

Chosen, Called, and Cared For

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes God's sovereign election, the assurance of salvation for the chosen, and the transformative power of the Gospel in the lives of believers.

Scripture: Matthew 5:45, Luke 18:7, John 6:37, Acts 9:1, Acts 27:23, 2 Timothy 2:13, 2 Timothy 4:16

Topics: "Election And Calling", "Eternal Security"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the profound truths of God's sovereign election, emphasizing the Father's gracious choice of His people, the irresistible calling of the elect to Christ, and the eternal security and preservation of those who come to Him. He highlights the exclusivity of God's liberality and benevolence, contrasting it with the sectarian spirit of the world. Bradbury delves into the story of Saul of Tarsus, illustrating how even the most vehement persecutors can be transformed by Christ's love and grace, never to be cast out. He reassures believers that despite their weaknesses, doubts, and failures, Christ's faithfulness and promise to never cast them out remain unwavering.

Transcript

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."
(John 6:37)

We have words of spiritual instruction set before us in the context preceding and succeeding the verse I have read for our meditation. Our Lord Jesus Christ, with that spirit of true liberality which ever characterized Him, and with that benevolence which flowed from His sympathizing heart, fed with bread and fish the multitudes who crowded around Him. We see no spirit of exclusiveness in Him as He deals out the bounties of His providence, none of that accursed spirit which clings to sects and isms.

Partisans generally confine their cold, cramped charity to those of the same creed or community. Our blessed Lord exemplified in His conduct the spirit of His words concerning His Father, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45) Liberality and benevolence flow from Him as temporal want and necessity meet His gaze; but faithful dealing and searching truth are displayed by Him as He unfolds the will of His Father to those who hang upon His lips.

It is said, "And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which he did on them that were diseased." He then fed them with loaves and fishes, and said unto them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

He was fully acquainted with their fleshly motives, but this hindered not the outflow of His generosity and philanthropy. He caused the food to multiply in the eater's hands, and then embraced the opportunity to declare God's glorious, yet humbling, truths to them.

The personal election, irresistible calling, and eternal preservation of a portion of Adam's lost race, and the total depravity of all mankind, with the perfect inability of the elect to come to Him for life and salvation without the direct operation of God the Holy Ghost, were the themes of His discourse. So long as the multitude were feasted with carnal provision, it crowded around Him; and mark you! That was not peculiar to those days, for in connection with almost all Churches, ay, and free-grace Churches too, there are those who hang on for the loaves and fishes.

But the very moment God sets His fan to work, and His glorious truth is faithfully declared, where are they? Scattered! As in the case of these who followed our blessed Lord and Master. "Many, therefore, of His disciples, when they had heard this, said: This is a hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them: Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said: Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father. From that." The word *time* in italics, and not in the original, is calculated to lead the mind away from that pungent point of Divine truth which these carnal followers of Christ hated. "From that"--from the plain declaration of Divine sovereignty and creature inability--"many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."

What are disciples? Followers. What kind of followers were these? Carnal only because He ministered to the wants and necessities of the flesh. Mark! The very moment He began to minister to the spiritual necessities of those in union with Him these carnal followers were off. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve: Will ye also go away? Here we see a little of the tender sympathy of the Master revealed. When the Gospel goes forth with power to the hearts of God's children, the children of Satan are sure to be offended, and, from some fleshly motive or other, they will retire.

Can a truly God-sent minister of Christ help but mourn, and sometimes weep in secret, over such? He cannot. It is part of the commission given unto him by the great Head of the Church. And while it is his in the presence of his God to mourn over this, it is his also to act according to the Lord's injunction to Jeremiah, "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them." (Jer. 15:19) This is the truth with him whom God hath sent here, for I can never go one step after those who, in the predestined purpose of God--and it may be through the suggestions of the devil--absent themselves from the preaching of God's glorious sovereignty displayed in the salvation of His people.

"Then Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." As much as to say, "Words of eternal life flow from no lips but Thine, and flow into our hearts from no heart but Thine." Jesus had said before: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The words of Christ, when spoken home to any heart, convey life and power. He had said unto them: "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life." (verse 54) Was that spirit and life?

Certainly. How is it then that Papists and Popish apes in the Establishment would have us believe that this eating and drinking is the pressing and piercing with the teeth the real human body and bones, and the drinking of the real human blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? Still further--How is it that thousands will wrest John 3:5, and make it to teach baptismal regeneration, or cause it allude to baptism at all? The portion has not the most remote allusion to baptism. Read it.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What is this water? The word of eternal life, which none but Christ can give. Here you have this water! "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." (John 17:17) Again--"Now are ye clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3) Again--"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Pet. 1:22) Here you have the life-giving, soul cleansing power.

The water is the Word of eternal life, the Gospel of the ever-blessed God spoken home to the heart from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. So His body and blood are spiritually received and fed upon in the glorious truths of the Word concerning Himself, given as a ransom for His people, His precious blood shed for His Church, and His broken body a sacrifice and satisfaction to law and justice. These truths, conveyed to the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, feed, strengthen, build up, and establish a living soul in the things of God. Peter continued--"And we believe, and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter had a very positive way of speaking, and I believe he meant what he said, though sometimes he said too much. He meant much, but did little. You will find the same profession, in chap. 16:30: "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things." Look at the answer of Jesus: "Do ye now believe?" As much as to say, Are you quite sure about it? It is as well to think twice before you speak once. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone." (John 16:32) Now, where is your faith and your assurance?

Ah! My dear friends, if we look at the acts of the saints and judge them thereby, we should come to the conclusion that they had no faith at all; but it is our mercy to know that our great King-Priest judges not of our faith by our acts, but according to His own power, grace, and righteousness made over unto us in the everlasting covenant. Having endeavoured to look at a few of the truths set before us in this sixth of John, let us seek a little instruction from the verse I have read to you by way of text.

It seems to open itself thus--I. THE GIVEN ONES--"All that the Father giveth Me." II. THEIR COMING--"Shall come to Me." III. THEIR SECURITY--"And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." I. THE GIVEN ONES. Who are these? They are the elect and redeemed people of the living God. Election is a truth distinguishing and discriminating. A fact, in its declaration, searching and separating. Wherever the truth, that God has reserved to Himself a portion of Adam's lost race, is fearlessly and feelingly proclaimed, the enmity of the carnal mind and the opposition of Satan are sure to be manifested in some way or other.

It must be so of necessity, for the preaching of God's truth is for the manifestation of the enmity existing between the two seeds. This has been demonstrated in the experience of all God's sent servants from Abel's days to the present time. All who have stood up to declare the mind of God concerning His covenant people, have found that their testimony has called forth enmity from some, whilst from others it has drawn forth a spirit of the most intense veneration and fond affection.

Take, for instance, Isaiah. He went forth declaring in evangelic strains the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. What was the result? Look at the commencement of that most sublime portion which describes the suretyship of our Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:1): "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" When he received his commission from the hands of the great King-Priest, he was told what effect his testimony would produce. Isa. 6:1: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple."

The Lord, Isaiah saw, was our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John 12:41: "These things said Esaias, when he saw His (Christ's) glory and spake of Him. And one (seraphim) cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory," or, as you read in the margin, "His glory is the fullness of the whole earth." What does that mean? It means that in every part of the habitable globe there are members of God's chosen family, units in the election of grace.

As the earth heaves out its corn and wine, its coal and iron, its jewels and precious treasure, so it will heave out the whole election of grace, God's jewels, God's special treasure, God's glory. If you will turn to Isa. 46:13, you will see how He speaks of His Israel: "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory." God's people are His glory, which He will bring out of every nook and corner of the habitable world. But I must pass on. "Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone."

Religious human nature would say, How could Isaiah say that in the light of so bright and blessed a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to his soul? Look here! In the light of this revelation he saw himself exceeding sinful, hated himself, loathed himself. You find the same experience in Ezek. 36:31, where, after Israel is cleansed from all filthiness and idols, blessed with the indwelling of God the ever-blessed Spirit, enabled to walk in His statutes and to do His judgments, fed with the good old corn of the land, and freed from famine, "Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations."

Then--a blood-washed people. Then--a people with a new heart. Then--a people with God's Spirit within them. Then--a people walking with God in the statutes of electing love, redeeming grace, and regenerating mercy. Then--a people fed with heavenly food. Then--a people fenced with covenant security. What think you of that? Brought into the experience of Divine life and into the enjoyment of Divine love, and yet possessed of a spirit of self-loathing, because of indwelling sin and abounding corruption.

Thus it was with Isaiah. A sight of his Sovereign caused him to cry, "Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." The live coal from off the altar touched his lips; his iniquity was taken away and his sin was purged. God in covenant, Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity, said, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me." God gave him His message. He was astounded, and cried, "Lord, how long" God answered, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.

And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth." Isaiah's message scattered multitudes while at the same time it was the means of manifesting and gathering together a godly remnant who were kept near to the Lord. The same effect attended the ministry of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Wherever the truths of sovereign love and discriminating mercy are declared, there must of necessity be a scattering and a separating.

But because this is the truth, is it my business to attempt to make my message palatable to the world? Never. Is it my business to try to make my message hateful to the world? No. I have no right by any tact of

mine to state God's truth with the intention to wound or offend any one; but to speak it as He has given it, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. If men will be offended at the plain, unadorned statement of God's truth, let them be offended. But who are the given ones?

God's elect family. Those whom He styles, "My redeemed." There are many portions of the Word where they are revealed as the gift of the Father to the Son. See John 6:39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Here we see a people given and guarded. Now turn to chap. 17:3: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."

Here we see eternal life secured to all the given ones. Ver. 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, and they have kept Thy word." Here we see the given ones taught, and faithful to the teaching. Ver. 9: "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." Here we see the given ones alone are the subjects of the intercession of Jesus. Ver. 11: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are."

Ver. 12: "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept." Now read the prayer, the demand, the command of ver. 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Now read John 10:27-29: "My sheep 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 man pluck them out of My hand."

My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Listen again to Heb. 2:13: "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me." Here you see the given ones prayed for, preserved, and presented perfect in Christ Jesus to the Father. Now the truth of our text and that of the portions I have quoted is hated and derided by carnal men. These object to God's sovereign right to elect, redeem, and glorify whom He would. Carnal reason, free-will pride, and fleshly legality all display their opposition to Jehovah's sovereignty in choosing part of Adam's race to salvation, and leaving the rest to perish in their sins, yet here we see it: "All that the Father giveth Me."

I have told you before that the word "All" in the original is in the neuter gender, not in the masculine or feminine, though these are included. "There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) Sometimes we find the expressions, "all men," "every man," in which we have included the whole election of grace. The "All" of our text, I believe, means all the persons, promises, prayers, petitions, privileges, grace, and glory given by the Father to the Son in covenant before the worlds were framed.

All these shall come to Him in adoration and worship. This brings us to the consideration of God's sovereign and gracious right to reserve to Himself whom He will for grace and glory. Objector cunningly suggests, "The doctrine of election is in the Scriptures, and well suited for the comfort of the family; but it is dangerous and imprudent to preach it to everybody." To the mind of the weak Christian there is a plausibility in this assertion, for, they suggest, by preaching this doctrine weak ones may be hurt, and little ones wounded.

Let me tell you what I think about that. The sooner the weak ones are hurt, and the little ones are wounded, the better, for then they will be fit for the Good Physician, and He will be prized by them. But are we warranted in preaching God's electing love and discriminating decrees to all persons? The question I answer with an unhesitating affirmative. Wherever I am, and before whomsoever I may stand, if God the

Holy Ghost warms my heart with the assurance of my election of God, believing that, I must preach it though devils roar and opposers wince.

It is not mine to preach it in my own fleshly spirit either of passion or of prudence; but by the anointing and guidance of God the ever-blessed Spirit for the ingathering, comfort, and establishment of the children of God. Let me ask this question: Is the Bible God's book? Yes. Is it for all the family? For babes, young men, as well as for the fathers in Christ? Yes. But would it not be prudent to have a Bible printed especially for the babes, with every allusion to election, predestination, and purpose left out, so that disciples might not be offended nor go back?

That would be all very well according to Popish reasoning and fleshly prudence; but it would bring down God's withering anathema upon all those who would thus prudently plunder Him of His glory, and impugn His wisdom. We must have a whole Bible for the whole family great or small. We will investigate this subject still further; "For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." (Heb. 13:9) Did Christ and His apostles preach the doctrines of sovereign election and personal predestination without respect to the persons whom they addressed?

Certainly they did, though the devil has made some so liberal and charitable as to trim their sails for every wind, and tone their tints for all comers. So did not Christ. He preached discriminating grace so clearly and pointedly in the synagogue of Nazareth, that the universal charity tribe were so moved and effected for the whole human race as to cause them to break His neck. (Luke 4:25-29) Did Peter adapt his preaching to his hearers? Would to God we had more of such preaching.

Turn to Acts 2, and notice well his preaching. From Joel 2, he preached the necessity for the Spirit's operation and grace. From Ps. 16, and Ps. 110, he preached the death, resurrection, and sovereignty of Christ. To whom? To men out of every nation under heaven. Does he shirk the mention of Divine decrees? Not a bit of it. Listen. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23) According to accommodating brethren Peter made a sad mistake in alluding to God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge, yet the Holy Ghost blessed it to the passing from death unto life of three thousand elect souls.

Now look at the first outburst of true worship and adoration to God after the ascension of Jesus into heaven and the descent of the Holy Ghost. You will find it recorded in Acts 4:23-30: "And being let go they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them." Priests are invariably the enemies of God's Christ, God's Word, and God's elect. "And when they heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is."

Then a quotation from Psalm 2, prophetic of the rage of Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, against God's Christ. Then these pungent words, "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." In apostolic practice we find God's discriminating truth set forth in both preaching and praise. My dear friends, it is mine to preach from a Bible full of election and predestination, and which declares God's mind according to His eternal covenant of love in Christ Jesus. I will give you another reason why God's election of His people should be preached without reserve: because it reveals the total depravity and perfect inability of human nature.

This is the very reason why all Arminians and fleshly free-willers hate this glorious, God-like doctrine. All mankind naturally are unwilling to be saved after God's plan, and unable to do anything to save themselves, therefore but for God's interference and interposition in reservation, redemption, and regeneration, all must be lost. None naturally can come to God, therefore God will spiritually compel some to come and be saved according to His own purpose and grace. Some sneer at the term "total depravity," and would have us believe it is only a commercial phrase and not a Scriptural truth and an experimental reality.

Phrases are used which are not in words Scriptural; but are so in spirit. Heretics object to the phrase, "the imputed righteousness of Christ," as unscriptural; but let such know that the truth and the spirit of the phrase are Scriptural, however much the devil and his brood may try to cry it down. Eternal election, irrevocable predestination, particular redemption, and imputed righteousness, as revealed in the Scriptures, and preached by God-sent ministers, are truths carried with power into the hearts of some and to the hearts of others.

Turn to Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Now look at Acts 7:54: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." You see in one case a willing reception of the truth, but in the other a spiteful rejection of the Christ of God. We preach sovereign election, not only because it is revealed in God's Word, exhibiting man's total depravity and inability, but because it exalts a sovereign God in His Trinity of Persons.

It reveals the magnitude of His kingdom, and defines who are the objects of the Father's everlasting love, the travail of the Redeemer's soul, and the objects of the Spirit's concern and care. Within election's hallowed bounds the whole seed royal of heaven are found by a seeking Saviour and a searching Spirit. "Eternal, free, electing grace, Redemption's bound'ry sets; And those whom Jesus died to save, The Spirit ne'er forgets." The Father knows where all His children are foolishly trying to hide themselves from Him.

The Saviour sees the fruit of His soul's agonies, and, though they be far off from Him, He will seek and save them. The Spirit, as the Witness to all the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son, knows where to find all the elect and redeemed, though dead in sins, and buried in the ruins of the fall. I cannot enumerate the many portions of God's blessed Word which come crowding into my mind; but I would ask you to read and meditate upon Ephesians 1. Here we see the whole of the given ones blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings, chosen in Christ to be holy and without blame before the Father, redeemed in Christ by His most precious blood, quickened in Christ by His gracious Spirit, and raised with Christ to sit in the heavenlies to hold sweet communion with Father, Son, Spirit, and the elect, redeemed, and living brethren.

Here they can trace that spot which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye--the keen perception of the unclean professor--hath not seen. We now come to notice--II. THEIR COMING--"Shall come to Me." Just look at John 12:32. Our blessed Lord says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." The word men is in italics. The portion should read, "will draw all unto Me"--"All that the Father giveth to Me." Turn to 1 Tim. 2:6: "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

All those for whom He gave Himself a ransom shall have the Spirit's testimony concerning and confirming the same. This is as clear as light to him that understandeth. All the given ones shall come to the Lord

Jesus Christ. Why? Because He has engaged to draw them to Himself. He will draw them with the cords of love. He will draw them in the chariot of His Word. Mark! That is something better than the dragging process of which many people have an idea. A person once said to me, "You believe that a man cannot get to heaven except God drags him there."

I answered, "No, I do not believe in a dragging or a driving God. I believe in a carrying God, one who has a chariot paved with love into which He puts His people, and brings them to enjoy the blessings of His house, and to be comforted with the sympathies of His heart." "Shall come to Me." Turn to verse 44 of this chapter: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." Why cannot a man come to Christ? First, because he is dead in trespasses and sins.

Second, because when quickened into spiritual life he has such a sense of his depravity and unworthiness as to cause him to think he cannot be welcome. Third, because he has so great a realization of his helplessness that he cannot take a single step alone. Therefore, when the Lord Jesus Christ said, "No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him," He spoke from His own knowledge and from the personal experience of all who spiritually come to Him. The drawing of the Father is first felt and known when the resurrection and ascension glory of Christ is revealed to the heart of His children.

This you see from Psalm 110:1-3: "The Lord said unto My Lord"--that is, Jehovah the Father said unto Christ My Lord--"Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion"--that is, the glorious Gospel of Christ which is His power unto salvation to every one that believeth. "Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies," or, Rule Thou by the power of Thy reconciling Gospel in the hearts of Thy people. See you anything of compulsion here?

If there is, it is the sweet compulsion of love. "In the beauties of holiness." In the beauties of Christ, "from the womb of the morning." What is that? From the womb of God's eternal purpose, the fruit of the soul-travail of a precious Christ, should proceed. "Thou hast the dew of Thy youth." As the drops of dew so shall the elect be in multitude. As the sand upon the sea-shore, so shall the redeemed be in number. Concerning every one of them the decree has gone forth, "They shall come." "Shall come to Me."

Where from? From every part of the habitable world. Is it not a mercy to know that in God's plan of salvation there is no lack, no afterthought, no failure? His plans and His work are perfect. "Determined was the manner how Eternal favours He'd bestow; Yea, He decreed the very place Where He would show triumphing grace. Also the means were fix'd upon, Thro' which His sovereign love should run; So time, and place, yea, means and mode, Were all appointed by our God." "With salvation God has ordained security. marvellous it is for me to think I was preserved amid the ruins of creation until I appeared as a mere speck upon the face of a blighted world. Persons, privileges, and positions all included in the everlasting covenant of grace.

Where shall they come from? From the ice-bound North shall God's elect ones come at His bidding. From the sunny South through slavery, the purchase of the Redeemer's blood shall be brought to His feet. From the historic East, besotted idolaters shall come and learn to have no other god but Him. From the "far West," thieves, rogues, and vagabonds shall come and bow before Him, "Who reigns by right and rules by love, And doeth all things well." By a combination of circumstances arranged in infinite wisdom and executed by irresistible might, God's elect are drawn from the wilds of moral and spiritual destitution, to be taught by the best of all teachers, to be fed at the table of Divine bounty, and to find rest in the lap of

everlasting love.

Yes, they are all brought in a marvellous and mysterious manner to Him. One listens to the wind whistling around him, and on the wings thereof the sweet sound of Gospel music is carried to his soul. Another is brought from the ends of the earth through waves, and storms, and dangers, and deaths, to the very spot where words of eternal life are conveyed by Almighty power to his ears and heart. It may be that another, whose lot has been to sit under the preaching of the Gospel for years, is taken by the never-failing providence of Jehovah from friends, home, the glorious proclamation of Gospel grace, to the antipodes, there to find mercy at the footstool of sovereign mercy, and to be blessed at the feet of Him who alone can bestow life, light, love, and liberty."Shall come to Him."

Neither place nor time can hold from Him His due when He commands. John the Baptist leaped with spiritual joy in the womb of His mother. Jeremiah was sanctified from the womb. Little Samuel heard the voice of irresistible love, and was first led to Eli the priest, but eventually to the great King-Priest. One is arrested amid the follies of youth, and another after his hair had grown hoary in the service of the devil. One is found by God in the halls of virtue; while another is taken from the haunts of vice.

Youth is no hindrance, and a lifetime of sin can never thwart the love of a covenant God in Christ Jesus. Our God will pass by the gilded cathedral, the gorgeous temple, the admired chancel, and the popular pulpit, and go to the den of infamy, where, with a voice of Almighty power, He will speak conviction to the hearts of His own, and arrest the rebel wanderer in his wild career. He melts the hard heart with the revelation of His love, while he who raised the arms of rebellion against Him throws wide his arms of love and fond affection to embrace Him."Shall come to Me."

How? He finds them dead, and He quickens them. He finds them clothed with the filthy rags of their own righteousness, and He strips them naked. He finds them exalted in self, and He brings them down with a due sense of their sin. He commands, and with the command He gives the power--His own faith--to come to Him. "Ho! Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." (Isa. 55:1) The Fountain of living waters, a precious Christ. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy burden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) Rest, restoration, and sweet refreshment are to be found in Him alone.

Look at that glorious portion in Jer. 31:8,9: "Behold, I will bring them from the North country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither." Are there any blind ones here who long to see? Any lame who long to be carried? Any burdened and travailing with desire for deliverance? See! "They shall come with weeping" over their sins, and after Christ.

"With supplications--or favours--will I lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of water, in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." Though I taught Ephraim to go and he wandered from Me, yet he is My Ephraim still. Look at the next verse: "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.

Therefore"--because of His electing, scattering, gathering, and redeeming power--"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together"--in desire, faith, hope, and love--"to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." We have a precious Scripture in Ezek. 20:40,41: "For in Mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of

Israel"--in resurrection grace and ascension glory--"saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel"--all the given ones--"all of them in the land, serve Me"--the land of Divine revelation, spiritual promise, and covenant relationship--"there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first-fruits of your oblations with all your holy things.

I will accept you with your sweet savor," or, savor of rest--rest in the love of a covenant God--rest in the person and work of a precious Christ--"when I bring you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen." I have no time now to say anything about their security. May the Lord add His blessing for His name's sake. Amen. This very blessed portion, to which I directed your attention this morning, sets forth three cardinal truths of God's covenant salvation.

First, the Father's sovereign, unconditional choice of His people in Christ Jesus, expressed in the words, "All that the Father giveth Me." Second, the irresistible calling and willing surrender of all those in whom God has a gracious interest and whom He brings to have a gracious interest in Him, as set forth in the words, "shall come to Me." Third, the eternal preservation of all the elect and called, as proved in the declaration, "and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is our lot this evening to seek for a little instruction, comfort, and edification in this glorious declaration of the Messenger of the covenant.

Let us look carefully and prayerfully, with a little freedom, at that proclamation of the Father's sovereign and unconditional choice of all those in whom He has a gracious interest. "All that the Father giveth Me." That's election! What is election? It means that some persons are taken while others are left. You go into a shop and ask for certain articles; an assortment is placed before you and you are requested to pick, choose, select, or take those you like best. What do you understand by that?

Your common sense and natural reason tell you that you are to take those you prefer and leave the rest. This is just what God has done. He has loved some and hated others, taken some and left the rest. Some of you may object, but when you are brought to look at this fact in the light of eternity, not standing in a pulpit, or sitting in a pew, but with eyes glazed in death, the tongue not able to speak to any however near or dear they may be, and a heart-searching God dealing with you, what about the truth of God's election then?

Well, object as you may, you cannot disprove the fact that election pure and simple is, taking some and passing by others. This is the question which personally concerns us, Has God chosen me? Am I one of God's elect? Am I among the favoured number upon whom He has conferred spiritual and eternal benefits in Christ Jesus? Am I, or am I not? We are living in a rather fast and fashionable age, when fancy words are all the go. For instance, I met a person some time ago who appeared to be ignorant of the word choose, and when asked to give a reason for certain acts, invariably said, "Because I elect to do so."

Just imagine! "I elect," flowing with fluency from a reprobate tongue. Ask such an one does he believe in election, and if he is honest, he will say, Yes, if you allow me to be the elector. I have oftentimes been taunted by such, with seeing nothing else in my Bible, and riding to death my own peculiar view. Peculiar view! Why my dear friends, it is more God's truth than my view. I have to do with election as it comes from the heart of Jehovah who disposes with His creatures according to His infinite wisdom, either to eternal glory, or the very opposite; for He has a perfect right to do as He will with the creatures of His own hands without my interference with His prerogative. "Though God's election is a truth, Small comfort there I see, Till I am told by God's own mouth, That He has chosen me." Again, our friend Crutcher reminded you this morning that the proxies in connection with the Aged Pilgrims' Society are now out, and we shall be pleased to

receive as many as we possibly can for the purpose of helping an old pilgrim of the Grove to the increased benefits of that Institution.

Why are these proxies issued? Why will the votes be recorded? For election. A certain number of persons are to be elected according to the majority of votes recorded. Election is the order of the day in connection with almost every institution under the sun; but when it comes to Jehovah's right to dispose of His creatures, to confer His favours, and to bestow His blessings as He pleases, lordly reason and fleshly free-will start up in bold defiance to the glorious truth of God's election. Again, there is such a thing as a man desiring to change his lot in life, and link his existence with that of another.

Surely you would allow him to have a voice in so momentous a matter. Ay, and a will and determination too. Well, I find no fault with a man for the manifestation of such a will and determination. With the choice of an object of the heart's affections no second person has any right to interfere. I have come across certain persons in my time who have manifested mighty interest in and indignation at two being made one. What did all this mean? Simply, that the grumbler ought to have been consulted in the matter.

I remember when it was my lot to go in the direction of taking a wife. My father came to me one day to warn and caution me. I did not want much counsel in that matter; but said to him, "I think you pleased yourself, and did not consult any one in connection with your choice of a wife, and as I take after you, I shall do likewise." And so I did, and have not rued doing so. My God went before me every step in that business, though I knew very little of Him at that time. A wise man will choose his own wife, and will not be interfered with in respect to the object of his affection.

But, look here, there are those who will not be interfered with, who manifest their enmity the very moment the question arises as to Jehovah having a right to choose His own and reveal to His Church the everlasting and unchanging affection of His heart. Arminianism and free-willism is rampant on every hand, calling into question God's right to do that which free-willers arrogate to themselves. Why, my dear friends, the world is full of election, and almost every institution is governed by it.

God's Book is full of God's election. Yes, God's Book, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, beams with this great and glorious truth. It is the silver line seen by the eye of faith in sparkling brilliancy from Abel to the winding up of the New Testament dispensation, when the Son of man, like a shepherd, shall divide between elect sheep and reprobate goats. Our God has a perfect right to choose whom He will. When I declare this precious truth, it is not for the purpose of propounding a view, an idea, an opinion, or a notion; but an inwrought, deep-rooted, living reality, made so by the teaching of God the ever-blessed Spirit. Having acknowledged God's right to elect whom He will to salvation, grace, and glory, let us notice, and that from His blessed Word, the reason why.

What is the reason why? Can He go out of Himself for it? Certainly not. He can never go out of Himself for a reason to act in grace toward any of His own. He has proved to us in the bitterness of our heart's experience that His grace is unmerited and free. The children of the serpent merit all the death and judgment they get. See! "The wages of sin is death." Wages, remuneration for work done. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) Turn with me to that declaration of grace at the commencement of Peter's 1st epistle.

Writing to the scattered strangers he styles them, "Elect." Upon what ground? "According" to what? To their faith? No. To their repentance? No. To their prayers? No. To their privileges? No. To the redemption, obedience, and atoning work of Jesus? No. The Holy Ghost by the apostle leads the mind of the scattered

and gathered strangers to higher ground than that. "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father." There you have it. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18) With Him there is no past, no future.

To Him all things are ever-present and form one eternal NOW. Standing in the knowledge and assurance of this we may sing with Watts,--"Our lives thro' various scenes are drawn, And vexed with trifling cares, While Thine eternal thought moves on Thine undisturb'd affairs." It is blessed to see and know that the minutest circumstance in the life of a child of God is ordered in His foreknowledge. If our election is according to His foreknowledge, what did He know concerning you and me?

As spiritually-taught ones, we will begin with our birth according to Ps. 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Jehovah knew what a mass of corruption I was in myself at my birth: that I should be a transgressor from the womb. (Isa. 48:8) Look at that painful description given in Ps. 58:3: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Let me consider myself as a little one of the household.

We cannot help but manifest special affection, care, and concern over the little ones, sometimes to the annoyance of the big ones. The little, the weak, and the helpless ones of my family are always the nearest to my heart; and such is the perversity of human nature that they will take advantage of this special concern and care, so that those of larger growth must submit to the wish of the weakling at the table. Do I think of the days that I passed between infancy and manhood?

It is invariably with the cry or the sigh, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord." (Ps. 25:7) Youthful days were days of thoughtlessness, rebelliousness, and heedless folly, and can only be remembered with sorrow and pain. I sinned against His mind and will, and contrary to the teaching of His gracious Spirit. As I look at myself, a child, a youth, a man, I am compelled to cry out--"What was there in me that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight?"

'Twas 'Even so, Father!' I ever must sing, Because it seemed good in Thy sight." But in connection with this we must be prepared for Satan's "If." Oh! "If that doctrine of yours be true." That is a pretty way of putting it! Our doctrine! It is God's doctrine: teaching that comes alone from Him. Election is a truth clearly revealed in God's blessed Word. If that be true, then away goes man's responsibility, and he has no occasion to pray, believe, repent, or produce good works.

Such is a carnal, devilish conclusion, contrary to the teaching of the Holy Ghost. He teaches me that a sure and certain consequence of election is the revelation of the Son of God and the manifestation of covenant mercy to the elect. See 1 Thess. 1:4,5: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." I will read it to you according to the margin, which is correct: "Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election." Mark! Love is the source or spring from whence election flowed; not election the cause, but the consequence, of Jehovah's love.

"Knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Now the Gospel, or revelation of God's eternal purpose of love, being the truth of God, let us look at a few of the evidences of election. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" (Luke 18:7) There you see election and prayer going hand in hand together. In the light of God's eternal choice of me, I feel and know my utter helplessness and total inability to perform aught that is good.

I am thus feelingly compelled to cry to Him for help and strength. My crying is not confined to the pulpit or prayer-meeting, but day and night. In the day to be guided, in the night to be guarded. All who cry from a Spirit-wrought necessity are God's "own elect." Look at Titus 1:1: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect." Here you have election and faith joined together by God, and neither devils nor free-willers can ever put them asunder.

The fruit springs from the root. Faith flows from God's election. We proceed still further. Look at that gracious statement in Isa. 65:22: "For as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." We see the days of a tree at this season of the year when vegetation is putting forth its beauty, leaves, and fruit. The night of a tree is winter, when all is naked and bare, and to the eye, all dead, no beauty there. But, "As the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

How long? Tell me if you can. Not on this side glory. I will tell you my reason for saying so. Because they know not here that they have any good work at all to enjoy, or that God has noticed any performed by them. But it pleases Him, having had unceasing regard to them in His everlasting covenant of grace, to manifest that regard to them, and work all their works in them. When they stand at last before the throne of glory, according to that thrilling account given in the latter part of Matthew 25: "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a Stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? Or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a Stranger, and took Thee in? Or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

O what a glorious surprise this will be to the whole election of grace! It is my firm belief that in the bliss of eternity there will be succession of unfoldings of the glory of JEHOVAH-JESUS from His sacred humanity as it will appear in the midst of His redeemed and glorified people. A succession of discoveries of the everlasting covenant to those who owe their all in life, in death, and throughout eternity, to the free, sovereign, uninfluenced grace of God the Father, revealed through the person, love, blood, and righteousness of a dear Redeemer.

But there are certain portions of the Word which seem to clash with statements of this description, and the desire of every God-taught one is to look at every portion straight in the face, and understand it in God's light. Turn to James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein--he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work--this man shall be blessed in his deed." Mark you! This Scripture is quoted by Popish and free-will controversialists to overthrow the faith of God's elect.

But this they can never do. Look at the portion again. "This man shall be blessed for his deed?" No. "This man shall be blessed because for his deed?" No. Such is the false gloss and perversion of the passage by Papists and Arminians; but James says, "This man is blessed in His deed." Concerning those out of Christ, verily they have their reward for their works in fleshly conceit and self-gratification; while to those in Christ there is a gracious reward in the Divine approval sweetly experienced by the power of the Holy

Ghost in every kindly office to any of Christ's tried and tempted members, because they belong to Him.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Do you know anything about this? I do. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. 11:24) To poverty of spirit, though there may be a profusion of the good things of the world. A heart touched, warmed, and melted with the love of God cannot shut itself against the poverty and distress of those who are Christ's, but opens itself in expressions of true and genuine sympathy.

Can a child of God in union with a precious Christ keep his pockets buttoned when he sees a poor tried saint in want or misery? No. Well, I would not give you twopence-half-penny for the Christianity of such a person. A man who is blessed in his deed is not blessed for his doing. He is blessed because God elected Him to faith, and prayer, and works; and in all these he must be blessed. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Look at that fact fully and fairly. What did God know?

Everything concerning me--the frailties of my infancy, the recklessness of my youth, the follies of my manhood, the sins of my whole life. Could He elect me for these? Then He must be an unholy God. But He is not unholy or unjust. He has respect to His children because of His own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus before the world began, and He manifests His lovingkindness and tender mercy, His concern, His care, His affection and compassion, just because He will. He gives no other reason in His blessed Book, or in the hearts of His living children."All that the Father giveth to Me."

All the elect and eternally-loved ones "shall come to Me." Shall come from every nook and corner of this sin-polluted world in spirit of all opposition from Satan, sin, and self. It matters not what may be the surgings of corruption in them, or the blasts from Hell's dark region howling around them, all these shall be swept away by the breath of Zion's Deliverer, and by His words which He makes to be life and power in the hearts of His tried ones who are at the ends of the earth.

How do these come, and how are they received? They come burdened with sin, and He relieves them; hungering, and He feeds them; mourning, and He comforts them; filthy, and He washes them; naked, and He clothes them; condemned, and He justifies them; weeping, and He wipes all tears from their eyes. Ofttimes they come like that poor creature whose case is described in Luke 9:42: "And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him." The eternally-loved ones who come to the Great Deliverer by His sovereign, irresistible, and invincible grace, and when they know that He has graciously come to their spot of weakness and weariness, then the devil torments them, tries them, and throws them down.

Know ye anything of this tearing? Are you ever thrown down? Torn with doubts as to your interest in the covenant verities of Jehovah, and concerning His interest in you? Are you torn with conflicting fears as to your acceptance with the Father in the Beloved? Are you ever thrown down with accursed unbelief experienced in your very heart of hearts, which appears to remove the ground of your confidence from under you, in the spot where you stood so stable and so secure? David knew something of this according to Ps. 30:6,7: "And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

Lord, by Thy favour Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled." I have been there. My mountain of peace and joy which He caused to stand strong for a time has been removed from beneath my feet and hurled into the tempestuous waves of unbelief and fear, or submerged in the calm sea of accursed indifference. Look throughout God's most Holy Word at the narration of the experiences of His living people, and you will find this to be the fact, however blessedly a

child of God may be brought into the apprehension of Jehovah's interest in him, he meets with many a throw down, and many a tare from Satan; and though he comes, and comes again, he will find himself deeper than the depths of the Mediterranean, and, like Jonah in the belly of hell, he will be taught to look, and look again, towards God's holy temple.

They shall come halting and limping, and if their legs cannot carry them halting and limping, "they shall come." How can this be? According to 1 Pet. 3:18: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Bring us in His arms of love. Bring us upon His powerful shoulders. Bring us in His bosom of everlasting affection. The experience of this causes the heart to laugh and sing, "Oh! I am my Beloved's, And my Beloved is mine!

He brings a poor vile sinner Into His house of wine: I stand upon His merit, I know no other stand, Not e'en where glory dwelleth In Immanuel's land."Now look at the precious declaration of covenant care and security, "and him that cometh to Me"--that is, according to the law of love laid down in the everlasting covenant of Jehovah's grace. He comes according to Divine purpose and by Divine power. He comes by Divine command which command communicates the will, ability, and means to come.

Yes, and there is something better than all that--he comes by the Divine performance of the Divine command. "Him that cometh." What is it to come? Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us to know what this coming is in the 35th verse: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." Coming, hungering, thirsting, believing, are all one and the same. Do you come to the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes, say you, I come in desire and longing, in anxious hope and trembling expectation, yet I am filled with many doubts and fears.

That will do, my friend, God sees His own wrought faith in your fear and trembling, while He abhors the presumptuous confidence of the fleshly professor. He sees His own impress upon His own work, and having a desire to the work of His hands, He will not bring to the birth and fail to bring forth, but will perfect that which concerns you, and will not forsake the work of His own hands. (Ps. 138:8) However feeble the apprehension of that work may be, or however weak the experience of it may be, He cannot forsake it until it is perfected, for having begun a good work in you, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6) Jehovah would not be God if He failed in the accomplishment of His designs of mercy in the experience of any child of His."Grace will complete what grace begins, To save from sorrows and from sins; The work that mercy undertakes, Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes.""I will in no wise cast out."

Why should we have even the mention of casting out from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ? I will tell you. Jesus has respect to the weaknesses and wants, failings and infirmities, of His brethren, and having Himself been taught in the school of bitter experience what the suggestions and temptations of Satan are, He knows how the same enemy, working upon the weaknesses of the saints, will suggest that they can expect nothing short of being cast out of the presence of a just and holy God.

Satan cries, Sinners of so deep a die must expect nothing but expulsion from Jehovah's presence. Jesus knew all about this, therefore for the comfort and encouragement of His tried and tempted ones, He said, "And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." In connection with this coming I am prepared to go farther than many who stand up in God's name to declare His truth. There is a blessed incident recorded in the first part of Matt. 9, full of sweet encouragement for those whose hearts yearn for wayward and wanderings ones who lie very deep in their affections.

This will suit those who cannot command a particle of faith for themselves. "What are you driving at?" Inquire some of you. I will tell you. Read that Scripture, and may God bless it to you as He has to me. Jesus saw one borne by his friends, carried by those who took a kindly interest in him. See! "And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Is not that blessed? "Jesus seeing their faith." The faith of those who carried the man, not the man's faith. Know ye what the spiritual pleasure is to carry to Jesus a weakling who cannot take a step by himself? Look at his spiritual and moral capacities. What see you? Nothing but depravity and infirmity. His judgment paralyzed, imagination disordered, will perverse. What can you do with him? Carry him to Jesus. Did you ever know the sweetness of such a privilege as to carry a poor waif and stray to the Saviour and Healer?

I know it. Here are precious words for your encouragement, "him that cometh"--cometh on the wings of heaven-born desires, cometh in the arms of God-given faith, though it be the faith of another, yet He, beholding His own work, declares, "I will in no wise cast out." "Cast out." What are we to understand by this casting out? Turn to the 9th chapter. The parents of the blind man whose sight Christ restored were afraid of being cast out of the synagogue. See verse 22. And of the blind man, after he had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, we read: "And they cast him out;" or, as you read in the margin, "They excommunicated him." (v. 34) You see it also in the case of the man at the wedding feast without a wedding garment: (Matt. 22:13) "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

You have the same idea expressed by Paul in 1 Cor. 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Cast out. Disapproved. By whom? God? No. But disapproved by those very persons for whose guidance and direction Paul had laid down injunctions and waymarks. He as much as says, "It is mine to act consistently with my own advice, lest that which I have stated should become a reality in my intercourse with my brethren."

Satan has made sad havoc with many a poor child of God through this portion. He suggests, "You are sure to be a castaway from God because your faith is not strong enough." Let me ask the devil and all his free-will brood, "Is anybody's faith strong enough?" I answer, No. But the faith of God's elect, the faith of the great and glorious Head, is strong enough to withstand all the wiles of the devil. The experience and realization of it may oftentimes be weak enough in the living child of God, but His truth will stand good: "I will in no wise cast out."

Out of what? Out of My sight; out of My reach; out of My esteem; out of My affection; out of Myself. In Christ no condemnation. Look at the glorious finish of that precious chapter, Romans 8: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, 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." "What from Christ that soul shall sever, Bound by everlasting bands? Once in Him, in Him for ever, Thus th' eternal covenant stands; None shall pluck thee From the Strength of Israel's hands." "I will in no wise." Let us look at this full in the face according to the all-gracious

mind and ever-loving heart of the Friend and Saviour of sinners.

First, we see Saul of Tarsus, as represented in Acts 9:1: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." Here he appears as an infuriated wild beast preying upon the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock. Yet mark! The great and good Shepherd had such love to him that from heaven's glory He calls Him to Himself, not in thunderstorms of damnation, but in tones of sweetest love, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" ME in the person of My members.

Covenant union, sympathetic oneness was the truth which first arrested poor mad Saul. He says, "Being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even to strange cities." (Acts 26:11) He also confessed to compelling the saints to blaspheme. Yet Christ loved him; and, in the face of all his wrathful and persecuting spirit, took him, washed him from his sins, clothed him in garments of glory and beauty, opened to him the love of His heart, and revealed to him such heights and depths of grace almost unknown to all from his days to the present.

Was he cast out? Nay. Though in deaths oft and in dangers many, the Angel of the covenant would not let him go. That is a precious scene we have pictured in Acts 27:23-25. In the midst of roaring tempests and apparent destruction, he said: "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

The God that Paul believed was Christ. Look again at 2 Tim. 4:16: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen."See how patiently He bore with blood-thirsty Manasseh, who filled Jerusalem with innocent blood from one end to another, "and seduced the people to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." Among the thorns he was caught, into captivity he was carried, in affliction God was gracious unto him. Neither murder, idolatry, nor all the sins combined in him, could cause his God to cast him out. Although failure after failure, folly after folly, and fall after fall, characterizes the history of a child of God, yet He will in no wise cast him out.

The almost universal cry is, "If you do not believe, He is sure to cast you out." What a lie! There are times and seasons when God's children can no more believe than they can create a world. What is to be done under circumstances like these? Do? Nothing can be done but wait the Lord's leisure. Here you have a precious portion! Carry it home with you, and may God bless it to your comfort and encouragement: (2 Tim. 2:13) "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

He has promised in no wise to cast out any of His blood-bought ones; but under all circumstances to keep, care for, hold fast, and never let them go. His honour is pledged to preserve them. His blood is sprinkled to secure them. His attributes are arranged to defend them. His intercession ascends to bring them into the possession of their privileges in Him.No! He cannot cast them out. Does Peter promise to stand by Him, yet go to sleep in Gethsemane; follow Him afar off, filled with craven cowardice deny all knowledge of Him, and back up his lies with cursing and swearing?

Surely Christ will cast him out. Never! A look of uncomplaining, patient pity broke poor Peter's heart, melted his spirit, and opened the flood-gates of godly sorrow, and caused him to seek a spot away from human observation where he could weep bitterly. O what a mer

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