

tation, and consequently of yours, whoever you be, or whatsoever you have been. You are right if you think yourself the chief of sinners; but you wrong the grace and gospel of Christ, if you think or say, that you are not as welcome as any sinner upon the face of this earth to the redemption by Jesus Christ.\* In truth, such despondent and apparently humble confessions, if examined to the bottom, will be found, when they obstruct our hope, to be no more than the conviction and the regret that we want materials for erecting an altar to our pride; that we are destitute of a justifying righteousness, which we are anxiously labouring after; they are but the painful lamentation arising out of the disappointed desire of attaining life, as it were by the works of the law; and they consist well, if we look into them seriously, with the notion, that there is a great deal of good in our hearts, in our motives, if not in our actions, though there be somewhat lacking, at the same time, to give us perfect confidence before God.†

6. Another may be saying in his thoughts, "But after all that the Gospel reveals, it is no comforting or satisfying news to me, because I remember Christ did not purchase this redemption for *all*

\* "There is but very little said in God's book about the salvation of *little sinners*; because that would not answer the *design* (of the book) to bring glory to the name of the Son of God. When Christ was crucified, and hanged up between the earth and the heavens, there were two thieves crucified with him, and behold, he lays hold of one of them, and will have him away to glory with him. Was not this a strange act, and a display of unthought-of grace? Were there none but thieves there or were the rest of that company out of his reach? Could he not, think you, have stooped from the cross to the ground, and laid hold on some honest man if he would? Yes, doubtless. Oh, but then he would not have displayed his grace, nor so have displayed his designs, namely, to get to himself a praise and a name; but now he has done it to purpose. For who that shall read this story, but must confess, that the Son of God is full of grace: for a proof of the riches thereof he left behind him when upon the cross, he took the thief away with him to glory. Nor can this one act of his be buried: It will be talked of to the end of the world to his praise."—*Bunyan*.

† "The blood of Jesus Christ tells us sad humbling truths as regards ourselves, though it tells us joyful news as regards God's mercy and love. It tells us that we are all alike condemned as sinners before God, so that the poor degraded harlot is entitled to mercy as much as the most upright, decent, and moral. It tells us that the heart, the whole nature, the whole man,—body, soul, and spirit, reason, understanding, all—is, in every individual, so corrupt, so filthy, so fallen, that nothing but the precious blood of God's own Son can enable the very best to stand guiltless before him. Yes, and even that the very best stands in as much need of it as

*mankind*, neither has God purposed it for *all*; and therefore, though I know that those who shall be saved, are saved by grace quite free and sovereign, yet I can be no way comforted by this, because I have no marks or evidences in my favour, to prove that I am one of the number of the elected and redeemed. I can therefore, only entertain a general possibility that I may be saved as well as another; but this is far from being sufficient to afford peace to my soul and conscience."

I readily reply, it is a real and important truth, that election and redemption are thus particular and sovereign, not universal nor conditional. But remember, though, the redemption by Christ is not universal in its *intention*, yet it is so in its *proclamation*, which is to be universally believed for salvation: John iii. 14—19. Read over these verses and you may see that here are good news, here are glad tidings indeed, presented to gain the confidence of poor helpless sinners. This free grace requires no previous marks or evidences of our own particular election or redemption, in order to afford immediate relief to the mind in believing it to be thus open and free.\* It is true, God by his word requires us to believe the doctrines of particular election and redemption, in order to give us a view of the sovereignty of his grace, and to prevent us from thinking it to be any way conditional, or suspended upon any actings of ours. But yet it does by no means require us to believe our own particular election or redemption, in order to our hope Godward. It presents the redemption of Jesus Christ directly before us, full and free: and where-soever this takes proper effect upon the mind, conscience, and conduct, this is the proper and sure evidence of our own elec-

tion. It brings all to one sad level of ruin, guilt, and sin. It proves the fairest the most lovely, to be as tainted and loathsome as the wretched harlot who is abandoned and scorned by all. Do you want deliverance? Do you wish to escape from judgment, you must find it where it is alike open to the vilest and most worthless,—in the blood of Jesus Christ. Your life is forfeited, your inheritance is death and judgment; nothing can avail for your redemption but seeing this guilt, this curse, this ruin, laid upon another."—*Amon*.

\* "The doctrine of election is never introduced to narrow the door. The door of gospel grace stands open night and day, and the motto over it remains (though Satan has ever tried to erase it). 'Whoever will let him enter.' Election never was intended to stand between the sinner and the sinner's Saviour."—*J. H. Evans*.