

A Divine Cordial

Chapter IX

Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson was of the group known as Non-conformist. His date of birth is unknown but it is known that he died at Barnston in 1686. He was educated at Emanuel College, Cambridge, and in 1646 was appointed to preach at St Stephen's, Walbrook. He showed strong Presbyterian views during the civil war, with, however, an attachment for the king; because of his share in Love's plot to recall Charles II. He was imprisoned in 1651, but was released and reinstated vicar of St. Stephen's in 1652. He acquired fame as a preacher, but in 1662 was ejected at the Restoration. He continued to exercise his ministry privately. In 1672 after the declaration of indulgence he obtained a licence for Crosby Hall, where he preached for several years, until his retirement to Barnston upon the failure of his health. Watson was a man of learning, and acquired fame by his quaint devotional and expository writings. Of his many works may be mentioned, *The Art of Divine Contentment* (London, 1653); *The Saint's Delight* (1657); *Jerusalem's Glory* (1661); *Divine Cordial* (1663); *The Godly Man's Picture* (1666); *The Holy Eucharist* (1668); *Heaven Taken by Storm* (1669); and *A Body of Practical Divinity; . . . One Hundred Seventy Six Sermons on the Lesser Catechism* (1692).

Concerning God's Purpose

1. God's purpose is the cause of salvation.

THE third and last thing in the text, which I shall but briefly glance at, is the ground and origin of our effectual calling, in these words, "*according to his purpose*" (Eph. i. 11). Anselm renders it, According to his good will. Peter Martyr reads it, According to His decree. This purpose, or decree of God, is the fountainhead of our spiritual blessings. It is the impulsive cause of our vocation, justification, glorification. It is the highest link in the golden chain of salvation. What is the reason that one man is called, and not another? It is from the eternal purpose of God. God's decree gives the casting voice in man's salvation.

Let us then ascribe the whole work of grace to the pleasure of God's will. God did not choose us because we were worthy, but by choosing us He makes us worthy. Proud men are apt to assume and arrogate too much to themselves, in being sharers with God. While many cry out against church-sacrilege, they are in the meantime guilty of a far greater sacrilege, in robbing God of His glory, while they go to set the crown of salvation upon their own head. But we must resolve all into God's purpose. The signs of salvation are in the saints, but the cause of salvation is in God.

If it be God's purpose that saves, then it is not free-will. This Pelagians are strenuous asserters of free-will. They tell us that a man has an innate power to effect his own conversion; but this text confutes it. Our calling is *"according to Gods purpose."* The Scripture plucks up the root of free-will. *"It is not of him that willeth"* (Rom. ix. 16). All depends upon the purpose of God. When the prisoner is cast at the bar, there is no saving him, unless the king has a purpose to save him. God's purpose is His prerogative royal.

If it is God's purpose that saves, then it is not merit. Bellarmine holds that good works do expiate sin and merit glory: but the text says that we are called according to God's purpose, and there is a parallel Scripture. *"Who hath saved us, and called us. not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace"* (2 Tim. i. 9). There is no such thing as merit.

Our best works have in them both defection and infection, and so are but glittering sins; therefore if we are called and justified, it is God's purpose brings it to pass.

Objection. But the Papists allege that Scripture for merit: *"Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day"* (2 Tim. iv. 8). This is the force of their argument. If God in justice rewards our works, then they merit salvation.

Reply. To this I answer, God gives a reward as a just Judge, not to the worthiness of our works, but to the worthiness of Christ. God as a just Judge rewards us, not because we have deserved it, but because He has promised it. God has two courts, a court of mercy, and a court of justice: the Lord condemns those works in the court of justice, which He crowns in the court of mercy. Therefore that which carries the main stroke in our salvation, is the purpose of God.

Again, if the purpose of God be the springhead of happiness, then we are not saved for faith foreseen. It is absurd to think anything in us could have the least influence upon our election. Some say that God did foresee that such persons would believe, and therefore did choose them; so they would make the business of salvation to depend upon something in us. Whereas God does not choose us FOR faith, but TO faith. *"He hath chosen us, that we should be holy"* (Eph. i. 4), not because we would be holy, but that we might be holy. We are elected to holiness, not for it. What could God foresee in us, but pollution and rebellion! If any man be saved, it is according to God's purpose.

Question. How shall we know that God has a purpose to save us?

Answer. By being effectually called. *"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure"* (2 Pet. i. 10). We make our election sure, by making our calling sure. *"God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification"* (2 Thess. ii. 13). By the stream, we come at last to the fountain. If we find the stream of sanctification running in our souls, we may by this come to the spring-head of election. When a man cannot look up to the

firmament, yet he may know the moon is there by seeing it shine upon the water: so, though I cannot look up into the secret of God's purpose, yet I may know I am elected, by the shining of sanctifying grace in my soul. Whosoever finds the word of God transcribed and copied out into his heart, may undeniably conclude his election.

2. God's purpose is the ground of assurance.

Here is a sovereign elixir of unspeakable comfort to those who are the called of God. Their salvation rests upon God's purpose. *"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And. Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"* (2 Tim. ii. 19). Our graces are imperfect, our comforts ebb and flow, but God's foundation standeth sure. They who are built upon this rock of God's eternal purpose, need not fear falling away; neither the power of man, nor the violence of temptation, shall ever be able to overturn them.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*. If you would like to discuss this article in our online community, please visit our [RPM Forum](#).

Subscribe to RPM

RPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like RPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [RPM](#), please select this [link](#).