

in His people, then the point were easily made out; for love and calling are synonymous terms in Rom. viii. 28. And he that loveth is born of God, and chosen by Him. But how many Christians are at a loss to make out this affection, and to tell whether they love God and His people, or no! Then, if not by introspection altogether, how may we proceed? In two ways we may make sure our calling: First, by a review of the past, and contrasting its experience with the present. We may remember a time, for instance, when we were without love to God—in duty formal, and in worship cold; our hearts never once offered Him, and, consequently, we could have no love. An affection to our relatives and to our fellow-men we might have, but not from love to God. Sacraments—fellowship-meetings, we might frequent, but no enjoyment in Divine things possessed. We were without the affection, and never once blamed ourselves for its want. But now how different! Unless we enjoy the Divine presence in the sanctuary, and the love of Jesus in the sacrament, it is no pleasure to us; if we be altogether without a sense of brotherly love, our fellowship is broken as the links of a chain. But this affection could not grow spontaneously in our hearts, nor are we deceived as to its actings; but it is the work of the Heavenly Agent; wherefore we conclude that we have been called by Him, and are therefore the objects of the Divine approbation. "For whom he called, them also he predestinated," &c. Rom. viii. 29. Hence our comfortable conclusion.

Now observe, I do not insist upon the time or mode of this calling. I do not ask what signs was it accompanied, or what preceded or followed it. Nor do I affix any one standard of experience. But what I desire is, the proof of the change having taken place, and its record read. Give us these, and then we argue that our calling is made out—our election is established; for had we not been chosen by God in eternity, we had never chosen Him in time. Hence our calling evidences our election, and that again is proved by our experience.

Secondly. We may look forward, and, by our hope, establish the point. For the Christian is bound for a better land; he is a citizen of a noble country. He may live beneath his dignity, and, at times, show himself as he should not; nevertheless he is born from above, and something within is moving him upward. In possession of a hope that disappointeth not, he rejoices in view of the glory of God. Then, the question for us is, Are we living above, or for, this world, while in, and minding the business of life? Are we still not of it, but passing through it to a mansion above? Are we preferring this life, or preparing for another and a better? Let us examine ourselves impartially as to these points. No doubt there may be, and are,

diversities in Christians; still, "not of this world, but citizens of heaven," is the characteristic of the true believer. Then if we settle down here as if we were to live always, we are strangers to his hope, and, consequently, to his calling; and our calling not made out, our election can never be established. Thus, then, prospectively and retrospectively, we may know our state and clear our calling; and that done, our election follows.

No otherwise, I am persuaded, did believers act in any age. No voice from heaven exclaimed: "You are one of the elect." No prying into secret decrees revealed it. Not by chance was it hit upon. But by patient inquiry they ascertained their calling, on the ground of love or hope—decided on that point, and then arrived at their election. See 1 Thess. i. 4. Do you the same, for no royal road is open besides.

Then comes, in the second place, the benefit of so doing. 1. For this life, are comfort and security. No doubts or distraction, no laying again foundations, or questioning the Spirit's work; but "building" one's self up "in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation." "Am I really a child of God, or is it all a delusion?" How distracting the question! But ascertain your calling, and then take comfort. Then, also, you may go on to perfection. Like a man who has cleared his path, every step is one of advance; but otherwise you are standing still or retrograding. Once more: Hereby it is that you will relish sacraments and enjoy fellowship; otherwise, you will scarce ever know whether you have a warrant to the one, or are a true member of the other. O, then, for your comfort's sake, make your calling sure. 2. A triumphant death, and a joyful admission, are motives to the same exercise. See following verse (2 Peter i. 11.) All believers, though they die safely, don't die equally well—some joyfully, like Simeon; others in fear, like Solomon; some, like Cromwell, once were assured; others, like Paul, desire to depart; some, as by fire, are saved; others enter heaven joyfully;—and what is the reason? One class kept their evidence bright like a mirror; the other fumbled, like Ignorance, in their bosom for their roll. One read their title clear, and walked in the comfort of it; the other left all to chance, or rested in a profession, or hoped that all would yet be well. Hence their difference. Some time ago, a man died who said, "I have been long reading the promises, but could not find rest for my foot till now; now all is clear, I am saved in Christ: my future is full of glory." O, we must get saved in Christ, and not leave the matter to haphazard. Multitudes enter eternity who never doubted of their safety, just because they were all along under a delusion. No doubt some are in fear who have no cause; but the cure is, not taking things for granted, or asking others for their