

Hilarius Pictaviensis

by John Gill

The sermon explores the theological insights of Hilarius Pictaviensis on predestination and the nature of God's elect.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 32:9, Isaiah 65:15, Matthew 22:14, Romans 8:19, Ephesians 1:4

Topics: "Election", "Predestination"

Description

John Gill discusses the teachings of Hilarius Pictaviensis regarding predestination, emphasizing that God has a determinate number of elect individuals chosen for eternal glory. Hilary asserts that this election is an eternal act of God, referencing scripture to support the idea that believers are part of a mystical Israel, chosen before the foundation of the world. He highlights the distinction between those called and those chosen, suggesting that true election is based on merit and faithfulness. Gill underscores the importance of understanding this doctrine in the context of God's sovereignty and grace.

Transcript

The

CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH.

Part 4

Chapter 1--Of Predestination

Section 12--Hilarius Pictaviensis. A.D. 360.

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, in France, was banished for his orthodoxy, A.D. 354, and died A.D. 371. It^[1] appears from his writings which remain, that he held that there is an election of particular persons to the heavenly glory, and that the number of God's elect is determinate and certain; having cited those words in Isaiah 65:15, which he reads thus, Ye shall have your name with joy to my chosen, he observes,^[2] that "the speech is to carnal Israel, with respect to time to come, who are upbraided that they should leave their name to the elect of God.

I inquire what is that name, to wit, Israel, to whom the word was then? Moreover, I ask, who is Israel now? The apostle truly testifies, that they who are in the Spirit, and not in the letter, who walk in the rule of Christ, are the Israel of God." And having mentioned the text in Deuteronomy 32:9; Jacob is the portion of

the Lord, and Israel the lot of his inheritance, he adds;[3] "This was chosen to an eternal inheritance; and because he was the Lord's portion, therefore the rest were reckoned as unknown; for these were chosen by the privilege of the portion;" which must be understood as before, not of literal, but mystical Israel; since they are said to be chosen to an eternal inheritance.

And that there is a certain number of persons thus chosen he dearly asserts, when he says,[4] "we are all, in one, Abraham: and by us, who are all in one, caelestis ecclesiae numerus explendus, the number of the heavenly church is to be filled up; wherefore every creature waits for the revelation of the children of God; therefore it groans together and grieves, that the number which, by Alpha, is added to Abraham, and which, in Rho, is finished in Sarah, might be filled up by an increase of believers, for the heavenly constitution."

And in another place,[5] he says, "that this must needs be understood as referring to the people of the church; he adds, I will number them, and above the sand shall they be multiplied. Is their number uncertain, who are written in the book of God? wherefore there is no difficulty in the number of them whose truth remains in writing." Moreover, nothing is more evident, than that this Christian writer though that election is an eternal act of God, or that it was from eternity: for which purpose he frequently cites,[6] or refers to the famous passage in Ephesians 1:4.

"The Father, says he,[7] absolutely calls the Son of God, meaning in Hosea 1:7, just cited by him, in whom he hath chosen us before the world began; and because God is inaccessible by none, we are given to the Son by God the Father for an inheritance." Again, speaking of the will of the Father and the Son, he has these words,[8] "that he wills the same, he shows without ambiguity, saying, Father, whom thou has given me, I will that where I am, they may be with me; seeing therefore, the Father wills that we should be with Christ, in whom, according to the apostle, he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world; and the Son wills the same, namely, that we be with him; the will, with respect to nature, is the same, which with respect to nativity, is distinguished in the person willing."

Once more, "God, says he,[9] is wonderful in the saints, whom, when he shall have made conformable to the glory of his body, by him who is the Mediator, will also assume unto the unity of the Father's majesty; and whilst the Father is in him by nature, and he again is in us by the society of the flesh, whom he will place to obtain the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world; to whom death being swallowed up, he will give an immortal and eternal life." Vossius,[10] and, after him, Dr.

Whitby,[11] cites a passage from this father, in favor of God's predestinating of men to life, from a prescience that they would live piously, believe, and persevere to the end, which is this, "Because many are called and few chosen, therefore, says he,[12] there is not a fewness in the invited, but a scarcity in the elect; for in the inviter, without exception, there is the humanity of public goodness: but in the invited, by a right judgment, the election is of probity." To which they might as well have added another passage, occasioned by a citation of the same words, where he says,[13] "the elect are conspicuous in the wedding garment, and splendid in the pure and perfect body of the new nativity, meaning the resurrection; wherefore election is not a thing of undistinguished judgment, but the distinction is made from the consideration of merit."

By which, as in the other passage, he means not that election he so often speaks of, as before the foundation of the world, but an election in time, after vocation, and indeed, no other than that distinction and separation which will be made at the day of judgment, in the resurrection morn; when the saints will

appear distinct from all others, having on the wedding garment, and in their glorious risen bodies; and so will be singled out from the rest, and placed at Christ's right hand. ENDNOTES:

[1] Dallaei Apolog. p. 783.

[2] Hilar. de Trinitate, 50:5, p. 56.

[3] Enarrat. in Psalm 143, p. 629.

[4] In Matthew Can. 18, p. 301.

[5] Enarrat. in Psalm 138, p. 610. Vide Etiam in Matthew Can. 9, p. 272, & Can. 10, p. 277.

[6] Ibid. in Psalm 60. p. 399, and in Psalm 62. p. 406, & in Psalm 7. p. 437, & in Psalm. 143. p. 633.

[7] De Trinitate, 50:4, p. 45.

[8] Ibid. 50:9, p. 143.

[9] Enarrat in Psalm 67, p. 439, 440.

[10] Hist. Pelag. 50:6, Thess. 8, p. 543.

[11] Discourse on the Five Points, p. 101; ed. 2. 100.

[12] Hilar. in Matthew Can. 22, p. 313.

[13] Enarrat. in Psalm 64. p. 412.

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