

Divine Ordaining

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It is a moment of surpassing joy and importance when, as believers, we are brought to the realisation that all God's activities have in view the securing of His own glory. To none other does this right belong. He is the "Father of glory" — every ray of true glory finds its source in Himself; He is the "God of glory" — in His sovereignty He has the undisputed right of its administration. The truly magnificent words of David in 1 Chronicles 29 thrill the affections — "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all" (v.11). Psalm 19 tells that "the heavens declare the glory of God" and in Numbers 14 we hear His words — "And the Lord said . . . as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." The marginal reading of Isaiah 6: 3 is — "His glory is the fulness of the whole earth." In Psalm 8: 1 we have the word which forms the title of this short paper — "O LORD our LORD, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! who has *set* (ordained) Thy glory above the heavens." This word first appears in Genesis 1: 17, where we read that God *set* "two great lights" in the firmament. The verb here is in the middle voice, reflexive, the glory of the action belonging to the One who performed it. The word is used extensively in the O.T. both in relation to creation (Genesis 9: 13) and in respect to God's interest in and dealings with His earthly people. The shewbread; the altars (of gold and for burnt offerings); the laver; the court of the tabernacle ; His sanctuary and the land are all "set" in relation to God's will, and notwithstanding the ruin which the failure of man has produced, God will yet glorify Himself both in regard of His creation and His earthly people. The sun and the moon, *set* by Him in Genesis 1 are seen responding in praise in Psalm 148! His people too, made obedient to Him will be *set* "supreme above all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28: 1). Thus shall God be glorified in that which He has ordained.

In Psalm 2 we have the blessed God Himself saying of the Son — "Yet have I set (or, anointed) My King upon My holy hill of Zion" (v. 6). The verb in this verse comes from an entirely different root, and although translated in several other ways in the Scriptures, apparently appears as "set" in this verse and in the words of Christ as wisdom in Proverbs 8: 23 only. Is there not a unique and precious fragrance attaching to the one blessed Person, our Lord Jesus Christ — the exalted Man who will yet cause the glory of God to be manifested both in His power to deal with the concerted enmity and opposition of men (Psalm 2), and in the expression of His eternal thoughts of wisdom (Proverbs 8) — "Christ (the Anointed) the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1: 24)? He was "set at nought" by men (Mark 9: 12); by Herod's men of war (Luke 23: 11); and by the religious leaders in Acts 4: 11. The verb here signifies "utterly worthless;" contemptible! Thus man, seeking his own glory, has no appreciation of One whose every motive, every word and every action had the glory of God in view; He who could say, as none other could — "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (John 17: 4). Glorious indeed is God's own valuation of this precious Christ - "Yet have I set my King;" "Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands" (Hebrews 2: 7); "Who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8: 1); "set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12: 2). Here the word signifies "permanence," "immoveable" — steadfast. The whole realm of glory and its eternal manifestation are safe in His blessed hands.

Finally a word of challenge and withal of encouragement. "And God has *set* some in the church"

(1 Corinthians 12: 28). Here we have the various gifts which are for the edifying of the body of Christ. Again the reflexive character of the verb engages our attention. Every gift, outstanding or obscure, is to be taken up with the glory of God in mind — *He is to be glorified in the service* — not the recipient of the gift. Even the apparently small, but yet wide-open gift of "helps" has the glory of God Himself in view. Beloved brethren, how many difficulties and sorrows could have been averted! Speaking to the elders of Ephesus Paul stressed two important points. First their service in relation to the Assembly — they were *set* there by God for His glory; secondly, those whom they were to shepherd were of immense value to God Himself — He had purchased them "with the blood of His own." Again we have a reflexive verb — "purchased" — the mighty transaction was of infinite cost to the blessed God, and He shall yet be glorified in every one of the unnumbered myriads so secured (Acts 20: 28 N.T.). Let us seek grace to so regard the saints, each one of them reflecting glory upon the blessed God — and thus in true humility embrace the privilege of serving "God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."