

OF THE BENEFITS OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. viii. 30.—*Whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

IN this and the preceding verse is the golden chain of salvation, consisting of five links. The first two lie out of the sinner's view, till they be brought to light by means of the third. The first is God's foreknowledge, or eternal free-love and favour to some of mankind, laid on them from everlasting. The second is the predestination of these, electing them to everlasting life, and the means leading thereto. The third is the calling of the predestinated, calling them effectually, which is done in time, of which we have spoke before: There are other two that hang upon this. The fourth is the justification of the called which may imply the whole of the relative change made upon them, both their justification and adoption; for it is evident from verse 29. that the apostle has respect to adoption in this chain. The fifth is the glorifying of the justified, which may import the whole of the real change made on the elect, namely, the sanctifying of them here, and glorifying of them hereafter. For what is grace but glory in the bud, and glory but grace brought to perfection? and therefore believers, 'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus effectual calling, as it rises from eternal love, so it makes the soul happy here and hereafter.

The text affords this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'They that are effectually called do thereby partake of great and glorious benefits and privileges, both in this life and the life to come.'

Here I shall briefly shew,

I. What are those benefits which they who are effectually called partake of in this life.

II. The benefits they partake of in the life to come.

III. Apply.

I. I shall shew what are those benefits which they that are effectually called partake of in this life.

First, There are three leading benefits which they partake of here.

1. They are all justified. So says the text. As soon as ever the soul answers the call of the gospel, and comes to Christ, the man is brought out of a state of condemnation, and gets his absolution, Rom. viii. 1. He lives not a moment longer under the black cloud

of the curse, but is translated into another climate, where he lives under the sunshine of the blessing. His sins are all pardoned, and he is accepted as a righteous man. He is judged, and he gets the white stone, Rev. ii. 17. The law and justice have no more to demand of him; the cords of guilt are loosed and thrown away, and he is clothed with a perfect righteousness.

2. They are all adopted children of God, Eph. i. 5. They get not only the white stone, but the new name, the name of sons and daughters to God. They are brought out of the devil's family, and made members of the household of faith: not servants only, but sons. For the moment they answer the call, new blood runs in their veins; they are of the blood-royal of heaven; Christ's Father is their Father, he is their elder brother; and the Spirit of his Son dwells in them, teaching them to cry, Abba, Father. They are of the same household with the excellent of the earth: All ye are brethren; nay, with the saints and angels in heaven; for though the one dwell above, and the other below, they are all but one family, Eph. iii. 15.

3. They are all sanctified, 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Thess. iv. 7. It is a holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. The author of it is holy, the means are holy, and the end and effect of it must needs be holy. As soon as the sinner answers the call, the Spirit of sanctification goes on with the begun work in him, breaks the reigning power of sin, gives it a deadly blow, so that it shall never recover, but languish on, till it quite die out. He adorns him with all saving graces, conforming the sinner to the image of Christ, John i. 16; so that he begins to lead a new life, living to the Lord and his service. The call brings him, like Lazarus, out of the congregation of the dead, and then the remainder of his life is spent in putting off the grave-cloths of sin, and acting from a principle of spiritual life.

Secondly, There are other benefits which accompany or flow from these. For these come not alone, but each of them is the opening of a treasure to the called, the striking up of a fountain, that runs out in many streams, Eph. i. 3. Some of these are mentioned in that question, 'What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?' *Ans.* — 'Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.' But who can reckon up all these benefits? For 'all things are theirs; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. I shall only at present single out the following.

1. Reconciliation with God, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith,

we have peace with God.' When the sinner is effectually called, the real enmity is taken away, and the legal enmity is removed by justification. God and the sinner become friends, and are firmly so in a covenant of peace, having common friends and enemies. Sin being removed and pardoned, the peace follows of course. The war is ended; for the treaty of peace proposed by the ambassadors of peace is complied with. But of this I spoke when treating of Christ's priestly office.

2. Access to God, as children to a Father, Eph. iii. 12. as one friend to another. The war being ended, and peace concluded, the communication betwixt heaven and earth is opened. They may export thither all their wants, petitions, and requests, being sure that they will be taken off their hands; and import supplies of all kinds necessary, to make them happy, light, life, strength, &c.

3. Freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan, John viii. 32. They that are sanctified by the Spirit, are loosed from the Egyptian bondage, and made the Lord's free-men. Though Satan and sin molest them, and put them hard to it, they shall never get them back again into their former house of bondage. But they shall, like a dog snarling at the horses heels, be bruised under their feet at length; and the soul shall be more than conqueror.

4. *Lastly*, A right to eternal life, Rom. viii. 17. Acts xx. 32. They may claim it in their head Christ, and their title is good and sure in him; for it is a heavenly calling, whereby they are called to the eternal inheritance. And therefore says the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 1. 'We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

II. I shall shew what benefits they that are effectually called partake of in the life to come. The advantages of effectual calling are great in this life, but they do not stop there, when a man must leave all temporal benefits, which he enjoys any manner of way here in this world, he will enter to the full enjoyment of the benefits coming by his answering the gospel-call. These are comprehended in one word, glorification, which will fall in afterwards to be treated of. In a word, at death the converted soul is received into heaven; at the last day his body will be gloriously raised, and both soul and body made perfectly happy for ever, 2 Thess. ii. 14.

I come now to make some practical improvement of this subject.

USE I. Of information. This doctrine lets us see,

1. That the gospel is the best news that ever was heard in the world, and the most excellent offer that ever was made to poor sinners, Eph. iii. 8. There are many to court the soul; Satan makes

his offers, the world its offers, and sin has its offers too. But all that they offer will not tell far, it perishes in the using, at most it cannot reach beyond this life. But Christ's offer in the gospel is of the best of things here, and the best of all hereafter, that we may enter to the enjoyment of, when nothing remains but the bitter dregs of the offers of sin, Satan, and the world.

2. God deals very liberally and kindly with his people that answer his call. He does not put an empty spoon into their mouths, he sets them not down to bare commons; they get much in hand, and yet far more in hope, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Their present possessions are far more valuable than crowns and sceptres in the world; but what they have a title to, is what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And then all is firm and sure; they can never be shaken out of their privileges, Rom. xi. 29. Heb. xii. 28.

3. Whatever men lose by complying with and following the gospel-call, they are gainers, Phil. iii. 8. He was a wise merchant that sold all to buy the pearl of great price. They are wise indeed that are wise for their souls; and they are so that come to Christ on his call; while all the neglectors of the great salvation, gain what they will otherwise, do lose a talent while they gain a mite, losing their own souls, which loss can never be made up.

USE II. Of exhortation.

First, To unconverted sinners. O comply with the gospel-call! at length, and come away to Christ. I offer a few motives to press the exhortation.

Mot. 1. While ye do not come away upon the call, ye have no part or lot in these benefits. If ye presume to apply them to yourselves, God's word knocks off your fingers from them, for they are the peculiar privilege of those that are effectually called. And,

1. Ye are not justified, the sentence of condemnation is standing in force against you, Gal. iii. 10. John iii. ult. And as sure as God's word cannot fail, it will be executed, if ye come not in in time. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse; all that thou dost is sin. But not one of all thy sins is pardoned; they are all wreathed about thy neck, and thou hast them all to reckon for. And thou hast not a cautioner to go between justice and thee; the burden must lie on thy own back.

2. Ye are none of God's children, but of the devil's, John viii. 44. Ye are still of the family ye were born of. A sad family, against which God will have war for ever. Ye can have no access to God, nor communion with him, nor may any of the privileges of the children of God be claimed by you. Your inheritance is suitable to the

family ye are of, namely, that ye are children of wrath, and heirs of hell.

3. Ye are not sanctified. There is no sanctification without the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you; ye have not Christ's Spirit, for ye are none of his. A form of godliness ye may have, but the power of it ye are strangers to. Ye are Satan's drudges and sin's slaves, though all are not employed in alike coarse work by the master of that family, Eph. ii. 2, 3.

Mot. 2. If ye will come to Christ on his call, ye shall partake of all these benefits. If your sins were never so great and many, they shall be pardoned, Isa. lv. 7. Ye shall be the children of God through Jesus Christ, John i. 12. Ye shall be made holy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Come in under the covert of his blood, and then neither law nor justice shall reach you. Match with the Son of God, and ye shall be of his Father's family. Answer his call, and he will break the yoke from off your necks, and make you free.

O, Sirs, do not ye need this benefits? How will ye live without them? are ye able to bear the weight of unpardoned guilt? How will ye die without them? What will it be to die in an unpardoned state, strangers to the family of heaven, and still in your sins? May not these glorious privileges prevail with you? Do ye think nothing of the white stone and new name, which ye may get by coming to Christ? Seemeth it a light thing to you to be adopted into the family of the King of heaven, and to have his image drawn on you? Think with yourselves how it will aggravate your condemnation, that Christ and all his salvation was in your offer, and ye would have none of him, Heb. ii. 3.

Secondly, To converted sinners that have answered the call.

1. Labour to know your great privileges for time and eternity, 2 Pet. i. 10. O! it is a sad matter that the people of God should have so little knowledge of their state. This would be a notable means to promote sanctification, and tenderness in heart and life.

2. Be thankful for these privileges. Bless God for Christ and the gospel. O bless him for his holy and powerful Spirit. Admire and adore his rich grace, bestowed on worthless worms through Christ, 1 John iii. 1.

3. *Lastly,* Walk worthy of the vocation, and suitable to the privileges of it, that is, humbly, holily, heavenly, contentedly patiently, and cheerfully, in hopes of the glory that is to be revealed.