

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

2 TIM. i. 9.—*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

THE mystical union betwixt Christ and a sinner is brought to pass in the effectual calling of a sinner, which I come now to explain, and we have in the text. The apostle had exhorted Timothy to a confident adhering to the doctrine of the gospel, over the belly of afflictions for the cause of God; and in the text shews a good reason that both he himself and Timothy had to do so, taken from what God had done for them.

1. What the Lord had done for them. (1.) *Saved* them; namely, from sin and wrath; i. e. had brought them into a state of salvation out of a state of sin and misery, applied Christ's salvation to them, which is so effectual that never one dies of the disease after it is applied, and therefore may be said thereupon to be *saved*. (2.) *Called* them, namely, by his Spirit, when they were at a distance from him; he called them to himself, *saved* and *called*; not that he first saved, and then called them; but he saved them by calling them; which shews this call to be an effectual call. Therefore also it is called *an holy calling*, not only as proceeding from an holy God, but as making the called holy too.

2. The cause of the Lord's doing this for them. (1.) Negatively; not for any merit of theirs, they had done nothing to move God to call them more than others. (2.) Positively: [1.] His eternal purpose of love and salvation to them, as the apostle explains it, Rom. viii. 30. They were from eternity predestinated to salvation and the means of it, and therefore in complement of that purpose were savingly called. [2.] His grace or free favour given them in and through Jesus Christ, which is said to have been *given* them *before the world began*, from eternity; namely, virtually in the decree, which secured the real giving them it in time, as much as if they had it in hand. And this account of the causes of this call does further evince it to be effectual calling that is meant.

The doctrine of the text is,

Doct. 'All that partake of Christ's salvation are effectually called.'

Here I shall briefly explain to you the nature of effectual calling, and then apply it.

Effectual calling is the first entrance of a soul into the state of

grace, the first step by which God's eternal purpose of love descends unto sinners, and we again ascend towards the glory to which we are chosen. And upon the matter, it is the same with conversion and regeneration. I shall shew,

- I. What the effectual call in the general is.
- II. Who they are that are effectually called.
- III. Whence and whither are they called that are effectually called.
- IV. What makes the call effectual to some, when it is not so to others.
- V. What is the necessity of their being thus effectually called.
- VI. I shall more particularly explain the nature of effectual calling.

I. I am to shew what the effectual call in the general is. An effectual call is opposed to an ineffectual one. An effectual call is the call that gains its real intent; that is to say, when the party called comes when called. An ineffectual call is that which gains not the real intent of it, but falls short thereof, the party called not answering and obeying the call. To apply this to our purpose, all that hear the gospel are called; but,

1. To some of them it is ineffectual, and these are the most part of gospel-hearers, Matth. xx. 16. 'For many be called, but few chosen.' They are called, invited, and obtested to come to Christ; but it is but the singing of a song to a deaf man that is not moved with it, Prov. i. 24. The real intendment of the call is lost upon them. Though the intent of God the great caller can never be lost, who says, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,' Isa. xlvi. 10. yet the design of the thing is so. Though they are called, yet they come not to Christ, they sit his call, to their own destruction.

2. To others it is effectual, and these are but *few*, Matt. xx. 16. forecited. They get the call, and they rise and come away to Christ. It is not only the intent of the call, but of him that called them, to have them home to himself; and they receive not the grace of the gospel in vain. While others at best do but play about the bait, they greedily embrace it, and are catched according to that, 'Ye shall be fishers of men.' They come away like Lot out of Sodom, while others account the call in effect but a jest, and so abide and perish in the overthrow.

II. I come now to shew who they are that are thus effectually called. The text tells us, that this effectual call is according to God's purpose and free grace in Christ; and so it follows, that the elect, and they only are thus called, Rom. viii. 30. Acts xiii. 48.

Others may be outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit too, but are never effectually called. The bow is shot at a venture among the hearers of the gospel; but God, that knoweth who are his, directs the arrow, so as to make it hit right. O the riches and freedom of grace that appears in this! For,

1. It is men, and not fallen angels, that are called, though they should have been preferred, if God had respected the dignity of nature among his lost creatures. But ‘the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,’ Jude, 6. There is special love in that, ‘Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men,’ Prov. viii. 4. O may we not say, as Psal. viii. 4. ‘What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?’

2. It is some men, and not others, that are called effectually, and these naturally in as bad and sinful a condition as others, Eph. ii. 12. ‘At the time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.’ They cannot pretend here, that they made the difference by their works; for says the text, *He saved us, and called us, not according to our works.* Nay, oft-times, they were worse than many others, such as fornicators, idolaters, &c. of whom Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Epist. vi. 11. says, ‘Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’ And says that apostle of himself, 1 Tim. i. 13. ‘I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy.’ Oft-times grace chuses to work on the most knotty piece of timber, which there is the least hope of.

3. *Lastly,* It is for the most part those who have the least advantages as to their outward condition in the world. For says the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. ‘Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.’ The Lord takes some of the greatest wits, of the greatest power, and the best blood in the world, but not many such. But often grace passeth by the learned man, and wise, and sits down and teaches babes in comparison with them. He passes by the rich, the

noble, and the gentle, and brings the meaner sort, the kinless things [*ta agene*], into a match with the Son of God, and an alliance with Heaven.

III. I proceed to shew whence and whither they are called who are effectually called. That I may answer this in a few words, observe, that there was a blessed bond of society betwixt God and his rational creatures, and among themselves, till sin entered, and then all was shaken loose. As it was at the building of Babel, so it was at the entrance of sin, there was a great scattering; sinners were separated from God, and from the holy angels, and scattered up and down on the mountains of vanity. For remedy of this, God appointed Jesus Christ the Head, in whom an elect world might meet again with God, and be gathered together among themselves, Eph. i. 10. ‘That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.’ 1 Pet. ii. 25. ‘For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.’ So then they that are effectually called, are,

1. Called out of the world that lieth in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. And hence the *church* has its name in the prophetical and apostolical writings, *Ekklesia*; q. d. a company called out from among others, a gathered congregation. And so the gathering of them is made the great work of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the church, John xi. 52. The elect of God, in their natural condition, are lost sheep gone astray among the devil’s goats; effectual calling is the bringing them from out among them, back to Christ’s fold. They are the lost goat lying hid among the dust of the nasty house of this world; effectual calling is the taking them out from among that dust, and restoring them to the use for which they were designed.

Thus Christ bespeaks his spouse (for that work is still going on, and will be so, till they be quit of the world, soul and body, 1 Thess. v. 24.) ‘Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house*.’ Psal. xiv. 10. ‘come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.’ They are called away from the sinful and miserable state of the world, from their ways manners and work; in a word, out of their society, so that though they be in the world, they are no more of it,

* The author has some excellent sermons on these texts, not yet printed.

and therefore do they fare so ill in it, John xv. 19. Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

2. Called unto Jesus Christ, and through him to the blessed society of another world. So the call runs, Matth. xi. 28. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The society they are called and come to is that of God himself, the holy angels, all the saints in heaven and earth which have gone before them, Jesus Christ being the blessed bond of the society, the centre of union wherein they meet, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. 'Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Here the call is, 'All things are ready; come unto the marriage,' Matth. xxii. 4.

Thus they are, like Noah, called into the ark, where they will be safe when the deluge of wrath sweeps away the world of the ungodly. Like Lot, they are called unto Zoar, where they will be safe while fire and brimstone is rained on those that stay behind. They are called to the feast on the great sacrifice, Christ crucified, while others perish for want; to the partaking of the benefits of Christ's redemption, while others have neither part nor lot in that matter, but must fall a sacrifice for their own sins to avenging justice. The particulars they are called to, will serve them to tell through eternity.

IV. I proceed to shew what makes the call effectual to some, when it is not so to others. Negatively,

1. It is neither the piety, parts, nor seriousness of those who are employed to carry the gospel-call to sinners, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Indeed, if moral suasion were sufficient to bring sinners back to God, men that have the art of persuading, and can speak movingly and seriously could not fail to have vast numbers of converts. But that work is not so brought about, Luke xvi. ult. Hence said Abraham to the rich man in hell, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persnaded though one rose from the dead.' Never did these, conjunctly or severally, appear in any, as in Christ, who 'spake as never man spake.' But behold the issue, John xiii. 37, 38. 'But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"'

2. Neither is it one that uses his own free-will better than another does, Rom. ix. 6. ‘It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.’ For every man will be unwilling till the power from another quarter make him willing, John vi. 44. If it were so, one man should make himself to differ from another in that grand point. But hear what the Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. iv. 7. ‘Who maketh thee to differ from another?’ Men are dead in trespasses and sins, and such cannot difference themselves.

2. Positively. We may say in this case, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.’ It is the Spirit of the Lord, accompanying the call of the word, that makes it effectual, John vi. 63. Hence days of the plentiful effusion of the Spirit are good days for the take of souls, and contrarywise, when the Spirit is restrained, Psal. cx. 3. Therefore Isaiah resolves the question thus, ‘Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’ The report may reach the ears, but it is the arm of the Lord that must open the heart, as it did that of Lydia. Mahomet II. the Turkish emperor, having desired to see Scanderbeg’s scymitar, said, that he saw nothing in it more than ordinary; the other returned him answer, that the virtue of the weapon depended on the strength of his arm.

V. It may be asked, What necessity is there for their being thus called? The necessity of it is manifest to all that know their natural case.

1. They are far off, Eph. ii. 13. far from God, and Christ, and all good, Eph. ii. 12. Hence the call is, ‘Draw nigh to God.’ We are at a distance from him naturally; not a distance of place, for God is every where, Acts xvii. 27. but of opposition, as far from him as war from peace, black from white, and hell from heaven. Our nature is contrary to his, and our will to his will, Rom. viii. 7. And there is no bringing us to him but by a very powerful and effectual call, whereby the sinner is irresistibly drawn, John vi. 44. ‘No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.’

2. They are hard and fast asleep, and they need this call, Eph. v. 14. ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ The ship they are in is every moment in hazard of being swallowed up of the waves, for the storm of wrath is gone out against it; but, like Jonah, they are down in the sides of the ship, know nothing of the matter to purpose, but are fast asleep. All their spiritual senses are locked up, they can neither see nor hear. Ministers cry, conscience cries, Awake thou sleeper, but to no purpose; if they be disturbed, they lay down

their heads again, and take yet a little sleep, a little slumber, though they should never awaken till they be in the bottom of the deep. And thus on they sleep, till the Spirit of the Lord call them effectually.

3. If they were awakened, they know not where to go to, Acts ii. 37. When they find the house on fire about their heads, they know not how to make their escape. The law-light that awakens them, cannot let them see Christ. He is preached and pointed out in the word, but they cannot take up the city of refuge, nor the way that leads to it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. until the Spirit of the Lord call them by his power, and they hear the voice behind them, saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’ Christ is a veiled Saviour to the natural man, till his eyes be opened.

4. If they did know where to go to, they are not willing to go thither, John v. 40. They are naturally unwilling to leave their lusts; all the milk and honey of the heavenly Canaan held forth in the gospel, cannot wean their hearts from the flesh-pots of Egypt. To leave a lust is like the cutting off of a right hand. And in this respect they need a powerful call, such a word from the Lord himself as makes the mountains to shake, the rocks to rend, and the graves to give up their dead, and the whale to vomit up Jonah. And particularly they are naturally unwilling to come to Christ, and will not be made willing in a day of power, Psal. cx. 3. When they are convinced of their disease, yet they cannot think to employ that Physician, or undergo his method of cure. Hence so many awakened sinners employ physicians of no value; they will go to the law that wounded them, they will watch, pray, mourn, and macerate their own bodies, rather than believe. For there is a peculiar enmity in man’s nature against the gospel-way of salvation. So there is a necessity of an effectual call.

5. If they were willing to go to Christ, yet being awakened, they dare not venture, guilt so stares them in the face, Jer. ii. 25. ‘Thou saidst, There is no hope.’ While the man is asleep, it is nothing to him to believe, to come to Christ; like people that walk in their sleep, they can go any where fearlessly. But when he is awakened, it is not so easy. He will then be like Adam, hiding himself on hearing the voice of the Lord, and will not come till he be called by the Lord himself. Hence so many words of grace heaped on one another in gospel-invitations, Isa. lv. 7, 8, 9. ‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways saith the Lord. For as

the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.' For the Lord knows, that however the sinner unawakened thinks coming to Christ a light thing, yet when once awakened, doubts and fears will be going as thick as dust in the sweeping of a dry floor.

6. *Lastly*, If they durst come, yet they cannot come, unless they be drawn, John vi. 44. forecited. Sinners naturally are not only asleep, but dead in sins. And no less power is requisite to bring them than to raise the dead, and therefore this call is a voice that raiseth the dead, John v. 25. The product of this call is a new creation, Eph. ii. 10, compare Rom. iv. 17.

VI. *Lastly*, I shall more particularly explain the nature of effectual calling. Ye see it is the work of the Lord's Spirit; and there is a twofold work of the Spirit upon the elect soul in effectual calling, one on the understanding, and the other on the will.

FIRST, On the understanding. This is the leading faculty of the soul, which by sin is overspread with darkness, Eph. v. 8. Satan finishes his work here, who, when he has got the soul asleep, shuts door and window, and draws the curtains, that the light may not enter, that so the soul may sleep the sleep of death; does as the Philistines did with Samson, puts out the sinner's eyes, when his strength is gone. And God begins his work here, as in the first creation, so in the second creation, 'The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light' Gen. i. 2, 3. Now, the work of the Spirit herein is twofold.

FIRST, An illumination of the soul from mount Sinai. And that is conviction of sin and misery, John xvi. 8. or the law-work. The Spirit of the Lord speaks to the soul as it were out of the midst of the fire; but there is blackness, darkness, and tempest, mixed with this light. And here consider the matter, the effects, the means, and the depth, of this conviction.

First, The matter of this conviction which is twofold.

1. Sin, John xvi. 8. 'He will reprove the world of sin.' The Spirit of the Lord convinces the man that he is a sinner, and sets his particular sins in order before him, Psal. l. 21. Then sins that are out of mind, as dead and buried, have a fearful resurrection, Rom. vii. 9. The spirit of bondage leads his prisoner in chains, through the several parts and steps of this life, to his very birth; and shews him convincingly his sins in them: lets him see such ill in sin as he never saw before, how heinously God takes it, and that with the several aggravations thereof.

2. Misery, John xvi. 8. The Spirit of the Lord convinces him, that he is lost and undone, Luke xv. 17. Being convicted and found guilty, sentence passes on him within his own breast, whereby he sees himself doomed to eternal death. He is convinced, as if an angel from heaven should tell him, that he is under God's wrath and curse, and that therefore, if he die in that case, he will perish for ever. He sees God to be his enemy; his word to speak no good of him, and all God's creatures his enemies in some sort ready armed against him.

Secondly, The effects of it are these three especially.

1. Remorse, Acts ii. 37. 'They were pricked in their hearts.' The man's conscience now galls him, and he is stung to the heart by the serpent which he hugged so kindly. Waves of killing grief and sorrow go over his soul, for his bypast folly and madness. He sees he has been murdering his own soul, and he groans out an elegy over his dead self.

2. Terror, Acts xvi. 27. as in the case of the Phillipian jailor. He sees now how he has to do with a holy just God, and how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. Horror takes hold on him, because of the judgments which he valued no more than the shadow of the mountains before. Then the stoutest sinner will quake at the shaking of a leaf, within his bosom, at the thought of death and eternity. A word from the Lord will pierce like a sword.

3. Anxiety, Acts ii. 37. The soul is then stretched on the rack, and would fain know if there be any hope. Sometimes it hopes, sometimes fears, but always would fain be delivered. This anxiety will fill head, and heart, and hand, and swallow up all other cares; for then the soul sees the truth of that saying, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Mat. xvi. 26.

Thirdly, The means by which this conviction is wrought. The Spirit of the Lord makes use of the word for that effect, and particularly of the law. The elect soul is brought prisoner to Mount Sinai, and there the Spirit of the Lord reads a dreadful lecture of the fiery law unto it. And here,

1. By the commands, the Spirit convinces of sin, Rom. vii. 7. The law is held out in its spirituality, and it proves to be the candle of the Lord, searching the innermost parts of the belly; a looking glass, wherein one gets such a sight of himself as he never had before.

2. By the threatenings and curse of the law, the Spirit convinces of misery. There they read their doom, Gal. iii. 10. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the

book of the law to do them.' Then every command appears fenced with a curse, and so each of them writes death to the sinner. And thus the law exacting perfect conformity to it, and binding wrath and sin together, binds over the sinner to death.

Fourthly, The depth of this conviction. This conviction, or law-work, is not alike in all; but it is deep enough, and but enough, when,

1. The sinner is not only convinced of the sins of his life, lips, and heart, but also of the sin of his nature, Rom. vii. 14. He must be convinced of the corrupt disposition of his soul, whereby he is fitted for all evil, and unfit for any good; for if he see not where his sore lies, how can he apply the remedy to it? Therefore the Lord bids the people of Judah to 'break up their fallow ground, and sow not among thorns,' Jer. iv. 3. to carry down the plow to the root of their corruptions, which is the sin of our nature. It was the ruin of the stony ground, that there was no depth of the earth. And it is the ruin of many who are convinced, that they never get a true sight of their own sinful nature; and thus their case turns to be like that of a boil, not sufficiently lanced, it is scurfed over a while, but never healed.

2. When the sinner is convinced of his absolute need of Christ, and of all his salvation, John xvi. 8. It is for this end that the Spirit works this work on the elect. Sinners will not come to Christ as long as they can find any other way; and therefore the Spirit hunts the elect out of all their starting holes, that finding no rest for the soles of their feet, they may get into the ark.

Therefore they must be convinced that they cannot want him; that they are utterly undone, if they get not an interest in him. And they must see their need of his sanctifying Spirit, as well as his justifying blood; that they must be saved by him from sin, as well as from wrath. They must see their utter inability to take away their guilt by all their mourning, reformation, &c. and that they can as little mortify a lust as take away guilt.

Inf. 1. How hopeless is the case of many that have never yet been awakened by the Spirit of conviction! The forerunners of the effectual call are not yet come unto you.

2. What a madness is it to work against and stave off convictions, or to murder them when they have once entered! These sinners against their own souls, wrestle against their own salvation.

SECONDLY, The work of the Spirit in effectual calling, is an illumination of the soul from Mount Zion. It is the enlightening in the knowledge of Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. It is the finding of the pearl spoken of, Matt. xiii. 45, 46. It is the discovery of the Physician to

the soul anxious for spiritual life and health. And this is a refreshing illumination, like the appearance of the rising sun after a long black and dark night, Hos. vi. 3. And here let us consider the matter, the effect, the means, and the measure, of this illumination.

First, The matter of this illumination is twofold.

1. Christ's ability to save. The man is made to see that Christ is able to save him, and that however desperate his condition be, he can cure him, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him.' The eyes that were held before that they could not perceive him, discover now his glorious suitableness to their ease. They see him in the glory of his person and natures, and his offices; a fulness in him, of merit for their justification, and of Spirit for their sanctification.

2. His willingness to save. The man is made to see that Christ is willing to save him, John vi. 37. 'Him that cometh to me, (says the Lord Jesus), I will in nowise cast out.' He sees that there is hope in Israel concerning his salvation in particular; that however his sins be many and great, yet he is not excluded from the benefit of the indemnity proclaimed and offered in the gospel. He discovers the Saviour stretching out his arms to embrace him, and calling him to partake of the benefits of his purchase.

Secondly, The effect of this illumination is hope. As the wise merchant hoping to be the owner of the pearl, sets himself to it, Matth. xiii. 46. The soul then begins to lift up its head, and says, 'Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?' Joel. ii. 14.; and with Jonah in the whale's belly, 'Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple,' Jonah ii. 4. And this is a blessed anchor of the soul that is yet in the depths, and has not got ashore, and keeps it from despondency.

Thirdly, The means by which it is wrought. That is the glorious gospel in the hand of the Spirit, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. For Christ is the subject of it, Eph. iii. 8. The law discovers the disease, and the gospel the physician. The one is effected by the thunder of a broken law, and the other by the still small voice of the gospel. And herewith begins the healing of the wounded soul.

Fourthly, The measure of it. The clearer this light be, it is so much the better. The more fully one be perswaded of Christ's ability and willingness to save, the more quick and thorough will his deliverance from all his fears be. But it is more or less, and not of one degree, in all. But so much of it is necessary as may make the soul venture itself on Christ, Mark ix. 24. And even this is very acceptable in the sight of the Lord, as the fruit of his own Spirit, Cant. vi. 10.

SECONDLY, The second work of the Spirit in effectual calling is on the will of the sinner. This faculty of the soul needs also a saving work of the Spirit thereon, being fearfully depraved in the state of nature, Rom. viii. 7. Effectual calling is the Lord's opening of the heart, as Lydia's; as the call of the gospel is, to open to him, Rev. iii. 20. There is a twofold door opened in effectual calling. (1.) The outer door of the understanding. That is opened by the twofold illumination spoken of before. And that door may at least be half-opened, as blown up by a law-storm of conviction, and yet the soul be not effectually called. (2.) The inner door of the will; and when that is opened, the work is done, Christ and the sinner meet. It is the great work. Now, the Spirit's work on the will is,

The renewing of it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. The Spirit of the Lord takes away the old and obstinate will of the sinner, which was an iron sinew in his neck, that would never bow to him; and gives him a new will, renewing him in the Spirit of his mind. Sin gave all the faculties of the soul a wrong set, particularly the will, which was originally bent in conformity to the will of God; but in the state of nature is bent the quite contrary way, Rom. viii. 7. The Spirit of the Lord in effectual calling brings it back in some measure to its primitive constitution.

This renovation does not change the soul in its substance but in the qualities thereof. It is the endowing of the will with new qualities, removing and breaking the power of the old ones, Eph. iv. 23, 24. planting in it new dispensations and inclinations. These are chiefly two :

1. Flexibleness or pliancy to good, Ezek. xxxvi. 20. 'I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' The stony heart is inflexible; it will break but not bow. But grace makes it a heart of flesh, that will bow according to the will of God. It powerfully melts it down, like wax before the fire; and makes it capable of impressions of holiness, Acts ix. 6. 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' content to be made holy, to be made clean, to come into the Physician's hand; willing to part with sin. The natural contumacy, wilfulness, and refractoriness, is carried off; the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke is tamed, and is taught to stand and receive it.

2. A proneness and bent of the will to good, Jer. xxxi. 18. The natural aversion is conquered, and the will that bent to the wrong side, by a powerful touch of the hand of the sanctifying Spirit, gets a set the contrary way, and is bowed or inclined to the will of God. This David prays for, for himself, Psal. cxix. 36. 'In-

cline my heart unto thy testimonies ;' and the apostle, for the Thessalonians, 2 Epist. iii. 5. 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.' The Holy Ghost working like fire, softens the iron heart, and then bends it according to his will, Psal. ex. 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.'

If any ask, how this is done ? let them take their answer from Eccl. xi. 5. 'Thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all, John iii. 8. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth.' The works of God in nature are often beyond our reach to account for the way of them, and no wonder his work of grace is so. The effect is felt, the change is visible ; but how the Spirit worketh it, who can distinctly trace that ? This we are sure of, it is done in a way agreeable to the rational nature ; there is no force or compulsion in the case ; but he that made the heart, makes it willing, and sweetly, yet powerfully conquers it, Psal. ex. 3.

Thus ye have heard that the work of the Spirit is twofold on the elect soul in effectual calling. It remains that,

Lastly, I shew you the blessed effect and happy issue of this twofold work of the Spirit on the elect soul. It is, that the sinner is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel. And thus the call is effectual. Here we may consider,

1. The effectual closing with the call. That is the sinner's embracing Christ by faith, John i. 12. The call of the gospel comes to poor sinners, saying, as Jer. iii. 22. 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings : and when it is effectual, the soul echoes back to the call, 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. The heart is won to Christ, the sinner is conquered, says Amen to the covenant, and gives its consent to Christ, to take him in the offer of the gospel. It comes out of itself, renounces its own wisdom, and takes Christ for a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, for all, and instead of all. This is the great design of the call ; and whatever length one come, he never answers the call, till he come this length. Though people may come the length of mourning for sin, and reformation of life in duties, if they do not embrace Christ in the gospel-offer, they stick in the place of breaking forth.

2. The warrant the sinner has to embrace Christ. That is the gospel-offer, Prov. viii. 4. 'Unto you, O men, I call ; and my voice is to the sons of men.' It would be presumption indeed for guilty creatures to embrace Christ, if he were not offered unto them. That is a match which is so high above us, that we could have no hopes of it, unless it were offered to us. But we are bidden to this mar-

riage, Matth. xxii. 4. We are commanded to believe on him, John iii. 23. and that on our highest peril, Mark xvi. 16. ‘He that believeth not, shall be damned.’ And do what we will, we cannot please God, if we do not that, Heb. xi. 6, ‘For without faith it is impossible to please him:’ for that is what the Lord mainly requires of us, John vi. 29. ‘This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.’

4. How the elect soul is effectually determined to it. The Spirit of the Lord persuades him to it, John vi. 45. Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.’ The soul has a bosom-counsellor, that leaves it not till it be won over to give consent to the happy match. The sinner may stand long in suspense, doubting whether to embrace the call or not, and Satan, with the corrupt heart, will muster up all the objections they can against it. But the Spirit of the Lord clears all their objections to the soul, so far as they cannot get them sustained, and presses and urges the sinner unanswerably to comply.

And this the Spirit does by the twofold illumination spoken of before. Upon the one hand, the sinner is pressed with his lost and undone state. He sees that he is undone for ever, if he does not comply. On the other, he is pressed with the sight of Christ’s ability and willingness to save, and the prospect of perfect happiness upon his compliance. So that he sees all the reason in the world for answering the call.

This shews that the Spirit acts in the conversion of a soul in a way suitable to the rational nature. What stronger arguments are possible than what are here made use of? and how can they fail to determine when the Spirit of the Lord, by his gracious work, sets them home on the soul? Can there be any thing more powerful to determine the slayer to run, than to see the avenger of blood hard behind him, and the city of refuge at hand before him? And so it is in this case.

Lastly, How the sinner is helped to comply with the call. The Spirit of the Lord enables him, Eph. i. 19, 20. This is absolutely necessary, John vi. 44. ‘No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me draw him.’ In vain will we call the lame man to run for his life, for, alas! he cannot do it; or the dead to arise, for they cannot move. But the Lord with the call sends forth a power enabling them to answer it, as in the case of Lazarus, Phil. ii. 13. ‘For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ The soul gets life from the Spirit of life, feet to run to Christ, and hands to receive him, even the faith that is of the operation of God. And so the work is completed.

This is done by the renewing of the will in a special manner. The soul being made pliable, actually complies; and having got the new disposition, acts accordingly, embracing and uniting with Jesus Christ.

I proceed now to the application of this subject.

USE I. Of information. This lets us see,

1. The happiness of those that are effectually called; they are partakers of Christ's salvation. He and his redemption are theirs. Their particular privileges will afterwards occur. In the general,

(1.) Whatever they meet with in the world, it shall turn to their good, Rom. viii. 28. Their crosses shall not be curses, but their curses be turned into blessings. The teeth-winds they meet with shall blow them towards their harbour, and every stone cast at them shall be turned into a precious stone. They shall be gainers by all, and losers by nothing at length. For that eternal purpose by which they are called, has ordered all things for their good.

(2.) They shall surely be safe for ever: 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,' Rom. ix. 29.

They are brought out from among the perishing multitude, and they shall never fall back again. Of the society they are called into, none can be lost. God will perfect the work which he has begun; and they that are brought upon this first step of the ladder, shall go from one step to another, till they come into the hill of God.

2. The misery of those who are not effectually called. They are not partakers of Christ's redemption. We all have the external call of the gospel; but, alas! how few of the called do come in upon the call? O, Sirs, see how ye entertain the gospel-call, your all depends on it for salvation or damnation. While ye do not comply with it, ye are in a lost state, a state of sin and wrath; yea, if ye do not comply with it, it will be worse for you than if ye had never heard the gospel-call, Prov. i. 24. I shall here, for the conviction of sinners, lay down some evidences of the gospel-call not being effectual to them.

(1.) They that never felt a divine power coming with the word into their hearts, are not effectually called, Isa. liii. 1. Psal. ex. 3. Think on this, ye that have still sat unmoved under the dropping of the gospel, into whose ears the word comes; but as I may say, it never sinks into your hearts. Ye have never heard the Lord's voice, and therefore are still in your sin.

(2.) They that never had any abiding impression made by the word on their spirits. Many are like the stony ground on whom the word makes some impression, while they hear or read it, but

presently it goes away, Matth. xiii. 6. They are like the sieve in the water, full, but immediately lose all again. Be sure, if ever the Spirit of God deal effectually with you, he will make an impression on you that will abide. Ye will carry it home with you, and it will remain, till it make you change your way and course, and make you new creatures.

(3.) They that are still with the world lying in wickedness; the old men and women they were before, no change, no reformation with them, by all the calls of the gospel, sounding in their ears, 1 John v. 19. If ever ye comply with the call, ye will come out, and leave that way and that society. Such are all profane persons, grossly ignorant of the truths of God, prayerless persons, and generally all that are not truly godly. O how easily may most be known to be of the world! Are there not many whose speech betrays them? they speak the language of the world, they know not that of Canaan. They keep the way of the world; they are conformed to it, in sinful scandalous practices. They drive worldly designs as the main design they have in hand. The constant language of their practice is, 'Who will shew us any good,' any worldly or temporal good? They go with ease the way of the multitude.

(4.) They that have never been under convictions of their sinful and lost state. This is the first work of the Spirit in effectual calling. What think ye of yourselves then, who have lived at ease all your days, whose rest has never been disturbed with the thoughts of what shall become of your immortal souls at death? Luke xi. 21. Have ye never seen yourselves lost and undone under the wrath of God? If so, it is an evidence, that it lies upon you still. If ye have never seen yourselves children of the devil, it is a sure token that ye are not yet the children of God.

(5.) Those whose convictions have never gone deep enough, Matth. xiii. 6. Many have got the sluggard's awakening, who have been disturbed in their spiritual sleep, but never thoroughly awakened, and therefore they have just fallen asleep again. They have been frightened under the guilt of gross sins, but never saw the evil of vain thoughts, idle words, &c. like children that are very easy playing with the dust, as long as it gets not into their eyes. If they have got a frightful sight of their actual sins, yet they never had the sin of their nature spread out before them. They have not been convinced of their need of Christ's Spirit for their sanctification, as well as of his blood for their justification.

(6.) Those who have stifled their convictions, warred against an awakened conscience, and come off victorious. Many take ways and means to quench the Spirit, which prevail to their own ruin; a

plain evidence that they are strangers to the efficacious irresistible operations of the Spirit in effectual calling. Some get their convictions laid by delays and off-puts, as Felix did, Acts xxiv. 25. Some for that end fill their heads and hands with business, like Cain building cities. Some with carnal mirth divert them, or, by rushing on to more sin over the belly of their consciences, do choke them, till they become as seared with a hot iron. O horrid cruelty against the soul ! to refuse to be healed !

(7.) Those who have never had any special illumination in the knowledge of Christ. It is certain, that hypocrites may be enlightened both in the knowledge of the law and of the gospel, Heb. vi. 4; but there is a saving illumination in effectual calling that is peculiar to them called, John iv. 10. Psal. ix. 10. In that work there is such a discovery made of Christ in his ability and willingness to save, as shews him to be so suitable to the sinner's case, so transcendently excellent, as that the soul is determined to embrace him for all, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. It sinks the value of all created things, and makes sinful lusts to appear as husks for swine, in comparison of the bread of life.

(3.) Those who, whatever light they have got, yet there has been no heat with it, to melt down the heart and will into a pliancy to the will of God, and the call of the gospel, Job xxiv. 13. Many come a great length in light, by the common operations of the Spirit, from whom the stony heart is never taken away, nor the power of it broken. Such was the case of Balaam, in whom the heart enmity against God and holiness is still rampant, as appears from the history of him. Such also was the case of those mentioned, Heb. vi. 4. &c. The outer door is broken up by the force of a law-storm, and some common touches of the Spirit on their minds ; but the inner door remains still shut. The outworks are taken, but the fort of the heart remains impregnable. Some one lust or other still has the throne in the heart.

(9.) *Lastly,* Those whose exercises have never issued in a kindly closing with Christ in the gospel-offer. O ! it is lamentable to think how many a good work that seems once fairly begun is miserably marred. Some are still kept wavering and undetermined, halting betwixt God and Baal, light pressing them forward, love to their lusts drawing them back, so that their time is like to go ere they come to a resolution what to do. Some, instead of closing with Christ, close with duties ; but never come out of themselves to Christ, but like the spider, entangled in her own web, perish. But true believers ' rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,' Phil. iii. 3. Some close with Christ for jus-

tification, but never mind or see a need to close with him for sanctification.

USE II. Of exhortation. Come away from the world lying in wickedness, unto Jesus Christ, and so comply with the gospel-call. Come away, sinners, unto him. For motives,

1. Consider what a society ye are called to come out of. See their character, Eph. ii. 12. Those that are ‘without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.’ We are all natives of that society indeed; but it is a Godless, Christless society, which we have need to leave, and that timeously.

(1.) It is a sinful society, a corrupt, unclean one, where there is nothing pure, Tit. i. 15. Better lie in a kennel with dogs, or in a hog-sty with swine, than with the world in wickedness. Their souls are like Job’s body, boils and sores all over, that they have not a free finger to scrape themselves withal. The society of the unconverted are defiled in all their faculties, and so they can do nothing that is good and acceptable in God’s sight. Their thoughts are polluted with vanity or vileness, their words are abominable, for their throat is like an open sepulchre; their actions, their very civil actions, are sinful, Prov. xxi. 4.; and their religious ones are so too, Prov. xv. 8.

(2.) It is a most miserable society, Rev. iii. 17. O the wretched state of the unconverted world! what tongue can tell their misery, who are without Christ, and without God in the world. They are the butt of God’s indignation, and set for a mark to the arrows of his wrath, Psal. vii. 12, 13. They are those that are under God’s curse; their state is a prison, out of which those that die in it are carried to the prison of hell: and there is no more difference betwixt them and the damned, than betwixt a dry faggot lying before the fire ready to be cast in, and the faggot that is in it already. A black cloud of wrath hangs over their heads at all times, ready to break upon them, John iii. 36.

How can it be otherwise, since it is a society which Satan is the head of, 2 Cor. iv. 4. ruled and governed by him, and with whom those that die in it must lodge for ever?

Now, sinners, have ye not been long enough there already? May I not say, as Deut. i. 6. ‘Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount.’ O come away from Lebanon! Cant. iv. 8. Leave the world of the ungodly, that are to be swept away with the flood of wrath, and come into the ark. Turn your back on that Sodom, which is to be overthrown in its own filthiness; haste and flee for your life; there is a Zoar to flee into, where ye may be safe.

2. Consider what a society ye are called to. This calling is a high calling, Phil. iii. 14. It is a holy and happy society. All the saints, the excellent ones of the earth, are of it, the glorified saints, the holy angels, and God in Christ is the head of it, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. O refuse not that high calling!

If ye will come away, ye shall enjoy the privileges of this society as members thereof, Eph. ii. 19. Ye shall be inheritors of glory, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: not only saved from wrath, but made happy here in the favour of God, and completely blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

3. *Lastly*, Consider who calleth you. It is the voice of a man that ye hear, but the word of the call is the Lord's own word: and therefore I say, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,' Heb. xii. 25. Our Lord Jesus has got the grant of the kingdom from the Father; and he minds to raise it up on the ruins of Satan's kingdom. And therefore he comes to the world lying in wickedness, to call out from among them whom he may make partakers of his glory. And therefore I say unto you, 'Arise, for the Master calleth you.' And since it is so, it is evident,

(1.) Ye may come; there is an open door for you, none of you all are excluded, Isa. lv. 1. The fallen angels have not that privilege, and therefore they grudge ye should have it; and they will do what they can to keep you from the benefit of it.

(2.) Ye shall not be rejected, nor get the door cast in your teeth, John vi. 37. Your being called ensures your welcome. Let not unbelief suggest such jealousies, as that it is needless to come now, for we will not be accepted; for the market of free grace is not yet over, and as long as the call is given you, ye may be sure of welcome. Indeed the day will come, that Christ will cease to call you; and then it will be needless to think of coming: but O come while the door is open! 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are,' Luke xiii. 24, 25.

(3.) *Lastly*, If ye do not come, it is upon your peril, the peril of the Mediator's vengeance. Does he call you, and will ye not come? Nay, you must come under the pain of the King's highest displeasure, Mat. xxii. 7.

As for you that are called, see that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, being holy in all manner of life and conversation.