

## EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. viii. 30. *Them he also called.*

Q. XXXI. *WHAT is effectual calling?*

A. It is a gracious work of the Spirit, whereby he causeth us to embrace Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

In this verse is a golden chain of salvation, made up of four links; this is one, vocation; 'Them he also called.' Calling is *nova creatio*, a new creation, the first resurrection.—There is a two-fold call: 1. An extrinsic or outward call: 2. An intrinsic, or inward effectual call.

1. An extrinsic or outward call, which is God's offer of grace to sinners, inviting them to come in and accept of Christ and salvation, Mat. xx. 16. 'Many are called, but few chosen.' This outward call shews men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience.

2. There is an intrinsic or effectual call when God with the offer of grace works grace: by this call the heart is renewed, and the will effectually drawn to embrace Christ. The outward call brings men to a profession of Christ, the inward to a possession of Christ.

Q. *What are the means of this effectual call?*

Ans. Every creature hath a voice to call us. The heavens call to us to behold God's glory, Ps. xix. 11. Conscience calls to us, God's judgments call to us, repent, Mic. vi. 9. 'Hear ye the rod.' But every voice doth not convert. There are two means of our effectual call:

1. The 'Preaching of the word,' which is the sounding God's silver trumpet in men's ears; God doth not speak by an oracle, he calls by his ministers. Samuel thought it had been only the voice of Eli, that called to him; but it was 'God's voice,' 1 Sam. iii. 6. So perhaps you think it is only the minister speaks to you in the word, but it is God himself speaks. Therefore Christ is said (now) to speak to us from heaven, Heb. xii. 25. How doth he speak but by his ministers? as a king speaks by his ambassadors: know, that in every sermon preached, God calls to you; and to refuse the message we bring, is to refuse God himself.

2. The other means of our effectual call, is the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the word is the pipe or organ; the Spirit of God blowing in it, doth effectually change men's hearts, Acts x. 44. 'While Peter spake the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word of God.' Ministers knock at the door of

men's hearts, the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door, Acts xiv. 6. 'A certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened.'

Q. *From what doth God call men?*

Ans. 1. From sin; he calls them from their ignorance and unbelief, 1 Pet. i. 14. By nature the understanding is invloped with darkness, God calls men 'from darkness to light,' Eph. v. 8. as if one should be called out of a dungeon to behold the light of the sun.

2. From danger. As the angel called Lot out of Sodom, when it was ready to rain fire; so God calls his people from the fire and brimstone of hell, and from all those curses they were exposed to.

3. He calls them out of the world; as Christ called Matthew from the receipt of custom, John xvii. 16. 'Ye are not of the world.' Such as are divinely called, are not natives here, but pilgrims; they do not conform to the world, or follow its sinful fashions: they are not of the world; though they live here, yet they trade in the heavenly country; the world is a place where Satan's throne is, Rev. ii. 13. A stage on which sin every day acts its part. Now such as are called, are in, but not of the world.

Q. *To what God calls men?*

Ans. 1. He calls them to holiness, 1 Theff. iv. 7. 'God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Holiness is the livery, or silver star the godly wear, Isa. lxiii. 18. *Knam kodshacca*, 'The people of thy holiness.' The called of God are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit, 1 John ii. 20. 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One.'

2. God calls them to glory, as if a man were called out of a prison to sit upon a throne, 1 Theff. ii. 12. 'Who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' Whom God calls, he crowns; 'it is a weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. The Hebrew word for glory (*Kauod*) signifies *pondus*, a weight? the weight of glory adds to the worth, the weightier gold is, the more it is worth. And this glory is not transient, but permanent, an eternal weight; it is better felt than expressed.

Q. *What is the cause of the effectual call?*

Ans. God's electing love, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he predestinated, them he also called.' Election is the fountain-cause of our vocation; it is not because some are more worthy to partake of the heavenly calling than others (as the Arminians) we were 'all in our blood,' Ezek. xvi. 6. And what worthiness in us? What worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the Corinthians, when God began to call them by his gospel? they were fornicators, effeminate, idolaters, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'Such were

some of you, but ye are washed,' &c. Before effectual calling, we are not only 'without strength,' Rom. v. 6. but 'enemies,' Col. i. 21. So that the foundation of vocation is election.

Q. *What are the epithets or qualifications of this call?*

Ans. 1st, It is a powerful call; *verba Dei sunt opera*, Luther. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to himself, he doth not only put forth his voice, but his arm. The apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power, 'he exerciseth towards them that believe,' Eph. i. 19. God rides forth conquering in the chariot of his gospel; he conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the will, which stood out as a fort-royal, to yield and stoop to his grace; he makes the stony heart bleed: it is a mighty powerful call. Why then do the Arminians seem to talk of a moral persuasion? that God, in the conversion of a sinner, doth only morally persuade, and no more. He sets his promises before them, to allure them to good, and his threatenings to deter them from evil; and here is all he doth. But sure moral persuasions alone are insufficient to the effectual call: how can the bare proposal of promises and threatenings convert a soul? This amounts not to a new creation, or that power which raised Christ from the dead; God doth not only persuade, but enable, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. If God, in conversion, should only morally persuade, that is, set good and evil before men, then God doth not put forth so much power in saving men, as the devil doth in destroying them. Satan doth not only propound tempting objects to men, but doth concur with his temptations; therefore he is said to 'work in the children of disobedience,' Eph. ii. 2. The Greek word, to work, signifies *imperii vim*, Cameron, the power Satan hath in carrying men to sin. And shall not God's power in converting, be greater than Satan's power in seducing? The effectual call is mighty and powerful; God puts forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotency: it is such a powerful call, that the will of man hath no power to resist.

2. It is an high calling, Phil. iii. 14. 'I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God.' It is an high calling, 1st, Because we are called to high exercises of religion; to be crucified to the world, to live by faith, to do angels work, to love God, to be living organs of his praise, to hold communion with the Father and the Son, 1 John i. 3.

2dly, It is an high calling, because we are called to high privileges: to justification and adoption, to be kings and priests unto God: 'We are called to the fellowship of angels, to be co-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. They who are effectually called, are candidates of heaven, they are princes in all lands, Psal. xiv. 16. though princes in disguise.

3dly, It is an immutable call, Rom. xi. 9. 'The gifts and

calling of God are without repentance ;' that is, those gifts that flow from election, (as vocation and justification) these are without repentance. God repented he called Saul to be a king ; but he never repents that he calls a sinner to be a saint.

*Uſe 1.* See the neceſſity of the effectual call, a man cannot go to heaven without it. Firſt, we muſt be called before glorified, Rom. viii. 30. A man uncalled can lay claim to nothing in the Bible, but threatenings : a man in the ſtate of nature is not fit for heaven, no more than a man in his filth and his rags is fit to come into a king's preſence : a man in his pure naturals, is a God hater, Rom. i. 30. and is he fit for heaven ? will God lay his enemy in his boſom ?

*Uſe 3. Of trial.* Whether we are effectually called ? we may know it by the antecedent and conſequent of it.

1. By the antecedent. Before this effectual call, an humbling work paſſeth upon the ſoul : a man is convinced of ſin, he ſees he is a ſinner, and nothing but a ſinner : the fallow-ground of his heart is broken up, Jer. iv. 3. As the husbandman breaks the clods, then caſts in the ſeed ; ſo God, by the convincing work of the law, breaks a ſinner's heart, and makes it fit to receive the ſeeds of grace. Such as were never convinced, were never called, John xvi. 8. 'He ſhall convince the world of ſin.' Conviction is the firſt ſtep to converſion.

2. By the conſequents, two, (1.) He who is ſavingly called, answers to God's call : when God called Samuel, he answered, 'Speak, Lord, thy ſervant heareth,' 1 Sam. iii. 10. When God calls thee to an act of religion, thou doſt run at God's call, Acts xxvi. 19. 'I was not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion.' If God calls to duties contrary to fleſh and blood, we obey his voice in every thing ; true obedience is like the needle which points that way which the loadſtone draws. Such as are deaf to God's call, a ſign they are not called by grace.—

(2.) He who is effectually called doth ſtop his ears to all other calls which would call him off from God. As God hath his call, ſo there are other contrary calls : Satan calls by a temptation, luſt calls, evil company calls : but, as the adder ſtops its ear againſt the voice of the charmer ; ſo he who is effectually called, ſtops his ear againſt all the charms of fleſh and devil.

*Uſe 3. Of comfort to them who are the called of God.* This call evidenceth election, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he predeſtinated, them he alſo called.' Election is the cauſe of our vocation, and vocation is the ſign of our election. Election is the firſt link of the golden chain of ſalvation, vocation is the ſecond ! he who hath the ſecond link of the chain is ſure of the firſt link : as by the ſtream we are led to the fountain, ſo by vocation we aſcend to election. Calling is an earneſt and pledge of glory, 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. 'God hath choſen you to ſalvation, through

sanctification.' We may read God's predestinating love in the work of grace in our heart.

*Branch 2.* To such as are called, to be thankful to God for this unspeakable blessing; be thankful to all the persons in the Trinity, to the Father's mercy, to the Son's merit, to the Spirit's efficacy. To make you thankful, consider, when you had offended God, that he should call you; that, when God needed you not, he had millions of glorified saints and angels to praise him, yet he called you. Again, consider what you were before God called you; you were in your sins; when God called Paul, he found him persecuting; when he called Matthew, he found him at the receipt of custom; when he called Zaccheus, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by his grace, he finds him seeking after his lusts: as when Sãul was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the asses: that God should call thee when thou art in the hot pursuit of sin, admire God's love, exalt his praise. Again, that God should call you, and pass by others, what mercy is this? Mat. xi. 26. 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' That God should pass by the wife and noble persons, of sweeter disposition, acuter parts, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you; O astonishing love of God! It was a great favour of God to Samuel, that God called to him, and revealed his mind to him, and passed by Eli, though a judge and priest in Israel, 1 Sam. iii. 6. so, that God should call to thee, a flagitious sinner, and pass by others of higher birth, and better morals, here is that which calls aloud for praise. As God so governs the clouds, that he makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another. Two at a sermon, one his heart the Lord opens, the other is no more affected with it, than a deaf man with the sound of music: here is the banner of free grace displayed, and here should the trophies of praise be erected. Elijah and Elisha were walking together; on a sudden there came a chariot of fire, and carried Elijah up to heaven, but left Elisha behind: so, when two are walking together, husband and wife, father and child, that God should call one by his grace, but leave the other, carry up one in a triumphant chariot to heaven, but let the other perish eternally; O infinite rich grace! how should they that are called be affected with God's discriminating love? how should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? how should they stand upon mount *Gerizzim*, blessing and praising God? O begin the work of heaven here! such as are patterns of mercy should be trumpeters of praise. Thus St. Paul being called of God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace; breaks forth into admiration and gratulation, 1 Tim. i. 13.

*Use 4.* To the called. Walk worthy of your high calling,

Eph. iv. 1. 'I beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ;' in two things.

1. Walk compassionately. Pity such as are yet uncalled : hast thou a child that God hath not yet called, a wife, a servant ? weep over their dying souls : they are in their blood, ' under the power of Satan : ' O pity them ! let their sins more trouble you than your own sufferings : if you pity an ox or ass going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray ? Shew your piety by your pity.

2. Walk holily. Your's is an holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. You are called to be saints, Rom. i. 7. Shew your vocation by a Bible conversation. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds ? shall not they who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrancy in their lives than sinners ? 1 Pet. i. 15. ' As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. O dishonour not your high calling by any fordid carriage : when Antigonus was going to defile himself with women, one told him, ' he was a king's son. ' O remember your dignity, ' called of God ! ' of the blood-royal of heaven : do nothing unworthy of your honourable calling. Scipio refused the embraces of an harlot, because he was general of an army. Abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. It is not fit for them who are the called of God, to do as others ; though others of the Jews did drink wine, it was not fit for the Nazarene, because he had a vow of seperation upon him, and had promised abstinence ; though Pagans and loose Christians take liberty to sin, yet it is not fit for them who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them to do so : you are consecrated persons, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and your bodies must be a sacrary, or holy of holies.

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## OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace.*

Q. XXXIII. *What is justification ?*

A. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity ; and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation, or an error in the first concoction. Justification by Christ, is a spring of the water of life ; and to have the poison