

## Salvation and Sanctification, in Present Grace and Future Glory

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Lord's Day Morning, Nov. 10, 1861

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess 2:13, 14

Of all the doctrines revealed in the inspired page, not one has called forth so general and so violent a storm of opposition as that of *election*. The very word excites in some minds a shrinking horror, where it does not provoke absolute scorn. "How unjust, how unfair, how partial, how contrary to all our preconceived notions of the universal goodness, mercy, and love of our great Benefactor, Father, and Friend, would it be if he had chosen some of the human race unto salvation, and passed by the rest! What a cruel tyrant such a doctrine makes God to be! How it tends to foster presumption in some who may deem themselves special favourites of heaven, and to engender despair in others who may fear themselves predestinated to hell! Sooner, then, than believe so horrid a doctrine as this I would throw the Bible away, and embrace infidelity itself." This is but a sample, and a small sample, of the angry speeches which have been hurled against a doctrine that, in spite of all such reasonings and all such objections, is written as with a ray of light in the word of truth, from the opening page of Genesis to the closing page of Revelation. I feel sorry even to quote such hostile and unbecoming language as has just escaped my lips, and would not have done so but to show how the

carnal mind of unregenerate man, using all its reasoning powers to overthrow the truth of God, has thus vented itself in idle rage against a doctrine which it so thoroughly abhors, but which it can no more move from its place than the spray of the sea can sweep away the rock against which it angrily beats. For after all that can be said or done, after man has spoken out to the full his bitterest words and vented to his heart's content his angriest expressions we must still come to this point at last, whether men receive the doctrine or not,— Is election a truth revealed in God's inspired book? Do we receive the Bible as a revelation of the mind and will of God? Do we believe that every part and portion of it was inspired by the Holy Ghost? Do we accept it as the rule of our faith; as the only standard of right and wrong; as the only means which God has given us whereby to know himself, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?" If such be our belief, if such our creed, then whether the doctrine of election be level with our natural conceptions or not, whether it be agreeable or not to our preconceived opinions, we must not set up our reasoning faculties against the inspired word of God; for if we do so, we act in diametrical opposition to our own creed, and pull down with our left hand what we have built up with our right. We say and unsay; deny what we assert, and assert what we deny; lay a foundation and stumble over it; profess to believe the Bible, and then set it up as a target for our infidel arrows. This is Colenso in another shape. This doing and undoing is contrary, then, not only to real religion but to sound reasoning, and convicts us not only of sin but of folly. If, then, we call ourselves Christians and believers of the Bible, we must not presume to bring the enmity and objections of our carnal mind against any one doctrine revealed in it, whether we like it or not; for in so doing we are madly fighting not so much against the doctrine itself as against the sovereign Majesty of heaven, with whose authority it comes invested to the children of

men.

But though I am compelled to speak thus, I know well that we never will or can receive God's truth until he makes us willing in the day of his power. But when he has once convinced us by his Spirit and grace of our fallen condition by nature; when he has once opened up to us the depths of the fall, and cut to pieces all our vain hopes of salvation by the works of the law; and especially when he has bowed our mind to receive his word of truth as written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and has given us a taste of its sweetness and blessedness, then all these cavils drop off our minds as the withered leaves drop off in autumn from the wind-rocked trees, and then the question arises in the mind not whether God has an elect people or not, for that point is settled beyond all controversy by the witness of the spirit in the word without and by the echo of our own conscience within; but whether *we* belong to that happy number; whether *our* names are in the book of life; and whether *we* are amongst "the brethren beloved of the Lord," whom God from the beginning "hath chosen unto salvation."

I shall, therefore, with God's help and blessing, endeavour this morning to bring before you some of the signs, marks, and gracious evidences which the Holy Ghost has revealed in our text by the pen of Paul, that you may compare with them what you hope the Lord has done for your soul, and thus gather up, if it be his will, some sweet consolation or some blessed encouragement to believe that you have a personal interest in God's electing love. In doing this, I shall, as the Lord may enable, show,

I.—*First*, that the *Lord has from the beginning chosen those whom he has loved unto salvation.*

II.—*Secondly, the means* as well as the evidences whereby he visibly manifests this choice: that he "*calls them by the gospel.*"

III.—*Thirdly, what are the fruits and effects* of this divine choice and heavenly calling: "*sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.*"

IV.—*Fourthly, what is the ultimate issue and blessed result* for all the elect of God: "*the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

I.—If you look at the connection of the passage before us with the previous context, you will find that the apostle is speaking of some very awful characters, whose state, case, condition, and end he denounces in some of the strongest language that ever fell from his pen. He is speaking of "a mystery of iniquity," which was already working even in his day; and which, though restrained for a time, he declares would eventually break out in a most awful manner under the guidance and headship of one whom he calls "that Wicked," or, as he is sometimes termed, "the Man of sin."

i. It is not, however, my intention to dwell upon this part of the subject, except to point out one or two features in it which have a special bearing upon our text.

1. *First*, then, observe that the coming of this Wicked one was to be "*after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.*" In this, therefore, as in every other mischief, Satan would be the prime agent, the head and chief; and he would work upon the minds of men with all his hellish power and craft, so that even "signs and lying wonders" would strengthen and enforce all his schemes.

2. Observe, *secondly*, that this was to be "with all *deceivableness of unrighteousness*." Deceit and ungodliness would stamp all their words and actions; and this "deceivableness" would be as much in self-deceit as in deceiving others; for the "unrighteousness" with which it would be accompanied would blind their eyes, harden their heart, and sear their conscience, till all distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, was utterly lost.

3. Observe, *thirdly*, their *end*, that they would "*perish*," and that without remedy; for all this deceivableness of unrighteousness would be carried out in, and carried out by "them that perish."

4. Observe, *fourthly*, a point which I particularly wish to impress upon your conscience, the ultimate *reason* of their ruin and perdition; "because they *received not the love of the truth*, that they might be saved."

5. One more remark, however, I cannot help adding, which is to point out the *consequences* of their not receiving the love of the truth, that "for this cause *God shall send them strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Let us not, then, charge God with injustice in their condemnation. The sin was theirs. They believed not the truth; they closed their eyes and hardened their hearts against it and all the evidence of it; they had pleasure in unrighteousness; they deliberately preferred their sins, and took such delight in them that they would not part with them. "Is God then unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" as the apostle elsewhere asks. (Rom. 3:5.) Is he unjust in sending them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, when they wilfully reject his truth? Was it not equitable in him to do so, seeing that they deliberately chose sin rather

than the service of God, and had pleasure in unrighteousness?

ii. Taking occasion, then, from considering the awful case and condemnation of those who were thus righteously left to fill up the measure of their iniquities, he casts his eyes of love and affection upon his Thessalonian brethren, to whom he appears to have been singularly attached, and who seem to have loved him almost as much as he loved them. In his first epistle to that church he had already written to them: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." (1 Thess. 1:2, 3, 4, 5.) In a similar way, his heart being warmed with the recollection of their faith and hope and love when he was with them, and by the good report brought to him when absent from them, that "their faith grew exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all toward each other abounded" (2 Thess. 1:3), he pours out his thankful heart in praise unto God from the firm persuasion he had in his bosom that God had from the beginning chosen them to salvation.

But what *proof* had he of this? What made him say in his first epistle, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God?" And why should he speak with equal confidence of them in our text? The reason why I shall have more fully to unfold under my second head. I shall now, therefore, only briefly intimate that it was because "his gospel had come unto them not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

We stand precisely upon the same spot with him and them. If we are partakers of the same divine calling; if we have felt the power of the same gospel; and if we are possessed of the same faith working in our bosom which wrought in them, of the same hope which supported them, and of the same love which warmed their breast, we stand, so to speak, upon precisely the same footing with them. We may indeed and certainly do possess less faith, hope, and love than they enjoyed, for ours is a dark and gloomy day, and they were perhaps, as a church, more favoured with those graces of the Spirit than any of the apostolic churches; but there can only be one faith, one hope, and one love, whether strong or weak, little or much. So far, then, as the Lord has called us by his gospel, and made it the power of God unto our salvation; so far as we know anything feelingly and experimentally of "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," we have scriptural evidences as good if not as great as theirs, as certain if not as clear, that "God has from the beginning chosen us to salvation." We have no other means of knowing our election. We cannot mount up to heaven to read our names enrolled in the book of life. No bright angel or burning seraph comes on flying pinions, as to Daniel, to say to us, "O man, greatly beloved," "fear not, peace be unto thee." (Daniel 9:21, 23; 10:19.) We hear no voice speaking in the sky, such as sounded forth when our Lord rose out of Jordan's flowing stream. We have no supernatural revelation by dreams, or Urim, or prophets of our union with Christ in ancient covenant ties. Such favours have indeed been vouchsafed to some of the sons of light, but God has not promised them to us, nor dare we expect them. We have then to look within, to the evidences that God has given us there; and if we can find the marks of divine life in our bosom, it is a reflection, so to speak, of the book of life held up before our eyes from the throne of God—a transcript from

the ancient roll in which the names of the elect were written.  
iii. I pass on now then to a fuller and closer consideration of the first branch of our text.

1. Observe first from it that God has "*from the beginning*" chosen his people unto salvation. From what beginning? From the beginning surely of his eternal purposes of love and mercy toward them. This choice of God did not then begin with their natural creation, nor did it commence with their spiritual calling; but was a choice in the eternal mind of God from the beginning of all time. We read in the word of truth of two beginnings: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1.) *There* was the beginning of time; *there* was the first stone laid of that arch which sprang as by divine command out of eternity, and on which the whole creation rests, with all its marvellous unfoldings of wisdom and power. Again we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1.) In the beginning, then, or "from the beginning," when God created the heaven and the earth; in the beginning and from the beginning, when "the Word was with God and the Word was God," there was a choice made of a people unto salvation; for they were "chosen in Christ," as the apostle speaks: "According as *he has chosen us in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:4.) In that beginning, then, when the Son of God stood up as the covenant Head and glorious Surety and Representative of his people; in that beginning of which we can form no conception, but which we believe because God has so revealed it in his word of truth; in that beginning, of which the Lord Jesus speaks under the name of "Wisdom" in the Proverbs: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Prov. 8:22, 23); in that beginning of his eternal



purposes of grace, mercy, and truth, when the Son of God was set up as his people's Representative, they were chosen, all and individually chosen in him, and that "*unto salvation.*" Thus they were not chosen merely to certain privileges which might be forfeited; to certain means of grace which might be neglected or abused; to certain conditions of faith and obedience from which they might fall; but they were chosen in the Person of the Son of God unto eternal salvation. I wish you particularly to observe this; for election being a truth so plainly revealed that none can deny it in some form or other, occasion has been taken by many men to explain away what they will not receive, and to undermine what they cannot overthrow. They allow then of an election; but they say it is either *national*, as is in the case of the Jews; or to *privileges* and means of grace, as in Christian churches; or on *conditions* of obedience, and a fore-view of faith and repentance, as in the case of individuals. Those three sorts of election they will admit of; but an election sovereign, absolute, unconditional; an election unto salvation, indefectible and indefeasible; a salvation firmly secured in a covenant Head, and therefore unalterably safe in him from being ever lost or forfeited; such an election as this, which takes the whole matter of salvation out of the hands of man and puts it wholly into the hands of God, yea, lodges it firm and fast in the very heart of the Redeemer; an election so glorious to God and so suitable to man, they utterly reject and abhor.

2. But O how much is comprehended in that expressive word "*salvation,*" and of being "*chosen* unto salvation." What a clear, bright, and glorious light it casts upon the infinite foreknowledge and ineffable wisdom as well as sovereign grace of Jehovah! We see from the words, as with a ray from heaven, that there was a foreview in the mind of God of the fall of man with all its awful consequences; that his all-seeing

eye and fore-planning heart viewed from the beginning the crash, the wreck, the miserable havoc which the disobedience of Adam would entail on man, the last and best creation of his hands; the utter prostration of the Church of God in and under the ruins of his transgression; and the millions of sins with all their dreadful results which through the breach thus made would rush into, and but for his gracious prevision and provision would utterly overwhelm the souls and bodies of the elect. All this scene of misery and woe, of sin in its birth and sin in its consequences—all this "mystery of iniquity" from the door of paradise down to the very gates of hell—all, all was foreseen by the omniscient eye, and all fore-provided for by the infinite wisdom and superabounding grace of the great and glorious I AM. See, then, and as you see admire the blessed truth, that unless God had chosen his people unto salvation and fixed their state by absolute decree, they would, they must all have been utterly lost. Man may rebel against the doctrine of election, but had this choice not been, as I have just declared, absolute, and had not every provision been previously made in "a Covenant, ordered in all things and sure," none, no, none of Adam's race would have reached the heavenly shore. Such are the demands of infinite Justice; such the claims of a broken Law; such the wrath of God against transgressors; such the purity of his holy nature, that, without the intervention of a Mediator, and without "the blood of the everlasting Covenant" (Heb. 13:20), salvation could not have been devised or accomplished. And looking at the state and condition into which the Adam transgression has reduced all this ruined race, such, I may well add, is the number of their enemies; such the strength of sin; such the craft of Satan; such the power of evil in their wretched hearts; and, to say no more, such the obstacles which obstruct every step of their path to the heavenly city, that unless God had from the beginning chosen them in the

Person of his dear Son unto salvation, so as certainly to carry them through all the storms of time and land them safe in eternal glory, none, none even of the elect themselves, could have been saved, but all, all would have perished by the way in spite of their election. Our pride, our ignorance, our self-righteousness, our enmity to God's ways and word, may reel against all this, and muster objection after objection, and argument after argument, against a doctrine which takes salvation out of our hands, and makes it wholly of the Lord. (Jonah 2:9.) But both from Scripture and experience I feel certain in my own mind that we can have no right and scriptural view of what the fall of man really was in all its miserable consequences; we can have no proper sight or feeling sense of the wreck and ruin which sin has wrought in the whole human race, and the utter helplessness of man to deliver himself from that fallen condition, if we deny, despise, or reject a salvation that is wholly of God. Nay, I will go a step further and say that unless we see, feel, believe, and admire the grace, wisdom, and mercy of God in choosing his people unto such a salvation as this, *that* salvation can never have reached our heart; for I am well convinced that if salvation comes with power to the soul it makes us feel that if God himself had not chosen us to salvation, such is the power of sin and such the helplessness of the creature, that neither we nor a single individual of the children of men could be saved. When, then, we are thus taught and led by the Spirit into all truth, instead of regarding election as arbitrary or unjust, or viewing God as a cruel tyrant because he has chosen a certain portion of the human race and left the rest to fill up the measure of their iniquities, we rather adore his wisdom, admire his grace, and say with the Church, "Thy counsels of old are mercy and truth." (Isai. 25:1.) We rather bless him that he should have chosen his people, and us, we hope, amongst them unto salvation. Standing upon this ground, we see him by faith in the

beginning, before the foundations of the earth were laid, viewing creation about to arise, and foreseeing the entrance of sin to mar not only creation, but that work above all others in which he took a special delight—man formed after his own image, fixedly and unalterably determining that where sin should abound, there grace should much more abound.

3. But this question often arises in the bosom of the child of God, and may even now be springing up in yours, "Who and what am I?" He sees in the Scriptures that God has chosen a people unto salvation; and he is deeply convinced that unless he belongs to that number he never will, never can be saved. But now the thought springs up in his breast; the anxious question rises to his lips, "What evidence have I of my personal interest in this sovereign choice? I see," he says, "and most firmly believe that God has an elect people; I see how highly favoured and blessed that people is. 'Happy art thou, O Israel,' he says, in spirit if not in words, 'Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?'" (Deut. 33:29.) "I am well convinced," he adds, "that they, and they only, will reach the heavenly shore. But who and what am *I*?" Am I one of the elect? Where are *my* evidences? Where *my* tokens for good? Where, O where can *I* find substantial marks of grace to assure me that *I*, even I have a part and lot in this important matter? What reason have I to believe that in the beginning God fixed his love upon me; that he gave me to his only begotten Son in ancient councils; that by virtue of this eternal choice and everlasting love, the incarnate Son of God bore my sins in his own body upon the tree, and washed me from all my iniquities in his atoning blood?" Now this anxious inquiry which may even now be moving in your heart, causing the sigh to arise to your lips and the tear to start to your eye, leads me to

II.—My *second* point, viz., to show that there are *certain marks and evidences* given us in the word of truth of an interest in this choice unto salvation. By comparing, then, these marks of grace with what we believe the Lord has done for our soul, we may, with his help and blessing, arrive at a happy assurance, or a sweet persuasion, or, at least, a comfortable hope, that though the gift may seem too great for us, the mercy too plenteous, yet that the Lord has chosen us to salvation, and granted us some sensible evidence of it by putting us in possession of the grace of life. The evidence given here by the apostle is, "*Calling,*" and that calling effected by what he calls "our gospel," that is, the gospel which he and his fellow apostles preached: "*Whereunto he called you by our gospel.*"

Let me, then, open these points as clearly as I can, if not as fully as I could wish, for your edification demands clearness, if my time forbid fulness, that you who have been called by grace and know the gospel in your heart, may read your evidences in the light of the scripture and of divine teaching.

1. First, then let me speak of *calling*. We are bidden by Peter to make our calling and election sure: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:10, 11.) We see, therefore, that the two are closely connected. We cannot make our election sure unless we first make sure our calling; for though election is the cause of calling, calling is the only evidence of election. But what means the apostle by bidding us "make our election *sure*?" Is it not already so? If God has from the beginning chosen us to salvation, is not that choice as sure as God himself could make it? and if he has truly and effectually called us by his

grace, is not that calling as sure also as the election itself? It does not mean, therefore, making them sure to God, or sure in themselves, but sure *unto us*; in other words, we are bidden to give diligence to obtain in our own breast a certain and blessed assurance that we, even we, have most certainly been both chosen and called. We have, first, then, "to make our *calling* sure," that is, to ourselves; and this we do when, by the shining in of God upon his own work in the heart, we come to some assurance in our own breast that we have been called by his effectual grace. Would we then know the truth of our election, so as to make it sure in our own consciences, we must give diligent heed to examine well our calling; for if that be sure, the election is sure also; for the one hangs upon, and is the certain fruit of the other.

1. But to cast a clearer light upon this point, let me carefully distinguish first between a calling which is not saving and a calling which is. Our gracious Lord says, "Many be called but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16); and we find the Holy Spirit also speaking of old in words of solemn import: "Because I have called, and ye refused" (Prov. 1:24.) Thus we see that there is a calling which is not the fruit of election, and which may be refused. This calling cannot be made sure; for it is general, and belongs to all to whom the word comes; as the apostle says, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord who hath believed our report?" He then adds: "But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. 10:18.) This call, then, is to the ear not to the heart; the outward sound of the gospel in the letter, not its inward voice in the spirit.

2. But I must distinguish also in effectual calling between being called by the law and being called *by the gospel*; for the apostle says, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel."

The law, properly speaking, does not call, and yet has a powerful hand in our calling. When the Lord first begins his work of grace upon our heart we are ignorant both of the sound and the power of the gospel; nor do we know usually what it is even in the bare letter of truth. At any rate, it has not reached our heart as a joyful sound, for though we may be diligent readers or even students of the New Testament, we may be and usually are, from various circumstances, enveloped in the densest ignorance of the doctrine which it teaches, of the grace which it reveals, and of the glory which it promises. The law, then, is that ministration with which we have first to make a close acquaintance. Moses speaks from Sinai before Christ speaks from Zion. To convince of sin is the first work of the Spirit upon the heart. "And when he is come he will reprove [margin "convince,"] the world of sin." (John 16:8.) Guilt of conscience, then, and consequent distress of mind under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, are among the first evidences of a divine change being begun. So it was with the publican in the temple: so it was with those who were pricked (or rather "pierced") in their heart under Peter's first sermon. The gospel at this time is at a distance from us. We have not yet been made willing in the day of Christ's power, nor have we heard his voice or seen his glory. Until then the law speaks, our conscience is not so heavily laden with the weight of guilt as to feel the need of atoning blood; nor are we so stripped of every rag of creature righteousness as to feel we require the justifying obedience of God's dear Son to screen us from the wrath of the Almighty. The first work, then, of grace is to kill rather than to make alive; to wound rather than to heal; to bring down rather than to lift up; to reveal the law rather than the gospel. For "balm is useless to the unfeeling." Salvation with all its superabounding grace is but an empty sound to those who have never felt themselves cut off from all help or all hope. So, in a sense, there is a calling under and through if

not by the law, in the first teaching and operations of the Spirit of God, bringing the soul under its condemnation as a ministration of death. But when the law has done its office, and the sinner is slain by its killing power, then there comes to his aid and deliverance, what the apostle speaks of here, the calling by the gospel. When the gospel utters its melodious voice; when pardon is proclaimed through the sacrifice of Jesus; when peace reaches the heart through atoning blood revealed to the conscience; when the glad tidings of salvation by grace are no longer a mere sound in the letter, but are made the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; when heavenly light shines into the mind; when divine power attends the word to the soul; when faith is raised up, hope casts its anchor within the veil, and the love of God is shed abroad, then, and there is the calling of which the apostle here speaks—a calling by the gospel. If you doubt my words, I would appeal to your own conscience, if you know anything of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Did the law ever give you any hope of salvation? Did the fear of death or hell ever impart any consolation to your wounded spirit? Did you ever read your name in the book of life when you were under the schoolmaster Moses, especially when you felt his angry rod, coming down again and again upon your sore back? Does not the apostle say, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21); and again, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20.) If this be so, then no man under the law ever

"Read his title clear  
To mansions in the skies."

No one under conviction of sin and distress of conscience, from a sense of the wrath of God in a broken law, could ever say he had a good hope in the mercy of God, for mercy has



neither name nor place in the bosom of the law. It is a ministration of death, and therefore can never communicate life; a ministration of condemnation, and therefore can never reveal justification; a ministration of wrath, and can therefore neither manifest nor communicate pardon and peace.

This, then, is the reason why the apostle speaks of "calling by the gospel" as its peculiar and distinctive blessing; for the gospel sounds an invitation to those who are under the law, and therefore calls them from death to life, as being a ministration of life; from condemnation to justification, as being a ministration of righteousness; from guilt and wrath, bondage and terror to pardon and peace, as being a revelation of salvation through the atoning blood of the Son of God. When, therefore, the sound of the gospel trumpet, like the silver trumpet on the great day of Jubilee, reaches the ears and heart of the captive exile, he hasteneth that he may be loosed. (Isai. 51:14.) The scene now changes; the storms of God's wrath blow over; the day-star appears in the dawning morn of the gospel day, "a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:4), until the Sun of righteousness in due time rises with healing on his wings. As, then, the gospel is thus made the power of God unto salvation, the soul is enabled to listen to, and embrace it as a joyful sound. Now just in proportion as faith receives it, hope anchors in it and love embraces it, is evidence given of our being from the beginning chosen unto salvation.

III.—But I now pass on to show from our text that there are certain *fruits and effects* wrought in the soul by a divine power when it is thus called by the gospel to salvation, and to a knowledge of it. And I think it very necessary to examine ourselves by these fruits and effects, so as to make diligent search and earnest inquiry how far we have been put

into a spiritual and experimental possession of them, and how far we can at present realise their presence and their power. It is easy to say, "I believe the gospel; I believe in Jesus Christ; I have heard the truth now for many years, nay more, I have made a long and consistent profession of my personal knowledge of it; I am surprised, therefore that you doubt my religion. What do you mean by casting any suspicion upon me or upon it, for I have none myself?" But if you do not doubt for yourself, will you not let others doubt for you? Self-confidence is not always a proof of safety; nor does offence at the bare suggestion of examination always prove its non-necessity. None profess greater indignation at being suspected of cheating than those who habitually use short weights and measures; but all their bluster does not prevent the weights and measures being examined by the lawful inspector and condemned. So a man may have no doubt of his own religion and be very angry with those who suspect it, and yet, when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, be very lacking in those evidences which God has given of his being from the beginning chosen unto salvation.

Two gracious evidences are here given us of a personal interest in this eternal choice. One is "sanctification of the Spirit," the other "belief of the truth." Those two fruits and results of God's eternal choice of his people, as seen in the light of the Spirit, overturn, in a moment, many of the cavilling arguments which are brought against the doctrine of election, and to which I have already referred. Some, for instance, say "that is a licentious doctrine; that men may consider they are 'elect,' and then abandon themselves to the commission of every crime; that if a man can only believe he is chosen of God and certain of going to heaven, there is not any iniquity in which he may not freely indulge, without the least fear of God's anger now, or of eternal punishment hereafter." Now the language of the Holy Ghost

here gives the lie to all such vain objections of the carnal mind—to all such ill-founded, angry cavillings against the truth of God. It lays down two divine marks as brought forth in the heart, lips, and life of the saints of the Most High, and reveals, as with a ray of heavenly light, the divine truth that if any are chosen to salvation, they are not chosen to live in sin, nor chosen that they may abandon themselves to all manner of iniquity; but that the same omnipotent and irreversible Will, and the same eternal decree which fixed their standing in Christ Jesus the Lord, and chose them to salvation from the beginning in him, determined also the work of grace upon their heart; that there should be given unto them "the sanctification of the Spirit," to make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; and that there should be wrought in them "the belief of the truth," with all its liberating, sanctifying effects. We will examine these two evidences of an interest in the electing love of God separately, as it is of the deepest importance that we should understand them clearly and realise them experimentally.

i. I shall consider, first, therefore, *"the sanctification of the Spirit."*

1. Observe, first, the peculiar force of the word *"through;"* it is *"through* sanctification of the Spirit." All the elect of God must therefore pass through sanctification. It is a path not merely *into* which, but *through* which—through the whole length of which they must, pass; so that, as there is no salvation from the curse of the law except *through* the blood and obedience of the Son of God, so there is no salvation from the inward defilement and inordinate power of sin except through the sanctification of the Spirit. The Bride must stand not only washed in Christ's blood and arrayed in Christ's righteousness that she may lift up her head without sin or shame in the presence of Jehovah; but she must be a

partaker also of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Christ's righteousness is her wedding dress, arrayed in which he says to her, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." This is her title and her warrant to heavenly bliss; but she needs an inward meetness, for she must have a queenly heart as well as a queenly robe. The two are beautifully brought together in those words of the Psalmist: "The king's daughter is all-glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." (Psalm 45:13.) She is "all-glorious within," as well as "clothed with wrought gold." The Spirit clothes her outwardly when he brings near and puts upon her the wedding dress; and the same Spirit gives her her inward glory when he sanctifies her by his special grace. Thus Christ not only "loved the Church and gave himself for it," but also "sanctifies and cleanses it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church"—glorious without and glorious within, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" to mar her outward beauty, and to be also "holy and without blemish," so as not to mar her inward glory. Sanctification, therefore, is as indispensable unto salvation as justification. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) Heaven is a holy place. Its enjoyments and employments are all holy. "Holy holy, holy is the LORD of hosts," is the eternal cry of created angels and ransomed spirits. There must be, therefore, a sacred meetness for this holy employment and spiritual enjoyment communicated to the soul before it can be fitted for those habitations into which nothing that defiles can ever enter. How glorious must be that place of which we read, "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth

them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 22:4, 5.) That they may thus see his face and ever serve him in the beauty of holiness was eternally provided for in the covenant of grace. In the same wondrous scheme of eternal love which contrived their salvation, provision was made for the Holy Ghost to sanctify by his indwelling power, influence, and operations the elect of God, and thus qualify and fit them for those heavenly mansions which were prepared for them. He being a divine Person in the Godhead, and as such taking a part in the covenant of grace, engaged, with a foreview of the depths of the fall, to regenerate them, to give them a new heart and a new spirit, to take possession of their soul, and fill them with every holy grace and every heavenly fruit. He thus pledged himself to breathe into them in their time-state an element of holiness in which they might hereafter eternally swim as in an ocean of purity and love, and without which heaven itself would be to them but a hell. He did not undertake to sanctify their carnal mind their Adam nature, but to breathe into them a new spirit, a spirit of perfect holiness, capable of expanding into heights and depths of purity and love beyond all conception or description.

ii. But our present business is with his divine operations in their time-state.

1. Thus he first sanctifies *their understanding* by casting a holy light into their mind to understand spiritual things. Of this the apostle speaks where he begs God to give unto the Ephesians the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened." (Ephes: 1:17, 18.) This communicates a spiritual capacity to understand spiritual things, as the Lord "opened the understanding" of his disciples "that they might understand the scriptures." (Luke 24:45.) By these spiritual eyes, the enlightened saint sees the Person of the Son of

God, beholds his finished work upon the cross, views his atoning blood, his justifying obedience, his dying love. This is the "anointing which teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie." By this "we know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. 2:12.) By this the veil of unbelief and ignorance is taken off the heart, and with open face we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18.) Thus the glorious things of God become revealed and adapted to the spiritual capacity of the child of grace, so that he is at home and in his element in the sweet enjoyment of them. Have you not found sometimes, as you read the Scripture, that a ray of divine light seemed to shine upon the sacred page, and you felt it so blessedly to illuminate your mind, and so raise up faith to believe the divine testimony, that you could say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart?" With it came also a tasting that the Lord was gracious, so that you could say that the word of God was sweeter to you than "honey and the honeycomb." Sometimes when, as your mind was enlightened by a ray of spiritual light, you have seen the glorious doctrine of a Triune God, and admired and adored with holy wonder the divine mystery of the Trinity. At another time, illuminated by the same Spirit, you may have seen by faith the glorious mystery of the Person of the Son of God—seen the eternal Son in the bosom of the Father; then traced him coming down from heaven to earth; seen him take flesh in the womb of the Virgin; viewed him lying as an infant in Bethlehem's lowly manger; witnessed his miracles, heard his words, followed him to the garden and to the cross, and seen him laid in the silent tomb. Then you have seen him issue from the tomb, and ascend to the Father, to be the great high priest over the house of God. Have you not seen these things as if unfolded to your view in the sacred page, and as you saw you admired and wondered? Now in all this the Holy Spirit was sanctifying

your understanding, illuminating your mind with heavenly light, and bringing eternal things with power into your soul.

2. But he not only illuminates the mind; he also *softens the heart* and melts the spirit by communicating *gracious sensations*. For he not only gives light to enlighten the mind, but communicates life, and feeling, warmth and tenderness to soften and melt and, as it were, spiritualise the soul; to water it as with holy dew; to fertilise it with heavenly anointings; to enrich it with gracious influences; to animate it with divine motion; to mould it after the image of Christ; and breathe into its inmost depths the very spirit and mind of Jesus. This gracious work upon the heart constitutes the grand distinguishing difference between the dry, cold, intellectual moonlight of those who are only in the letter, and the warm, heavenly sunlight of those who are blessedly in the Spirit. This renewing power, this regenerating influence, this fertilising, quickening operation of the Holy Ghost on the soul, whereby he creates it anew in Christ Jesus, and adorns it inwardly and outwardly with every gracious and holy fruit, will ever distinguish "the sanctification of the Spirit," which is the fruit of eternal choice, from that dry, intellectual knowledge in the head of a professor, which leaves him with no more grace in his heart than was possessed by a Balaam and an Ahithophel.

3. By this gracious work upon the heart, the Holy Spirit also gives *spiritual affections*, and thus enables the believer to fulfil the precept, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:2, 3.) He thus sanctifies the affections, fixes them on things above, and fills the soul as with the very breath of heaven. Light, life, and love—light in the understanding, life in the soul, love in the heart; is not this "sanctification of the Spirit?"

iii. But there is another heavenly fruit which God in our text is said to impart, that forms a further blessed evidence of an interest in this electing love—namely, a "*belief of the truth.*" Let me endeavour to lay this before you as a necessary evidence of your being chosen unto salvation.

The truth of God is revealed in the Scriptures, and can only be received by faith. If, then, we believe it not, we have no manifest interest in it. But if we believe it, we have so far an evidence in our favour. But to put this evidence more clearly before you, let me point out two distinguishing features which ever accompany a *belief of the truth*; for the truth of God has two precious properties when applied to the soul by a divine power.

1. The first is to *make free*, according to the Lord's own testimony, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth *shall make you free.*" (John 8:31, 32.) We by nature and practice are bond slaves to sin and Satan. We are the sport of the Prince of the power of the air, who takes us captive at his will. We are held down also by many hurtful lusts; or, if free from gross sin, are bond slaves to pride, covetousness, or self-righteousness. Perhaps some idol is set up in the chambers of imagery, which defiles all the inner man; or some snare of Satan entangles our feet, and we are slaves to sin, without power to liberate ourselves from this cruel slavery. We groan under it, as the children of Israel under their burdens, but, like them, cannot deliver ourselves. But sooner or later the truth comes to our aid; the truth as it is in Jesus flies to the rescue of God's oppressed family; the blessed Spirit opens it up and seals it upon the heart with a divine power. As, then, under his gracious influences they believe the truth and feel its power and savour in their heart,



a liberating influence is communicated; their fetters and shackles are loosened; the bondage of sin and Satan, and the power and strength of evil are sensibly broken, and a measure of holy freedom is enjoyed. Look at this point in the light of your own experience—your surest testimony next to the word of God. Were you not in bondage under the law, and feared that its curse and torment was the beginning of eternal woe? How were you delivered? How were you brought out from under that cruel schoolmaster? By some application of God's truth to your heart; by some manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ; or by the discovery of the gospel by the power of God to your soul. There is no other way of getting from under the bondage of the law but by the application of the gospel, and by believing what the gospel reveals. As the truth came, then, to your heart as the very word of the living God, power came with it to believe; faith was raised up to credit the testimony; and as faith began to credit the truth of God and receive it in hope and love, there was a sensible loosening of the bonds; and then the chains and fetters dropped off of themselves. It is with the soul as it was with Peter in prison: when the angel came, and a light shined in the prison, and the angel's words fell upon his ears, "the chains fell from off his hands." There remained nothing then to bar his exit; for "the iron gate that leadeth unto the city opened to them of its own accord." (Acts 12:7-10.) So whatever chains or fetters may hold the soul; let the angel of mercy come; let the message of salvation be revealed, the chains of unbelief drop off, the iron gate of hardness gives way, and the truth makes the soul blessedly free.

But take another case. Not having a clear view of the gospel, of its fulness and freeness, you might have been kept in hard bondage for years by legality or ignorance. Hoping and endeavouring to be what God never meant his people to be—

perfectly free from all the workings of corruption, you were held down in bondage and condemnation from feeling so much of your own inward sinfulness. When you were entangled in an evil, despair seized hold of you, and all without and within was darkness, confusion, and bondage. But how were you delivered? I cannot enlarge upon this point, as my time is nearly gone; but I may briefly ask, Was it not by the word of truth—by the gospel? by seeing and believing that salvation was a finished work? by seeing and feeling that those for whom Jesus died are freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses?

2. But now look at the "belief of the truth" under another form, as affording an evidence of interest in God's eternal choice—truth in its *sanctifying influence*. Our blessed Lord thus prayed to his heavenly Father on behalf of his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) Truth sanctifies. Error hardens the heart; leads to presumption; takes the soul away from the light of God's countenance; draws it aside from under the testimony of his word; and leaves it to wander, as if without a guide, in the midst of confusion, and frequently to fall headlong into the open ditch of evil. But truth not merely softens and liberates the heart from the power of sin, but has a most blessed, sanctifying power and influence upon the soul. If ever the truth of God reached your conscience, it communicated a sanctifying influence to your spirit; it raised up a warm and affectionate love to everything which that truth reveals. Wherever the love of the truth is received, it separates from the world, influences the heart and life, and is attended with every good word and work. Thus to believe the truth not merely liberates the soul from the bondage of the law, with all its guilt and condemnation, but sanctifies the heart to the worship and service of God. Spirituality of mind is thereby

communicated; communion with God is sought and sometimes enjoyed; deliverance from evil that it may not grieve us is earnestly desired; and the time longed for when sin shall no more pollute the conscience, or separate between God and the soul.

Now can you find any print of these two gracious marks on your soul? Have you any reason to believe that the Spirit of God has ever come into your soul to sanctify it and communicate those gracious influences, whereby the heart is drawn up into the enjoyment of heavenly blessings? Has the truth of God ever come home with unction, savour, and power, so as sensibly to deliver you from the influence of sin and sanctify you to the service of God? Your answer, perhaps, is, "Well, I scarcely know what reply to give to your questions. I hope I feel at times holy influences, spiritual desires, gracious affections but O, taking me in general, I find so much coldness, darkness, and death; my heart is so evil, my nature so corrupt, and every member of the old man so utterly foul, and often so alive and active toward everything that is evil, that when I closely examine myself by such marks and evidences, such is the opposition within, and such the conflict between the old man, and the new, that I scarcely know what answer to give about myself as to who or whereabouts I am." If it were not so, there would be no conflict. Sanctification is not a progressive work, nor does the Holy Spirit sanctify the members of the old man, so as to make them holy. The old man remains, what he ever was, in all his integrity. No change takes place in the corrupt flesh: it is ever corrupt, and will be so to the very grave's mouth. It is the "new spirit" of God's own creation in which holiness dwells, for it is the very workmanship of God. With this light upon it, you can now perhaps see through the mists which so often blind your eyes. Do you not at times see and feel that there is that in your soul which nothing but the power of God

could have wrought? that there are or have been there felt and experienced holy sensations, spiritual affections, heavenly desires, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, hope in his mercy, love to his name, renunciation of self, and with all this that sweet spirituality of mind which is life and peace? There are times, then, when these mists and fogs are dispersed by the beams of the Sun of righteousness, and then you can read what God has done upon your heart. Were it not so, we must sink down into despair. But under these renewals of God's goodness and mercy, intimations of his favour, whispering of his love and grace, and gracious revivings of the work of the Spirit, hope springs up in the bosom, and with hope faith embraces once more the Lord the Lamb, and love again cleaves to him with purpose of heart.

It is, then, from these gracious evidences, that there is from time to time gathered up any real testimony that God has "from the beginning chosen us to salvation." We may well wonder at the mystery, how God should have chosen such sinful creatures, not merely such mere atoms and specks in creation, but such polluted worms of earth in whom to magnify the riches of his grace. But after all our wonder, we must still come to this point, which helps us to make diligent search: "If not chosen, what is my state and case? I must either be chosen and saved, or passed over and lost. It is with me, then, heaven or hell, salvation or damnation. It is, therefore, a most important matter, to come to some decision whether God has chosen me to salvation. If not who am I and where am I and what will be my awful condition when I come to lie upon my death-bed?" So we cannot blink the inquiry, nor leave it a matter of conjecture, but from time to time anxiously long to come to some clear decision whether God has chosen us or not, because upon that turns the question whether we shall be for ever with Jesus, or with the lost in the abyss of eternal woe.

IV.—But passing to our last point, we are called in it to look away from the fleeting things of time and sense, to see what is the *ultimate issue* and blessed result of this election of God and of this work of the Spirit upon the heart: "*To the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

1. There is a glory which our Lord has as *one with the Father* and the Holy Ghost, in *one undivided Essence*. But that is not the glory here spoken of.

2. There is also a glory which our blessed Lord has as *the eternal Son* of the Father, of which John speaks so clearly: "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But that is not the glory here spoken of.

3. There is also a glory which he has as *Immanuel, God with us*. But that is not the glory spoken of in the text. For none of these three kinds of glory can his people possess. They may and can see them; but they cannot *partake* of them; for the intrinsic perfections of Jesus as God are not communicable to man. The finite can never become infinite; humanity can never become Deity nor a creature possess the omnipotence and omniscience of the Creator.

4. But there is a glory which the Lord Jesus does give to his people, and of which they can partake. Our blessed Lord, therefore, said to his heavenly Father, in his intercessory prayer for his disciples, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:22.) This glory is that of perfect conformity to his own glorified humanity, as we read: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:21.) This glory is

given in grace, for grace is glory begun; and springs from a believing view of him: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.) The consummation of this glory is reserved for a future state, when the Church will be "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" when she will be perfectly conformed in body and soul to his glorious image, will see him face to face, and enjoy the bliss of his presence without a veil between. God is essentially invisible. The Deity, therefore, of the Son of God cannot be seen even in eternity as it is in itself; but it will shine through his glorified humanity in all its uncreated splendour. To see this glory and be a partaker of it, is the happiness of heaven. Our gracious Lord, therefore, said, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24.) Nothing short of the revelation and communication of this glory could satisfy the heart of God; and nothing short of the partaking of this glory can satisfy the heart of man. Heaven short of this would be no heaven to his soul. Not to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; to have no view of the glory of an incarnate God; not to be conformed to his glorious image, so as to be perfectly holy both in body and soul—were these things denied, there would be no heaven at all for the redeemed among the children of men. But God, in giving the saints heaven as their happy home, gave them with it an eternal weight of glory. He has designed that all whom he has chosen unto salvation should reach the heavenly shore; that none should suffer shipwreck by the way; that sin should not be their ruin; that Satan should not succeed in any of his devices against their eternal safety; but that every member of the mystical body of Christ should be for ever with their glorious Head in the realms of bliss, to behold and

be partakers of the glory which shall be revealed when he comes and all his saints with him. It is the prospect of this glory which animates the Christian in all his battles against sin, and encourages him never to quit the field until victory crown the strife. It nerves his heart in all the troubles and trials of this mortal state, still to press forward to win this immortal prize, that he may safely reach that land where tears are wiped from off all faces; and where the glory of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost will be seen and enjoyed through the glorified humanity of Jesus without a cloud to dim its rays, or intercept its eternal lustre.