

clude to live as we list! On the contrary, the value of holy deeds is enhanced by this, that they are proofs indispensable of a title to heaven. Nor, surely, are Christians less likely to love God,—and love is the fulfilling of the law,—when they have once attained to the knowledge that God has first loved them. Surely the certainty, as well as the greatness, of the provisions divine love is seen to have made for our safety and happiness, must operate by a sufficiently natural and intelligible law to induce a grateful ingenuous obedience.

And we see that the passage just expounded proceeds on this. "*Therefore*," says the Apostle "stand fast," just as elsewhere he makes this practical appeal to the hearts of Christians. (Col. 3. 12.) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

4. In its aspect on the inquirer as well as on the man already leading the Christian life, the decree of love has really nothing to discourage. Election is not God's taking one and refusing another of those who seek, and seek perhaps with like earnestness. So some picture the matter, and others wantonly misrepresent it. Election is the *cause* of any one seeking—it hinders none who seek from finding. So that, as we cannot know our election but by our calling, the very first or incipient desire Godwards and heavenwards is a symptom of the divine favour for us. The decree bars the access of none who would come, nor does the condemnation of any sinner rest on non-election. The invitation is indefinite to all. Instead of being discouraged because God has not alike loved and chosen all, oh, let it encourage and excite us, that God has loved any of our race whatever, yea, many! and that sure as the connection established between God's plans and their accomplishment, is the connection between faith and salvation, between holiness and heaven, between seeking in earnest and finding! The very sovereignty connected with the freeness of God's choice is calculated to inspire hope into the breast even of the chief of sinners. For, since it is not foreseen faith or holiness that determines the divine decree, or is acknowledged as