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EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

by Charles H. Spurgeon

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EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

NO. 385

THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH, 1861,

THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON TOOK THE CHAIR
AT 3 O'CLOCK.

The proceedings were commenced by singing the 21st Hymn —

*Saved from the damning power of sin,
The law's tremendous curse,
We'll now the sacred song begin
Where God began with us.*

*We'll sing the vast unmeasured grace
Which, from the days of old,
Did all his chosen sons embrace,
As sheep within his fold.*

*The basis of eternal love
Shall mercy's frame sustain;
Earth, hell, or sin, the same to move
Shall all conspire in vain.*

*Sing, O ye sinners bought with blood
Hail the Great Three in One;
Tell how secure the cov'nant stood
Ere time its race begun.*

*Ne'er had ye felt the guilt of sin,
Nor sweets of pard'ning love,
Unless your worthless names had been
Enroll'd to life above.*

*O what a sweet exalted song
Shall rend the vaulted skies,
When, shouting grace, the blood-washd throng
Shall see the Top Stone rise.*

The Rev. GEORGE WYARD, of Deptford, offered prayer.

The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON in opening the proceedings said, we have met together beneath this roof already to set forth most of those truths in which consists the peculiarity of this Church. Last evening we endeavored to show to the world, that we heartily recognised the essential union of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, this afternoon and evening, it is our intention, through the lips of our brethren, to set forth those things which are verily received among us, and especially those great points which have been so often attacked but which are still upheld and maintained, — truths which we have proved in our experience to be full of grace and truth. My only business upon this occasion is to introduce the brethren who shall address you, and I shall do so as briefly as possible, making what I shall say a preface to their remarks.

The controversy which has been carried on between the Calvinist and the Arminian is exceedingly important, but it does not so involve the vital point of personal godliness as to make eternal life depend upon our holding either system at theology. Between the Protestant and the Papist there is a controversy of such a character, that he who is saved on the one side by faith in Jesus, dare not amour that his opponent on the opposite side can be saved while depending on his own works. There the controversy is for life or death, because it hinges mainly upon the doctrine of justification by faith, which Luther so properly called the test doctrine, by which a Church either stands or falls. The controversy again between the believer in Christ and the Socinian, is one which affects a vital point. If the Socinian be right, we are most frightfully in error; we are, in fact, idolaters, and how dwelleth eternal life in us? and if we be right, our largest charity will not permit us to imagine that a man can enter heaven who does not believe the real divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are other controversies which thus cut at the very core, and touch the very essence of the whole subject. But, I think we are all free to admit, that while John Wesley, for instance, in modern times zealously defended Arminianism, and on the other hand, George Whitfield with equal fervor fought for Calvinism, we should not be prepared either of us, on either side of the question, to deny the vital godliness of either the one or the other. We cannot shut our eyes to what

we believe to be the cross mistakes of our opponents, and should think ourselves unworthy of the name of honest men, if we could admit that they are right in all things and ourselves right too. An honest man has an intellect which does not permit him to believe that “yes” and “no” can both subsist at the same hour and both be true. I cannot say, “It is,” and my brother point blank say, “It is not,” and yet both of us be right on that point. We are willing to admit, in fact, we dare not do otherwise, that opinion upon this controversy does not determine the future or even the present state of any man; but still, we think it to be so important, that in maintaining our views, we advance with all courage and fervency of spirit believing that we are doing God’s work and upholding most important truth. It may happen this afternoon that the term “Calvinism” may be frequently used. Let it not be misunderstood, we only use the term for shortness. That doctrine which is called “Calvinism” did not spring from Calvin; we believe that it sprang from the great founder of all truth. Perhaps Calvin himself derived it mainly from the writings of Augustine. Augustine obtained his views, without doubt, through the Spirit of God, from the diligent study of the writings of Paul, and Paul received them of the Holy Ghost, from Jesus Christ the great founder of the Christian dispensation. We use the term then, not because we impute any extraordinary importance to Calvin’s having taught these doctrines. We would be just as willing to call them by any other name, if we could find one which would be better understood, and which on the whole would be as consistent with fact. And then again, this afternoon, we shall have very likely to speak of Arminians, and by that, we would not for a moment insinuate that all who are in membership with the Arminian body, hold those particular views. There are Calvinists in connexion with Calvinistic Churches, who are not Calvinistic, bearing the name but discarding the system. There are, on the other hand, not a few in the Methodist Churches who, in most points perfectly agree with us, and I believe that if the matter came to be thoroughly sifted, it would be found that we are more agreed in our private opinions than in our public confessions, and our devotional religion is more uniform than our theology. For instance, Mr. Wesley’s hymn-book, which may be looked upon as being the standard of his divinity, has in it upon some topics higher Calvinism than many books used by ourselves. I have been exceedingly struck with the very forcible expressions there used, some of which I might have hesitated to employ myself I shall ask your attention while I quote verses from the hymns of Mr. Wesley, which we can all endorse as fully and plainly in harmony with

the doctrines of grace, far more so than the preaching of some modern Calvinists. I do this because our low-doctrine Baptists and Morisonians ought to be aware of the vast difference between themselves and the Evangelical Arminians.

HYMN 131, VERSES 1, 2, 3.

*“Lord, I despair myself to heal:
I see my sin, but cannot feel;
I cannot, till thy Spirit blow,
And bid the obedient waters flux.*

*“Tis thine a heart of flesh to give;
Thy gifts I only can receive:
Here, then, to thee I all resign;
To draw, redeem, and seal, — is thine.*

*With simple faith on thee I call,
My Light, my Life, my Lord, my all:
I wait the moving of the pool;
I wait the word that speaks me whole.”*

HYMN 133, VERSE 4.

*“Thy golden scepter from above
Reach forth; lo! my whole heart I bow,
Say to my soul, ‘Thou art my love;
My chosen ‘midst ten thousand, thou.’”*

This is very like election.

HYMN 136, VERSES 8, 9, 10.

*“I cannot rest, till in thy blood
I full redemption have:
But thou, through whom I come to God,
Canst to the utmost save.*

*From sin, the guilt, the power, the pain,
Thou wilt redeem my soul:
Lord, I believe, and not in vain;
My faith shall make me whole.*

*I too, with thee, shall walk in white;
With all thy saints shall prove,
What is the length, and breadth, and height,
And depth of perfect love."*

Brethren, is not this somewhat like final perseverance? and what is meant by the next quotation, if the people of God can perish after all?

HYMN 138, VERSES 6, 7.

*"Who, who shall in thy presence stand
And match Omnipotence?
Ungrasp the hold of thy right hand,
Or pluck the sinner thence?

Sworn to destroy, let earth assail;
Nearer to save thou art:
Stronger than all the powers of hell,
And greater than my heart."*

The following is remarkably strong, especially in the expression "*force.*" I give it in full: —

HYMN 158.

*"O my God, what must I do?
Thou alone the way canst show;
Thou canst save me in this hour;
I have neither will nor power:

God, if over all thou art,
Greater than my sinful heart,
All thy power on me be shown,
Take away the heart of stone.

Take away my darling sin,
Make me willing to be clean;
Have me willing to receive
All thy goodness waits to give.

Force me, Lord, with all to part;
Tear these idols from my heart;
Now thy love almighty show,
Make even me a creature new.*

*Jesus, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride;*

*Stop the whirlwind of my will;
Speak, and bid the sun stand still;
Now thy love almighty show,
Make even me a creature new.*

*Arm of God, thy strength put on;
Bow the heavens, and come down;
All my unbelief o'erthrow;
Lay the aspiring mountain low:*

*Conquer thy worst foe in me,
Get thyself the victory;
Save the vilest of the race;
Force me to be saved by grace."*

HYMN 206, VERSES 1, 2.

*"What am I, O thou glorious God!
And what my father's house to thee,
That thou such mercies hast bestow'd
On me, the vilest reptile, me*

*I take the blessing from above,
And wonder at thy boundless love.
Me in my blood thy love pass'd by,
And stopp'd, my ruin to retrieve;*

*Wept o'er my soul thy pitying eye;
Thy bowels yearn'd, and sounded, 'Live!
Dying, I heard the welcome sound,
And pardon in thy mercy found."*

Nor are these all, for such good things as these abound, and they constrain me to say, that in attacking Arminianism we have no hostility towards the men who bear the name rather than the nature of that error, and we are opposed not to any body of men, but to the notions which they have espoused.

And now, having made these remarks upon terms used, we must observe that there is nothing upon which men need to be more instructed than upon

the question of what Calvinism really is. The most infamous allegations have been brought against us, and sometimes, I must fear, by men who knew them to be utterly untrue; and, to this day, there are many of our opponents, who, when they run short of matter, invent and make for themselves a man of straw, call that John Calvin and then shoot all their arrows at it. We are not come here to defend your man of straw — shoot at it or burn it as you will, and, if it suit your convenience, still oppose doctrines which were never taught, and rail at fictions which, save in your own brain, were never in existence. We come here to state what our views really are, and we trust that any who do not agree with us will do us the justice of not misrepresenting us. If they can disprove our doctrines, let them state them fairly and then overthrow them, but why should they first caricature our opinions and then afterwards attempt to put them down? Among the cross falsehoods which have been uttered against the Calvinists proper, is the wicked calumny that we hold *the damnation of little infants*. A baser lie was never uttered. There may have existed somewhere, in some corner of the earth, a miscreant who would dare to say that there were infants in hell, but I have never met with him nor have I met with a man who ever saw such a person. We say, with regard to infants, Scripture saith but very little, and, therefore, where Scripture is confessedly scant, it is for no man to determine dogmatically. But I think I speak for the entire body, or certainly with exceedingly few exceptions, and those unknown to me, when I say we hold that all infants are elect of God and are therefore saved, and we look to this as being the means by which Christ shall see of the travail of his soul to a great degree, and we do sometimes hope that thus the multitude of the saved shall be made to exceed the multitude of the *lost*. Whatever views our friends may hold upon the point, they are not necessarily connected with Calvinistic doctrine. I believe that the Lord Jesus, who said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” doth daily and constantly receive into his loving arms those tender ones who are only shown, and then snatched away to heaven. Our hymns are no ill witness to our faith on this point, and one of them runs thus:

*“Millions of infant souls compose
The family above.”*

“Toplady, one of the keenest of Calvinists, was of this number. ‘In my remarks,’ says he, ‘on Dr. Nowell, I testified my firm belief that the souls of *all departed infants* are with God in glory; that in the decree of predestination to life, God hath included all whom he decreed to take away

in infancy, and that the decree of reprobation hath nothing to do with them.' Nay, he proceeds farther, and asks with reason, how the anti-Calvinistic system of conditional salvation and election or good works foreseen, will suit with the salvation of infants? It is plain that Arminians and Pelagians must introduce a *new principle* of election, and in so far as the salvation of infants is concerned, become Calvin. Is it not an argument in behalf of Calvinism, that its principle is uniform throughout, and that no change is needed on the ground on which man is saved, whether young or old? John Newton, of London, the friend of Cowper, noted for his Calvinism, holds that the children in heaven exceed its adult inhabitants in all their multitudinous array. Gill, a very champion of Calvinism, held the doctrine, that all dying in infancy are saved. An intelligent modern writer, (Dr. Russell, of Dundee.) also a Calvinist maintains the same views; and when it is considered that nearly *one-half* of the human race die in early years, it is easy to see what a vast accession must be daily and hourly making to the blessed population of heaven."

A more common charge, brought by more decent people, — for I must say that the last charge is never brought, except by disreputable persons, — a more common charge is, that we hold clear *fatalism*. Now, there may be Calvinists who are fatalists, but Calvinism and fatalism are two distinct things. Do not most Christians hold the doctrine of the providence of God? Do not all Christians, do not all believers in a God hold the doctrine of his foreknowledge? All the difficulties which are laid against the doctrine of predestination might with equal force, be laid against that of Divine foreknowledge. We believe that God hath predestinated all things from the beginning but there is a difference between the predestinations of an intelligent, all-wise all-bounteous God, and that blind fatalism which simply says, "It is because it is to be." Between the *presdestination* of Scripture and the *fate* of the Koran, every sensible man must perceive a difference of the most essential character. We do not deny that the thing is so ordained that it must be, but why is it to be but that the Father, God, whose name is love, ordained it; not because of and necessity in circumstances that such and such a thing should take place. Though the wheels of providence revolve with rigid exactness, yet not without purpose and wisdom. The wheels are full of eyes, and everything ordained is so ordained that it shall conduce to the grandest of all ends, the glory of God, and next to that the good of his creatures. But we are next met by some who tell us that we preach the wicked and horrible doctrine of *sovereign and unmerited*

reprobation. “Oh,” say they, “you teach that men are damned because God made them to be damned, and that they go to hell, not because of sin, not because of unbelief, but because of some dark decree with which God has stamped their destiny.” Brethren, this is an unfair charge again. Election does not involve reprobation. There may be some who hold unconditional reprobation. I stand not here as their defender, let them defend themselves as best they can; I hold God’s election, but I testify just as clearly that if any man be lost he is lost for sin; and this has been the uniform statement of Calvinistic ministers. I might refer you to our standards, such as “The Westminster Assembly’s Catechism,” and to all our Confessions, for they all distinctly state that man is lost for sin and that there is no punishment put on any man except that which he richly and righteously deserves. If any of you have ever uttered that libel against us, do it not again, for we are as guiltless of that as you are yourselves. I am speaking personally — and I think in this I would command the suffrages of my brethren — I do know that the appointment of God extendeth to all things; but I stand not in this pulpit, nor in any other, to lay the damnation of any man anywhere but upon himself. If he be lost, damnation is all of man, but, if he be saved, still salvation is all of God. To state this important point yet more clearly and explicitly, I shall quote at large from an able Presbyterian divine:

“The pious Methodist is taught that the Calvinist represents God as creating men in order to destroy them. He is taught that Calvinists hold that men are lost, not because they sin, but because they are non-elected. Believing this to be a true statement, it is not wonderful that the Methodist stops short, and declares himself, if not an Arminian, at least an Anti-Predestinarian. But no statement can be more scandalously untrue. It is the uniform doctrine of Calvinism, that God creates all for his own glory; that he is infinitely righteous and benignant, and that where men perish it is only for their sins.

In speaking of suffering, whether in this world or in the world to come; whether it respects angels or men, the Westminster standards (which may be considered as the most authoritative modern statement of the system) invariably connect the punishment with previous sin, and sin only. ‘As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God as a *righteous* judge FOR FORMER SINS doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as *their corruption*

makes occasion of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they *harden themselves* even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.’ The Larger Catechism, speaking of the unsaved among angels and men, says, ‘God according to his Sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth) hath passed by and fore-ordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, *to be for their sin inflicted*, to the praise of the glory of his justice.’ Again, “the end of God appointing this day (of the last judgment) is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate *who are wicked and disobedient*.” This is no more than what the Methodist and all other Evangelical bodies acknowledge — that where men perish it is in consequence of their sin. If it be asked, why sin which destroys, is permitted to enter the world that is a question which bears not only on the Calvinist, but equally on an other parties. They are as much concerned and bound to answer it as he, nay, the question is not confined to Christians. All who believe in the existence of God — in his righteous character and perfect providence, are equally under obligation to answer it. Whatever may be the reply of others, that of the Calvinist may be regarded as given in the statement of the Confession of Faith, which declares that God’s providence extendeth itself even to the first fall, and other sins of angels and men, etc., *yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin*. It is difficult to see what more could be said upon the subject and if such be the undoubted sentiments of Calvinists, then what misrepresentation can be more gross than that which describes them as holding that sinners perish irrespective of their sin, or that God is the author of their sin? What is the declaration of Calvin? “*Every soul* departs (at death) to that place *which it has prepared for itself* while in this world.”

It is hard to be charged with holding as sacred truth what one abhors as horrid blasphemy, and yet this is the treatment which has been perseveringly meted out to Calvinists in spite of the most solemn and indignant disclaimers. Against nothing have they more stoutly protested than the thought that the infinitely holy, and righteous, and amiable Jehovah is the author of sin, and yet how often do the supporters of rival systems charge them with this as an article of faith?”

A yet further charge against us is, that we *dare not preach the gospel to the unregenerate*, that, in fact, our theology is so narrow and cramped that we cannot preach to sinners. Gentlemen, if you dare to say this, I would take you to any library in the world where the old Puritan fathers are stored up, and I would let you take down any one volume and tell me if you ever read more telling exhortations and addresses to sinners in any of your own books. Did not Bunyan plead with sinners, and whoever classed him with any but the Calvinists? Did not Charnock, Goodwin, and how we agonise for souls, and what were they but Calvinists? Did not Jonathan Edwards preach to sinners, and who more clear and explicit on these doctrinal matters. The works of our innumerable divines teem with passionate appeals to the unconverted. Oh, sirs, if I should begin the list, time should fail me. It is an indisputable fact that we have labored more than they all for the winning of souls. Was George Whitfield any the less seraphic? Did his eyes weep the fewer tears or his bowels move with the less compassion because he believed in God's electing love and preached the sovereignty of the Most High? It is an unfounded calumny. Our souls are not stony; our bowels are not withdrawn from the compassion which we ought to feel for our fellow-men; we can hold all our views firmly, and yet can weep as Christ did over a Jerusalem which was certainly to be destroyed. Again, I must say, I am not defending certain brethren who have exaggerated Calvinism. I speak of Calvinism proper, not that which has run to seed, and outgrown its beauty and verdure. I speak of it as I find it in Calvin's Institutes, and especially in his Expositions. I have read them carefully. I take not my views of Calvinism from common repute but from his books. Nor do I, in thus speaking, even vindicate Calvinism as if I cared for the name, but I mean that glorious system which teaches that salvation is of grace from first to last. And again, then, I say it is an utterly unfounded charge that we dare not preach to sinners.

And then further, that I may clear up these points and leave the less rubbish for my brethren to wheel away, we have sometimes heard it said, but those who say it ought to go to school to read the first book of history, that we who hold Calvinistic views are the enemies of revivals. Why, sirs, in the history of the Church, with but few exceptions, you could not find a revival at all that was not produced by the orthodox faith. What was that great work which was done by Augustine, when the Church suddenly woke up from the pestiferous and deadly sleep into which Pelagian doctrine had cast it? What was the Reformation itself but the waking up of men's minds to

those old truths? However far modern Lutherans may have turned aside from their ancient doctrines, and I must confess some of them would not agree with what I now say yet at any rate, Luther and Calvin had no dispute about Predestination. Their views were identical and Luther, “On the bondage of the will,” is as strong a book upon the free grace of God as Calvin himself could have written. Hear that great thunderer while he cries in that book, “Let the Christian reader know then, that God foresees nothing in a contingent manner; but that he foresees’ proposes, and acts, from his eternal and unchangeable will. This is the thunder stroke which breaks and overturns Free Will.” Need I mention to you better names than Huss, Jerome of Prague Farrel, John Lennox, Wickliffe, Wishart and Bradford? Need I do more than say that these held the same views, and that in their day anything like an Arminian revival was utterly unheard of and undreamed of. And then, to come to more modern times, there is the great exception, that wondrous revival under Mr. Wesley, in which the Wesleyan Methodists had so large a share, but permit me to say, that the strength of the doctrine of Wesleyan Methodism lay in its Calvinism. The great body of the Methodists disclaimed Palagianism, in whole and in part. They contended for man’s entire depravity, the necessity of the direct agency of the Holy Spirit and that the first step in the change proceeds not from the sinner, but from God. They denied at the time that they were Pelagians. Does not the Methodist hold as firmly as ever we do that man is saved by the operation of the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost only? And are not many of Mr. Wesley’s sermons full of that great truth, that the Holy Ghost is necessary to regeneration? Whatever mistakes he may have made, he continually preached the absolute necessity of the new birth by the Holy Ghost, and there are some other points of exceedingly close agreement, for instance, even that of human inability. It matters not how some may abuse us, when we say men could not of himself repent or believe, yet, the old Arminian standards said the same. True, they affirm that God has given grace to every man, but they do not dispute the fact, that apart from that grace there was no ability in man to do that which was good in his own salvation. And then, let me say if you turn to the continent of America, how cross the falsehood, that Calvinistic doctrine is unfavourable to revivals. Look at that wondrous shaking under Jonathan Edwards, and others which we might quote. Or turn to Scotland — what shall we say of M’Cheyne? What shall we say of those renowned Calvinists, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Wardlaw, and before them Livingstone, Haldane, Erskine, and the like? What shall we say of the men of their school, but that, while they held and

preached unflinchingly the great truths which we would propound to-day, yet God owned their word, and multitudes here saved. And if it were not perhaps too much like boasting of one's own work under God, I might say, personally I have never found the preaching of these doctrines lull this Church to sleep, but everwhile they have loved to maintain these truths, they have agonised for the souls of men, and the 1600 or more whom I have myself baptized, upon profession of their faith, are living testimonies that these old truths in modern times have not lost their power to promote a revival of religion.

I have thus cleared away these allegations at the outset; I shall now need a few minutes more to say, with regard to the Calvinistic system, that there are some things to be said in its favor, to which of course I attach but little comparative importance, but they ought not to be ignored. It is a fact that the system of doctrines called the Calvinistic, is so *exceedingly simple* and so readily learned, that as a system of Divinity it is more easily taught and more easily grasped by unlettered minds than any other. The poor have the Gospel preached to them in a style which assists their memories and commends itself to their judgments. It is a system which was practically acknowledged on high philosophic grounds by such no as Bacon, Leibnitz, and Newton, find yet it can charm the soul of a child and expand the intellect of a peasant. And then it has another virtue. I take it that the last is no mean one, but it has another — that when it is preached there is a something in it which *excites thought*. A man may hear sermons upon the other theory which shall glance over him as the swallow's wing gently sweeps the brook, but these old doctrines either make a man so angry that he goes home and cannot sleep for very hatred, or else they bring him down into lowliness of thought, feeling the immensity of the things which he has heard. Either way it excites and stirs him up not temporarily, but in a most lasting manner. These doctrines haunt him, he kicks against the pricks, and full often the word forces a way into his soul. And I think this is no small thing for any doctrine to do in an age given to slumber, and with human hearts so indifferent to the truth of God. I know that many men have gained more good by being made angry under a sermon than by being pleased by it, for being angry they have turned the truth over and over again, and at last the truth has burned its way right into their hearts. They have played with edge-tools, but they have cut themselves at last.

It has this singular virtue also — it is so *coherent in all its parts*. You cannot vanquish a Calvinist. You may think you can, but you cannot. The

stones of the great doctrines so fit into each other, that the more pressure there is applied to remove them the more strenuously do they adhere. And you may mark, that you cannot receive one of these doctrines without believing all. Hold for instance that man is utterly depraved, and you draw the inference then that certainly if God has such a creature to deal with salvation must come from God alone, and if from him, the offended one, to an offending creature, then he has a right to give or withhold his mercy as he wills; you are thus forced upon election, and when you have gotten that you have all: the others must follow. Some by putting the strain upon their judgments may manage to hold two or three points and not the rest, but sound logic I take it requires a man to hold the whole or reject the whole, the doctrines stand like soldiers in a square, presenting on every side a line of defense which it is hazardous to attack, but easy to maintain. And mark you, in these times when error is so rife and neology strives to be so rampant, it is no little thing to put into the hands of a young man a weapon which can slay his foe which he can easily learn to handle, which he may grasp tenaciously, wield readily, and carry without fatigue; a weapon, I may add, which no rust can corrode and no blows can break, trenchant, and well annealed, a true Jerusalem blade of a temper fit for deeds of renown. The coherency of the parts, though it be of course but a trifle in comparison with other things, is not unimportant. And then, I add, — but this is the point my brethren will take up — it has this excellency, that it is scriptural, and that it is consistent with the experience of believers. Men generally grow more Calvinistic as they advance in years. Is not that a sign that the doctrine is right. As they are growing riper for heaven, as they are getting nearer to the rest that remaineth for the people of God, the soul longs to feed on the finest of the wheat and abhors chaff and husks. And then I add — and, in so doing, I would refute a calumny that has sometimes been urged — this glorious truth has this excellency that it produces the holiest of men. We can look back through all our annals and say, to those who oppose us, you can mention no names of men more holy, more devoted, more loving, more generous than those which we can mention. The saints of our calendar, though uncannonized by Rome, rank first in the book of life. The name of Puritan needs only to be heard to constrain our reverence. Holiness had reached a height among them which is rare indeed, and well it might for they loved and lived the truth. And if you say that our doctrine is inimical to human liberty, we point you to Oliver Cromwell and to his brave Ironsides, Calvinists to a man. If you say, it leads to inaction, we point you to the Pilgrim Fathers and the

wildernesses they subdued. We can put our finger upon every spot of land, the wide world o'er, and say, Where was something done by a man who believed in God's decrees; and inasmuch as he did this, it is proof it did not make him inactive, it did not lull him to sloth."

The better way, however of proving this point is for each of us who hold these truths, to be more prayerful, more wakeful more holy, more active than we have ever been before, and by so doing, we shall put to silence the gainsaying of foolish men. A living argument, is an argument which tells upon every man; we cannot deny what we see and feel. Be it ours, if aspersed and calumniated, to disprove it by a blameless life, and it shall yet come to pass, that our Church and its sentiments too shall come forth "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

ELECTION

NO. 386

BY THE REV. JOHN BLOOMFIELD,

OF MEARD'S COURT, SOHO.

My dear Christian friends, those who best know my cast of mind and minis will readily believe me when I say I would rather have spoken on the majesty and mystery of the person of Christ, or I would rather have spoken on the perfection and intrinsic worth of the mediation of Christ, or on the great attractions of Christ as a gracious and omnipotent Savior, than on the subject that has been assigned to me. The subject that has been given me is that of the doctrine of eternal and personal election; I have to prove that the doctrine of election is a scriptural truth, and, at the commencement of my few remarks on this profound project, allow me to say that I hold and firmly believe the Bible to be a revelation from God, that the revelations of God's mind are essentially and infallibly true, that its ancient historical records are of the greatest value, that its prophecies are to be studied and to be venerated, that the doctrines of the Bible are in harmony with the majesty, wisdom, holiness and goodness of their Author. Now it should not be a pain with us whether a doctrine is liked or disliked, whether it is believed or disbelieved, but whether it is a doctrine according to godliness, whether it is the doctrine of the Word of God. Truth has never been popular in this world: Jesus Christ when on earth was be no means popular. Truth never will be popular in this world while men are influenced by sin, and enmity against God. Perhaps no doctrine has met with such bitter opposition as the doctrine on which I have to speak. It has been fearfully misunderstood for a want of prayerful and independent study of the Holy Scriptures, or perhaps from the miserable misrepresentations that have been given of it by some public anew. I? is a truth which has been bitterly opposed: we may oppose a doctrine which we cannot with all our puny efforts depose. We may dispute in our blindness and enmity a doctrine which we cannot refute. We believe firmly that the doctrine of election to salvation in Jesus Christ is a doctrine of the Scriptures. We

believe in sovereign love, but not in sovereign hatred. We believe in salvation by the grace of God without works, but not in damnation without sin. We believe firmly in election to salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but we discard from our creed the miserable, wretched doctrine of reprobation without sin. Is the doctrine of election a Scriptural doctrine? Can we grove it from the word of God? It is one thing to believe it to be a doctrine of Divine revelation, and it is another thing to have the sanctifying grace and power of it in our hearts. The election we read of in the Scriptures is inseparably connected with holiness, and we believe in no election to salvation without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He who has appointed salvation as an end has appointed the methods by which that end shall be accomplished. Perhaps no man possessed of his reasoning powers questions the truth that God has predestinated harvest as long as this world shall continue. But without sowing of seed, without the agricultural labor that is given to the land, we should have no harvest, because he who predestinated harvest predestinated the sowing of the seed as much. And God has appointed us not unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ. I shall endeavor now to prove, from the quotations of a few Scriptures, that the doctrine of eternal and personal election is a Scriptural and Divine truth. Jesus Christ himself was said to be “chosen of God and precious.” He is God’s elect, for Jehovah himself says, “Behold my servant, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.” Angels that continue in their unfallen dignity and felicity are termed elect angels. Elect angels are employed as ministering spirits to those that shall be heirs of salvation. Elect angels will be employed in the gathering of God’s elect into the heavenly world. The Jewish nation was a chosen nation, and as such they were privileged with the oracles of God, and stood as a representative people. They were chosen not because of their personal worth, they were chosen not because of their goodness, but they were chosen to be a separated people, a people that should be God’s peculiar treasure, and should be holiness unto the Lord; of them it was said, “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God — the Lord hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” Jesus Christ himself, in the 24th chapter of Matthew, speaks of certain days being shortened because of God’s elect. The Psalmist craved to be remembered with the favor that God was pleased to bear towards his people, that he might see the good of his chosen. And Jesus Christ himself said to his disciples, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” And the Apostle Paul very often in his writings has brought out this great and

profound doctrine. He says, “There is a remnant recording to the election of grace.” He speaks to the Ephesian Church, and says, “Ye are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that ye may be holy, and that ye may stand before God without blame in love.” God hath in the exercise of his sovereignty *chosen a people* in Christ to *salvation* before time began — it *was* before the foundation of the *world*, here is its antiquity — it is in Christ according to the riches of God’s grace, and it is to *holiness* and salvation. He, in his addresses to the Church at Thessalonica, said he could but thank God, that they were chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth.” Peter speaks of the people of God as a chosen generation and a royal priesthood. He wrote to the *elect* according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father. More Scriptures might be given upon this subject, but I think they would be unnecessary. If we would only give our attention to the simple teachings of the Spirit of God by the prophets, by the Psalmist, by Christ, and by the Apostles, we could not have one moment’s doubt as to the doctrine of Divine election being a Scriptural truth.

My second point is to show that God has chosen his people to the highest possible relation to himself, and to the enjoyment of the most precious blessings in Christ. All spiritual relations stand in Christ, all spiritual relations originated in God’s grace; and all spiritual relations are standing manifestations of the sovereignty of God’s favor and of the immutability of God’s love. If we are the sons of God, what has constituted us the sons of God? We are sons of God by God’s sovereign love; it is by an act of adoption, it is by an act of Jehovah; will, that we are constituted his sons and his daughters. Adoption is relation established to which we have no natural right; adoption is one thing, and the spirit of adoption is another. Now Christ is God’s first-born, and all the family are chosen in him; Christ is the glorious Head of the Church, and all the family of God are chosen members in him; Christ is the everlasting Priest of his Church and he represents all the family, just as the Jewish priest represented by his breast-plate and in the fulfillment of his office the whole of the Jewish nation. All relation to God then stands in Christ, originated in the sovereignty of Jehovah’s will, and is expressive of the infinite love of Jehovah’s heart. We are chosen to salvation — that is the end, the means by which that end is accomplished is by the “sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth.” We are chosen to use fullness, every Christian should seek to be useful; every Christian in his right mind is a witness for God, every

Christian, as he is influenced by Christian principles, bears testimony to the dignity of the relation that God has established and bears testimony to the holiness of the principles by which his heart is influenced, every Christian should be a living gospel, his life should bear testimony to the holiness of that Christianity that he studies and is influenced by. We are chosen to eternal life, but it is eternal life through Christ. Without faith there is no evidence of interest in Christ, without faith there is no enjoyment of salvation by Christ. Without faith a man has no evidence of interest in the Lamb's Book of Life, but he who believes in Christ, however weak and trembling his faith has evidence in his own heart that his name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life and his conduct corresponding with the holiness of the gospel he carries in his life a witness to his interest in all the purposes of heaven and in all the redemptive excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ. The great Evidence of interest in election, is holiness. A man to talk of believing in election and going to heaven, because he is one of God's elect, and yet living in sin, and in enmity to God, this can never, never be. We are chosen unto salvation, it is said "through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth;" and without this sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth, there is no holiness; and, "without holiness, no man can see the Lord." Without holiness, no man would be capable of serving God in heaven; without holiness, no man would be capable of beholding the glories of Jesus Christ there; without holiness, no man can serve God with power and success here; without holiness, no man can have fellowship with God, and so have fellowship with us, for truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ. It is only by a practical life of consistency with faith in Christ Jesus, that we have evidence of our interest in election. We are chosen, not because we are holy, but that we might be holy; we are chosen, not because we are good, but that by the principles of the everlasting Gospel, we might become so; we are chosen, not because we are saved but that we may be saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I hold, dear friends, that the great doctrine of election should be preached. It should be preached, because it is part of a grand system of truth. Truth is not one doctrine, but it is a grand system, and you cannot leave out one part without impairing its beauty, nor leave out one part of this system without weakening its strength. The beauty of truth lies in its perfection, and in that harmony of its connection the strength of truth lies in the unity of its parts, and it is like gold dust — it is all precious. If Election be not a truth inspired by the Spirit of the living God — if it be not a truth proclaimed by the prophets that were inspired — if it be not a

truth published by the Apostles — if it be not a truth found in the teachings of the Word of God, let us never say one word about it; but if it was truth in the days of the Apostles, then it is no less a truth now. What the Apostles preached, I hold, we ought to preach in the spirit of love, in the spirit of faith, in the spirit of meekness, entirely depending on the power of the Holy Spirit to give us success in the conversion of immortal souls. One moment longer, and I have done. There is nothing in the doctrine of election that is discouraging to a penitent, seeking sinner. There is everything in the Gospel to welcome the returning prodigal to his Father's house; there is everything to meet the necessities of an awakened conscience; there is everything in the Gospel to satisfy the longing of a penitent soul. I know some may say, "I fear, Sir, I shall not be saved because I am not one of God's elect." Art thou a sinner? art thou a penitent sinner? art thou a seeking sinner? If thou art a seeking, penitent sinner, you cannot imagine how welcome you are to the provisions of infinite love. Every truth in the Gospel is open to you; every promise in the Gospel is open to you; every invitation in Scripture speaks to you. If thou art a sinner seeking mercy, let this cheer thy heart — that God delighteth in mercy. If thou art seeking salvation, Jesus is a willing and an able Savior, and he has said, "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." There is nothing dear friends, in the doctrine of election as it stands in the Scriptures that should discourage any penitent in seeking after mercy through Jesus Christ. I know, in the miserable misrepresentations of this great and glorious truth, men might well be discouraged from seeking mercy through the Savior. But see it in its Scriptural connection; see it in the simplicity of it as it is put before us by the great Apostles; see it in the teachings of the Savior himself, and there is nothing in it but that which welcomes a penitent sinner. It is a great encouragement to a seeking Soul. Does the farmer who sows his seed sow that seed with less or more encouragement because he knows that God has ordained that harvest shall be? He sows his seed with a heart brimfull with hope, because God has promised that a harvest shall be as long as the world continues. Only let the means be used according to the Holy Scriptures; only let the poor awakened penitent sinner renounce everything but Christ and him crucified, mercy will roll into his troubled heart and fill his spirit with peace, and he shall come off more than conqueror, shouting, Victory through the blood of the Lamb — Victory, victory through Jesus Christ.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

NO. 387

BY THE REV. EVAN PROBERT,

OF BRISTOL.

My Christian friends, you are quite aware that the subject which in to engage our further attention this afternoon, is HUMAN DEPRAVITY — a subject about which there are different opinions, which I shall not attempt to examine at the present time, but I shall confine myself to the teachings of God’s word, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and from which we learn what man was when he came from the hands of his Maker, and what he is now as a fallen creature. It is explicitly declared by the sacred writers, that God made man upright, and therefore his condition was one of perfect innocence and high moral excellence. There was no tendency to evil in any part of his nature, nothing that deviated in the least from the lute of moral rectitude. Whatever his duty was, it was to him his invariable and delightful employment. But, alas! man in honor did not long continue. Through the insinuating wiles of the devil, our first parents were induced to violate the positive command of their Maker, the observance of which was the condition of their happiness, and, as a punishment for their transgression, they were driven out of Paradise, and became liable to be cut off by the sentence of death, and consigned to everlasting misery; and, in consequence of our connexion with Adam, as our federal head and representative, we became subject to the dreadful consequences of his fall. This is evident from the testimony of the Apostle Paul, in the fifth Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. There we read, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” And, again, “By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, and by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners.” It is evident from these passages that God viewed Adam in the covenant of works as the head and representative of his natural posterity, and consequently, when he fell we fell in him, and became subject to the tremendous consequences of his fall. Here it may be asked, what are the

consequences of his fall? what were they to him, and what are they to us? To answer this question, we must ascertain what the Apostle means when he uses the words death, judge meet, and condemnation. I think that he uses these words in opposition to the grace of God, to justification of life, and to the reign of the redeemed in life by Jesus Christ. These are the benefits which result from the grace of God through Christ, and which stand opposed to the evils which sin has introduced into our world; and, as it cannot be supposed that these benefits relate to temporal life, or solely to the resurrection of the body, it cannot be that the evils involved in the words, death, judgment, and condemnation, relate simply to temporal death, but they must be considered as including temporal, legal, and spiritual death.

From the very hour that Adam transgressed, he became mortal, — the sentence of death was pronounced upon him, and the seeds of depravity were sown in his system; thus the fair and beautiful and glorious creature began to fade, wither, and die, and all his posterity became mortal in him, and have from that day to this come into the world dying. Whatever the case of man might have been if he had not sinned we cannot say. ‘This however we know, that he would not have died; for death is the result of the federal failure of the father of our race. “Dust thou art,” God said to him, “and unto dust shalt thou return.” “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” “In Adam all died.” So that it may be said to every one of Adam’s sons and daughters, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”’

But Adam by his transgression not only brought temporal death upon himself and his posterity, he also brought legal death. Having violated the law that was given him to observe, he became under the curse of that law, which involved not only temporal death and expulsion from Paradise, but an exposure to suffer the just demerits of his transgression; and, in consequence of our connection with him as our federal head, we are under the curse of the same law — “By one man’s disobedience judgment came upon all men to condemnation;” and further, “By the offense of one many were made sinners.” The very moment our progenitor transgressed, all his descendants became subject to the curse. The holy nature of God abhorred the apostate race, the source of his holy and righteous law has ever rested upon that race, judgment has been given and recorded against us as a fallen world, in the court of Heaven, and unless it is reversed it must fall upon us with all its tremendous consequences.

We are also, in consequence of Adam's transgression become the subjects of spiritual death, which consists not merely in the deprivation of the principle of life, but in having become depraved creatures, all the faculties of our souls and members of our bodies are depraved so that it may be said of us, as the prophet says of the Jewish nation, "The head is sick, the whole heart is faint, from the sole of the foot unto the head there is no soundness." What! no soundness in any part? nothing good in any part? nothing spiritually good? nothing if cherished and fostered that will not lead to God, to Heaven, and to happiness? Nothing whatever. Let no one mistake me. I do not mean to say for a single moment, that sin has destroyed any of the faculties of man's soul, for they are all there. They all exist as they did when they were produced; but I mean to say, that sin has deprived man of the principle of spiritual life, and made him a depraved and debased creature; and we believe that we can prove this from the word of God, as well as from observation.

First, — From the conduct of little children. Children begin to sin very early in life. If there were any good in us, it would show itself in infancy, before good habits became corrupted, and evil principles were produced by our connection with the world. But do little children prefer good? Are they inclined to the good and the excellent? Do you see from the earliest period of their existence that they are desirous of good? On the contrary, I say, as soon as they begin to act, they prove by their action that in them there is a depraved nature, from which they act. "Madness," says the wise man, "is bound up in the heart of a child," they astray from the womb telling lies. But it may be said, in the way of objection, that this may arise from the unfavourable circumstances in which some children are placed. No doubt, unfavourable circumstances have a bad influence upon the minds of children; but it is not so with the whole race. Point out to me, one child who is disposed from in infancy to seek that which is good, that which is holy. And surely if the tendency of infants from their earliest history is to evil it is a proof that it must arise from the evil propensities within them, which grog; with their growth, and strengthen with their strength.

Secondly, — We have further proof of human depravity from the aversion of sinners to come to Christ. They are invited to come, persuaded to come, and are assured that they shall find pardon, acceptance, and salvation. But they cannot be induced to come to him, and why will they not come? Is it because he is not willing to receive them, or because there is anything in him to prevent them? No but it is because of the deep-rooted depravity in

their hearts. The heart is averse to all that is good, and therefore rejects the Savior and turns away from him. Hence he complained when in our world, "How often would I have gathered you, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "We will not come to me, that ye might have life!" What more need be added? Man turns away in proud disdain from all the blessings of the gospel, and the glories of heaven brought before him, and rushes on with steady purpose to damnation. "Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Oh, to how many in this land may it be said, "They hate knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of his counsel, they despised all his reproof"

Thirdly, — We have further evidence of native depravity from the testimony of Scripture. In the first place, let me refer you to the fifth chapter of the Book of Genesis, and the third verse. There we read, that Adam, after he had lived one hundred and thirty years, begat a son in his own likeness after his image. Mind, the image in which Adam was created was the image of God, but that image he had lost before he begat Seth; therefore, the image in which Seth was born must have been the image of his progenitor, as a fallen and depraved creature. Let me refer you, in the second place, to the third chapter of the Gospel by John. "He that is born of the flesh," said the Savior to Nicodemus, "is flesh, and he that is born of the Spirit is spirit." To be born of the flesh, according to the wisest interpretation of that passage, is to be born of a depraved nature, to be born of the Spirit is to be born of the Holy Spirit of God — which birth, the Savior told Nicodemus he must experience before he could see the kingdom of God. And again, we have several passages in proof of this point. In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the fifth verse of that chapter, the Apostle says, "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin by the law which worked in us to bring forth fruit unto death." "When we were in the flesh," means this — when we were in an unrenewed depraved state, In the same chapter he says, at the 14th verse, "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin," as if he had said, "I am as a sinner, a depraved creature." In accordance with this the Apostle says, at the 18th verse of the same chapter, "In me — that is, in my flesh — there dwelleth no good thing." No love to God, no holy aspirations! No, none whatever. At the beginning of the eighth chapter of the same Epistle, we find the terms "flesh" and "Spirit" placed in opposition to each other, "Who walk not after the flesh," says the Apostle,

describing Christians, “but after the Spirit.” To be in the flesh is to be in a depraved state, in be in the Spirit is to be a partaker of his grace, to walk after the flesh is to walk after the dictates of corrupt principles and propensities, to walk after the Spirit is to be governed by spiritual principles and by the Holy Spirit of God, and the Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, says to them, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” These passages, I think, prove beyond all contradiction, that man as a fallen creature, is a depraved creature, destitute of any good. There are many other passages of Scripture that confirm this doctrine, such as the following “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean.” Not one. What is man that he should be clean, or the son of man that he should be just. “Behold,” says the Psalmist, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Read the account of man before the deluge, and there we find that every imagination and the thoughts of his heart were only evil, and that continually. The same account is given of him after the flood. The deluge could not wipe away the stains of moral pollution, could not destroy in man the deep-rooted depravity of his heart. “The heart,” says Jeremiah, “is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it,” I think that what our blessed Lord said to the Jews of old, is applicable to every unconverted man under heaven — “But I know you that ye have not the love of God in you.” Some of you may be more humane than others; more benevolent than others, more compassionate than others, as men, and as women, but one has as much of the love of God in him as others. “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” against the being of God, against the government of God, against the gospel of God, against the purposes of God. The enmity of the human heart is unconquerable by any human agency whatever. It is mortal enmity, it strikes at the being of God, and, therefore as President Edwards, of America, justly observes, “that when it found God in; our nature, in our world, it put him to death on the accursed tree.” Such, my brethren, is the enmity of the heart of man, such is its deep-rooted depravity, that in him there is no good thing. We can never speak too bad of what sin has done for us, and we can never speak too much, or too well, of what God has done for us, in the person of his Son, and in us, by the agency of his Holy Spirit.

Fourthly — The doctrines of human depravity may be proved from those passages which assert the universal necessity of redemption by Jesus Christ. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus,” said the angel, “because he shall

save his people from their sins.” “In him we have redemption through his blood,” says St. Paul, “even the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.” Now, the work of redemption pre-supposes the sinful state of man, and implies a deliverance from that state and from the punishment to which man is exposed. Hence it is said of Christ, that he came into the world to save sinners, to seek and to save that which was lost, and that he died — the just for the unjust — that he might bring us to God. Now, if redemption by Christ is necessary, it is evident that man is a sinner, and, if man is a sinner, it is evident that man has a depraved nature. You cannot make anything else of it. Say what you like about man and about his excellencies, you must come to this conclusion, that he is a condemned and a depraved creature, or else he would not need redemption through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fifthly — The passages that assert the universal necessity of the new birth prove this very truth — “Except a man be born of water,” said the Savior, “and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again.” But if a man has some good in him, and if that good could be cherished, and be increased, and worked up so as to make men fit for heaven, what need of the new birth? what need of the Spirit of all grace to renew him in the spirit of his mind? Whenever, my brethren, you pray to God for the Spirit to change the human heart, whether you believe the doctrine or not, you imply it in your petition before the mercy-seat. They are represented by the sacred writers as having been called from darkness into light, as having an unction from the Holy One whereby they know all things, and those of them who have been called readily acknowledge that they were once foolish, once deceived and deceiving, once depraved — very depraved; and not only so, but the very best of Christians in the world confess with humility the depravity of their hearts, and I believe that the man who knows himself best is the man who is most ready to confess this and to humble himself before God — “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And while Christians feel this, their language is, “Create within me a clean heart, oh God! and renew a right spirit within me; purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Apply the blood of sprinkling to my guilty conscience, and let the Spirit of all grace work in my polluted and depraved heart, and form me to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ, and meeten my immortal spirit for the inheritance of the saints in light, and of angels in glory. My dear friends, I need not say more.

I should not think there is an individual here this afternoon who is not disposed to agree with me, when I say that man is a fallen creature, is a depraved creature, is a condemned creature: he is under the curse of God's righteous law, and at the same time the subject of the reigning power of depravity, the subject of the effects of sin throughout his whole nature; and that, as a sinner, let it be recorded in high heaven there is no good in man's nature until God puts it there, and you will never be brought, my beloved hearers, into a right state of mind before tied, until you are brought to feel that you have nothing, and that you must have all in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Oh! Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!" But here are messed tidings, But in me is their help found." Does not this subject, my hearers, teach us, in the first place, the amazing long suffering of God towards our race. God might, as soon as man sinned without the least imputation of injustice to his character, have cut him down, because the fall was the result of his criminal choice, and attended by the most aggravating circumstances; but God has borne with us, and is bearing still, which shows that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his ways and live. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, oh! house of Israel?" And does not the subject teach us also the helplessness of man as a sinner? he is unable to atone for his sins or to renew his heart. Many attempts have been made to atone for human transgression, and to cleanse and purify the human heart but they have all failed not one has succeeded. No sacrifice, short of an infinite one, could satisfy Divine justice and magnify the broken law. No power, short of the omnipotent energy of the Eternal Spirit, can renew the human heart. But, while man is a helpless creature he is not a hopeless creature. We do not say to him there is no hope. Oh, no! I rejoice in that thought at this very moment. God has remembered us in our lowest state, he has laid help upon one that is mighty, one who, by his passive and active obedience, has made the law and made it honorable, satisfied the claims of Divine justice, so that God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ; and while he made atonement for our transgressions, he has procured for us the Spirit of all grace to renew our nature, to transform us into the likeness of himself, and to prepare us in the use of means for the inheritance of the saints in light. Those of us who are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and, I trust, most of us are — would to God that I could believe that we all are — let us pray for a larger measure of the Spirit, upon ourselves, individually, and upon the world around us.

Surely, my hearers, my dear brother who has to occupy this platform, and who has to unfurl to you the banner of the cross, will need a large measure of the Holy Spirit. May He come upon his head, and upon his heart; and may he never ascend this platform but in His strength, and under His guidance, and in His light; may he never preach a sermon without its being blessed to the conversion of souls, and the building up of the Church; and may you, as a Christian Church, continue earnest in prayer for the Spirit to come, and it is the Spirit will reconcile us to each other, the Spirit will remove differences between Arminians and Calvinists, the Spirit will bring us to see, by-and-by, eye to eye, and this world will be filled with the glory of God. May the Lord command his blessing upon these remarks, for his name's sake. Amen.

The Meeting then adjourned till half-past six. After the friends had reassembled —

The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON said, I wish to make one or two observations before I introduce to you the speakers of this evening. Controversy is never a very happy element for the child of God: he would far rather be in communion than engaged in defense of the faith or in attack upon error. But the soldier of Christ knows no choice in his Master's commands. He may feel it to be better for him to lie upon the bed of rest than to stand covered with the sweat and dust of battle; but as a soldier he has learned to obey, and the rule of his obedience is not his personal comfort but his Lord's absolute command. The servant of God must endeavor to maintain all the truth which his Master has revealed to him, because, as a Christian soldier, this IS part of his duty. But while he does so, he accords to others the liberty which he enjoys himself. In his own house of prayer he must and will maintain that which he believes to be true. He does not feel himself at all out of temper or angry when he hears that in other places there are come holding different views of what the truth is, who as honestly, and perhaps as forcibly, endeavor to maintain their views. To our own Master we stand or fall; we have no absolute judge of right or wrong incarnate in the flesh on earth So-day. Nor is even the human judgment itself an infallible evidence of our being, for since the fall, no powers of mortals are free from imperfection. Our judgment is not necessarily a fully enlightened one, and we must therefore let another man's judgment also be his guide unto God; but we must not forget that every man is responsible to the Most High for the use of that judgment, for the use of that mental power which God has given him, by which he is to weigh and balance the

arguments of either side. I have found commonly that, with regard to the doctrine of grace which we preach, there are a great many objections raised. One of the simplest trades will the world is the raising of objections. You never need, if you wish to set up in that line of business, to look abroad for capital or resources; however poor and penniless a man may be, even in wits, he can easily manufacture difficulties. It is said "that a fool may raise objections which a thousand wise men could not answer." I would not hesitate to say that I could bring objections to your existence to-night, which you could not disprove. I could sophisticate and mistily until I brought out the conclusion that you were blind, and deaf, and dumb, and I am not sure that by any process of logic you would be able to prove that you were not so. It might be clear enough to you that you could both speak, and see, and hear. The only evidence, however I suppose that you could give would be by speaking, and seeing, and hearing, which might be conclusive enough, but if it were left to be a mere matter of word-fighting for schoolmen, I question whether the caviller might not cavil against you to the judgment day in order to dispute you out of the evidence of your very senses. The raising of difficulties is the easiest trade in all the world, and, permit me to add, it is not one of the most honorable. The raising of objections has been espoused, you know, by that great and mighty master of falsehood in the olden times, and it has been carried on full often by those whose doubts about the truth sprung rather from their hearts than from their heads. Some difficulties however, ought to be met, and let me now remove one or two of them. There are some who say, "Provided the doctrines of grace be true, what is the use of our preaching?" Of course I can hardly resist a smile while I put this splendid difficulty — it is so huge a one. If there are so many who are to be saved, then why preach? You cannot diminish, you cannot increase the number, why preach the Gospel? Now, I thought my friend Mr. Bloomfield anticipated this difficulty well enough. There must be a harvest, — why sow why plough? Simply because the harvest is ordained in the use of means. The reason why we preach at all is because God has ordained to save some. If he had not we could not see the good of preaching at all. Why! we should come indeed on a fool's errand if we came here without the Master's orders at our back. His elect shall be saved — every one of them, — and if not by my instrumentality or that of any brotherhood present, if not by any instrumentality, then would God sooner call them by his Holy Spirit, without the voice of the minister, than that they should perish. But this is the very reason why we preach, because we wish to have the honor of

being the means, in the hand of God, of calling these elect ones to himself. The certainty of the result quickens us in our work, and surely it would stay none but a fool in his labor. Because God ordains that his word shall not return unto him void, therefore, we preach that word, because, “as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it to bring forth and bud, even so doth the word of the Lord accomplish his purpose;” therefore, we would have our doctrine to drop as the rain and distil as the dew, and as the small rain upon the tender herb. But, there are some again who say, “To what purpose after all, is your inviting any to come, when the Spirit of God alone constrains them to come; and why, especially, preach to those whom you believe to be so depraved that they cannot and will not come?” Ay, just so, this is a serious difficulty to everything except faith. Do you see Ezekiel yonder; he is about to preach a sermon. By his leave, we will stop him. “Ezekiel, where are you about to preach?” “I am about,” saith he, “to preach to a strange congregation — dead, dry bones, lying in a mass in a valley.” “But, Ezekiel, they have no power to live.” “I know that,” saith he. “To what purpose, then, is your preaching to them? If they have no power, and it the breath must come from the four winds, and they have no life in themselves, to what purpose do you preach?” “I am ordered to preach,” saith he, “commanded,” and he does so. He prophesies, and afterwards mounting to a yet higher stage of faith, he cries, “Come from the four winds, oh breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” And the wind comes, and the effect of his ministry is seen in their life. So preach we to dead sinners; so pray we for the living Spirit. So, by faith, do we expect his Divine influence, and it come, — cometh not from man nor of man, nor by blood, nor by the will of the fly, but from the sovereign will of God. But notwithstanding it comes instrumentally through the faith of the preacher while he pleads with man, “as though God did beseech them by us, we pray them in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God.” But if ten thousand other objections were raised, my simple reply could be just this “We can raise more objections against your theory, than you can against ours.’ We do not believe that our scheme is free from difficulties; it were uncandid if we were to say so. But we believe that we have not the title of the difficulties to contend with that they have on the opposite side of the question. It is not hard to find in those texts which appear to be most against us, a key, by which they are to be harmonized, and we believe it to be utterly impossible, without wresting Scripture, to turn those texts which teach our doctrine, to teach any other thing whatsoever. They are plain,

pointed, pertinent. If the Calvinistic scheme were the whole sum and substance of all truth, why then surely, if it held everything within some five or six doctrines, you might begin to think that man were God, and that God's theology were less than infinite in its sweep. What are we, that we should grasp the infinite? We shall never measure the marches of eternity. Who shall compass with a span the Eternal God, and who shall think out anew his infinite thoughts? We pretend not that Calvinism is a plumb line to fathom the deeps; but we do say, that it is a ship which can sail safely over its surface, and that every wave shall speed it onwards towards its destined haven To fathom and to comprehend is neither your business nor mine, but to learn, and then, having learned, to teach to other", is the business of each Christian man; and thus would we do, God being our helper. One friend kindly suggests a difficulty to me, which, having just spoken of, I shall sit down. That amazing difficulty has to do with the next speaker's topic, and, therefore, I touch it. It says in the Scriptures, that Paul would not have us destroy him with our meat for whom Christ died. Therefore, the inference is — only mark, we do not endorse the logic — the inference is, that you may destroy some with your meat for whom Christ died. That inference I utterly deny. But then, let me put it thus. Do you know that a man may be guilty of a sin which he cannot commit. Does that startle you? Every man is guilty of putting God out of existence, if he says in his heart, "No God." But he cannot put God out of existence, and yet, the guilt is there, because he would if he could. There be some who crucify the Son of God afresh. They cannot, — he is in heaven, he is beyond their reach. And yet, because their deeds would do that, unless some power restrained, they are guilty of doing what they can never do, because the end and aim of their doings would be to destroy Christ, if he were here. Now, then, it is quite consistent with the doctrine that no man can destroy any for whom Christ died, still to insist upon it that a man may be guilty of the blood of souls. He may do that which, unless God prevented it, — and that is no credit to him, — unless God prevented it, would destroy souls for whom Jesus Christ died. But, again I say, I have not come here to-night to anticipate and to answer all objections; I have only done that, that some troubled conscience might find peace. This was not a meeting of discussion, but for the explaining of our own views, and the teaching them simply to the people. I now shall call upon my beloved brother to take up the point of particular redemption.

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

NO. 388

BY THE REV. J. A. SPURGEON,

OF SOUTHAMPTON.

I think it is well that the death of Christ and its consequent blessings should occupy one place in our discussion here tonight; for not only is it the central truth in the Calvinistic theory, but the death of Christ is the center point of all history and of all time. The devout of all ages have stood and with anxious glance into these deep mysteries, searching what, or what manner of things the Holy Spirit did by them testify and reveal; and we know that hereafter, in the world of glory, the redeemed shall sing of these things for ever, and shall find in the Redeemer and in his work, fresh matter for love and for praise as eternity shall roll on. We take our stand between the two, and I think the language of our hearts to-night is akin to all ages of the Church of Christ, — “God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now the grand result of the death of our Lord — though not the only result — the grand result of that death, so far as man is concerned, is the redemption which it ultimately achieves and with regard to the extent of that redemption, we believe the Scriptures are plain and speak most clearly, when they tell of a final day of manifestation, when the redeemed *from amongst* men shall take their stand before the Redeemer, to sing of him who, as the good shepherd, hath laid down his life for his sheep, and has purchased unto himself a peculiar people — his body, the Church. Now, we believe that, in reaching that grand and final result there are many steps that must be taken and we think that, from these preliminary steps, there are multitudes that gain rich handfuls of blessings who shall not however reap the full harvest of glory. We believe that the whole world is flooded with blessings, and that the stream rolls broad and clear from the hill-foot of Calvary, and laves the feet alike of the godly and of the ungodly, the thankful and the thankless. But from the riven side of Christ there comes forth one stream — the river of life whose banks are trodden only by the

feet of the multitude of believers, who wash and are clean, who drink and live for evermore. We speak tonight of Christ's death in its various relations, so as to touch upon and include sundry things which cannot be properly classed under the title of particular redemption; but we feel we are driven to this course, so as to be able to do justice to ourselves and to our leading theme.

Now, we have three sets of truths before us, and these three sets of truths we must deal with. (1.) We have, first of all, a God holy and righteous, loving and gracious, a God who has been most grievously wronged and injured, and a God who must be honored alike by the giving him all the glory of which he has been robbed, and by the bearing of his just expression of holy indignation at the wrong that has been done unto him. We have a God jealous in the extreme, and yet, strange enough, declaring that he passes by iniquity and forgiveth transgression and sin. We have a God truthful, who has sworn "that the soul that sinneth it shall die," and who yet speaks to those souls, and says, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die." A God whom we know must be just, and must execute upon the ungodly that which they have justly merited, and who yet strangely says, "Come and let us plead together, and though your sins be as scarlet I will make them as wool, and though they be red like crimson I will make them white as snow" "That is one set of truths — strange, and apparently contradictory. Then we have another. (2.) We have a world lost, and yet swathed in an atmosphere of mercy. We have a world dark with the darkness of death, and yet everywhere we find it more or less under the influences of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, which came a light unto darkness, that did not and could not comprehend it. And we have, moreover, a world rebellious, and serving another matter than the right one, and yet nevertheless beneath the feet of him who has been made Head over all things for his body's sake, which is the Church. (3.) And then, once more, we have a Church peculiar in its unmerited privileges, chosen from before all time to inherit the kingdom given to it before the world began — a kingdom that can never be trodden upon save by the spotless and the deathless, and yet the inheritors are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins — list, ruined — without a God and without a hope in the world. How are all those strange and apparently contradictory things to be solved? One clue, we find, is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The work involves its ultimate end, which is redemption, and of that work we are about to speak to her to-night.

We speak first of those blessings which come from the death of Christ, and are for all men, the whole world is under a mediatorial government, the whole spirit of which is a government of long-suffering, graciousness, tenderness, and mercy, such as could not have been exercised had Christ never died. A government there might have been, but it must be, we think, a government akin to that which is found in the place where those are found who make their bed in hell. We find, moreover, that the direct and indirect influences of the Cross of Christ have pervaded the world, and none can tell how full oft its gentle spirit has come like oil upon the troubled waters; or what man, with his wild passions, would have been without the ameliorating influence of the Cross. We possibly may be able to tell, when we look across the impassable gulf into a Gehenna beneath, and see sin unchecked working out its dire results and, we believe that whatever comes short of that darkness, whose very light is darkness, is due to that light which radiates from the Cross of Christ, and whatever is short of hell streams from Calvary. And then, further still, we have a Bible, a revelation filled with the love and mercy of God to man — a Bible in which our Lord himself could show, beginning at Moses, and in all the prophets, that which did testify concerning himself; and, apart from Jesus Christ and his death, there could have been no such revelation of God's character unto the human race. A revelation there might have been, but it would have been a revelation of Sinai's horrors and terrors, without even the spark of hope which comes forth from that dispensation there set forth. There might have been a revelation, I say, but it would have been a revelation that would not have wound up as this does with a blessing. It would have ended like the Old Testament with a curse; it would have begun with the same. It would have been worse than Ezekiel's roll of woes, which is filled all over with terrible lamentation, and with awful sorrow and woe. And again, there is a positive overture of mercy, a true and faithful declaration of good tidings unto every creature, and we *do* believe that it is our duty to preach the Gospel unto every creature, and the Gospel runs thus — "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, for he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That overture we hold to be no mockery, but made in good faith, and that overture is not the overture of a shadow. But the presentation of solid, substantial blessings; and for the rejection of that, not God, but man is answerable, and for the rejection of that he will be lost. "For this is the condemnation, that they have not believed on him whom God hath sent." And, then, lastly, we find that as the purchase of the death of Christ there is a Church and that Church is sent forth into the

world with orders to bless it and to do good unto all men. It is bidden to go forth as a light in the midst of darkness; it is bidden so to live as to be the salt of the whole earth. Now, we say that each one of these blessings is no small gift from God to man — no mean result of the death of our Master; and, combined, we think they would form a bond worthy of a God, and, as we put our hand upon it, we think we can give full and true expression, and with an emphasis surpassed by none to that glorious text — “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;” And we think, upon our system, and upon ours alone, we can give full truthfulness and emphasis to the remainder — “That whosoever believeth in him shall have everlasting life.” Now, upon redemption proper, the latter part of our theme, we will pass on to speak. And, first, what do we mean by redemption? Most certainly we do not mean the POSSIBILITY OF REDEMPTION, for we have learned to distinguish between the possibility of a thing and a thing itself. We feel this, that we do not preach and cannot preach, gathering our teaching from the Bible, a possibility of redemption. We proclaim a redemption. Nor do we mean by redemption a contingency of redemption, which, again, is contingent upon a third thing. We have learned to distinguish between a contingency and a certainty. We proclaim a certain redemption, and we speak of that which is not possible but positive, not contingent but certain. Neither do we mean by redemption such an outgrowth of the man’s own power or goodness as shall enable him to burst his way through every bondage and to get forth free; such an elevation of human nature, whether by the education of others, or by his own works, as to enable him at last to stand free. If we meant that, we should use the word escape, but not the word redemption. And again, if we meant, as some, alas! have seemed to mean, God’s waiving his claim upon man, God’s waiving man’s liabilities, and God’s giving up that which are believe, as a holy God, he cannot surrender; if we meant that, we should speak of emancipation — of pure pardon and forgiveness but we do not. We mean redemption. And then, gain, we do not mean by redemption the meeting of the debts, either in prospective or in the present. We do not mean that the man shall either in the present or in the future, bear any part of the penalty, and, by some goodness, either in the present or foreseen, satisfy God’s claim upon him. If we meant that, I think we should use altogether another word than the word redemption. What do we mean by redemption? We mean, by redemption, the work one being which is done for another, but generally a helpless one, in order to give him perfect freedom. And when we speak of redemption, mark you, ere speak of a

thing that is the result of that work. We distinguish between redemption and redemption work. What we mean, by redemption, is just this — the grand result and end of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we could as well speak of redemption apart from the redeemed, as we could speak of life apart from a living creature. Life and living creatures are co-extensive, and so is redemption and the redeemed. If you take down any book that will give you an explanation of the word “redemption,” I think you will find three things, put therein. It is a ransom, a rescue, and a release. Now, I take the whole three words to be the fullness of the meaning of our one word. It is such a ransom, and such a rescue, as result in a complete and full release. Whatever stops short of that thing, is, of course, not the thing itself; the thing itself that we mean, is the positively being redeemed and made free. Now, just by way of simplifying the subject, let me speak of the Redeemer, and of the redemption work, and of those who are redeemed.

First, the Redeemer, who is he? We believe him to be the Word that was with God, equal unto God, and was God, — who became flesh and dwelt amongst us. At the same time, the flesh did not become, in any sense, Deity, neither did the Deity, in any sense, become carnal. They formed another person and that person the God-man, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Now, what is he? And here I just ask that question, in order to meet some objections, and, if I can, to put on one side two or three theories that seem to fight against ours. I hear a voice, saying, in reply to that question, what is he? Why he is God’s idea of humanity he is God, who has taken up humanity from its fallen state, raised it up not only to the place where he first put it, but, beyond, even to the height to which he hoped it would ascend, or possibly something beyond it. And, now, from henceforth, such is the union betwixt common humanity, that the lost, in their degradation, have but to look to their common humanity exalted, realize their identity with it, and to feel themselves, by that deed, raised to the same standard and redeemed and free for evermore. To which we reply, there is enough of truth in that lie to keep it alive, and that is all. We do believe that our Master did lay hold of humanity; we do believe that he is the most perfect man that ever was; we do believe that he has honored and dignified the human race, by taking that upon men, and by becoming flesh like unto ourselves. But we cannot see how that the gazing upon that can open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, give life to the dead, and procure the discharge of our sins any more than we can see how that the gazing upon an Olympic

game could give to the physically lame, physical strength, or could give to those who were physically dead, life from their physical death.

And, again I hear other voices replying to that question. They say, “he is the great example of self-denial, and of the submission of the human will to the Divine. And what redemption is, is this — that man now can look to that great display of self-denial, can catch of its spirit, and can imitate it, and by that deed of subjection making the will to succumb to the will of the Divine, they may, at least, emancipate themselves, and go forth free “To which we reply, once more, there is enough of truth in that just to cement the error together, and to give it a plausible appearance to the sons of need, but there is nothing more. It is true that our Savior was the Sent One of the Father. It is true, he came, saying, “Lo! I come to do thy will.” He declares he was not doing his own will, but the will of him that sent him. And he winds up by saying, “Not my will, but thine be done.” But, after all, we cannot, and dare not accept that submission of Christ’s will to the Father, as being a satisfaction for sin; neither can we see, how, by the imitation of that, we can, in any sense, wipe an ay the sins of the past, or free ourselves from the penalty that is yet to come.

But now to answer for ourselves. What our Lord Jesus Christ? And we say, that in life he is the great example and copy, in death, he is the substitute; and in both, the federal head — the elder brother and kinsman of his Church.

But now time warns me that I must pass on to the second thought — the work of redemptions First of all, we gaze at that part of the work which is Godward, and that we call atonement, and, when you ask me — What is the character of the atonement? I reply — It has a twofold nature, to correspond with the twofold character of sin. Sin is a transgression of the law, and a consequent insult to him who is the lawmaker. But it is something more than that: the power by which he has transgressed has been perverted, it was given to him to obey the law that he might glorify God. And to make, therefore, satisfaction for sin, there must be a bringing to the law obedience; there must be the bearing of the sanction because of the disobedience; there must be the rendering to God the glory due to him, and there must be the bearing of his just displeasure and the expression of his holy wrath and indignation. That Christ has done: he came and his whole life was obedience to the law, for he was obedient even unto death and in that death he bore the sanction of the law — for he was made a

curse, it being written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." His whole life was spent to glorify God, and at its close he could say, "I have glorified thee, and I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," and his death was the bearing of the just displeasure of God towards the sinner, and in the agony of his heart he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In these things we behold, therefore the presentation of the obedience due, the giving to God the glory due, the bearing of God's displeasure, and the enduring of the curse of the law. And now the question would be put to me as to the value of atonement. We believe that its value depends not so much upon the Being appeased, nor upon the beings to be atoned for, as upon the Being who makes the atonement. The value of Christ's atonement is the value of himself. He gave himself for us. If he had stood as the surety of but one soul, he could not have been less than himself; if he stood as a surety for the whole world, he could not be more. He gave himself; what more could he bestow? The value of the atonement is the value of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his flesh he can take man's place, and by his Divinity he can give, and must give anyhow, an infinite value for the work that he, in mortal flesh, performs. For one soul, therefore, it must be infinite — for more or less it cannot be. Infinite it is, and infinite it must be, and we have our part or parcel with those who would say, that if Judas was to have been saved, Judas' amount of agony would have had to have been borne by Christ, and Judas' amount of penalty would have had to have been paid, in addition to what has been borne and paid by Christ. He took the place, the room, and stead of the church, and then all that he was worth went in that church's place and stead. More he could not do, if he had taken the place of the whole world. But, you ask me, is there any limit to the atonement at all? I say I think there is, and the limit seems to be, not in the value, but in the purpose. The limit seems to be this theory — for *whom* did he die? in whose place and stead did he stand? If he stood in the place and stead of the whole world, then he made atonement for the sins of the whole world, and the whole world will be saved. If he stood in the place and stead of his Church, then he made atonement for his Church, and the whole Church will be saved. We believe that Christ took the place and stead of every believer, that the believer's sin was put on him, and thus the ex-sinner can go forth free. But I hear a voice saying, "I challenge substitution, and I object to that." So be it. I ask you, did Christ die for sin at all? It must be answered, — Yes. Then for whose sin did he die? If his own, then he suffered righteously. Did he die for the sins of the whole world? then justice cannot demand this

again. Did he die for part of the sins of the whole world? then the rest of the sins will still condemn the world; then must have Christ died in vain. We believe that he took all the sins of some men. It was not a fictitious condemnation; it was not a fancy sin made for the occasion, it was a positive sin that had been committed by God's people, and is transferred from them to him who laid down his life for his sheep; loving us, and giving himself for and in the stead or in the place of his people.

But, then, we say this work of redemption comprised something more than thus paying down the ransom, and the bearing of the penalty. It is, moreover, a rescue; for sin has not only made men thus to have insulted God and broken God's law, it has transferred them unto bondage under the allegiance of one — "the strong man armed." They must be freed from that. Christ came, has destroyed death, and through death him also who has the power of death, even the devil, making an open show of them upon his cross, ascending up on high a victor, leading captivity captive. And then, I think, there is yet something further. Sin has affected the man himself, made him to need in his own person a releasing from the dominion, Power, and corruption of sin. This Christ has secured by his covenant with the Father. But that which I take to comprise effectual calling and final perseverance, I shall leave to my brethren who shall speak afterwards. And now as to the persons redeemed — who are they? The Church, we say, whether you look at the Church as elect from all eternity, or the Church believing in time, or the Church as glorified hereafter. We look at them all as one, and we say these are the redeemed, these are they for whom redemption has been procured. We cannot add to their number, we cannot diminish them; for we believe that those whom God foreknow, he did predestinate; that those whom he did predestinate, he also called: for whom he calls he justifies, for whom he justifies he also glorifies; the whole are one, — and for these redemption has been made.

Now, if I may be permitted the time, I will just touch upon one or two objections, and then I will conclude. I hear some one saying, "But by that, sir, you surely must limit God's love." I reply, is God loving when he punishes any and doth not save all? Then is he loving also when he purposes to do that, for whatever justifies the deed justifies the purpose which gives the morality to the deed. And then I hear another objections — "How can you, sir, upon that theory, go to preach the Gospel unto every creature?" You have heard that answered — we have got the order; but, I reply yet further: I could not go and preach the Gospel upon any other

theory, for I dare not go on that fool's errand of preaching a redemption that might not redeem, and declaring a salvation that might not save. I could not go and say to a man, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And he would ask me, "Do you think you are going to heaven?" "Yes." "Why?" "Because Christ died for me." "But he died for us all, and my chances therefore are as good as yours." And he might reply to me after he had accepted my declaration, and after he had believed, and begun to rejoice, after all he might say, Is there any real reason why I should rejoice, some for whom Christ died are in hell, and I may also go there. I cannot begin to rejoice in your news till I feel myself in glory. It is rather a faulty piece of good news, because it is nothing positive it is a grand uncertainty you have proclaimed to me." Now, what we preach, is the Gospel to every creature, and that we take to be this — If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved, if you do not, you will be lost, and lost for ever. You are not redeemed — you are not saved, — there is not, in another word, salvation and redemption for you. Because I cannot say that there is salvation and redemption for those who are lost for ever. But we add, "We are what we are by Divine grace; we have believed, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you will be as we are — will be able to boast as we do, humbly in the Lord our God;" or in other words — If you believe, and are baptized, you will be saved; if you do not believe, you will be lost, and lost for ever.

EFFECTUAL CALLING.

NO. 388A

BY THE REV. JAMES SMITH,

OF CHELTENHAM.

My Christian friends, our minds have been occupied to-day with some of the loftiest subjects that can engage the thoughts of man. Our attention has been directed to the infinitely wise and true God, and we have been endeavoring to conceive of him as the great, the infinite, the eternal; the great, the infinite, the eternal intellect, who, of himself, conceiveth the grandest schemes, and infallibly provides for their accomplishment, so that there can be no mistake, no failure. We know that every wise intellect forms its plan before it provides its means, or attempts to carry out the idea conceived in the mind.

And the great doctrine of election, to which our attention was directed this afternoon, answers to the formation of the plan in the infinite mind of God. He foresaw, clearly, that the whole human race, represented by the first man, would fall into sin, and left to themselves, would certainly perish. To prevent a catastrophe so fearful, he determined in his infinite mind, to have a people for himself, a people that would comprise the vast majority of the fallen inhabitants of this world were all present before his mind their names were registered in his book, which book was delivered into the hands of the Lamb, the Son of God, who accepted the book at the hands of his Father, and, as it were, signed it with his own name, so that it has been designated, "The Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And Jesus looked upon this act as the committing of the people to himself, on purpose that he might take the charge of them, on purpose that he might carry out the Father's will respecting them, and gain eternal laurels and honors to himself, by placing them in splendor, majesty, and glory before his Father's face for ever. We therefore find him frequently when speaking with his Father, and referring to this act in the eternal counsels, saying, "Thine they were and thou gavest them me. Keep those whom thou hast given me by thine own name, that they may be one as we are." But

election interferes not with man as standing in Adam, but with man as under sin, the result of Adam's fall. It ensured their restoration, but it did not interfere with their fall, and consequently the elect, with the rest, all fell in the first man. The entire mass of human nature became depraved, polluted rotten to the hearths core; so depraved, so polluted, so rotten, that nothing could effect a change but the omnipotent energy of the omnipotent God. There is that in depravity in every form, that defies the touch of any one but the Infinite; that refuses to succumb to anything but to Omnipotence itself the heart of man is foul as the heart of Satan; the nature of man is foul as the nature of Satan; and the sin of man is worse than the sin of Satan. Satan, the great archangel, that fell from heaven, did a tremendous deed when he set mind in opposition to Deity; but man set not merely mind, but matter with mind in opposition to the eternal God. God could once look upon the world and say, "Though mind is in rebellion, matter is not in opposition," but after the fall of man, mind and matter alike were corrupt, were depraved, were in opposition to the Eternal. Every man's heart steams with enmity against God, every man's spirit rises in rebellion against God; and, as you have heard to-night the verdict of every man's conscience in its fallen state is, 'No God no God,' and if the Eternal could be voted out of existence by the suffrages of his fallen creatures, every hand would be up, every heart would give its verdict, and every voice would vote for the annihilation of the Most High. The will of man strong, the will of man sterns, the will of man determined, and opposed to the will of God, will yield to nothing but that which is superior to itself; it laughs at authority, it turns with disgust from holiness, it refuses to listen to invitation, and, in this state, man — universal man, is found. In this state, man, the entire mass of man, with the exception of those who had been saved on credit, and had been changed by the sacred influences of the Spirit — in this state man was found when Christ came into our world. He came and, as ye have heard, assumed humanity, and united it with Deity. The two natures constituted the one person of the glorious Mediator; that glorious Mediator stood the representative of his people; that Mediator stood the Surety of his family, that Mediator stood the Substitute of the multitude of his fallen ones. That Mediator came to be the sacrifice to which sin was to be transferred, by which sin was to be expiated and removed out of the way, that God's mercy might freely flow, and from the sinners conscience, that he might have peace and joy.

But as the election of the Father did not interfere with the falling of man's nature, so the redemption of the Son did not change the nature that had fallen. It was therefore necessary, that as the Father sent the Son, the Son should send the Comforter; and as it required an infinite victim to atone for man's guilt, it required an infinite agent to change man's fallen nature. As to the Father, the atonement must be made as the moral governor, as the maintainer of the rights of the eternal throne, so from the Father, through the Son, must the Holy Spirit descend to renew, to transform, to remodel, to fit human nature to gaze upon the unveiled glories of Deity, and to render to God the homage due unto his name. And this just brings me to my point — EFFECTUAL CALLING. This implies, that there is a calling that may not be effectual. Yes, there is a call that extends to the whole human family. As it is written, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men." There is a call that refers to humanity as sinful, and to sinners as such, however fallen and depraved they may be. Repentance or a change of mind, repentance and remission of sins, are to be preached amongst all nations, and the disciples were to begin at Jerusalem; and, beginning at Jerusalem the slaughter-house of the Son of God, and the slaughter-house of the prophets, and of the saints, — beginning there, they said, "Repent and he converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." But the people were like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer — charm he never so wisely. The Baptist had come and cried, "Repent," and sternly and impressively he preached, but they paid little regard, — at least, little regard that tended to life. And the Son of God, with all that was soft and winning, and captivating, came and preached; but they turned away, and he said, "To whom shall I liken the men of this generation — they are like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows — We have piped unto you, but ye have not danced, and we have mourned unto you, but ye have not lamented.' Now, this call must be given, because God commands it; this call must be given, because God works by it. In airing the general, the universal call to all that hear the gospel, we obey the high mandate of the Eternal Goal; we do honor and homage to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we employ an instrument — a weapon, if you please — by which the Spirit of God operates upon the human mind; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, and the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing, and the bringing into subjection every thought to the obedience of Christ.

The general call leads to the special, to the particular, or what we designate, the “effectual call.” We speak to men as men, and we reason with them; we speak to sinners as sinners, and we expostulate with them; but while we reason, and while we expostulate, we have the promise of the presence of the Master — “I am with you;” we have the promised presence of the Eternal Paraclete, who was sent to empower, sent to accompany, and sent to work by the Lord’s servants; and, while we speak and give the call as we are commanded and commissioned, the Holy Spirit works, — the infinite power of the Eternal Spirit comes into contact, — direct, immediate contact, with the mind of man. There is a power that goes with the word — distinct from the word — when it is accompanied by the energy of the Eternal Spirit; and that power produces in the heart, life — a spiritual, a Divine, an immortal life — a life that man dead in sin had not; a life which a man once having loseth not, for it is eternal; a life that was given us in Christ before the world was, a life preserved for us by Christ all through the past Ages that have rolled away, a life that is communicated from the loving heart of Him who is the great depository of grace, and conducted by the Holy Ghost into the heart that is called by grace. Has the Spirit accompanying the word produced life? from that life springs conviction: not the cold conviction awakened occasionally in the mind of man, by the reasoning of man, by reflecting upon his past misconduct, or by the flashing of the forked lightings of the law, but a conviction that is produced by the Holy Spirit bringing the law into contact with the conscience — the Gospel into contact with the heart. In the sinner’s conscience God erects a tribunal, in the sinner’s conscience God sits as judge, and to the tribunal, before the just judge, man is summoned to appear, and in the heart, in the soul, in the nature of man, there is a miniature of the judgment that is to take place at the completion and winding up of the present dispensation. The man is arraigned as a sinner, the man is convicted as a culprit, the man is condemned as a criminal, he stands before God, and he has nothing to say; every excuse has withered like the leaves of autumn, every excuse is carried away like the chaff from the summer’s threshing-floor, every rag that the man boasted of is torn from him, and he stands, a naked sinner, before a heart-searching God. The penetrating eye of the Omniscient darts into the innermost recesses of his soul and the gentle fingers of the Spirit turns over one fold of the heart after the other, the process may be long, or the operation may be quick, but sooner or later the man is brought to this. — “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” He had once started at the Scriptural

representation of man's fallen and depraved nature, he had once wondered that from the lip of truth had proceeded the startling words. "From within, out of the heart, proceed murders, adulteries, blasphemies, false witnesses, and abominable idolatries." He never could have thought that evil so dreadful, he never could have thought he cast his eye back, there are the crimes of his life; if he cast his eye forward, there is the tremendous judgment; if he lift up his eyes to Heaven, there is the pure and holy God that he has insulted; and if he turn his eyes within, all is dark and vain and wild. He is filled with alarm — alarm that perhaps keeps him awake by night, and haunts and harasses him by day, until he is prepared to do anything, prepared to go anywhere, if he may but escape the just judgment of his God. He is by this discipline prepared to submit to God's method of salvation; he is prepared to give up proposing conditions according to which he would be saved; he no longer goes about to work out a righteousness of his own, but he is ready to submit himself to the righteousness of God. Being, therefore, conscious of his criminality, burdened with his guilt, trembling at the prospect of his destiny, he falls prostrate before the high throne of the Eternal, smites upon his breast, and cries "God be merciful to me a sinner," as if no such a sinner had ever appealed to God's mercy, as if no such culprit had ever stood before God's throne; before God he says, "If there can be mercy in thy heart sufficient to reach a case so dismal and so desperate, God be merciful to me," and after having pleaded with earnestness, after having supplicated with intense emotion, and after having, perhaps, become a little bold, he is startled at his own temerity, and receding, as it were from the position that he had taken, he cries —

*"Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy in thy heart for me,
O God of spotless purity?"*

And, perhaps, like David, he groans in his heart, and mourns in his soul, until his bones wax old, through his roaring all the day long but, no relief, no help is found, until, at length, he begins to make confession of his sin, and, as he confesses, the Spirit of God unveils and unfolds the gospel mystery, and, as in the days of the law, when the victim was brought to the Priest, and the man placed his hand upon its head, between its horns, and pressed with his might, and confessed over it all his transgressions, all his iniquities, and all his sins, so the man lays his hand of faith upon the victim's head, and there confesses his sin. As he confesses, a change takes

place in his feelings, the burden begins to move from his conscience; the dark cloud that hovered over him begins to disperse a little; bright light in the cloud attracts his attention, and, as he looks upward he seems to catch the loving Father's eye, and feels an encouragement within him to approach unto God; and, as he approaches, still confessing, still pleading, still deploring, still resting his hand upon the victim's head, and trusting in the atonement you have heard of; and on that alone, he seems to hear strange music, a delightful melody, and that music is the commencement of the sound of the trump of the Jubilee, when the oppressed one is to go free, and as he listens to the sound the chains drop from his hands, and the burden from his shoulders, the trouble is removed from his heart, and he tilts up his eyes, streaming perhaps with tears, to heaven, and says, 'I Oh Lord, I will praise thee, for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me;' and looking around, on those about him, in the language of wonder, astonishment and gratitude, he says, "Behold, behold a mystery, behold a miracle, behold one of the greatest wonders in the universe; behold, God is my salvation. I will trust, and not be afraid, for Jah Jehovah is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation." He has now peace flowing into his heart like a river, he has now a consciousness that God has accepted him in the beloved, and he now experimentally knows the truth, tastes the sweetness, and feels the power of the apostolic testimony, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." He has now experienced the effectual call. It has been a call from darkness into marvellous light, from bondage into glorious liberty; out of prison the man comes to reign; from the dunghill he is lifted up to sit among the princes, even among the princes of God's people. And, now, as I must conclude, just observe, the origin of this call is the free, the sovereign, the distinguishing grace of God. It originates, not in man's will, nor in man's disposition, nor in man's station in society, but of His will, and of His will alone, who is the great sovereign ruler of the universe, is this change effected; of man it *cannot* be, for it includes a new creation; a resurrection; and the inhabitation of God. Generally speaking, the instrumentality by which God works is the gospel, but in every instance the agent that produces the change is the holy and eternal Spirit of God. He quickens the soul dead in trespasses and sins, he enlightens the understanding that was in the midnight darkness of nature he disposes the will which before ran counter to the will of God; he teaches the understanding that was once

averse to everything pure and holy, and then gently, and lovingly, and sweetly he leads the soul to the Cross to gaze upon the wondrous Sufferer, he then leads the soul to the Church to confess Christ and him crucified and then leads it in the paths of righteousness for his own name's sake. The calling is high, for it is from the High and Holy One; it is heavenly, in contrast with the earthly calling of the descendants of Abraham of old; it is an evidence of distinguishing love; and thanks, eternal thanks to God, it is irreversible, for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance. From death to life we pass; from darkness into light we come; out of bondage into liberty we spring; from sin to the knowledge and enjoyment of holiness we are introduced; then at last from earth to heaven. Into the grace of Christ we are called, and we stand in his favor. Into the fellowship of Christ we are called and in communion with him we live. To be glorified with Christ we are called, and when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory. The Father draws, the Spirit quickens, the Son receives, and when locked in the arms of the Son of God, our effectual calling is realized and enjoyed. Its author, is God; its subjects, are the elect, its nature, is holy, and its end, is glorious. Thus, you perceive, my friends, all originated in God's thought, which thought sprung into the perfect plan to carry out which plan provision was made, and this plan will be perfectly carried out to the praise of the glory of his grace. Thus, whether you think of election, whether you think of redemption, or whether you think of effectual calling

*“Give all the glory to his holy name,
For to him all the glory belongs;
Be your's the high joy still to sound forth his praise
And crown him in each of your songs.”*

The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON. — I think it was John Newton, who, speaking about good Calvinistic doctrine compared it to lumps of sugar, but he said, he did not so slouch give to his people the lumps of sugar, as diffuse the whole of it throughout his sermons; just as people do not eat sugar, but put it in their tea. Now, come of you have not yet grown patient enough to listen, I think, to a doctrine, however fully it may be brought out. Our people want anecdotes, illustrations, parables, and metaphors; even the best and sublimest things keep our minds on such a stretch when we listen to them, that there is good need that illustrations should yield us some relief. To-Jay was set apart that these doctrines might be fully brought out; this has been done, and there remains but one, and that my friend Mr.

O'Neil is to take, namely, the final perseverance of the saints Before he speaks, just one or two words. Has it never struck you that the scheme of doctrine which is called Calvinistic has much to say concerning God? It commences and ends with the Divine One. The angel of that system stands like Uriel in the sun; it dwells with God; he begins, he carries on, he perfects; it is for his glory and for his honor. Father, Son, and Spirit co-working, the whole Gospel scheme is carried out. Perhaps there may be this defect in our theology; we may perhaps too much forget man. I think that is a very small fault, compared with the fault of the opposite system, which begins with man, and all but ends with him. Man is a creature; how ought God to deal with him? That is the question some theologians seem to answer. The way we put it is — God is the Creator, he has a right to do as he wills; he is Sovereign, there is no law above him, he has a right to make and to unmake, and when man hath sinned, he has a right to save or to destroy. If he can save, and yet not impair his justice, heaven shall ring with songs; if he destroy, and yet his goodness be not marred, then hell itself with its deep bass of misery, shall swell the mighty rollings of his glorious praise. We hold that God should be most prominent in all our teaching, and we hold this to be a gauge by which to test the soundness of ministers. If they exalt God and sheik the sinner to the very dust, it is all well but if they lower the prerogatives of Deity, if he be less sovereign, less just, or less loving than the Scripture reveals him to be, and if man be puffed up with that fond notion that he is anything better than an unclean thing then such theology is utterly unsound. Salvation is of the Lord, and let the Lord alone be glorified.

THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST JESUS

NO. 388B

BY THE REV. WILLIAM O'NEILL,

MINISTER OF NEW BROAD STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

My dear Brethren and Friends.

Most unexpectedly did the kind invitation of my esteemed brother, Mr. Spurgeon, come to me, to take part in the present service of this beautiful house. And after I had engaged to come I sincerely wished that I had not. I felt, however, that it would not be proper to retire from the engagement, but seek to meet it in a becoming spirit, both towards God's truth and God's people. I will now try to do this. I utter here, of course, my own sentiments. As I am not responsible for anything that has been or may be said by another speaker, so I alone am responsible for what I shall say. But though I am not the delegate or representative of any church, denomination, or community, I doubt not that my declaration of faith on the matter in hand will be, in all substantial points, that of a very large number who love Jesus and are living in His service. That I desire to believe what the Bible teaches, and that I am sincere in my convictions, I *know* to be true: but that there are thousands of excellent Christians on the other side admits of no doubt, and should not be questioned by any one. Of their deep sincerity, love to God and his Gospel, zeal and devotedness in holy things, self-denying labors in the Divine service, and the cultivation and manifestation of Christian graces, I would and do speak with the most earnest approval I give them as much credit for sincerity as I claim for myself; and I do this not as a favor, but as a piece of simple justice. Yet we differ — differ as to what the Sacred Oracles teach on the doctrine now before us, and it is competent and right for all men to examine, each one for himself, which of our opinions is that which is taught in the Bible, for certainly both are not taught there.

The question — Is it possible for sincere Christians, truly regenerated persons, to be finally separated from Jesus, to lose the favor of God their Father, and be eternally shut out from His smile and Home? — is one of no small moment. It involves issues of the most momentous nature, and cannot but be unspeakably interesting to every believer in Christ. We say, with unfaltering tongue, that of all the dead, every one who was ever renewed in heart is now in heaven; and that reconciliation with God on earth, through Christ Jesus, will, in every case, end in the everlasting salvation of the soul. Did God, then, tell us that all who are here now are His regenerated people, (would that they were!) we should believe that when the roll of the finally saved shall be called, every one of them would answer to that call by saying, “Here am I, Lord: Thy right arm, and the effectual operation of Thy Spirit and grace has done it all, and now I am to be for ever happy, for ever sinless, for ever safe.” It is hardly necessary to say, that we believe this view of the case to be in entire harmony with the teaching of God’s Book. To the law and to the testimony, if we, or others, speak not on this and on all other matters according to that Word, it is because there is no light in us or in them. (Isaiah 8:20.)

Having called public attention to this doctrine lately in a small book, “UNCHANGING LOVE.” Tresidder, Ave Maria Lane, London. All the texts that are usually quoted in opposition to the doctrine now noticed are passed under calm review. in which I have sought to obey the Master’s command, — “Search the scriptures,” — I will now, with your kind permission, direct attention to a few portions of the Divine Word that, we believe, fully establish the doctrine of the saints’ final preservation and perseverance. On each of those texts my words must be few, as the time allotted to me is short.

Hear then the Holy Spirit’s teaching when speaking by the prophet Samuel: — “For the LORD will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people.” (1 Samuel 12:22.) This, we think, is conclusive. What Christian does not know, and knowing, does not mourn over, the untrustworthiness of his own heart? And feeling fully assured that it is impossible for him to vanquish “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” how welcome to his heart is the declaration, “The LORD will not forsake His people.” No; He thought proper to renew their hearts, to quicken them into spiritual life, and He will mercifully continue to carry on His good work in their souls till it shall be perfected in glory. The reason why “He will not forsake His people” is

stated here most explicitly; just as much so as is the declaration of His unchangeable love. It is not that they were less sinful by nature or practice than others; or because of any moral qualities that were found in them; but “because it pleased the Lord to make them His people.” Hear another portion: God, speaking by his prophet Isaiah, says, — “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” (Isaiah 49:15, 16.) This we regard as a most interesting as well as a most consolatory portion of Scripture. “Zion said, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.” This was not only an error in creed, — it was also a dishonorable estimate of the Divine character, and to it the Gracious One replies in these words: — “Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.” The affection of a right-minded mother for her tender and helpless offspring is one of the strongest that is experienced by human beings. But, though strong, very strong, it may, alas give way. It is, at best, only a creature’s love, and therefore changeable; while that love which is exercised by God towards His believing children is, like Himself, unchangeable. These words prove, and were designed to prove, most conclusively, that the love of the Divine Father towards His adopted sons and daughters is not a fluctuating or changing thing. What other, or what lower interpretation can we put upon the words, “YET WILL NOT I FORGET THEE? And not forgetting them is, in this case, equivalent to His continuing to care for, to keep, and tenderly regard them.

Hear God again speaking by the same prophet: — “For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.” These words deserve to hold a prominent place among those which God has spoken for the comfort and joy of His people. Their obvious design is to sustain believers under the chastening hand of God, and to do this by considerations drawn from His own character, and not from

anything in themselves. Vain, brethren, is it to trust, or put confidence in our own false hearts. They are weak as helpless infancy. To lean on them will only be evidence of our folly and of our sin. We are not to find consolation in our gifts, in our graces, in our labors, in our resolutions, or in our experience, nor by the grace of God will we do so but when chastised by the ever-loving and good Father, — when smarting under his parental and deserved stripes, — we may feast our souls on His blessed words — words that fire those souls with confidence, hope, and love. — “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.” For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.” Such, brethren, are GOD’S utterances! These are the words of One who is unchangeable in affection; of One who says, — Oh! blessed be his adorable name for that saying, — “For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6.)

I name another passage: — “For there shall arise,” says Jesus, “false Christ, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch, that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” (Matthew 24:24.) The plain and obvious meaning of this latter clause is, that it is not possible to deceive, or allure to their final ruin, the adopted sons and daughters of God, those whom He has chosen to be His. Nothing less, we believe, was intended by the Gracious Speaker, and we see not how any other meaning can be consistently given to the language which He here uses. The words, “If it were possible,” only say, in another form, “*It is not possible.*”

I now name such texts as connect faith, or believing in Christ, with salvation, of which the following are a few: — “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” “And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever.” “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” (John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, 50, 51, 57; Romans 1:16.) The plain teaching of these, and many similar passages, is,

that every believer in Jesus *hath* everlasting life. They teach this or they teach nothing. If this be not their meaning, what is? But, can that which is everlasting cease to be? Can it come to an end? No words can more plainly assert than these do, that *whosoever* believeth in Jesus SHARE NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; that all believers in him shall enjoy “everlasting life.” We take these gracious assurances as proving, to the fullest extent, the doctrine for which we plead. If the belief of the Gospel be not followed, in every instance, by eternal blessedness, what did Paul mean when he said, “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to *every one* that believeth?” (Romans 1:16.) If, at the last day, a single one be unsaved of those who had believed the Gospel, who had been united to Christ by faith in His name — the apostle’s words must needs be falsified — his teaching is not true. This, at least, is our opinion. No amount of adverse criticism can set aside the evidence that such verses as these furnish in support of the blessed doctrine which we now defend.

Hear Christ again: — “My sheep,” he says, “hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” We regard this entire passage as one of the most delightful and consoling in the Scriptures. It teaches most unequivocally, — in the plainest, strongest, and most conclusive terms, — that Christ’s believing ones “SHALL NEVER PERISH” — that no enemy, human or hellish, shall be able to wrench them out of His or His Father’s covenanted and secure grasp. Infinite power, no less than infinite love — both existing in their God and Savior — stand guarantee for their security. Neither men nor demons shall be able to defeat or overturn the purpose of Divine grace concerning them! Difficulties, many and sharp, may surround them, and temptations, fierce and fiery, may assault their souls, but Divine love, wisdom, grace, and power shall be ever on their side. Jesus, the “faithful and true witness,” says, “THEY SHAKE NEVER PERISH.” Elsewhere He says, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” (John 14:17.) The spiritual life of believers is in HIS keeping, and He here declares that it is as secure as His own. If He dies, and continues not to be their “advocate with the Father,” (1 John 2:1) their Intercessor “at the right hand of God,” (Romans 8:34) then may they die also, but not otherwise. In perfect keeping with his Lord’s words are those which Paul uses, when referring to the same subject. “For if,” he says, “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to

God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Romans 5:10.) That is, we shall be preserved in that state of reconciliation by Christ’s intercessory life at God’s right hand in heaven. He, the God-man, lives there as Mediator, for them: He holds and exercises “all power in heaven and on earth” for the welfare and safety of His church. And they cannot die while He lives. The power that is to destroy the spiritual life of the weakest saint must first destroy the life of that saint’s Head. “Their life” as the Holy Spirit by Paul elsewhere teaches, “is hid with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3). Where, brethren, could it be safer, or as safe? In whose care or keeping could it be so secure? It is hid with Christ in God.” Not only so, but the Apostle goes on to say, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him IN GLORY. “This, to say the least of it, is a glorious statement and declaration. Can language, we ask, go beyond that which is used in these texts to guarantee the eternal salvation of every believer in Jesus? The Head and members shall never be separated. They are bound up in an inseparable and an unchanging union.

Hear a Divine lesson given in another place: — “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified” (Romans 8:30).

When it is said, “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called,” we must interpret the word “called” to mean very much more than *invited*, for the Apostle goes no to say, “Whom He called, them He also justified.” We know that this is only true of those who believe in Jesus — who are effectually called or drawn, by the combined operations of the Word and Spirit of God, into the blessed fellowship and joys of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:9). That those, and only those, who *believe* in Christ are justified, is the uniform lesson of the Divine Word (John 3:16, 36; Acts 13:39, 40; Romans 1:16, 3:22, 28). Let it be noted that Paul affirms three things here. The first is — “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” The second is — “Whom He called, them He also justified.” And the third is — “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.” What, then, does he mean by the expression “glorified?” Does he, or can he mean anything less than the enjoyment of everlasting life? We say, then, that were only a single individual out of the whole number of those who have been, or shall be “justified” by faith in Jesus, to come short of heaven, the declaration would not be true that “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

Hear another Divine proclamation relative to the security of God's people: — "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39). These brethren, are notes of the most triumphant character, relative to the ultimate blessedness of believers in Jesus. The terms which are here used are such as leave no doubt as to what the Holy Spirit, speaking by Paul, meant to teach. We deliberately affirm that language has no power to assert the doctrine for which we contend more conclusively than is here done. Words have no meaning, nor are they of any use in communicating thought, if these words were not used by a man who believed as we do on the matter in hand. And we are entirely willing to believe or disbelieve with the Apostle Paul, neither more nor less.

I quote him again. Hear what he wrote to the Church at Philippi: — "Being confident of this very thing, that I who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." I well remember how greatly this passage strengthened my own soul when, in the morning of my religious life, I was passing through much mental conflict. And are not these words well calculated to comfort the hearts of those who, through grace, have believed in the Savior? Is there any room for objecting criticism here, or is there any ambiguity in the language employed? No, there is none whatever: the Apostle was confident of this very thing. What "very thing?" Why, that wherever the Divine Spirit had commenced this "good work" of grace in the soul, He would complete it. No other power could have begun it, and no other power is competent to carry it forward to completion. That He who commences that "good work" is *able* to finish it, no professing Christian *will* deny: that He *will* finish it, this verse most clearly teaches. The Apostle Paul was "confident of THIS VERY THING;" and so are we.

Let us give attention to other words of the same sacred penman. Addressing one of the primitive Churches he says: — "We are bound to give thanks always 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" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). This is a most important portion of Scripture in relation to the question — What is the end of election? In what does it, or is it to terminate? What does it secure? Are its subjects merely chosen to enjoy the light of the gospel, the means of grace, and no more? Or, are they chosen to enjoy, in its full measure,

everlasting life, the priceless favor and blissful fellowship of God here and for ever? This question is definitely settled by the language of inspiration employed here. The Apostle declares that the choice is “to salvation;” or, in other words, which he also uses in this place, “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This means, of course, eternal life in heaven, as well as all that precedes and prepares for it on earth. But how can this be realized? How can it be said, they were “chosen to *salvation*,” if they may all apostatize finally from Jesus, fall out of the Divine favor, and be for ever numbered with the lost? The thing is, of course, impossible. If not *saved*, — fully and for ever, — it would not be true to say they were chosen “to salvation.”

I beg to name one passage more. Speaking of believers, a divinely inspired teacher says: — “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Peter 1:5). Here we are distinctly taught what the Divine Being is doing and will continue to do for His believing people. The Apostle asserts, that they are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” If so, nothing is more certain than that they shall reach it, and enjoy it for ever. Had Peter believed that it was possible for any number of them to become outcasts from God, and die in their sins, he would never have employed the language which is found here. The declaration that believers are “kept” or garrisoned in (for such is the meaning of the term here employed) “by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation,” settles the point with us, and leaves us nothing more to desire in the shape of statement or promise. This is, indeed, a glorious declaration. Fellow pilgrims, let it fill you with the highest joy, as it gives you the fullest assurance that you are safe in the grasp and guardianship of Jehovah of hosts.

We hold and teach too, that the certain enjoyment of everlasting life, inseparably connected with continued faith in the Divine testimony concerning sin, Jesus, and His salvation. They shall be preserved in the exercise of faith in the Redeemer, until they shall enter upon the possession of the heavenly inheritance. This is clearly taught here, and nothing less.

I have now referred to a few out of the many portions of God’s word which teach the doctrine for which we contend. God’s people shall be preserved, and will persevere to the end, for they were given to Christ in the everlasting covenant, that covenant which is “ordered in all things and sure:” the stability of which is as safe as the oath, and promise, and power

of God can make it (Psalm lxxxix. 30, 34; Hebrews 6:18, 19). They are “loved by Him with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3); they are “chosen to salvation” (Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thes. 2:13); and God, their gracious and reconciled Father, “will rest in His love” (Zephaniah 3:17). Their safety, as believers in Jesus, is secured by the word and promise of the “God that cannot lie.” He has said that He will “never leave them nor forsake them (Hebrews 13:2); that they shall never perish” (John 10:28); and that He will “confirm them unto the end” (1 Corinthians 1:8).

For this purpose the ever-availing intercession of Jesus is employed. He is at the right hand of God as their Brother, Representative, and Advocate. If he prays for them that their faith fail not (Luke 22:32). They are, each and all, borne on His heart and pleaded for in His gracious and ever-successful intercession. “Father,” says he, “I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory” (John 17:24). Oh, what priceless joy do these words afford to the believer’s heart! No weapon that is formed against them shall prosper. Their Almighty King will vanquish all their spiritual foes. He will so aid them that they shall contend victoriously against “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” They shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved them (Romans 8:37). They shall be the saved of His right arm, and the everlasting monuments and trophies of His grace, love, and power. They are “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is *the earnest* of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession” (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; Ephesians 1:13,14). Having received the “earnest,” the pledge which guarantees the fulfillment of their Heavenly Father’s covenant to saved them, they are perfectly and for ever secure.

We build our faith in this doctrine on God’s plain teaching. We extort no meaning from His word which cannot be found there by the simple and ordinary reader of it. We take its statements in their plain grammatical sense, just as they would be interpreted by any unprejudiced expounder of language. We should be content to abide by the interpretation of them which would be given by any man, infidel or other, who felt no interest in our controversy, and who was entirely careless relative to our differences of opinion. One unequivocal passage teaching this doctrine would be, or should be sufficient to establish it, and to bring out opinions into harmony with Divine teaching; but we are not confined to one, or five, or ten; we have line upon line, promise upon promise, assurance upon assurance, and declaration upon declaration to this effect, so that we would fain ask, — If

the doctrine be not taught in the portions of Scripture that I have named, what is taught in them? What is their import? What do they teach? Or, what language or terms would be thought sufficient to teach it? It is our firm conviction that no doctrine of religion is more clearly taught in the Bible than is this. It is expressed as plainly as words can possibly do it.

And are we, with these inspired declarations before us, to suppose it possible for wicked men or demons to say, when pointing to numbers of the lost, — “The Most High began to build up His kingdom in their souls, but He was not able to finish it! He quickened them into spiritual life, — renewed, pardoned, justified, and sanctified them; but now they are torn from His grasp, His enemies *were* able — contrary to the words of Jesus (1 John 10:21) — ‘to pluck them out of His hand,’ *and they have done it.*”

This would, indeed, make short work of many plain and positive declarations found in the Bible: it would prove, beyond doubt, that its promises, and assurances, and declarations are of very little value.

Let me, before I close, say — and say with the fullest emphasis possible — that we believe as firmly as any man living, as firmly as we believe any truth taught in the Bible, that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). We know no other evidence of being in Christ, or of being a Christian, than that which is furnished by a life and behavior becoming the Gospel. And though holiness is not the cause of God’s first or continued love to His people, it is the effect and fruit of that love, and a main part of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus — that salvation to which they are chosen (Ephesians 1:4) and he who is satisfying himself with the notion that he is safe for eternity, while he is living in any known sin, is turning the grace of our God into licentiousness, and is a deadly enemy of the Cross of Christ. The blessed doctrine which the Bible teaches, and in which we glory, is — the doctrine of the *saint’s* final perseverance, and that doctrine was never designed to comfort any man who is not living a life of faith in the Son of God, intensely anxious to please God in all things, and to be the holy and happy subject of that mind which was in Jesus.

Very interesting, then, is the question, when asked in no wrong spirit — Are there few that be saved? If God does not hold up His people, if He does not keep them by His grace and power, they will be very few indeed — a child may count them, and, in fact, have none, not one, to count. But let no man charge our views with being “narrow” or “embracing only a

few,” or contemplating the eternal salvation of “a very limited number” of our race, for, according to the view which we hold and teach, they will be a numberless number. We believe, and our hearts swell with high and holy joy in believing, that *every* child of man who loved God, — *every one* of Adam’s race who was renewed in heart, — *all* who were ever on the Lord’s side, — will be found among the saved. Not one will be lost. Not one will be missed from the eternal banquet. Not one will be outside the gates of the holy city, All, all shall be there, and there for ever, and ever, and ever!

*“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
He will not, He cannot, give up to His foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
He’ll never! no, never! no, never forsake!”*

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