

The Doctrine of Election 8. Its Manifestation

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Transcript

The Doctrine of Election

8. Its Manifestation

By His electing act God took the Church into a definite and personal relation to Himself, so that He reckons and regards its members as His own dear children and people. Consequently, even while they are in a state of nature, before their regeneration, He views and owns them as such. This is very blessed and wonderful, though alas it is a truth which is almost unknown in present-day Christendom. It is now commonly assumed that we only become the children of God when we are born again, that we have no relation to Christ until we have embraced Him with the arms of faith. But with the Scriptures in our hands there is no excuse for such ignorance, and woe be unto those who deliberately repudiate their plain testimony: to their divine Author will they yet have to answer for such wickedness. It seems strange that the very ones who are foremost in propagating (unwittingly, we would feign believe) the error alluded to above, are they who have probably said and written more upon the typical teaching of the Book of Exodus than any one else. We would ask such, Were not the Hebrews definitely owned by God as belonging to Him before He sent Moses to deliver them from the house of bondage, before the blood of the paschal lamb was shed, yea, while they were utterly idolatrous (Ezek. 20:5-9)? Verily, for to Moses He declared, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows" (Exod. 3:7); and of Pharaoh He demanded, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (5:1). And the Hebrews were a divinely ordained type of the Israel of God, the spiritual election of grace! It is quite true that God's elect are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3), nevertheless their persons have been loved by Him with an everlasting love. Consequently, before the Spirit is sent to quicken them into newness of life, the Lord God contemplates and speaks of them as His own. As this is now so little known, we will pause and offer proof from the Word. First, God calls them His children: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13)—His children before taught by Him; and again, "He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52)—His children before "gathered" by Him. Second, He designates them His people. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. 110:3)—His people before "made willing," "I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10)—before Paul preached the gospel in that heathen center. Third, Christ denominates God's elect His sheep before they are brought into the fold: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring" (John 10:16)—who were those "other sheep" but those of His elect among the Gentiles? Fourth, the elect are spoken of as the tabernacle

of David while they are in the ruins of the fall: "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down" (Acts 15:14-16). In the apostolic age God began to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name, and concerning this Amos had prophesied of old: "The tabernacle of David, that is, the elect of God, once stood in Adam with the non-elect, and with them they fell; but the Lord will set up His elect again, not in the first Adam, but in the second Adam, in whom they shall be for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (James Wells). Love in the heart of God was a secret in Himself from everlasting, being wholly unknown before the world began, except to Christ, God-man, yet it has been exercised towards the whole election of grace. Though they were beloved with such a love as contained the uttermost of God's good will unto them, and to the uttermost of blessing, grace and glory, yet it was in such a way and manner that for a season they were altogether unacquainted with the same. Though the acts of God's will in Christ's Person concerning them and upon them were such as could never cease, nevertheless they were to be in a state for a season in the which none of them were to be opened and made known to them. All was in the incomprehensible mind of Jehovah from everlasting, and the same it will be to everlasting; but the revelation and manifestation of the same has been made at different times and in various degrees. The various conditions in which God's elect find themselves not only exhibit the manifold wisdom of God, but illustrate our last remark above. The elect were to be in a creature state of purity and holiness; as such they were made naturally in Adam. From that they fell into a state of sin and misery, sharing the guilt and depravity of their federal head. They were to be brought therefrom into a redeemed state by the atoning work of Christ, and given a knowledge of this through the quickening and sanctifying operations of the Spirit. After their earthly course is finished they are brought into a sinless state, while they rest from their labors and await the consummation of their salvation. In due course they shall be brought into the resurrection state, and from thence into the state of everlasting glory and unutterable bliss. In like manner there are different stages in the unfolding of God's eternal purpose concerning His people. The principle of divine election has operated from the beginning of human history. No sooner did the Fall take place than the Lord announced the line of distinction which was drawn between the woman's seed and the seed of the Serpent, first exemplified in the clear-cut case of Cain and Abel (1 John 3:12). In an earlier chapter we called attention to the continuous operation of this selective principle, as was seen in the families of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and later still more conspicuously in the separating of Israel from all other nations, as the people of Jehovah's choice and the objects of His special favor. But what we would now consider is not so much the operation of God's eternal purpose of grace, as the manifestation of it. In all these states through which the elect are ordained to pass the love of God is exercised and displayed toward them and upon them, agreeably to the good pleasure of His will. The secret and everlasting love of God to His chosen and His open disclosure of the same, though distinct parts, are one and the same love. The first act of God's love to the persons of those whom He chose in Christ consisted in giving them being in Christ, well being in Christ from everlasting: that was the fundamental act of all grace and glory for God then "blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). The love of God in His own heart towards the person of Christ, the Head of the whole election of grace, cannot be expressed, and His love towards the persons of the elect in Christ is so great and infinite that the Scriptures themselves declare "it passeth knowledge." The open expression and manifestation of this love it is now our design to ponder. First, the incarnation and mission of Christ: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Take notice of the persons unto whom the love of God was thus manifested, expressed in the word "us." This is a term made use of by the sacred writers to include and express the saints of God by. It is a distinguishing excellency of the apostles that they bring

home their subjects with all their energy to the minds of saints, and then apply them so that hereby the truth might be felt in all its vast importance. Let the subject be election, redemption, effectual calling or glorification, and most generally they use the term "us," as thereby including themselves and all the believers to whom they wrote. This serves fitly to evince that all of them are alike interested in all the blessings and benefits of grace, which opens the way for them to appropriate and enjoy the good of them in the Scriptures. To illustrate what has just been pointed out: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. . .to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6). In that passage the repeated "us" shows the interest which all the saints have in their eternal election in Christ. With respect to effectual calling the apostle uses the word "us" in Romans 9:24. So in connection with salvation (note the "us" in 2 Tim. 1:9) and glorification (see Eph. 2:7; Rom. 8:18). Let it be carefully observed that whereas this repeated "us" in the Epistles includes the whole election of grace, yet it excludes all other and cannot with any truth or propriety be applied to any but the called of God in Christ Jesus. We next consider in what this open manifestation of the love of God consisted, namely, in the incarnation and mission of Christ. In the infinite mind of Jehovah all His love concerning the persons of the elect was conceived from everlasting, with the various ways and means by which the same should be displayed and made known in a time state, so that the Church might be the more sensibly taken therewith. As it pleased the Lord, notwithstanding His eternal love to His people in Christ, to will their fall from a state of creature purity into depravity, so also their redemption from the same was predetermined. An everlasting covenant transaction took place between the Father and the Son, wherein the latter engaged to assume human nature and act as their Surety and Redeemer. His incarnation, life and death were fixed upon as the means of their salvation. This became the subject of Old Testament prophecy: that Christ was to be manifested in the flesh, with what He was to do and suffer, in order to take away sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. That which was revealed in the Scriptures of the prophets concerning Christ made it fully evident that it was of God that the whole of it was originally council-transaction in Heaven before time began, the fruit of consultation between Jehovah and the Branch, of which the eternal Spirit was witness, He communicating the same to holy men, who spake as they were moved by Him, for He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. In the person of Immanuel, God with us, by His open incarnation and the salvation He wrought out and most honorably completed, all the love of the blessed Trinity is reflected most gloriously. God has shone forth in all the greatness and majesty of His love upon His Church in Christ, and thus displayed His everlasting good will unto them. He has so loved them as to give His only begotten Son. This is clearly set forth in His Word, so that it is all-sufficient to keep up a lively sense thereof in our minds, as the Spirit is pleased to maintain a believing knowledge of it in our hearts. A brief word upon the end of this manifestation of the love of God as spoken of in 1 John 4:9: it is "that we might live through him." "It is through the incarnation and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ that we live through Him a life of justification, peace, pardon, acceptance, and access to God. The elect of God in their fallen state were all sin, corruption, misery, and death; in these circumstances God commended His love toward them, in that while they were yet sinners Christ died for them. He by His death removed their sins from them. He loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood, and brought them nigh unto God, so that herein the Father's everlasting love of them is most distinctly evidenced" (S. E. Pierce, to whose lovely sermon on 1 John 4:9 we here gladly acknowledge our indebtedness). A most striking parallel with the Scripture we have looked at above is the statement made by the Lord to His Father in John 17:6: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they

were, and thou gavest them me." The manifesting of the name of God, or the secret mystery of His mind and will, could only be performed by Christ, who had been in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, who became incarnate in order to make visible Him who is invisible. It was the office and work of the Messiah to open the "hidden wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:7), to unlock the holy of holies, to declare what had been kept secret from the foundation of the world; and here in John 17 He declares that He had faithfully discharged it. But mark well how the "us" of 1 John 4:9 is here defined as "the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Yes, it was to them Christ manifested God's ineffable name. In John 17 Christ opened the whole heart of God, making known His everlasting love as was never revealed before. Therein He expounded the good will which the Father bore to the elect in Christ Jesus, in a manner sufficient to fill the spiritual mind with knowledge and understanding, even such as was calculated to lead to an entire trust and confidence in the Lord for all the blessings of this life and that which is to come. And who could give this information but Himself? He came down from heaven with this express end and design. He was the great Prophet over the House of God. He had the key of all the treasury of grace and glory. In Him personally was "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). By the "Name" of God is meant all that He is in a manifestative and communicative way. It is His love to the Church, His covenant relation to His people in Christ, the eternal delight of His heart to them, which Christ has been pleased to so fully reveal. It is by the Lord's admitting us into the knowledge of Himself that we are led to know our election of God. The true apprehension of this is a ground for joy, therefore did Christ say, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). As we cannot know that we are the beloved of God but by believing on His Son, so this is the fruit of spiritual knowledge. Christ has the key of knowledge and opens the door of faith, so that we receive Him as revealed in the Word. It is He, who by His Spirit, is pleased to shed abroad the love of God in the heart. He gives the Spirit to make a revelation of the everlasting covenant to our minds, and thereby we are made to know and feel the love of God to be the fountain and spring of all grace and everlasting consolation. As Jehovah caused all His goodness to pass before Moses and showed him His glory (Exod. 33:19), so He admits us into the knowledge of Himself as "The Lord God merciful and gracious." Second, by a supernatural call. We have somewhat anticipated this in the last two paragraphs, but must now consider it more distinctly. A saint's being called is the first immediate fruit and breaking forth of God's purpose of electing grace. "The river ran under ground from eternity and rises and bubbles up therein first, and then runs above ground to everlasting. It is the initial and grand difference which God puts between man and man, the first mark which He sets upon His sheep, whereby He owns them and visibly signifies that they are His" (T. Goodwin). "Whom He did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). The original benefit was His predestination of us, and the next blessing is His calling of us. The same order is observed in "Who hath saved us, and called us. . . according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). The eternal purpose is made evident in time by a divine call. Another Scripture which presents this same truth are those well-known words "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10). It is not our faith nor our justification which is here specifically singled out, but our "calling," which we are bidden to "make sure," for thereby our election will be attested to us, that is, confirmed to our faith. It is not that election is not sure without it, for "the foundation of God [His eternal decree] standeth sure" (2 Tim. 2:19) before our calling; but hereby it is certified unto our faith. Thus the apostles speak one uniform language, and therefore when writing to believers show that the two terms are co-extensive. Thus, Paul "unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . called to be saints"—saints by calling (1 Cor. 1:2). Peter unto "the church that is at Babylon, elected together with you" (1 Pet. 5:13). The terms are equivalent, the apostles acknowledging none other to be true "calling" but what was the immediate proof of election, being commensurate to the same persons. It is indeed blessed to observe—so graciously has the Spirit

condescended to stoop to and help our infirmity—how frequently this precious truth is iterated in the Word, so that there might be no room whatever for doubt on the point. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). Two things are here affirmed, and the intimate and inseparable relation between them is emphatically stated. First, the everlasting love of God unto His own; second, the effect and showing forth of the same. It is by the Spirit's effectual call the elect are brought out of their natural state of alienation and drawn to God in Christ. That supernatural call or drawing is here expressly attributed to the Lord's "loving kindness," and the connection between this and His everlasting love for them is pointed by the "therefore." Thus, it is by means of God's reconciling us to Himself that we obtain proof of His everlasting good will toward us. The everlasting love and grace of the triune God unto His chosen ones is made apparent to them in this world by means of the fruit or immediate effects of the same: that which was secret in the heart of Jehovah is gradually brought into open manifestation through His own wondrous works unto the Church. It cannot be expected that the world of the ungodly should take any interest in these transactions, but to the regenerate they must be a source of unfailing and ever increasing delight. As we pointed out earlier, the electing love of God was evidenced, first, in the incarnation and mission of His own dear Son, who was ordained to accomplish the redemption of His people that had fallen in Adam. Second, the eternal purpose of God's grace is revealed in and through a divine call which the elect receive while here on earth. We must now consider more definitely what this divine call really is. First of all we must distinguish carefully between this call which is received by the elect and that which comes to all who are under the sound of the Word: the one is particular, the other general. Whosoever comes under the sound of the Word, yea, all who have it in their hands in its written form, are called by God to forsake their sins and seek His mercy in Christ. This general call comes to the elect and non-elect alike: but alas, it is refused by all of them. It is described in such passages as, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4), "many [are] called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16). Their rejection of the same is depicted thus: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded" (Prov. 1:24), "They all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). But it is with the special and particular call, of which the elect alone are the subjects, that we are now concerned. Second, then, this calling of the elect is an individual and inward one, falling not upon the outward ear, but penetrating to their very hearts. It is the Word of God's power, reaching them in their natural state of spiritual death and quickening them into newness of life. It is the Good Shepherd seeking and saving His lost sheep and restoring them to His Father: as it is written, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice" (John 10:3, 4). From the legal side of things the salvation of God's elect became an accomplished fact when Christ died and rose again, but not until the Spirit of God's Son is sent into their hearts— "whereby they cry Abba, Father"—is it made good in their actual experience. It is by the Spirit alone that we are given a saving knowledge of the Truth, being led by Him into a right apprehension thereof: The Spirit so shines upon our understanding that we are enabled to take in the spiritual knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Third, then, it is an effectual call, being accomplished by the supernatural operations of the Spirit. It holds equally good of the new creation as of the old that, "He [God] spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9). It is in such passages as "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3), this effectual call is referred to—their natural unwillingness to surrender themselves completely to the Lord's claims is sweetly melted down by the communication of an overwhelming sense of God's grace and love to them. Again; "All Thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13), so taught that He "hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5:20). Once more, this effectual call is God's making good the promises of the

new covenant: "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10). Theologians have wisely designated this the "effectual call" so as to distinguish it from the general and outward one which comes to all who hear the gospel. This effectual call is not an invitation, but is the actual bestowment of life and light. It is the immediate fruit of God's wondrous and infinite love to our persons when we are altogether unlovely, yea, the subjects of nothing but what renders us repulsive and hateful (see Ezek. 16:4-8!). It is then that the Holy Spirit is given to the elect—given to make good in them what Christ wrought out for them. Let it be clearly recognized and thankfully owned that the gift of the Spirit to us is as great and grand a gift as the gift of Christ for us. By the Spirit's inhabiting us we are sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption. By the Spirit's indwelling of us we become the temples of the living God, His dwelling-place on earth. It is not sufficiently recognized that all covenant mercies are in the hand of the blessed Holy Spirit, whose office and work it is to bring home the elect (by effectual calling) to Christ, and to make known and apply to their souls the salvation which the Lord Jesus has fulfilled and wrought out for them. He comes from Heaven in consequence of Christ's atonement and ascension, and proclaims salvation from the Lord for wretched sinners. He enters their hearts of sin and woe and makes known the salvation of God. He puts them by believing on the person and work of Christ into possession of the things that accompany salvation, and then He becomes a Comforter to them. Such do not pray for the Spirit to come and regenerate them, for they have already received Him as a life-giving and sanctifying Spirit. What they must now do is pray for grace to receive Him as the Spirit of adoption, that He may witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. Now this effectual call is a necessary and proper consequence and effect of God's eternal election, for none are the recipients of this supernatural vocation but His chosen ones. Wherever predestination unto everlasting glory goes before concerning any person, then effectual calling unto faith and holiness infallibly follows. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). The elect are chosen unto salvation by the free and sovereign grace of God; but how is that salvation actually obtained? How are His favored ones brought into the personal possession of it? Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and not otherwise. God's decree of election is an ordination unto everlasting life and glory, and it is evident by holiness being effectually wrought in its objects by the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Spirit. It is thereby that the Spirit communicates what Christ purchased for them. "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9:23, 24). In the verses immediately preceding the apostle had treated of the unspeakably solemn subject of how God shows His wrath and makes known His power in connection with the non-elect, but here he takes up the blessed theme of how God discovers the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. This is by the effectual call which is received individually by His people. That call is what serves to make manifest God's everlasting grace toward us: as Romans 8:28 expresses it we are "the called according to His purpose"; in other words, the Spirit is given to us in order to the accomplishment of God's decree, or to put it in another way, through his effectual call the believer may look upward to the eternal love of God unto him, much as he might through a chink in his wall peer through to the shining of the sun in the heavens. As the love of God the Father is chiefly spoken of under the act of election and expressed by Him giving His only begotten Son to be our Head and Mediator, and as the love of God the Son shines forth brightest in His incarnation, obedience, and laying down His life for us, so the love of God the Spirit is displayed in His revealing in the Word the eternal transactions between the Father and the Son and by enlightening our minds into a true, vital, and spiritual knowledge of the Father and the Son. It is at effectual calling that the Spirit is pleased to make an inward revelation and application of the salvation of Christ to the soul, which is indeed heaven

dawning upon us, for by it dead sinners are quickened, hard hearts softened, stubborn wills rendered pliable, great sins manifestatively forgiven, and infinite mercy displayed and magnified. It is then that the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of all spiritual life, enables great sinners to know that God is love. By His Spirit Christ is pleased to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and through the gospel He manifests the knowledge of the Father's love to us. He gives the Spirit to make a revelation of this to our minds, and thus we are led to know and feel the love of God to be the foundation of all grace and of everlasting consolation. As the knowledge of our personal election (obtained through our effectual calling) makes it evident to us that we are near and dear to God, so it follows that we perceive we are dear to Christ. As the Spirit imparts to us a knowledge of the Father's love unto us in His dear Son, we are led to search into and study this wondrous subject of election, and the more we know of it, the more we are astonished at it. Hereby, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, we are led to such views of the grace of the Lord Jesus as fills the heart with holy contentment and delight. Third, the eternal purpose of God's grace unto us is manifested by a supernatural change in us. Strictly speaking this is not a distinct branch of our subject, for the new birth is one and the same as our effectual calling; nevertheless, for the sake of clarity and to resolve those doubts which the regenerate are the subjects of, we deem it well to give the same a separate consideration. When a sincere soul learns that there is both a general and external call, and a particular and inward one, he is deeply concerned to ascertain which of these he has received, or rather, whether he has been favored with the latter, for it is only the supernatural call of the Spirit which is effectual unto salvation. It is on this point that many of God's dear people are so deeply perplexed and exercised: to ascertain and make sure that they have passed from death unto life and been brought into a vital union with Christ. In seeking to clear this point the writer has to guard against infringing too much upon the next branch of our subject, namely, the knowledge of our election. At present we are treating of the manifestation of it, particularly as it is seen in that supernatural change which is wrought in its subjects at the moment they receive God's effectual call. We shall therefore content ourselves here with endeavoring to describe some of the principal features of this supernatural change. That supernatural change is described in general terms in, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). Another passage treating of the same thing is, "According as His divine power [he] hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). It will at once appear that this verse is very much to the point, for it refers specifically to our effectual call and attributes the same to God's Divine power. This supernatural change consists, then, in our being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. That which is brought forth by the Spirit at the new birth, though but a feeble and tiny spiritual babe, is nevertheless "a new creature"; a new life has been imparted, new principles communicated from which new actions proceed. It is then that "Of His [Christ's] fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16), that is, every spiritual grace in the Head is transmitted to His members; every grace from Christ in the Christian is now complete for parts: "grace for grace" as a child receives limb for limb from its parents. At our effectual calling divine power gives to us "all things pertaining to life and godliness": what they comprise we must now briefly consider. First, a spiritual understanding. The natural man can neither perceive nor receive spiritual things in a spiritual way (though he can ponder them in a natural and intellectual way), because he is devoid of spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 2:14). But when we are effectually called God gives us "an understanding that we may know him that is true." Hence 2 Peter 1:3 declares that the all things pertaining to life and godliness are given us "through the knowledge of Him that has called us." The first light which the soul receives when the Spirit enters his heart is a new view of God, and in that light we begin to see what sin is, as it is in itself against a holy God, and thus perceive what holiness is. It is this new and spiritual knowledge of God Himself which constitutes the very core and essence of the blessing and work of the new covenant of

grace: "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11). This spiritual knowledge of God, then, is the germ and root of the spiritual change which accompanies the effectual call. Second, a principle of holiness is wrought in the soul. God chose His people in Christ that they should be "holy" (Eph. 1:4), and therefore does He call them "with a holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). Thereby we are made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). Our title to heaven rests upon what Christ did for us, but our fitness for heaven consists of the image of Christ being wrought in us. This principle of holiness is planted in the heart by the Spirit, and is termed "the new nature" by some writers. It evidences itself by the mind's pondering again and again that God is a holy God, whose pure eyes can endure no iniquity, and by the heart's cleaving to Him under this apprehension of Him. Here, then, is the test by which we are to examine and measure ourselves: do I—notwithstanding so much in my heart and life which humbles me and causes me to mourn as contrary to divine holiness—approve of all God's commands as holy and good, though opposite to my lusts? And is it my constant longing for God to make me, increasingly, a partaker of this holiness? Third, a love for spiritual objects and things. Not only is a "new heart" communicated at our effectual calling, but there is such a divine renewing of our will that it is now enabled to choose what is spiritually good—a power which the natural man has not in his fallen condition. It is the turning of the heart unto and longing after holy objects which carries the will along with it. When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we cannot but love Him and all that He loves. A true and sincere love to God is the fruit and effect of His effectual call: the two things are inseparable: "to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Alas, our natural lusts still crave that which is unholy, nevertheless, in the renewed heart there is a principle which delights in and seeks after that which is pure and holy: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Do you not find (intermingled with other workings in you) true strains of love toward God Himself? Fourth, a spiritual principle of faith. Natural faith suffices for natural objects, but spiritual and supernatural objects require a spiritual and supernatural faith. That spiritual faith is "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), wrought in the regenerate by "the operation of God" (Col. 2:12). This faith is the effect and accompaniment of our effectual call: "with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3) signifies, first, that the heart is drawn unto the Lord, so that it rests on His promises, reposes in His love, and responds to His voice. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed" (Heb. 11:8): the two things are inseparable—faith responds to God's call. Therefore do we read of "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1), which differs radically from the "faith" of formal religionists and wild enthusiasts. First, because it is a divine gift and not the working of a natural principle. Second, because it receives with childlike simplicity whatever is stated in the Word, quibbling not at "difficulties" therein. Third, because its possessor realizes that only God can sustain and maintain that faith in his soul, for it lies not in the power of the creature to either exercise or increase it. In conclusion, let us point out that this supernatural change wrought in the elect at their effectual call, this working in them a spiritual understanding that they may know God, the imparting to them of a principle of holiness, of love and of faith, is the foundation of all the actings of grace which do follow. Every acting of grace, to the end of the believer's life, evidences this first work of effectual calling to be sound and saving. At regeneration God endows the soul with all the principles and seeds of all graces, and the future life of the Christian and his growth in grace (through the conflict between the "flesh" and "spirit") is but a calling of them into operation and manifestation. We will now treat God's making known in time that purpose of grace which He formed concerning the Church in eternity past. The everlasting love of God unto His chosen people is discovered in a variety of ways and means, chief among them being the inestimable gifts of His Son for them and of His Spirit to them. Thus, we have so far dwelt upon, first, the incarnation and mission of Christ

as the principal opening of the Father's heart unto His own, for while the glorification of the Godhead was His chief design therein, yet inseparably connected therewith was the blessing of His saints. Second, God's gracious design is manifested by the communication of the Spirit unto the elect, whereby they are made the subjects of a supernatural call. Third, this is made still further evident by the supernatural change wrought in them by the Spirit's regeneration and sanctification. Fourth, by Divine preservation. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet. 5:10). This verse sets forth the wondrous and mighty grace of God dispensed to His elect in effectually calling them, in preserving them from temptation and sin, in strengthening and enabling them to persevere unto the end, and—withstanding all the opposition of the flesh, the world, and the devil—bring them at last securely unto eternal glory; for as Romans 8:30 declares, "Whom He called, them He also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Once again we shall draw freely from the most excellent writings of the Puritan, Thomas Goodwin, first because his works are now out of print and unknown to our generation, and second because having personally received so much help therefrom, we wish to share the same with our readers. It is to be duly noted that in the immediate context (1 Pet. 5:8) the Devil is set forth in all his terribleness: as our "adversary" for malice, likened unto "a lion" for strength, unto a "roaring lion" for dread, "walking about seeking" such is his unwearied diligence; "whom he may devour" if God prevent not. Now observe the blessed and consolatory contrast: "But God": the Almighty, the self-sufficient and all sufficient One; "the God of grace": how comforting is the singling out of this attribute when we have to do with Satan in point of temptation. If the God of grace be for us, who can be against us? When Paul was under temptation a messenger (or angel) from Satan being sent to buffet him, what was it that God did immediately set before him for relief? This: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9)—the grace in God's heart toward him and the grace working in his own heart, both to assist him effectually. But there is something yet more precious here in 1 Peter 5:10: "the God of all grace," which has reference first to the exceeding riches of grace that are in His nature, then to the benevolent designs which He has toward His own, and then to His gracious dealings with them. The grace in His nature is the fountain, the grace of His purpose or counsels is the wellhead, and the grace in His dispensations or dealings with us are the streams. God is an all-gracious God in Himself, even as He is the Almighty, which is an essential attribute. There is a limitless ocean of grace in Himself to feed all streams in which His purposes and designs of grace are to issue forth. Our consolation from hence is, that all the grace which is in the nature of God is in the promise of His being "the God of all grace" to His Church, declared to be so engaged as to afford supplies unto them, yea, to the utmost expenditure of these riches as their needs shall require. Nor is God known to be such only by His people in the New Testament era. David, who was the greatest subject as well as adorer of this grace that we find in the Old Testament, apprehended and acknowledged the same. "According to Thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things" (1 Chron. 17:19). And mark what immediately follows, "O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee": that is, Thou art the God of all grace, for it was a point of grace, high grace, David is there extolling, namely, God's covenant of grace with him in Christ, just revealed to him. "What can David say more?" (v. 18); such divine favor is beyond him; just as Paul in Romans 8:3 1, "what shall we then say to these things?" When God pardons, He does so after the manner of a great God, full of all grace: He will "abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7), not according to our thoughts saith He (v. 8) but according to His own. That to which the old divines referred when they spoke of God's purposing grace was the ocean thereof in His own nature, from which flow those beneficent designs which He hath toward His people, designs which the prophet described as "thoughts of peace" (Jer. 29:11), which He took up unto them or which He "thinks toward" them. It would be impossible to speak of all these thoughts, for as David declares, "Many,

O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order" (Ps. 40:5). We must then summarize them and dwell only on those particulars which directly serve to the point before us, namely, our preservation, or God's carrying us safely through all temptations unto everlasting glory. First Peter 5:10 manifestly speaks of God's purposing grace, that grace which was in His heart toward His people before He calls them from which in fact that call proceeds and which moved Him thereunto, as it is expressly affirmed in 2 Timothy 1:9. The first act of His purposing grace was in His choosing of us, His singling out of those persons whom He designed to be a God of grace unto. Choice of their persons is therefore styled "the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5), that being the fundamental act of grace, upon which all others are built. To be a God of grace unto His Church is to love its members merely because He chose to love them, for grace is the freeness of love. Receive us graciously" is the prayer of the Church (Hos. 14:2); "I will love them freely (v. 4) is the Lord's response. Divine grace and human merits are as far apart as the poles: as Romans 11:6 shows, the one mutually excludes the other. For God to be the God of all grace unto His people is for Him to resolve to love them, and that forever; to be unchanging in His love and never to have His heart taken from off them. This is clearly denoted in the language of 1 Peter 5:10, for He "called us unto His eternal glory." It is not simply that He hath called us into His grace or favor, but into glory, and that, "eternal glory": that is, by the effectual call He estates us into the whole and full right thereof forever. What can this mean but that God called us out of such grace and love as He did and doth resolve to be the God of all grace to us for everlasting, and therefore calls us beyond recall (Rom. 11:29). This is clearly borne out by what immediately follows: "after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. This grace thus fixed in the divine will is the most sovereign and predominating principle in the heart of God, overruling all other things He willeth, so as to effectually carry on and carry out His resolution of free grace. Grace, as it is the most resolute, so it is the most absolute principle in the heart of God; for unto it belongeth the dominion. What else means "the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16)? Why else is grace said to "reign . . . unto eternal life" (Rom. 5:21)? The same thing appears in the context of 1 Peter 5:10: "Humble yourselves [or submit to] therefore under the mighty hand of God [that is, to His sovereign power] that He may exalt you in due time" (v. 6): He "careth for you" (v. 7); all of which is carried down to "the God of all grace" in verse 10; which is followed by "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (v. 11), that is, to Him as "the God of all grace." But it is as the God of all grace by way of execution or performance that we must now contemplate Him in His gracious dispensations of all sorts, which are the effects of the ocean of grace in His nature and the purpose of grace in His heart. We may turn back for a moment to 1 Peter 5:5: "God giveth grace to the humble," which refers to His actual bestowment of grace. In like manner, James declares, "He giveth more grace" (4:6), where he quotes the same passage as Peter's. In James it is spoken of in reference to subduing His people's lusts, particularly lusting after envy. Truly this is grace indeed, that when lust is raging, the grace of God should move Him to give more grace whereby He subdueth; unto them that humble themselves for their lusts, He giveth more grace. It will help us to a better understanding of this divine title "the God of all grace" if we compare it with "the God of all comfort" in 2 Corinthians 1:3. Now that is spoken of in relation to effects of comfort: as the Psalmist says "He is good, and doeth good"; so immediately after He is spoken of as "the God of all comfort" it follows, "who comforteth us in all our tribulations." He is "the God of all comfort" in relation unto all sorts of distresses, which the saints at any time have; in like manner, He is the God of all grace in respect of its gracious effects. Yet this may be added—for the due magnifying of free grace—that the two are not commensurate, for the dispensations of His grace are wider than the dispensations of His comfort. God often gives grace where He does not bestow comfort, so that He is the God of all grace to a larger extent than He is of all comfort. Now since there is a fullness, an ocean, all dispensatory grace to be given forth

by God, what necessarily follows? This, first, that there is no temptation that doth or can befall a saint that is under the dominion of free grace, but God hath a grace prepared to be applied when His hour arrives. It clearly implies that God hath a grace fitted and suited as every need and occasion should arise. There is no sore in the heart but He hath a plaster ready for it, to be laid thereon in due season. The very word "grace" is a relative to need and temptation, and so "all grace" must be a relative to all or any needs whatsoever. If there were any want in the large subjects of free grace of which they are capable, and God had not a special grace for it, He were not the God of all grace. But it can never be said that the misery of His people is more extensive than the scope of God's grace. As God hath grace for all the manifold needs of His people, so He is the God of all grace in giving forth help as their occasions require, for such is the season for grace to be displayed. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). So again, "that He maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require" (1 Kings 8:59), which is to be viewed as a type of the intercession of the antitypical Solomon, the Prince of peace. Thus God's favor is manifested unto His people at all times of need and in all manner of ways. If God were to fail His people in any one season and help them not in any one need, then He is not the God of all grace, for it is the chiefest part of being gracious to relieve in time of greatest need. The fact that He is the God of all grace in respect to dispensing the same, demonstrates that He takes not this title upon Himself potentially, but that He is so actually, it is merely that He has in Himself sufficient grace to meet all the varied needs of His people, but also that He really does so. By instances of all sorts, God gives full proof of the same. In the day to come, He will have the honor of being not only the God of all grace potentially, but really so in the performance of it, for it will then be seen that He fully made good that word, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). The greatest and acutest need of the Christian springs out of his indwelling sin, yet ample provision is made here, too, for "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). This superabounding of divine grace is gloriously displayed when God effectually calls His people. Let us mention one or two eminent details in proof. First, God then shows Himself to be the God of all grace in the pardon He bestows. Consider what an incalculable debt of sinning we had incurred! From the earliest infancy the carnal mind is enmity against God: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3). Every thought from the first dawning of reason has been only evil continually. Our sins were more in number than the hairs of our head. Suppose, Christian reader, thou hadst lived for twenty or thirty years before God effectually called thee: during all that time thou hadst done no good—not a single act acceptable to the thrice holy God; instead, all thy ways were abominable to Him. Nor hadst thou any concern about God's being so grievously dishonored, nor the fearfulness of thine estate. And then, lo!—wonder of wonders—by one act, in a single moment, God blotted out all thy sins: "having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). Second, God showed Himself to be the God of all grace in bestowing on thee a righteousness which met every requirement of His holy Law: a perfect righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ, which contained in it all obedience. That infinitely meritorious righteousness was imputed to thy account wholly and at once: not piecemeal, abith at a time, but in one entire gift. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). Verily, that was indeed "abundance of grace." That perfect righteousness of Christ is fully commensurate with all the designs of grace in God's heart toward thee, and the whole of this thou receivest at thy calling, so that thou mayest exclaim, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe

of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. 61:10). It was the realization of this which moved Paul to extol the grace bestowed on him at his first conversion: "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant" (1 Tim. 1:14). Third, God showed Himself to be the God of all grace in sanctifying thee. This includes first and foremost the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, who takes up His residence in the heart, so that thy body is the temple of God, whereby thou art set apart and consecrated to Him. In consequence of this, mortifying grace was bestowed, so that every lust then received its death-wound: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Quickening grace was also imparted, whereby the spirit is enabled to resist the flesh: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3). Justification and sanctification are inseparably conjoined: as the former provides an inalienable standing for us, so the latter secures our state; and thereby is the foundation laid for our glorification. These inestimable blessings were the pledges and earnest of thy preservation, for "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). It is in no wise a question of thy worthiness, but solely a matter of divine grace: "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it" (Eccl. 3:14). True, sin is still left within thee—to further humble thy heart—and thy lusts are ever active; nevertheless, you may be fully assured with David "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever" (Ps. 138:8). True, thou hast a most inadequate appreciation of such wondrous favor being shown thee, and to thine unutterable shame thou must confess that your daily conduct is utterly unworthy thereof; nevertheless, that too serves to bring out the amazing grace which bears with so ungrateful and vile a creature. Before looking at some of the obstacles which might be supposed to stand in the way of the believer being carried safely through all temptation into eternal glory, we must guard against a possible misconception. It is not the prerogative of divine grace to save men who continue how they will in sin, to save out of an absolute sovereignty because it will save them. No indeed: God saves none without rule, much less against rule. The very verse which speaks of Him being the "God of all grace" adds "who hath called us" and as 2 Timothy 1:9 declares, God calls us "with an holy calling . . . according to his own purpose and grace"; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The monarchy of grace hath fundamental laws, as all well-regulated monarchies have. Let the foundation of God be never so sure that "the Lord knoweth [loveth] them that are his," yet it is added "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19). On the other hand, we do unhesitatingly declare the Scriptures teach that the saving grace of God is an effectual, all-powerful, infallible principle in the hearts of the regenerate, enabling them to keep those rules that are set them as essentially requisite to salvation. The one thing which Arminians suppose stands in the way of this is man's free will—as if God had made a creature which He was unable to rule. We are not ashamed to affirm that there is such a supremacy in divine grace that it engages all in God to its triumphant issue. If on the one hand grace complies with divine wisdom, justice, and holiness in setting rules; on the other hand grace draws all other attributes of God into an engagement for the preserving of us, keeping our otherwise perverse wills within the compass of those rules, and overcoming all opposition to the contrary. Hence it is that God makes so absolute a covenant: "I will not turn away from them, to do them good, ... they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 32:40). We now desire to point out the arguments of comfort and support which may be drawn from this grand truth that the God of all grace will safely carry His people through all temptations. Having begun as the God of all grace in justifying them after this manner, and in sanctifying them at their effectual call, what is there which should divert and hinder Him from conducting them to eternal glory? Is it the guilt of sin, incurred by transgressions after calling? or the power of sin again recovering its strength in them? If neither of these, then nothing else remains. As both

of them, at times, acutely distress the consciences and minds of Christians, it is advisable for us to point out that there is nothing in either of them which can even begin to turn God's heart from off His beloved children. May the Lord graciously help us to make this quite clear. If any thing was calculated to provoke God not to continue His grace unto the Christian it would be the guilt of those sins committed after his calling. But that shall not be able to so do. If God justified them at the first from sins mountain high, and thereby became engaged to continue a God of all grace ever after to them, then surely He will not fail to pardon their after-sins. Compare matters as they stood in this respect afore calling with the state thereof after. First, at thy calling God pardoned a continued course of sinning for many years, wherein there had been laid up a multitude too great for thee to number; but a pardoning thy sins after conversion it is at worst but of backslidings, and those repaired by many sincere repentings coming between. If then, God pardoned an entire course of sinning, will He not much more easily continue to pardon backsliding intermingled with repentings, even though they are sins committed again and again? "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you" (Jer. 3:14). Married Israel had been to God afore, but she had gone a-whoring from Him. At his first conversion God is espoused to the believer and He did then give up Himself to be a God of all grace to him. How marvelous is such grace to His unfaithful spouse! "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:12). So merciful is He and He pardons on the lowest terms we could desire: "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice" (v. 13). The same is found again in Isaiah 57:17, 18 and Hosea 14:4, where He promises to heal their backsliding. Now if the God of all grace picked us up out of the mire when our hearts were wholly hard and impenitent, broke them, and forgave us all our years of sinning: then shall He not continue to melt our hearts when we backslide and recover us? Then, He forgave thee all thy past sins in one immeasurable lump; now He distributes His pardon, daily as thou humblest thyself for transgressions. That fountain opened "for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1) is constantly available for us. Dost thou not confess thy sins, plead the blood of Christ, seek for mercy at the throne of grace, and beg forgiveness through Christ's intercession? If so, thou shalt not seek in vain; for though God pardoneth not because of thy humblings and seekings (as they are thy doings), yet in this course runs His pardoning grace. But will not those who have been effectually called, reply: Alas, my sins since conversion have been greater and grosser than any I committed before. Answer: first, thou mayest have been very young when first converted: since then, as you have developed according to the course of nature, lusts too have grown, and you are more conscious of them than in early youth. Second, thy circumstances may account for them, though not excuse them. Some do sin worse after conversion than before: Job and Jeremiah sinned more grievously in later life than during their earlier years, for their temptations grew much higher. Third, consider not only thine awful sins, but thy sincere repentings too—thy earnest cryings to God against them, which were not disregarded by Him—demonstrating again that He is "the God of all grace." One other thing which might be supposed to obstruct the course of God's grace begun in us at effectual calling, causing His heart to be diverted from us, is the power and ragings of sin within the Christian. But if He did sanctify us at the first as the God of all grace, then surely that affords a sure ground of confirmation that, notwithstanding the hazards with which our remaining corruptions might seem to threaten us, He will assuredly preserve grace in us despite all the temptations we are subject to. At his sanctification God laid in the soul of the Christian the seeds of every grace and gracious disposition that he shall ever possess: is He not well able to nourish and preserve this garden of His own planting? Listen to His most precious promise, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27:3). "Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God

resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:5, 6). This clearly denotes that our fiercest and most perilous conflicts are with some particular lust or temptation, for so the apostle's instance here carries it—the lust of envy. But when a regenerated soul is conscious of this corruption and doth humble himself under it and for it, bewailing the same before God, this shows that a contrary grace is working within him opposing the activities of that lust, resisting that envy (and the pride from which it springs), and therefore it is that he seeks for humility (the contrary grace to pride); and the Lord as the God of all grace giveth him "more grace. But many a poor soul will reply: alas, I greatly fear that my condition is far worse now than ever it was previously. Answer: take the very worst condition that you have ever been in since conversion, and consider the frame of your heart therein, and then compare it with the best mood you were ever in before conversion. Honestly, dare you exchange this now for that then? Before conversion you had not the least iota of holy affection in thee, no aim at the glory of God; but since conversion thou hast (take the whole course of your Christian life) had an eye unto God and sought to please Him. True, like David, you must say, "I have gone astray like [not a sow but] a lost sheep"; yet can you also add with him "seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (Ps. 119:176). Before thy conversion thou never callest upon God, unless a formality; but now thou often criest unto Him unfeignedly. Before, you had no real hatred of sin and no pursuit after holiness; but now thou hast though falling far short of what thou wouldest be. Thou talkest of lusts harrying thee with temptations; yes, but once thou hadst the Devil dwelling within thee, as in his own house, in peace, and taking thee captive at his will. You complain of coldness in the performance of spiritual duties; yes, but once thou wast wholly dead. It may be thy graces are not shining, and yet there are in thee longings after God, desires to fear His name. There is, then, a living spiritual creature in thee, which, like the mole underground, is working up towards the air, heaving up the earth. A further proof (in 1 Pet. 5:10) that the God of all grace will carry safely through all suffering and temptations into heaven those whom he has called, is contained in the words "called us unto His eternal glory." Though we are not yet in actual possession and full enjoyment thereof, nevertheless God has already invested us with a full and indefeasible right thereunto. This "glory" was the firstborn of all God's thoughts and intentions concerning us, for it was the end or upshot of His gracious designs with us. Said the Lord Jesus, "Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32), and He will exclaim in the day to come, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), which refers unto heaven itself, where God reigns as undisputed King. Now God's heart is so set upon this glory as His first and last end for His people that, when His electing grace is made known at our calling, He does then give us a full right thereto. Though He suspends the giving us the full possession of it for some years, yet He does not suspend the complete title thereto, for the whole of salvation is then stated upon them. A beautiful (and designed) type of this is found in 1 Samuel 16:18. In the open view of his brethren, God sent Samuel to David while he was yet young, and anointed him king, thereby investing him unto a sure right to the kingdom of Israel—that anointing being the earnest and pledge of all the rest. But for many years David's possession of the kingdom was delayed, and during that time he suffered much at the hands of Saul; nevertheless, God miraculously preserved him and brought him safely into it. But note well that God has not only called us unto His glory, but unto "His eternal glory," whereby is implied not simply that the glory is eternal as an adjunct of it, but that our calling and estate thereby is into the eternity of that glory, as well as unto the glory itself. This implies two things. First, he that is called of God hath a spiritual life or glory begun in his soul which is eternal—note how the image of Christ wrought in the believer in this life is termed "glory" in 2 Corinthians 3:18. This glory of spiritual life in the Christian is indestructible; "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25). Second, it imports that when a man is called, he is put into possession of an eternal right of glory—not a present right to glory only, but a

perpetual right; a present right that reaches to eternity. We are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). There is yet one other phrase in 1 Peter 5:10 which remains to be considered: "by Jesus Christ." There is a security which Jesus Christ gives, as well as that of the Father's, to confirm the believer's faith that he shall be strengthened and enabled to persevere. God is the God of a

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