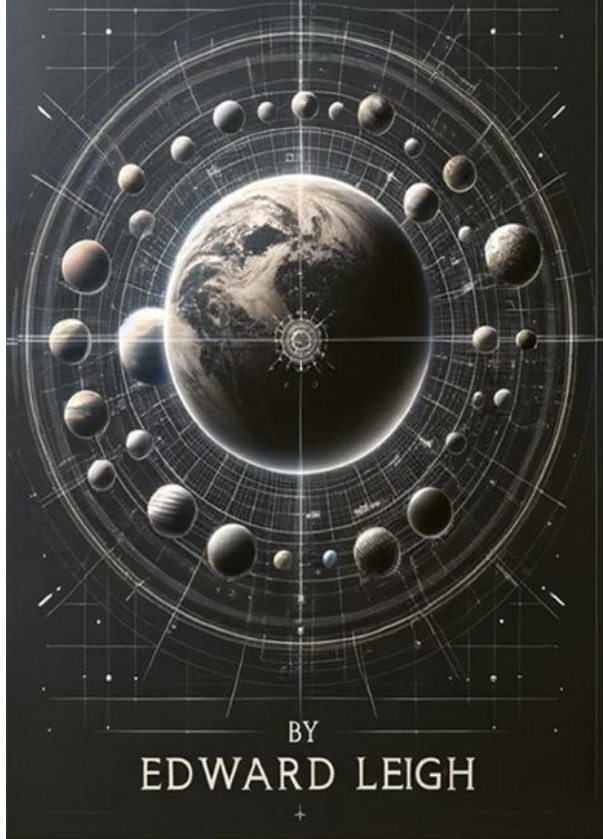


PREDESTINATION



BY
EDWARD LEIGH

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by Edward Leigh

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Introduction

**Of God's Decree, and especially of
Predestination, and the Parts thereof,
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Having spoken of the Scripture, and God, the works of God are next to be handled, which some divide into two categories: the Decree and the Execution of the Decree; others into three: Decree, Creation, and Providence. The works of God, by which he moves himself to his creatures, are three: Decree, Creation, and Providence—not three individually, for they are innumerable, but in their species and kinds.

The works of God are:

1. **Before time or eternal:** his Decree.
2. **In time:**
 1. **Past:** Creation of all things.
 2. **Present:** Gubernation and Sustentation, Government and Preservation.

Or thus:

God's Works are:

1. **Internal:** These are in the very will of God from eternity and are called the Decrees of God, by which God determined from eternity what he would do in time. We follow the received phrase of Divines when we call the Decrees the works of God and speak of God after our capacity. Therefore, we call the Decrees of God his Works because the Decrees of man are works or actions from man and really distinct from his understanding and will, by which we conceive the Decrees of God, or rather God decreeing.
2. **External:** Creation and Providence.

1. Of God's Decree

Decree is a term taken from the affairs of men, especially Princes, in the determination of causes between parties at variance, whose sentence is called a Decree. Secondly, it is a resolution of things consulted on, either negatively or affirmatively. According to the latter use of the phrase, it is applied to God, as in Isaiah 46:10.

Decretum in Latin is indifferent, signifying either in the abstract, God's Decree, or in the concrete, a thing decreed.

God's Absolute Decree is that whereby the Lord, according to the counsel of his own will, has determined with himself what he will do, command, or forbid; permit, or hinder, together with the circumstances of the same (Acts 2:23; Acts 4:28; Luke 22:22; John 7:30).

Or, God's Decree is an eternal and infinite act of the Divine Essence, by which he determines to do, or not to do, whatsoever is or shall be done, from the beginning to all eternity, that good is; and to permit or suffer whatsoever evil is done or shall be.

God's Decree is called Counsel because it is done most wisely; all things being so ordered as is most agreeable to the truest reason, as if things had been long debated or consulted before, though the Divine Nature is free from all need of consulting. It is called the Counsel of his Will because his will determines all things agreeably to that counsel.

It is an eternal determining of all things which have been, are, or shall be, so as he himself saw fittest to have them, upon the best reasons known to him, though not to us.

The Decree of God extends to all things, both good and bad, and the rule of it is his own wisdom and good pleasure guided by his wisdom.

The end is for his glory, that is, the manifestation of his excellencies. His mercy moved him to decree, his wisdom orders the decree, his power perfects it, and brings it to pass.

The Properties of God's Decree

1. It is complete, that is, it comprehends the determination of everything whatsoever the creature itself works, or God concerning it, that was decreed from eternity to be so. Matthew 10:29. It reaches to greater matters, such as the Incarnation and coming of Christ (Psalm 40:6-8 compared with Hebrews 10:5-7), and the Kingdom of Christ (Psalm 2:2), and to lesser matters, in things which befall the Church, such as the ordering of things in Egypt when the Israelites were in captivity. Nothing comes to pass but what God has decreed shall come to pass; and nothing comes to pass otherwise than as he has decreed it shall come to pass. We do not only subject *res ipsas* but also the *modos rerum* to the will and decree of God. Neither has God decreed only good things, but even justly the evil works of evil men; for evil, in respect of God's ordering it, *habet rationem boni*, that by it the glory of God may be revealed in his justice and mercy. He does order, determine, and direct the sinful actions of men, but not effect them.
2. It is most wise (Ephesians 1:11, 1 Timothy 1:17, Romans 11:33).
In decretis sapientum nulla litura.
3. Just (Romans 9:13-14).
4. Free (Romans 9:18). Nothing moved the decree of God without, or beyond, himself. "Even so, O Father," says Christ, "because it pleases you."

5. Certain, firm (2 Timothy 2:19), infallible, unchangeable (Matthew 18:14).
6. Eternal (Acts 15:18, Ephesians 1:4, 2 Timothy 1:9). It was one of Vorstius' prodigious doctrines to maintain that God's decrees are not eternal; then he would be changeable.
7. Absolute; not so as to exclude means, but causes, merits, and conditions.

The Decree is Twofold

1. **Common and General**, which concerns all creatures: the decree of creation and government, or providence. So that nothing comes to pass unawares, but it was ordered by an eternal decree (Zechariah 6:1). Mountains of brass; that is, stable and eternal decrees.
2. **Special**, which belongs to reasonable creatures, angels and men, and orders their eternal estate. It is called the decree of predestination (Psalm 135:6) and consists of two parts: a decree of election about saving, and of reprobation about damning some angels and men.

The Execution of the Decree is Twofold

1. **Common**: the execution of the decree of creation, which is creation; and of government, called providence.
2. **Special**:
 1. The execution of the decree of election in good angels, their confirmation in that state, and in elect men: redemption and restoration, and all the gracious works of God.

2. The execution of the decree of reprobation, partly in evil angels, casting them out from their state and condition and their punishments in Hell; partly in men, their rejection, obduration, and all effects of divine anger upon them.

But I shall handle the special decree first, called predestination, and speak briefly concerning the two parts of it, election and reprobation, and then proceed to treat likewise of creation and providence.

Of Predestination

To predestinate is to decree the attainment of some end, by such means as counsel shall prompt us with. It differs from election; election is in the will, predestination in the understanding (Acts 4:28). Election is only of the end; this is of the means also.

By divines, predestination is used to signify the decree of God concerning the eternal and supernatural state of angels and men, or of men elect and reprobate. Although predestination concerns angels and men alike, yet the Scripture especially inculcates to us men the predestination of men.

Predestination in Scripture (say some) is all one with election almost everywhere, as in Romans 8:30. When they are distinguished, election is especially and properly referred to the end itself, predestination to the means. With the ancient Latins, *destinare* is used of punishment as well as reward; and ancient divines make a predestination to punishment, as well as to glory.

Predestination is the sentence or decree of God, according to counsel, determining with himself from all eternity to create and govern mankind for his special glory, viz. the praise of his glorious mercy or excellent justice.

Or thus:

Predestination is the secret and immutable purpose of God, whereby he has decreed from all eternity to call those whom he has loved in his Son Christ, and through faith and good works, to make them vessels of eternal glory.

Or thus:

Predestination is the infallible purpose of God, whereby he has made choice of some and rejected others, according to the pleasure of his own will.

It is part of providence (1 Peter 1:2). There is a double difference between predestination and providence:

1. In respect of the object; all things are the object about which providence is conversant; reasonable creatures only are the object of predestination.
2. In respect of the end; providence directs all things, as well to natural as supernatural ends, but predestination only directs reasonable creatures to their supernatural ends.

The Lord has not only decreed in general that he will save some who believe and condemn those who continue in infidelity, but he has determined whom and how many he will bring to holiness and life eternal, for the praise of his grace, and how many he will leave to themselves and punish for sin, for the praise of his justice. The ancient fathers call that verse (Romans 8:30) the golden chain of our salvation.

Election and Reprobation

The parts of predestination are two: election and reprobation.

This doctrine of election is profitable to be taught in the Church of God; for it sets forth the profound depth of the Lord's love, the glory and riches of his grace and mercy, ascribing the whole praise of our vocation, justification, adoption, and glorification to the mercy of God. It holds forth the wonderful wisdom of God (Romans 11:33). It sets out his power and sovereignty (Romans 9:20).

The word Election signifies:

1. The choosing or taking of one into some office (1 Samuel 10:24, Luke 6:13 and 17:12) either in the commonwealth (Psalm 78:70) or church (John 6:70).
2. The making choice of a nation to be God's peculiar people, upon whom (passing by others) he will bestow his laws, ordinances, and singular pledges of his love (Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:7; 10:15; 32:8; Romans 11:5, 25).
3. It is put for the elect themselves (Romans 11:7).
4. It notes *electionem et salutem*, the eternal decree of God, separating some men to holiness and glory, for the praise of his rich grace (Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). *Particularis et completa electio, neminem spectat nisi morientem*, say the Arminians.
5. It is taken for the execution of God's eternal decree, or the separation of certain men in time by effectual vocation (Luke 18:7, Colossians 2:12, Revelation 17:14).

Election is the decree of God's good pleasure, according to counsel, whereby he has from eternity chosen and determined with himself to call some men to faith in Christ, to justify, adopt, sanctify, and give them eternal life, for the praise of his incomprehensible grace and rich mercy.

Or, it is an action of God ordaining some men out of his mere good will and pleasure to eternal life, which is to be had by faith in Christ, for the manifestation of his grace and mercy.

Or it is an unchangeable decree of God, whereby he has, out of his own free will in Christ, appointed some angels and men to holiness and happiness for the praise of the glory of his grace.

1. **A Decree of God in Christ:** Ephesians 1:4 and 3:11. Christ is first elected as the Head, we as the members.
2. **Of Certain Angels and Men:** They are called elect angels; "Jacob have I loved"; Moses' name was written in the book of life (Revelation 13:20 and 8:17). It is unchangeable (Zechariah 6:1-4). It is to the means as well as the end (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:1-2), a decree founded on God's free will (Ephesians 1:11).

The general nature of it:

1. **It is an action of God ordaining.**
2. **The impulsive cause,** of his mere good will (Ephesians 1:6; Romans 9:16, 18). There can be no other reason given, when men have wearied themselves out in disputes, but only God's will: "Even so, Father, because it pleases you" (Matthew 11). God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. God's mere free will makes us differ in naturals; you are a man, and not a toad; how much rather must it make us differ in supernaturals? To fly to a *scientia media*, or a *congrua motio divina*, or to the preparation and use of free will, is to wander, and to say anything in man makes a difference.

3. The object of election, whether man absolutely considered, or respectively, as good by creation; miserable by sin. Some make *homo condendus*, man to be made, the object of election; some man made, but not fallen; some man made and fallen. But these opinions may be reconciled, for those who hold *homo condendus*, or *massa pura*, to be the object, do extend election further than the latter do, even to comprehend in it a decree to make man, and to permit him to fall; but as for that actual election and separation, Augustine, Calvin, Beza, Rivet, hold it to be from the corrupted mass; and so does Bishop Carleton and others. Of which opinion these reasons may be given:

1. We are chosen that we might be holy and unblameable; this supposes that we were considered in election as sinners (Ezekiel 16:6, 9). Election is of God, who shows mercy, and we are called vessels of mercy; mercy presupposes misery.
2. We are elected in Christ as our head, and he is a mediator and saviour, which presupposes sin; he came to save sinners (Matthew 20:16). The means of salvation are given to few; few are holy, the effect of election (Matthew 7:13).
3. Man simply considered is the object of predestination in respect of the preordination of the end; but man corrupted, if we respect the ordination of the means which tend to that end; or man absolutely, in respect of the supreme or last end, not in respect of this or that subordinate end.

4. The end of election is twofold:

1. Near and immediate: eternal life.
2. Farther off and ultimate: the glory of his name (Ephesians 1:3-6).

5. The means to bring about these ends: Christ's merits apprehended by faith.

Consider also the adjuncts of this decree: the eternity, immutability, and certainty of it. There is a certain and determinate number of the elect, which cannot be diminished or augmented.

Christ prayed to his Father that the faith of his elect might not fail (John 17:16, 20). It is impossible they should be deceived (Matthew 24:24).

The Papists think that the certainty of immutable election begets in a man carnal security and profaneness, but Peter thinks far otherwise (2 Peter 1:10).

God was not moved by anything outwardly to choose us to eternal life, but it was only the mere will of God.

Some of the Papists say, God did choose man to eternal life upon the foresight of his good works and his perseverance in them.

The Lutherans say for faith foreseen, not because of any dignity in faith, but for Christ apprehended by it.

Objection: If God should not predestinate for something in us, he is an acceptor of persons, for all were alike; Judas was no more opposite than Peter. Why then should one be elected and not another?

Answer:

1. This makes the doctrine of election such a depth, that God loves Jacob and hates Esau; among the angels, some are elected, and some have fallen.

2. To accept persons is when we prefer one before another and ought not to do so. Now that God chooses some, it is of his mere grace, for all deserve eternal damnation. (Vide Dav. Dissert. Praedest. p. 132, 133.)

Objection: Predestination or election is grounded on God's foreknowledge (Romans 8:28-29; 1 Peter 1:2). Therefore, say the Papists, God out of the foresight of man's good works did elect him. And the Arminians say that God elected them out of the foresight of men's faith and perseverance; so election and predestination shall be grounded on the will of man.

Answer:

1. The foreknowledge of God is:
 - Permissive: He foresaw all men's sins, the fall of angels, and Adam.
 - Operative: He foreknows all the good that is in men by working it. God foresees to give men faith, and then they shall believe; perseverance, and then they shall hold out. There can be no difference until elective love makes it: When God has decreed to give grace, he foreknows that man which believes.
2. Predestination is not only an eternal act of God's will but also of his understanding (Ephesians 1:5; Acts 2:23).
3. There is a twofold foreknowledge of God:
 - General: whereby he foreknew all things that ever were.
 - Special: a foreknowledge joined with love and approbation (1 Peter 1:21; Matthew 7:23).

Arguments against the Papists and Lutherans:

1. That which is the effect and fruit of election cannot be a cause or condition, for then a thing should be a cause to itself. But these are effects (Ephesians 1:4). According to them, it should be "he has chosen us because we were foreseen as holy" (Acts 13:48). A man is not ordained to eternal life because he believes, but he believes because he is ordained to eternal life (Acts 2:27; 13:48; Romans 8:30).
2. Then we should choose God, and not he us, contrary to John 15:19.
3. Infants are elected, who cannot believe or do good works. This argument (saith Rivet, Disputat. 4. de causa electionis), although puerile by reason of the subject, is virile if we respect its weight; for the adversaries cannot avoid it without running into many absurdities, such as denying that infants are saved (contrary to Matthew 18) and affirming that some are saved who are not elected (contrary to Romans 11).
4. If man were the cause of his own election, he would have cause to glory in himself, and election would not be of grace. See Master Bailey's Antidote against Arminians, p. 26-46.

All the sons of Adam without exception are not elected; for election supposes a rejection. He who chooses some refuses others. See Isaiah 41:9; John 13:8. Whom God elects, he also glorifies (Romans 8:30); but all are not glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:13). Chosen out of the world (John 15:19), therefore he chose not all in the world, but some.

2. Saving faith is a true effect of God's election, peculiar to the elect and common to all the elect who live to the age of discretion, but many are destitute of faith forever; therefore, they must be out of God's election.
3. The Scripture says expressly that few were chosen (Matthew 20:16; Romans 11:5, 7). Few are saved (Luke 13:23). The elect, considered apart by themselves, are a numberless number, and exceedingly many; in comparison to the wicked, they are but few, even a handful (Matthew 7:13-14; 22:14; Luke 12:32).

Though some of the places of Scripture may be expounded to refer to the small number of believers in the days of our Saviour, some are more generally spoken, showing plainly that only few do find the way to life.

Today, if the world were divided into thirty parts, nineteen of them live in infidelity, without the knowledge of the true God. The Mohammedans possess another six parts of the world. Among those who profess Christ, scarcely one part of the remaining five embraces the true religion: And many more profess with the mouth than believe with the heart unto salvation.

The Arminians say there is an axiomatic election, not a personal one. They acknowledge that there is a choice of this or that particular means to bring men to salvation. God, they say, has revealed only two ways to bring men to life: either by obedience to the Law or by faith in Christ. But they deny that there is an election of this or that particular man. God has set down with himself from all eternity, not only how many but who shall lay hold on Christ to salvation and who shall not. 1 Peter 1:10 speaks of a personal election, Romans 9:11-12 of both elections, axiomatic and personal (see John 10:3; 2 Timothy 2:19). Some hold that God's election is so uncertain and changeable

that the elect may become reprobates, and the reprobate elect. They say there is a constant and frequent interchange of members between Christ and Satan: today a member of Christ, tomorrow a member of Satan. Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for their good," then nothing shall work for their greatest hurt, that is, their damnation. And in verse 30, he says, "Those whom he predestined, he also called, justified, glorified;" not others, but those whom he predestined, these he called and justified. God's election is most firm, certain, and unchangeable (John 6:37; 10:28; Matthew 24:24). By the Arminian doctrine, there can be no certainty of election, for they hold that absolute election only follows final perseverance in faith, and that faith may be totally lost, and fail finally. So much concerning election.

In the Scriptures, "reprobate" and "to reprobate" refer rather to the present conditions of wicked men than God's eternal ordination concerning them. But the decree of reprobation is expressed in such terms as these: God is said not to have given them to Christ, not to show mercy on some, and not to have written the names of some in the Book of Life.

Reprobation is the purpose of God to leave the rest of men to themselves, that he may glorify his justice in their eternal destruction. *Est decretum aliquod quo destinavit alicui Deus damnationem.* (Twisse)

The Schoolmen and others distinguish between a negative and positive or affirmative act of reprobation. The negative act is called preterition, non-election, or a will of not giving life. The positive or affirmative act is called pre-damnation or a will of damning the reprobate person. So there are two parts of election: 1. The decree of giving grace, by which men are freed from sin by faith and

repentance. 2. The decree of rewarding their faith and repentance with eternal life.

The word "reprobation" is taken three ways, says Bishop Davenant out of Junius:

1. For preterition and damnation jointly.
2. For the decree of damnation alone: to be reprobated is to be appointed to eternal torments.
3. As it is opposed contradictorily to election: it is taken for preterition only or non-election. (*Daven. Dissertat. de Praedestinat. c. 7*)

The object of it is some sinful men, or the greatest part of sinful men, who are called vessels of wrath fitted for destruction (Romans 9:22). That there are more damned than saved is proved in Matthew 20:16 and 7:14.

The end of reprobation is the declaration of God's justice in punishing sin.

There is no cause of reprobation in the reprobate, that they rather than others are passed by of God; that is wholly from the unsearchable depth of God's good pleasure. But the damnation to which they are adjudged is for their own sins.

There are five dreadful consequences of reprobation or preterition:

1. Such whom God passes by, he never calls, or not effectually; calling is according to purpose.
2. He deserts them, leaving them to follow their own corrupt lusts.
3. He hardens them (Romans 9).
4. They shall prove apostates (1 Timothy 2:18).

5. They are liable to that dreadful sentence (Matthew 25:41).

Objection: 1 Timothy 2:4 - "Who will have all men to be saved."

Answer: That is, God would have some of all sorts of men to be saved; so "all men" is taken in verse 1: "Let prayers be made for all men," that is, all manner of men; he instanced in one kind, viz., Kings. "All" is likewise here to be taken, not *pro singulis generum*, but *pro generibus singulorum*. So Augustine expounded this place over a thousand years ago. All manner of men of all nations and qualities. "All" in this place does not signify universally every man in every age and condition, but "all" as opposed to the Jews only, all indefinitely, and that in the times of the New Testament, of which the Apostle speaks.

Objection: 2 Peter 3:9 - "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"; therefore, there is not an election of some and reprobation of others.

Answer: He speaks there only of the elect, and he would have none of them perish. He speaks that for the comfort of the godly and includes himself amongst them, "longsuffering to us-ward": therefore, he means those in the same condition with himself. He shows why God delays the execution of his wrath: because all his elect are not gathered. See 1 Peter 2:8.

There is nothing that more sets out the glory, excellency, and sufficiency of God than his decree. Oh, the infinite depth of the wisdom of God, which has foreseen, decreed, and determined with himself the innumerable things that ever did or shall come to pass. We should not search into the depths of his counsels (Deuteronomy 29:29), but in all things profess our dependence on him and refer all to his decree (Psalm 37:5).

They are justly blamed who ascribe anything to chance, fate, fortune, or good luck, as also such as are impatient under any cross.

Admiring the methods of God's eternal counsel and the execution of it for the salvation of our souls will be a great part of our work in heaven.

That is a desperate inference: "If I be predestinated, I shall be saved, though I neglect and scoff at sanctity." God has predestinated the means as well as the end; he has decreed us to be holy as well as happy (2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:4). Christ laid down his life not only to save us from the guilt of our sins but to sanctify us (Titus 2:14). The Spirit of God is a Spirit of sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13). In good things, the Devil strives to sever the means from the end; in evil, the end from the means. We must not reason whether we are predestinated but use the means, proving our election by our calling. We should judge of our predestination not so much *descendendo*, by prying into God's secret counsel, as *ascendendo*, by searching our own hearts. It was good counsel that Cardinal Poole gave to one who asked him how he might most profitably read the Epistle to the Romans: he advised him first to read the twelfth chapter to the end, and then the beginning of the Epistle to the twelfth chapter. Because in the twelfth chapter, the Apostle falls on matters of duty and sanctification, which is the only way to attain to the knowledge of those great mysteries handled in the beginning of predestination.

Take heed of abusing this doctrine.

1. Do not quarrel with God's justice because he has determined not to give grace to some (Romans 9:14). That any are saved is from God's mercy; there can be no injustice in refusing when it is the mere mercy of God to take any. As if of many traitors, the King spares some and hangs up the rest. Neither have the elect a just

cause to glory, nor the reprobate to complain; since undeserved grace is shown to the one, and due punishment inflicted on the other. It shows no more lack of mercy in God that he takes but some, than it did lack of power because he made not many worlds; since the exercising of one and the other is determined by his wisdom.

It would be unjust (say the Polish Churches in their Catechism) to punish anyone because he has not done that which by no means he could do. But when God punishes the wicked and those that are refractory to his word, what does he do but punish those who do not do what they cannot do? See more there, cap. 10 of the same branch.

2. This may comfort the people of God, who may be certain of their election and salvation (Romans 8:38-39). Paul had not this by immediate revelation because he concluded upon such arguments as are general to all the godly (see 1 John 3:14). The certainty of man's election and salvation is not such as we have of arts and sciences, yet the truths of God are more to be adhered to than any human principle.
3. Nor is it such as we have of doctrinal truths. We are not so persuaded of God's favour in particular to us, as that there is a God and that there is Jesus Christ, because the dogmatical truth is contained in the Scripture; the other is but a practical conclusion drawn from the general.
4. It is not such an assurance as expels all doubting and wavering (Mark 9:24). Yet doubting is a sin, and we are to bewail it. But the Papists teach doubting and praise it under the name of humility, and say it keeps us from presumption. They say we can have but a conjectural and wavering knowledge of our salvation; justly, therefore, did Luther term the Romish doctrine

concerning the uncertainty of salvation, *Non Doctrinam fidei sed diffidentiae*, no doctrine of faith but distrust.

5. It is not such as presumption and carnal security, excluding all use of the means. Work out your salvation with fear; those who have been most persuaded of God's love to them have been most active for him: the love of Christ constrains us.
6. It is more than probable, conjectural, or moral.
7. It is not of our own conscience and spirit only, but enabled by the Spirit of God thus to conclude and determine (Romans 8). The Spirit witnesses with our spirit.

Those who find this in themselves should feed upon this eternal comfort. It is absolute, eternal, and immutable; nothing shall oppose it. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is full of love and grace. We may make our election sure by our calling (Romans 8:29-30) and our effectual calling by two things:

1. By a new light.
2. By a new life (2 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:9; John 12:36; Ephesians 5:8).

We have a new knowledge wrought in us:

1. Of ourselves: we see our misery by sin and our inability to help ourselves (Romans 2:23).
2. Of God: God in Jesus Christ is revealed to us (2 Peter 1:3). We see our need of Christ and know him to be a mediator who must reconcile God and us.

A new life is wrought in us (Ephesians 2:1). We now die to sin and live to God:

1. By faith (Revelation 17:14). These three are put together: faithful, chosen, and called.
2. By new obedience.
3. It is every man's duty to give diligence to make his election sure, both for the glory of God and the comfort of his soul, but in God's way and according to his ordinance: first calling, then election.
4. When he has used his utmost diligence, if he cannot make it sure, it is his misery, not his sin.
5. When the Spirit of God reveals to a man either the truth of his own graces or God's eternal love to him, then a man is bound to believe it. It is:
6. A certain assurance.
7. Secret (Revelation 2:17).
8. Exceedingly sweet: rejoice that your names are written in the Book of Life.
9. An imperfect assurance: the assurance of faith, not of sight; it may be eclipsed.

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