

SERMON XL.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.—ROM. viii. 30.

HERE is a further declaration of the last argument, represented by a gradation or chain of causes, beginning at election and ending in glory. Those whom God hath appointed unto salvation he doth not presently put in possession of it, but by degrees, with respect to his eternal purpose; he offereth grace to them in Christ, which they accepting, are justified. Then God dealeth with them as justified, beginning a life in them which shall be perfected in heaven. All which proveth that God by an infallible decree doth guide all things to the good of the elect. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, &c.*

In the words observe this general point—

That those whom God electeth before time he effectually calleth, justifieth, and sanctifieth in time, and will finally glorify when time shall be no more.

In handling this point I shall not speak of the nature of these acts of grace, but only of their connection and relation to one another, which I shall represent to you in these propositions—

1. That God's eternal purpose, will, or decree, is the first rise of all things; for the apostle beginneth with predestination, or his fore-appointing, and fore-ordaining certain persons to come to salvation. Something there is besides God, or without God, as sense teacheth us. Now how came it to be translated from the state of pure possibility into the state of futurity and being, but only by the will of God? else something would exist whether God would or not. Surely all things are of God; and being of God, they are first conceived in the womb of his everlasting purpose and decree, before they have any natural existence in the world. I say his everlasting purpose, for there can be no new thought, intent, and purpose in God; and if all things, surely the most necessary things, the disposal of man to his eternal estate; he doth nothing therein but what he purposed and decreed to do from all eternity; therefore all things must be reduced hither as to their proper spring and fountain. That all things are of God, no christian will deny; that they are not besides, or against his will, is as evident as the former. That this will of God is eternal, and dependeth not upon emergencies of occasion from the creature, is as evident as that. I shall prove out of the scriptures that nothing is made or done without the will of God; not the world: Rev. iv. 11, 'Thou hast created all things, for at thy pleasure they are and were created.' If the world were not created at his will, why was it not created sooner? or why this world and no more?—so men, that these and no others. There is not one man more that liveth upon the earth than God pleaseth, from Adam to the end of the world; he hath determined their number, fixing the times and places in great order: Acts xvii. 26, 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before ap-

pointed, and the bounds of their habitation.' If there were any creature in the world whom God willed not, he would be independent of God, and exempted from his providence. The dispersion of all mankind into all quarters of the earth is from his will and purpose; he did decree and fore-appoint from all eternity that such men should live here and there, so many and so long, in such places. Again, that some should have more means of knowing their creator, others less, it is all from the mercy and will of God: Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation.' His church hath a privilege and an advantage above other nations in the world; the Jews had above the heathens, and christians above the Jews; and no other reason can be assigned but his eternal love, as many people that have the means. All the difference between them and others cometh from God's will, as the rise of it: 2 Tim. ii. 18, 'The Lord knoweth who are his.' Now the will of God reacheth to the smallest and least matters, even to the contingent motions of second causes. In the least things the scripture plainly witnesseth: Mat. x. 29, 30, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your heavenly Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' The least things are not left to blind chance or the will of man, but God determineth the smallest matters. Surely God hath the knowledge and care and overruling of them, and of the brute creatures that are made to be taken and destroyed. Much more of man; for it is said, Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.' Our life dependeth upon God, as the sounding of the pipe dependeth on the breath of the musician; and we move, as the divers tunes of the pipe dependeth on the modulation of his breath or the motion of his fingers. 'Have our being;' there the similitude faileth. A pipe, though it cannot sound without the breath of a musician, or sound to a tune unless he play upon it; yet it may be, whether he breathe in it or play upon it, yea or no. But we have life and breath and all things from God; for if he should suspend his providential influence, we do not only cease to live and move, but also to be. Now God doth not only rule and govern these things, but doth rule and govern them with respect to his decree, or his eternal purpose. I will prove it, because—(1.) He foreknew all things before they came to pass; (2.) That God determineth all these things that they may come to pass. God foreknew them: Acts xv. 18, 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.' Things that come not to pass till long afterward were foreseen by God; he is not surprised by any event. If anything could fall out which God foresaw not, his wisdom were not infinite and eternal. And how could he foretell things to come, if he did not know them? Isa. xlv. 7, 'Who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming, and shall come?' that is, who can tell beforehand what shall befall a people in after times, and relate the constant course and tenor of my dispensations? But how doth God foreknow things? from the nature of the thing, or from his own decree? Certainly God hath not his prescience from the nature of future things, but all things have their futurity from God's decree. Because it was the purpose of God

to do this or permit that; therefore he knoweth that this or that will come to pass: Acts ii. 23, 'Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;' so that God determineth as well as foreknoweth. Many will say that God doth foreknow what men will do in time by their own free will, but hath not determined; but the scripture teacheth us that nothing is done in time, by rational or irrational agents, but it was by the determination of God working the good and permitting the evil: Acts iv. 28, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' God foreseeeth nothing as certainly future but what he hath before determined shall be, nothing good but what he hath decreed to work in us, nothing bad but what he hath decreed to permit, and serve his providence of it, and so it will certainly come to pass; so that all the difference between us and others cometh merely from God, and is to be ascribed to him: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who made thee to differ?'

2. That what God so willeth and purposeth doth infallibly come to pass. Certainly what God intendeth to do, he will not cease till he hath done it; for what should hinder? Any change in God himself, or any impediment without? No change in God himself; no, for he is Jehovah, that changeth not: Mal. iii. 6, 'For I am God, I change not;' Job xxiii. 13, 'But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me.' Certainly God is unchangeable in himself, and also in his mind, and in the purpose of his love towards his children; and he carrieth on the pleasure of his own will by his efficacious providence, without controlment. It is spoken by Job in his vexation; but it is usually observed that in that whole book there are good doctrines, though sometimes misapplied by the speakers. If God himself should change his purpose, it must be either for the better, that reflecteth on his wisdom, or for the worse, and that reflecteth on his goodness. Nothing without God can hinder God, when he applieth himself to the performance of what he hath purposed; for all creatures are at his beck, can do nothing without him, much less against him: Ps. cxv. 3, 'But our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleased.' None can resist the counsel of his will, seconded by his almighty power, or the work of his hands. Men may wish things, but God effecteth them. Nothing is faulty, nothing is wanting, when he will work; therefore his purpose, backed with almighty power, cannot be disappointed.

3. Whatever so cometh to pass is brought about in the most convenient order. The purpose of his will is also called the counsel of his will: Eph. i. 11, 'He worketh all things according to the counsel of his will;' not that God deliberateth or consulteth as men consult, out of ignorance or doubtfulness of what is most convenient; but God's will is called counsel, because there is depth of wisdom to be seen in what he doth. The creation showed his wisdom, for the world is established in an excellent order: Ps. civ. 24, 'Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.' God hath disposed variety of excellences in the world by a wise contrivance, which striketh the heart of man with reverence whenever he beholdeth them. So for his providence; there is an excellent contexture of occurrences, which

maketh the whole frame the more beautiful: Eccles. iii. 11, 'He hath made everything beautiful in its time.' There is at first a seeming confusion in the government of the world, and the events that happen in it; but when we see all in their frame, when his whole work is done, it is full of order. So in the work of redemption, and all the means to bring the effect of it about, there is much more a great deal of wisdom to be seen. It is said, Eph. i. 8 (in the dispensation of his grace by Christ), 'He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.' Means are fitly ordered to bring God's purpose about with honour to himself and benefit to us, and are so set, as links in a chain, that not one of them can be left out, and so as no violence is offered to the creature, and the liberty of second causes is not taken away. For though the decree be fixed and absolute, yet the dispensation thereof is conditional; for whom he hath predestinated, them he hath called. God will not discover his eternal differencing intent to any person before the actual application of Christ by faith; our particular election cannot be known till we do believe. All to whom the gospel cometh are children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, in the sentence of his law, whatever they may be in the purposes of his grace; and so they can only look upon themselves as all alike in sin, and so all alike in danger of condemnation; and so God proceedeth with them in such a way as is most agreeable to a reasonable creature, by persuasion and proposal of arguments to come out of this wretched estate; and the outward dispensation being alike to elect and reprobate, the one having no more favour than the other, those that are passed by are found without excuse for their unbelief. Jesus Christ is propounded to them as an all-sufficient saviour, and also a promise that whosoever believeth shall be saved. More than this, in respect of external means, is not tendered to the elect, nor less than this to reprobates; though the elect's receiving be the fruit of special grace, the others rejecting is without excuse. God indeed giveth to the one a heart to receive, yet the external offer is made to both; and if they embrace it not, it is long of themselves. This then is the wisdom of God, that his absolute fixed purpose taketh place by an efficacious, conditional dispensation.

4. That God doth not find this order in causes, but maketh it; for all good is the fruit and effect of predestination, not the motive and cause of it, otherwise it would be a post-destination, not a predestination. Effectual calling and justification and glory are effects of God's eternal purpose, and flow from it as streams out of a fountain; and herein differeth the purpose of God to do good from the purpose of man. Something is presented to us as good and convenient, that moveth our will to purpose and choose, and inclineth us for its own goodness to seek after it, and set about the means whereby we may obtain it; but nothing in the creature can move God. What is the effect of the decree cannot be the motive of it. Indeed God willeth one thing in order to another, as effectual calling in order to justification, and both in order to glory; but then these are co-ordinate causes. His will and good pleasure is the original of this order, and the free grace of God is the only supreme and fountain-cause of our salvation: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, 'Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief

of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.' The cause is our election; the means of execution are the sanctification of the Spirit and our belief of the truth; the end is our eternal salvation, or our obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And mark, he saith they were chosen from the beginning, as elsewhere it is said this grace was given us in Christ before the world was, 2 Tim. i. 9; and he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4; so that from this pre-ordination all cometh. Well then, God hath of his mere grace put his eternal purpose in that model and mould wherein we now find them; he that is the efficient cause of all things is also the dirigent cause, appointing in what order grace and mercy should be dispensed.

5. This order of causes is so settled and joined together, that none can separate them. The chain is indissoluble, and one link draweth on another; none are glorified but those that are sanctified and justified, and none are justified but those that are effectually called, and none are effectually called but those that are predestinated according to the purpose of his grace; and, on the other side, whoever is effectually called, justified, and sanctified, may be assured of his predestination to eternal life, and his future glorification with God. This connection must not be, cannot be disturbed; which is to be noted, because some, upon the vain presumption of the infallibility of God's purposes, think it needless to be serious, diligent, and holy; if I be elected, I shall be saved. No, God hath linked means and ends together; his decree establisheth the duties of the gospel, and checketh all thoughts of dispensation from them; never think that this order shall be broken or disturbed for your sakes. Drunkards and gamesters may as well imagine that God will break the ordinance of day and night, by turning day into night and night into day for their sakes, as the unholy soul to think to be justified and glorified till they be effectually called and sanctified. No, you must be holy, or conclude that you shall have no saving benefit by Christ; for they who are fore-ordained are a chosen generation, a distinct society and community of men, who are called out of darkness into his marvellous light, to show forth the virtues of God, 1 Peter ii. 9; made objects of his special grace and love, that they may show forth the distinction God hath made between them and others, by the choiceness of their spirits and conversations; their carriages must be suitable to their privileges.

6. The method is to be observed, as well as the connection.

[1.] The first effect of predestination is effectual calling. Certainly all that are chosen before time are called in time: Rom. i. 7, 'Beloved of God, called to be saints.' First beloved, then called; so 2 Peter i. 10, 'Make your calling and election sure.' By making our calling sure, we make our election sure; for that is the first eruption of God's eternal love. You may know God hath distinguished you from others, when you are recovered from the devil, the world, and the flesh, to God: John v. 19, 'We know we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' When there is a conspicuous difference between us and others, we may trace the stream to the fountain, and know God hath made a difference before the world began, and distinguished you from them that perish. Once you were as vain, sensual,

worldly-minded as others, till God called you out of the lost world, to be a peculiar people to himself; but this act of grace cometh from on high. Vocation is the fruit of election; the first grace found you in the polluted mass of mankind, as having found you entangled in many foolish and hurtful lusts. Now this is a mighty engagement upon us; if God hath made such a difference, oh! do not unmake it again, and confound all again by walking after the course of this world, for you do in effect set yourselves to disannul his decree. Conformity to the world is a confusion of what God hath separated; God made the difference when none was, and by the power of his grace you must keep it up.

[2.] The next step is, 'Whom he hath called, them he hath justified.' Calling is chiefly by the gospel, and the next end of that is faith in Christ, or conversion to God; and certainly none are justified, but those that are called, and all that are called are justified: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.' When we are turned from Satan to God, we receive the forgiveness of sins: Mark iv. 12, 'Lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them;' where forgiveness of sins is mentioned as a consequent of their conversion and turning to the Lord; so when we are brought into the kingdom of Christ, then we have redemption by his blood, the remission of sins, Col. i. 13, 14. Till we become Christ's subjects, we cannot have the privileges of Christ's kingdom; this is the order set down here, of conveying to us the benefits of Christ's death: first called, then justified. They that are yet under the power of sin are under the guilt of it; as in the fall there was sin before there was guilt, so in our recovery there must be conversion before remission; a new nature or life from Christ, then a new relative estate. When we are regenerated, we are justified, and adopted into God's family: Heb. viii. 10-12, 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.' It is fit God's turn should be served before ours, that we should be willing to return to our obedience before we have our discharge.

[3.] The next step is, 'And whom he justified, them he also glorified.'

But you will say, Doth the apostle, in the several links of the golden chain, omit sanctification?

I answer, No, it is included, as to the beginning, in vocation; as to the continuance and further degree, it is included in glorification. This, therefore, is the order; God doth first regenerate, that he may pardon; and he pardoneth that he may further sanctify, and so make us everlastingly happy. Now regeneration is included in vocation; for his calling us is all one with his begetting us by the word of truth, James i. 18. But his further sanctifying, which is consequent to justification, is implied in the word glorified; as grace is glory begun, so glorification is sanctification consummate and completed: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath

sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,' which is *centesima pars*. Here our happiness standeth in loving God and being beloved of him; there, in the most perfect act of love and reception of his benefits: this love is here enkindled by faith, there by vision; here so far like God that sin is mortified, there nullified.

[4.] Those that are sanctified are glorified in part, there are fully glorified. The apostle speaketh of it as past; he will certainly and infallibly glorify them as if they were in heaven already—'Hath eternal life,' John v. 24. Hath it in the promise, hath it in the pledge, the gift of the sanctifying Spirit. We have small beginnings and earnest and foretastes of everlasting blessedness in this life; by faith we may foresee what God will be for ever to his saints. Now by being sanctified we are put into a capacity of eternal life—'Without holiness we cannot see God,' Heb. xii. 14. But holiness maketh us more fit; and as it is increased in us, so we are nearer to glory, and are more suited to it.

Use 1. Is information. It informeth us of divers truths necessary to be observed by us.

1. In all this order and chain of causes there is no mention of merits, but all is ascribed to grace and God's free favour, choosing, calling, justifying, sanctifying, glorifying us; from the first step to the last it is all grace; our best works are excluded from having any meritorious influence upon it: Rom. ix. 11, 'Before the children had done either good or evil, it was said, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand.' Mark, there was a *voluntas*, and *voluntas miserendi*; 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Not according to works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.' Works are still excluded, as they stand in opposition to God's free mercy and goodness; it is a free act of his disposing, to which only God was induced by his own love.

2. That predestination is most free, not depending upon foreseen works and faith. We are chosen to faith and holiness, but not for it; the scripture saith, to faith: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'Because God hath from the beginning of the world chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;' and to holiness: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the world, that we should be holy.' But we are not chosen because we believed and were holy, or because God did foresee it, but that we might believe and be holy; faith and holiness are only fruits and effects of God's grace in us; there was no foreseen cause in us to move God to bestow it upon us.

3. That predestination to glory doth not exclude the means by which it is brought about: such as Christ's gospel, ministry, faith, holiness, the cross. No, a conditional dispensation is subordinate to an absolute decree; God that hath predestinated will yet call before he will justify; God giveth the condition, taketh away the heart of stone, worketh faith and holiness in us; God's purpose is that such and such shall be called and saved by faith in Christ. Now this maketh an absolute connection between faith and salvation; now the elect, till they are called and do believe, know nothing of this, but it is their duty to fulfil the condition.

4. The greatness of our obligation to God. Here are the several steps and degrees whereby his eternal love descendeth to his chosen, or the several acts and effects by which he bringeth them to their purposed blessedness, and do all infer a new obligation, that he was pleased to choose us who were equally involved in misery with others, and call us with a holy calling, passing by thousands and ten thousands in outward respects much before us, and justify us freely by his grace, forgiving us so many offences, and bestowed upon us the gift of the sanctifying Spirit, by which we are regenerated and fitted for everlasting glory; see here the great love of God. God's love in time cannot be valued enough, but God's love before all time should never be forgotten by you; there you have the rise and fountain of all the benefits done unto us; this was ancient love before we or the world had a being; it was the design God travailed with from all eternity; and who are we, that the thoughts of God should so long be taken up about us? It is love managed with wisdom and counsel; his heart is set upon it to do us good. Those benefits came not by chance, but were fore-laid and fore-ordained by God. If one do us a kindness that lieth in his way, and when opportunity doth fairly invite him, he is friendly to us; but when he studieth to do us good, we know his heart is towards us: God sets all his wisdom and grace a-work. This was a feast long in preparing, that it might be the more full and ample, and all things be ready if we be ready, and our remedy at hand before our misery took effect. This is a distinguishing love, differencing us from others all along, by choosing, calling, justifying, glorifying, that one should be taken and the other left.

5. The blessedness of a christian: they are predestinated, called, justified, and glorified: all which are special grounds of comfort and patience under the cross, whatever may befall a christian in this world. God hath predestinated and singled us to be objects of his grace and instruments of his glory in this world, and to be conformed to the image of his Son, ver. 29, (and we can fare no worse than Christ did), and that the Lord should call us in due time out of the corrupt and miserable state of mankind to the faith of Christ (and shall not we suffer for it?), and then justify us, and free us from the curse of the law, and absolve us from the guilt and eternal punishment of all our sins, and moderate the temporal punishment of them (surely the cross may be the better borne); and then a life begun which shall not be quenched. Blessed is that soul who hath these privileges.

6. See the way how we get assurance of God's love and our own salvation. We know the purposes of God's grace by the effects by which he witnesseth his love to his elect ones. By vocation our predestination is manifested, by justification we feel the comfort of it, so climb up to glory by degrees. Those whom God hath predestinated from all eternity, and will glorify in the world to come, he doth powerfully call. The scripture promiseth salvation, not to the named, but described persons; here, then, is your way of procedure. Would you know your election of God? Are you called, sanctified, brought home to God? Begin to live in the Spirit.

Use 2. Do not know these things in vain, nor reflect upon them merely to satisfy curiosity, or to keep up a barren, speculative dispute,

but to cherish the love of God, holiness, patience, and become more serious in the work of salvation.

What effects have you of this predestination?

1. Love to God. From everlasting to everlasting he is God, Ps. xc. 2, Ps. ciii. 17; and from everlasting to everlasting his mercy is to them that fear him. We see his love in his purposes and performances; the one before the world began, the other when the world shall have an end. And so two eternities meet together, eternal glory arising from purposes of eternal grace; so that whether we look backward or forward, you see the everlasting love of God. Oh! then, let God be yours first and last; let the everlasting purposes of his grace be your constant admiration, and the everlasting fruition of God in glory be your fixed end, which is always in your eye; and let the sense of the one and the hope of the other quicken all your duties. God's mercy, you see from all eternity it began, and to eternity it continueth. We adjourn, and put off God, as if we had not sinned enough, and dishonoured his name enough; hereafter will be time enough to return to our duty. If we begin ever so soon, God hath been aforehand with us; some make early work of religion, as Josiah, Samuel, Timothy; some are called sooner, some later; but though all are not called so soon as others, they are loved as soon as others, for these benefits were designed to us from all eternity.

2. Holiness. That we might hate sin more, and prize holiness more. Holiness is inferred out of election, as a special fruit of this predestination: Eph. i. 4, 'He hath chosen us to be holy.' It is inferred out of calling, for 'he hath called us with an holy calling,' 2 Tim. i. 9. The calling is from misery to happiness, from sin to holiness. It is inferred out of justification; sanctification is the inseparable companion of it. God freeth us *a malo morali*, that freeth us *a malo naturali*; impunity followeth uprightnes, our recovery were not else entire. Our case is like that of a condemned malefactor, sick of a deadly disease, who needs not only the skill of the physician to heal him, but the pardon of the judge. And it is inferred out of glorified; none shall enjoy everlasting glory after this life but such as are holy here; and if they be not sanctified and renewed by the Spirit, they shall never enter into the kingdom of God; for we cannot have one part of the covenant while we neglect another: it is not only the way, but part of glory.

3. Patience under afflictions. The same notions are used of afflictions which are used of your privileges by Christ: 1 Thes. iii. 3, 'Ye are appointed thereunto.' You should look to that in all that befalleth you; he that appointed you to the crown, appointed you to the cross also. Called: 1 Peter ii. 21, 'For even hereunto were ye called.' We are called to the fellowship of the cross; we consented to these terms: Mat. x. 38, 'He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.' Justified; the comforts of it are most felt then: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Glorified; take it for degrees of holiness; holiness is promoted by affliction: Heb. xii. 10, 'We are chastened, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Final blessedness: 1 Peter iv. 13, 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.' Christ's last day is a glad day to you.

4. More seriousness in the work of salvation: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

SERMON XLI.

What shall we then say to these things? if God be for us, who can be against us?—ROM. viii. 31.

WE are now come to the application of these blessed truths, and the triumph of believers over sin and the cross; yea, over all the enemies of our salvation. It is begun in the text—'What shall we then say?'

The words contain two questions—

1. One by way of preface and excitation.

2. The other by way of explication, setting forth the ground of our confidence. So that here is a question answered by another question.

First, Let us begin with the exciting question, What shall we then say to these things?

Doct. When we hear divine truths, it is good to put questions to our own hearts about things.

There are three ways by which a truth is received and improved—by sound belief, serious consideration, and close application. Sound belief: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' Serious consideration: Deut. xxxii. 46, 'Set your hearts unto all the words I testify among you this day;' Luke ix. 44, 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears.' Close application: Job v. 27, 'Lo! this it is, we have searched it out; know thou it for thy good.' Now these three acts of the soul have each of them a distinct and proper ground; sound belief worketh upon the clearness and certainty of the things asserted; serious consideration on the greatness and importance of them; close application on their pertinency and suitableness to us; see all in one place, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' These are all necessary to make any truth operative. We are not affected with what we believe not; therefore, to awaken diligence, the truth of things is pleaded: 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16, 'And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' &c.; 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure,' &c.; 'For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So for consideration: Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.'