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PARTICULAR ELECTION.

A Sermon

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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter i. 10, 11.

It is exceedingly desirable that in the hours of worship and in the house of prayer our minds should be as much as possible divested of every worldly thought. Although the business of the week will very naturally struggle with us to encroach upon the Sabbath, it is our business to guard the Sabbath from the intrusion of our worldly cares, as we would guard an oasis from the overwhelming irruption of the sand. I have felt, however, that to-day we should be surrounded with circumstances of peculiar difficulty in endeavouring to bring our minds to spiritual matters; for of all times perhaps the most unlikely for getting any good in the sanctuary, if that depends upon mental abstraction, election times are the worst. So important in the minds of most men are political matters, that very naturally after the hurry of the week, combined with the engrossing pursuit of elections, we are apt to bring the same thoughts and the same feelings into the house of prayer, and speculate, perhaps, even in the place of worship, whether a conservative or a liberal shall be returned for our borough, or whether for the City of London there shall be returned Lord John Russell, Baron Rothschild, or Mr. Currie. I thought, this morning, Well, it is of no use my trying to stop this great train in its progress. People are just now going on at an express rate on these matters; I think I will be wise, and instead of endeavouring to turn them off the line, I will turn the points, so that they may still continue their pursuits with the same swiftness as ever, but in a new direction. It shall be the same line; they shall still be travelling in earnest towards election, but perhaps I may have some skill to turn the points, so that they shall be enabled to consider election in a rather different manner.

When Mr. Whitfield was once applied to to use his influence at a general election, he returned answer to his lordship who requested him, that he knew very little about *general* elections, but that if his lordship took his advice he would make his own *particular* "calling and election sure;" which was a very proper remark. I would not, however, say to any persons here present, despise the privilege which you have as citizens. Far be it from me to do it. When we become Christians we do not leave off being Englishmen; when we become professors of religion we do not cease to have the rights and privileges which citizenship has bestowed on us. Let us, whenever we shall have the opportunity of using the right of voting, use it as in the sight of Almighty God, knowing that for everything we shall be brought

into account, and for that amongst the rest, seeing that we are entrusted with it. And let us remember that we are our own governors, to a great degree, and that if at the next election we should choose wrong governors we shall have nobody to blame but ourselves, however wrongly they may afterwards act, unless we exercise all prudence and prayer to Almighty God to direct our hearts to a right choice in this matter. May God so help us, and may the result be for his glory, however unexpected that result may be to any of us!

Having said so much, let me, then, turn the points, and draw you to a consideration of your own particular calling and election, bidding you in the words of the apostle, "the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We have here, first of all, *two fundamental points in religion*—"calling and election;" we have here, secondly, *some good advice*—"to make your calling and election sure," or, rather, to assure ourselves that we are *called and elected*; and then, in the third place, we have *some reasons given us why we should use this diligence to be assured of our election*—because, on the one hand, we shall so be kept from falling, and on the other hand, we shall attain unto "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I. First of all, then, there are the **TWO IMPORTANT MATTERS IN RELIGION**—secrets, both of them, to the world—only to be understood by those who have been quickened by divine grace: "**CALLING AND ELECTION.**"

By the word "calling" in Scripture, we understand two things—one, the *general call*, which in the preaching of the gospel is given to every creature under heaven; the second call (that which is here intended) is the *special call*—which we call the effectual call, whereby God secretly, in the use of means, by the irresistible power of his Holy Spirit, calls out of mankind a certain number, whom he himself hath before elected, calling them from their sins to become righteous, from their worldly trespasses and sins to become living spiritual men, and from their worldly pursuits to become the lovers of Jesus Christ. The two callings differ very much. As Bunyan puts it, very prettily, "By his common call, he gives nothing; by his special call, he always has something to give; he has also a brooding voice, for them that are under his wing; and he has an outcry, to give the alarm when he seeth the enemy come." What we have to obtain, as absolutely necessary to our salvation, is a special calling, made in us, not to our ears but to our hearts, not to our mere fleshly understanding, but to the inner man, by the power of the Spirit. And then the other important thing is election. As without calling there is no salvation, so without election there is no calling. Holy Scripture teaches us that God hath from the beginning chosen us who are saved unto holiness through Jesus Christ. We are told that as many as are ordained unto eternal life believe, and that their believing is the effect of their being ordained to eternal life from before all worlds. However much this may be disputed, as it frequently is, you must first deny the authenticity and full inspiration of the Holy Scripture before you can legitimately and truly deny it. And since, without doubt, I have many here who are members of the Episcopal church, allow me to say to them what I have often said before, "You, of all men, are the most inconsistent in the world, unless you believe the doctrine of election, for if it be not taught in Scripture there is this one thing for an absolute certainty, it is taught in your Articles." Nothing can be more forcibly expressed, nothing more definitely laid down, than the doctrine of predestination in the Book of Common Prayer; although we are told what we already know, that that doctrine is a high mystery, and is only to be handled carefully by men who are enlightened. However, without doubt, it is the doctrine of Scripture, that those who are saved are saved because God chose them to be saved, and are called as the effect of that first choice of God. If any of you dispute this, I stand upon the authority of Holy Scripture; ay, and if it were necessary to appeal to tradition, which I am sure it is not, and no Christian man would ever do it, yet I would take you upon that point; for I can trace this doctrine through the lips of a succession of holy men, from this present moment to the days of Calvin, thence to Augustine, and thence on to Paul himself; and even to the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine is, without doubt, taught in Scripture, and were not men too proud to humble themselves to it, it would universally be believed and received as

being no other than manifest truth. Why, sirs, do you not believe that God loves his children? and do you not know that God is unchangeable? therefore, if he loves them now he must always have loved them. Do you not believe that if men be saved God saves them? And if so, can you see any difficulty in admitting that because he saves them there must have been a purpose to save them—a purpose which existed before all worlds? Will you not grant me that? If you will not, I must leave you to the Scriptures themselves; and if they will not convince you on the point, then I must leave you unconvinced.

It will be asked, however, why is *calling* here put before *election*, seeing election is eternal, and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our calling: we cannot tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called. We must, first of all, prove our calling, and then our election is sure most certainly. “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.” Calling comes first in our apprehension. We are by God’s Spirit called from our evil estate, regenerated and made new creatures, and then, looking backward, we behold ourselves as being most assuredly elect because we were called.

Here, then, I think I have explained the text. There are the two things which you and I are to prove to be sure to ourselves—whether we are *called* and whether we are *elect*. And oh, dear friends, this is a matter about which you and I should be very anxious. For consider what an *honourable* thing it is to be elected. In this world it is thought a mighty thing to be elected to the House of Parliament; but how much more honourable to be elected to eternal life; to be elected to “the Church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven;” to be elected to be a compeer of angels, to be a favorite of the living God, to dwell with the Most High, amongst the fairest of the sons of light, nearest the eternal throne! Election in this world is but a short-lived thing, but God’s election is *eternal*. Let a man be elected to a seat in the House: seven years must be the longest period that he can hold his election; but if you and I be elected according to the Divine purpose, we shall hold our seats when the day-star shall have ceased to burn, when the sun shall have grown dim with age, and when the eternal hills shall have bowed themselves with weakness. If we be chosen of God and precious, then are we chosen for ever; for God changeth not in the objects of his election. Those whom he hath ordained he hath ordained to eternal life, “and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand.” It is worth while to know ourselves elect, for nothing in this world can make a man more *happy* or more valiant than the knowledge of his election. “Nevertheless,” said Christ to his apostles, “rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven”—that being the sweetest comfort, the honeycomb that droppeth with the most precious drops of all, the knowledge of our being chosen by God. And this, too, beloved, makes a man *valiant*. When a man by diligence has attained to the assurance of his election, you cannot make him a coward, you can never make him cry craven even in the thickest battle; he holds the standard fast and firm, and cleaves his foes with the scimitar of truth. “Was not I ordained by God to be the standard bearer of this truth? I must, I will stand by it, despite you all.” He saith to every enemy, “Am I not a chosen king? Can floods of water wash out the sacred unction from a king’s bright brow? No, never! And if God hath chosen me to be a king and a priest unto God for ever and ever, come what may or come what will—the lion’s teeth, the fiery furnace, the spear, the rack, the stake, all these things are less than nothing, seeing I am chosen of God unto salvation.” It has been said that the doctrine of necessity makes men weak. It is a lie. It may seem so in theory, but in practice it has always been found to be the reverse. The men who have believed in destiny, and have held fast and firm by it, have always done the most valiant deeds. There is one point in which this is akin even with Mahomet’s faith. The deeds that were done by him were chiefly done from a firm confidence that God had ordained him to his work. Never had Cromwell driven his foes before him if it had not been in the stern strength of this almost omnipotent truth; and there shall scarcely be found a man strong to do great and valiant deeds unless, confident in the God of Providence, he looks upon the accidents of life as being steered by God, and gives himself up to God’s firm

predestination, to be borne along by the current of his will, contrary to all the wills and all the wishes of the world. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

II. Come, then, here is the second point—GOOD ADVICE. "Make your calling and election sure." Not towards God, for they are sure to him: make them sure to yourself. Be quite certain of them; be fully satisfied about them. In many of our dissenting places of worship very great encouragement is held out to doubting. A person comes before the pastor, and says, "Oh! sir, I am so afraid I am not converted; I tremble lest I should not be a child of God. Oh! I fear I am not one of the Lord's elect." The pastor will put out his hands to him, and say, "Dear brother, you are all right so long as you can doubt." Now, I hold, that is altogether wrong. Scripture never says, "He that doubteth shall be saved," but "He that believeth." It may be true that the man is in a good state; it may be true that he wants a little comfort; but his doubts are not good things, nor ought we to encourage him in his doubts. Our business is to encourage him out of his doubts, and by the grace of God to urge him to "give *all* diligence to make his calling and election *sure*;" not to doubt it, but to be sure of it. Ah! I have heard some hypocritical doubters say, "Oh! I have had such doubts whether I am the Lord's," and I have thought to myself, "And so have I very great doubts about you." I have heard some say they do tremble so because they are afraid they are not the Lord's people; and the lazy fellows sit in their pews on the Sunday, and just listen to the sermon; but they never think of giving diligence, they never do good, perhaps are inconsistent in their lives, and then talk about doubting. It is quite right they should doubt, it is well they should; and if they did not doubt we might begin to doubt for them. Idle men have no right to assurance. The Scripture says, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Full assurance is an excellent attainment. It is profitable for a man to be certain in this life, and absolutely sure of his own calling and election. But how can he be sure? Now, many of our more ignorant hearers imagine that the only way they have of being assured of their election is by some revelation, some dream, and some mystery. I have enjoyed very hearty laughs at the expense of some people who have trusted in their visions. Really, if you had passed among so many shades of ignorant professing Christians as I have; and had to resolve so many doubts and fears, you would be so infinitely sick of dreams and visions that you would say, as soon as a person began to speak about them, "Now, do just hold your tongue." "Sir," said a woman, "I saw blue lights in the front parlour when I was in prayer, and I thought I saw the Saviour in the corner, and I said to myself I am safe." (Mr. Spurgeon here narrated a remarkable story of a poor woman who was possessed with a singular delusion.) And yet there are tens of thousands of people in every part of the country, and members too of Christian bodies, who have no better ground for their belief that they are called and elected, than some vision equally ridiculous, or the equally absurd hearing of a voice. A young woman came to me some time ago; she wanted to join the church, and when I asked her how she knew herself to be converted, she said she was down at the bottom of the garden, and she thought she heard a voice, and she thought she saw something up in the clouds that said to her so-and-so. "Well," I said to her, "that thing may have been the means of doing good to you, but if you put any trust in it, it is all over with you." A dream, ay, and a vision, may often bring men to Christ; I have known many who have been brought to him by them, beyond a doubt, though it has been mysterious to me how it was; but when men bring these forward as a proof of their conversion, *there* is the mistake; because you may see fifty thousand dreams and fifty thousand visions, and you may be a fool for all that, and all the bigger sinner for having seen them. There is better evidence to be had than all this: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

"How, then," says one, "am I to make my calling and election sure?" Why, thus:—If thou wouldest get out of a doubting state, get out of an idle state; if thou wouldest get out of a trembling state, get out of an indifferent lukewarm state; for lukewarmness and doubting, and laziness and trembling, very naturally go hand in hand. If thou wouldest enjoy the eminent grace of the full assurance of faith under the blessed Spirit's influence and assistance, do what the Scripture tells thee—"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Where-

in shalt thou be diligent? Note how the Scripture has given us a list. Be diligent in your *faith*. Take care that your faith is of the right kind—that it is not a creed, but a credence—that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a reception of doctrine into your heart, and the practical light of the doctrine in your soul. Take care that your faith results from necessity—that you believe in Christ because you have nothing else to believe in. Take care it is simple faith, hanging alone on Christ, without any other dependence but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And when thou hast given diligence about that, give diligence next to thy *courage*. Labour to get *virtue*; plead with God that he would give thee the face of a lion, that thou mayest never be afraid of any enemy, however much he may jeer or threaten thee, but that thou mayest with a consciousness of right, go on, boldly trusting in God. And having, by the help of the Holy Spirit, obtained that, study well the Scriptures, and get *knowledge*; for a knowledge of doctrine will tend very much to confirm your faith. Try to understand God's Word; get a sensible, spiritual idea of it. Get, if you can, a system of divinity out of God's Bible. Put the doctrines together. Get real, theological knowledge, founded upon the infallible word. Get a knowledge of that science which is most despised, but which is the most necessary of all, the science of Christ and of him crucified, and of the great doctrines of grace. And when thou hast done this, "Add to thy knowledge *temperance*." Take heed to thy body: be temperate there. Take heed to thy soul: be temperate there. Be not drunken with pride; be not lifted up with self-confidence. Be temperate. Be not harsh towards thy friends, nor bitter to thine enemies. Get temperance of lip, temperance of life, temperance of heart, temperance of thought. Be not passionate: be not carried away by every wind of doctrine. Get temperance, and then add to it by God's Holy Spirit *patience*; ask him to give thee that patience which endureth affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur in your sicknesses; that you may not curse God in your losses, nor be depressed in your afflictions. Pray, without ceasing, until the Holy Ghost has nerved you with patience to endure unto the end. And when you have that, get *godliness*. Godliness is something more than religion. The most religious men may be the most godless men, and sometimes a godly man may seem to be irreligious. Let me just explain that seeming paradox. A real *religious* man is a man who sighs after sacraments, attends churches and chapels, and is outwardly good, but goes not farther. A godly man is a man who does not look so much to the dress as to the person: he looks not to the outward form, but to the inward and spiritual grace, he is a godly man, as well as attentive to religion. Some men, however, are godly, and to a great extent despise form; they may be godly, without some degree of religion; but a man cannot be fully righteous without being godly in the true meaning of each of these words, though not in the general vulgar sense of them. Add to thy patience an eye to God; live in his sight; dwell close to him; seek for fellowship with him; and thou hast got godliness. And then to that add *brotherly love*. Be loving towards all the members of Christ's church; have a love to all the saints, of every denomination. And then add to that *charity*, which openeth its arms to all men, and loves them; and when you have got all these, then you will know your calling and election, and just in proportion as you practise these heavenly rules of life, in this heavenly manner, will you come to know that you are called and that you are elect. But by no other means can you attain to a knowledge of that, except by the witness of the Spirit, bearing witness with your spirit that you are born of God, and then witnessing in your conscience that you are not what you were, but are a new man in Christ Jesus, and are therefore called and therefore elected.

A man over there says he is elect. He gets drunk. Ay, you are elect by the devil, sir; that is about your only election. Another man says, "Blessed be God, I don't care about evidences a bit; I am not so legal as you are!" No, I dare say you are not; but you have no great reason to bless God about it, for, my dear friend, unless you have these evidences of a new birth take heed to yourself. "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Well," says another, "but I think that doctrine of election a very licentious doctrine." Think on as long as you please; but please to bear me witness that as I have preached it to-day there is nothing licentious about it. Very likely you are licentious, and you

would make the doctrine licentious, if you believed it; but "to the pure all things are pure." He who receiveth God's truth in his heart doth not often pervert it and turn aside from it unto wicked ways. No man, let me repeat, has any right to believe himself elect of God, unless he has been renewed by God; no man has any right to believe himself called, unless his life be in the main consistent with his vocation, and he walk worthy of that whereunto he is called. Out upon an election that lets you live in sin! Away with it! away with it! That was never the design of God's Word; and it never was the doctrine of Calvinists either. Though we have been lied against and our teachings perverted, we have always stood by this—that good works, though they do not procure nor in any degree merit salvation, yet are the necessary evidences of salvation; and unless they be in men the soul is still dead, un-called and unrenewed. The nearer you live to Christ, the more you imitate him, the more your life is conformed to him, and the more simply you hang upon him by faith, the more certain you may be of your election in Christ and of your calling by his Holy Spirit. May the Holy One of Israel give you the sweet assurance of grace, by affording you "tokens for good" in the graces which he enables you to manifest.

III. And now I shall close up by giving you THE APOSTLE'S REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE.

I put in one of my own to begin with. It is because, as I have said, *it will make you so happy*. Men who doubt their calling and election cannot be full of joy; but the happiest saints are those who know and believe it. You know our friends say this is a howling wilderness, and you know my reply to it is, that they make all the howling themselves: there would not be much howling, if they were to look up a little more and look down a little less, for by faith they would make it blossom like the rose, and give to it the excellence and glory of Carmel and Sharon. But why they howl so much is because they do not believe. Our happiness and our faith are to a great degree proportionate; they are Siamese twins to the Christian; they must flourish or decay together.

"When I can say my God is mine,
Then I can all my griefs resign;
Can tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good or great."

But ah

"When gloomy doubts prevail,
I fear to call him mine;
The streams of comfort seem to fail,
And all my hopes decline."

Only faith can make a Christian lead a happy life.

But now for Peter's reasons. First, because "*if ye do these things ye shall never fall*." "Perhaps," says one, "in attention to election we may forget our daily walk, and like the old philosopher who looked up to the stars we may walk on and tumble into the ditch!" "Nay, nay," says Peter, "if you take care of your calling and election, you shall not trip; but, with your eyes up there, looking for your calling and election, God will take care of your feet, and you shall never fall. Is it not very notable, that, in many churches and chapels, you do not often hear a sermon about *to-day*; it is always either about old eternity, or else about the millennium; either about what God did before man was made, or else about what God will do when all are dead and buried? Pity they do not tell us something about what we are to do to-day, now, in our daily walk and conversation! Peter removes this difficulty. He says, "This point is a practical point; for you can only answer your election for yourself by taking care of your practice; and whilst you are so taking care of your practice and assuring yourself of your election, you are doing the best possible thing to keep you from falling." And is it not desirable that a true Christian should be kept from falling? Mark the difference between *falling* and *falling away*. The true believer can never fall away and perish; but he may fall and injure himself. He shall not

fall and break his neck; but a broken leg is bad enough, without a broken neck. "Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down;" but that is no reason why he should dash himself against a stone. His desire is, that day by day he may grow more holy; that hour by hour he may be more thoroughly renewed, until conformed to the image of Christ, he may enter into bliss eternal. If, then, you take care of your calling and election, you are doing the best thing in the world to prevent you from falling; for in so doing you shall never fall.

And now, the other reason, and then I shall have almost concluded. "*For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" An "abundant entrance" has sometimes been illustrated in this way. You see yonder ship. After a long voyage, it has neared the haven, but is much injured; the sails are rent to ribbons, and it is in such a forlorn condition that it cannot come up to the harbour: a steam-tug is pulling it in with the greatest possible difficulty. That is like the righteous being "scarcely saved." But do you see that other ship? It has made a prosperous voyage; and now, laden to the water's edge, with the sails all up and with the white canvass filled with the wind, it rides into the harbour joyously and nobly. That is an "abundant entrance;" and if you and I are helped by God's Spirit to add to our faith virtue, and so on, we shall have at the last "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a man who is a Christian; but, alas! there are many inconsistencies in his life for which he has to mourn. He lies there, dying on his bed. The thought of his past life rushes upon him. He cries, "O Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner," and the prayer is answered; his faith is in Christ, and he shall be saved. But oh! what griefs he has upon his bed. "Oh, if I had served my God better! And these children of mine—if I had but trained them up better, 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!' I am saved," says he; "but alas, alas! though it be a great salvation, I cannot enjoy it yet. I am dying in gloom, and clouds, and darkness. I trust, I hope I shall be gathered to my fathers, but I have no works to follow me—or very few indeed; for though I am saved, I am but just saved—saved 'so as by fire.'" Here is another one; he too is dying. Ask him what his dependence is: he tells you, "I rest in none else but Jesus." But mark him as he looks back to his past life. "In such a place," says he, "I preached the gospel, and God helped me." And though with no pride about him—he will not congratulate himself upon what he has done—yet doth he lift his hands to heaven, and he blesses God that throughout a long life he has been able to keep his garments white; that he has served his Master; and now, like a shock of corn fully ripe, he is about to be gathered into his Master's garner. Hark to him! It is not the feeble lisp of the trembler; but with "victory, victory, victory!" for his dying shout, he shuts his eyes, and dies like a warrior in his glory. That is the "abundant entrance." Now, the man that "gives diligence to make his calling and election sure," shall ensure for himself "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a terrible picture is hinted at in these words of the apostle—"Saved so as by fire!" Let me try and present it to you. The man has come to the edge of Jordan; the time has arrived for him to die. He is a believer—just a believer; but his life has not been what he could wish; not all that he now desires that it had been. And now stern death is at him, and he has to take his first step into the Jordan. Judge of his horror, when the flames surround his foot. He treads upon the hot sand of the stream; and the next step he takes, with his hair well nigh on end, with his eye fixed on heaven on the other side of the shore, his face is yet marked with horror. He takes another step, and he is all bathing in fire. Another step, and he is up to his very loins in flames—"saved, so as by fire." A strong hand has grasped him, that drags him onward through the stream. But how dreadful must be the death even of the Christian, when he is saved "so as by fire!" There on the river's brink, astonished he looks back and sees the liquid flames, through which he has been called to walk, as a consequence of his indifference in this life. Saved he is—thanks to God; and his heaven shall be great, and his crown shall be golden, and his harp shall be sweet, and his hymns shall be eternal, and his bliss unfading;—but his dying moment, the last article of death, was blackened by sin; and he was saved "so as by fire!" Mark the other man; he too has to die. He has often feared death. He dips the first foot in Jordan; and

his body trembles, his pulse waxes faint, and even his eyes are well nigh closed. His lips can scarcely speak, but still he says, "Jesus, thou art with me, thou art with me, passing through the stream!" He takes another step, and the waters now begin to refresh him. He dips his hand and tastes the stream, and tells those who are watching him in tears, that to die is blessed. "The stream is sweet," he says, "it is not bitter: it is blessed to die." Then he takes another step, and when he is well nigh submerged in the stream, and lost to vision, he says—

"And when ye hear my eyestrings break,
How sweet my minutes roll!—
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul!"

That is the "abundant entrance" of the man who has manfully served his God—who, by divine grace, has had a path unclouded and serene—who, by diligence, has "made his calling and election sure;" and therefore, as a reward, not of debt, but of grace, hath entered heaven with higher honours and with greater ease than others equally saved, but not saved in so splendid a manner.

Just one thought more. It is said that the entrance is to be "ministered to us." That gives me a sweet hint that, I find, is dwelt upon by Doddridge. Christ will open the gates of heaven; but the heavenly train of virtues—the works which follow us—will go up with us and minister an entrance to us. I sometimes think, if God should enable me to live and die for the good of these congregations, so that many of them shall be saved, how sweet it will be to enter heaven, and when I shall come there, to have an entrance ministered to me, not by Christ alone, but by some of you for whom I have ministered. One shall meet me at the gate, and say, "Minister, thou wast the cause of my salvation!" And another, and another, and another, shall all exclaim the same. When Whitfield entered heaven—that highly honoured servant of the Lord—I think I can see the hosts rushing to the gate to meet him. There are thousands there that have been brought to God by him. Oh how they open wide the gates; and how they praise God that he has been the means of bringing them to heaven; and how do they minister unto him an abundant entrance? There will be some of you, perhaps, in heaven, with starless crowns: for you never did good to your fellow-creatures; you never were the means of saving souls; you are to have crowns without stars. But "they that turn many to righteousness," shall "shine as the stars, for ever and ever;" and an entrance shall be abundantly ministered to them. I do want to get a heavy crown in heaven—not to wear, but to have all the more costly gift to give to Christ. And you ought to desire the same, that you may have all the more honours, and so have the more to cast at his feet, with—"Not unto us, but unto thy name, O Christ, be the glory!" "Rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

And now, to conclude. There are some of you with whom this text has nothing to do. You cannot "make your calling and election sure;" for you have not been called; and you have no right to believe that you are elected, if you have never been called. To such of you, let me say, do not ask whether you are elected first, but ask whether you are called. And go to God's house, and bend your knee in prayer; and may God, in his infinite mercy, call you! And mark this—If any of you can say—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;"

if any of you, abjuring your self-righteousness, can now come to Christ and take him to be your all in all; you are called, you are elect. "Make your calling and election sure," and go on your way rejoicing! May God bless you; and to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory for evermore! Amen.