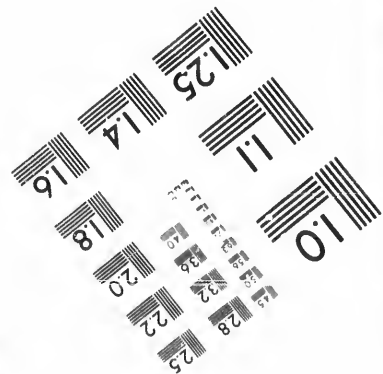
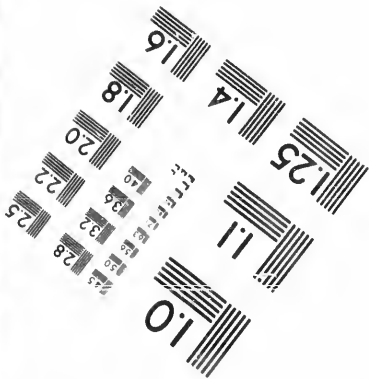
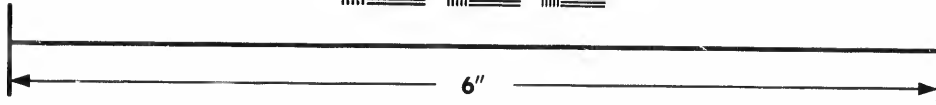
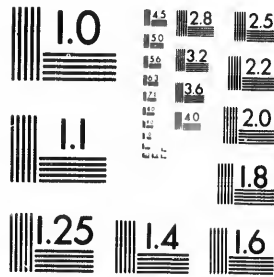


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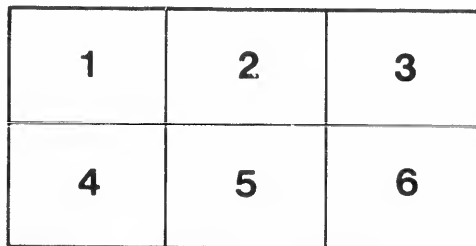
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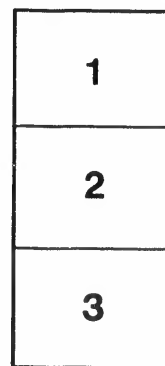
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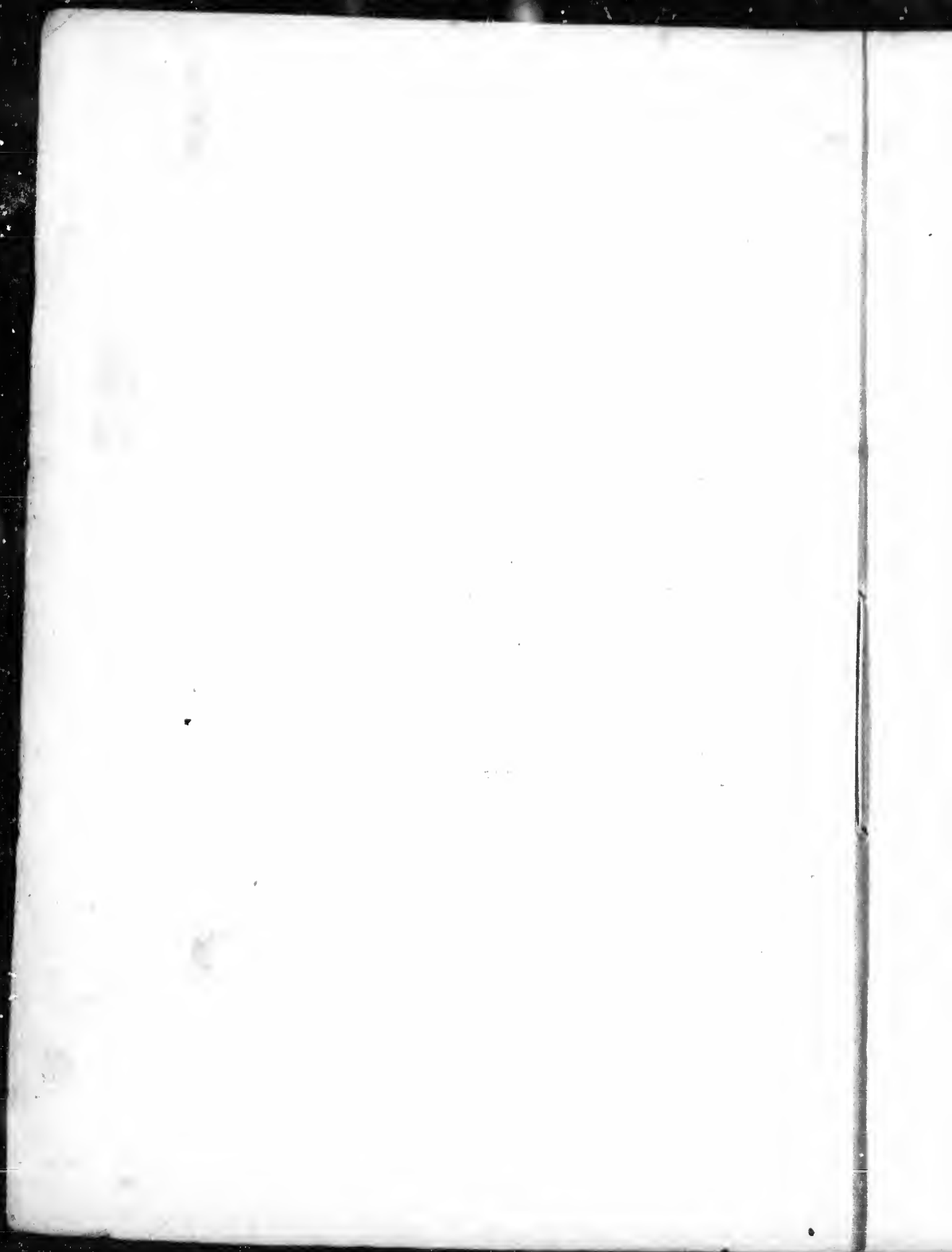
Is Election a Doctrine of the Bible?

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

Nine Mile River Presbyterian Church,

BY REV. JOHN CAMERON.



Is Election a Doctrine of the Bible?

A DISCOURSE

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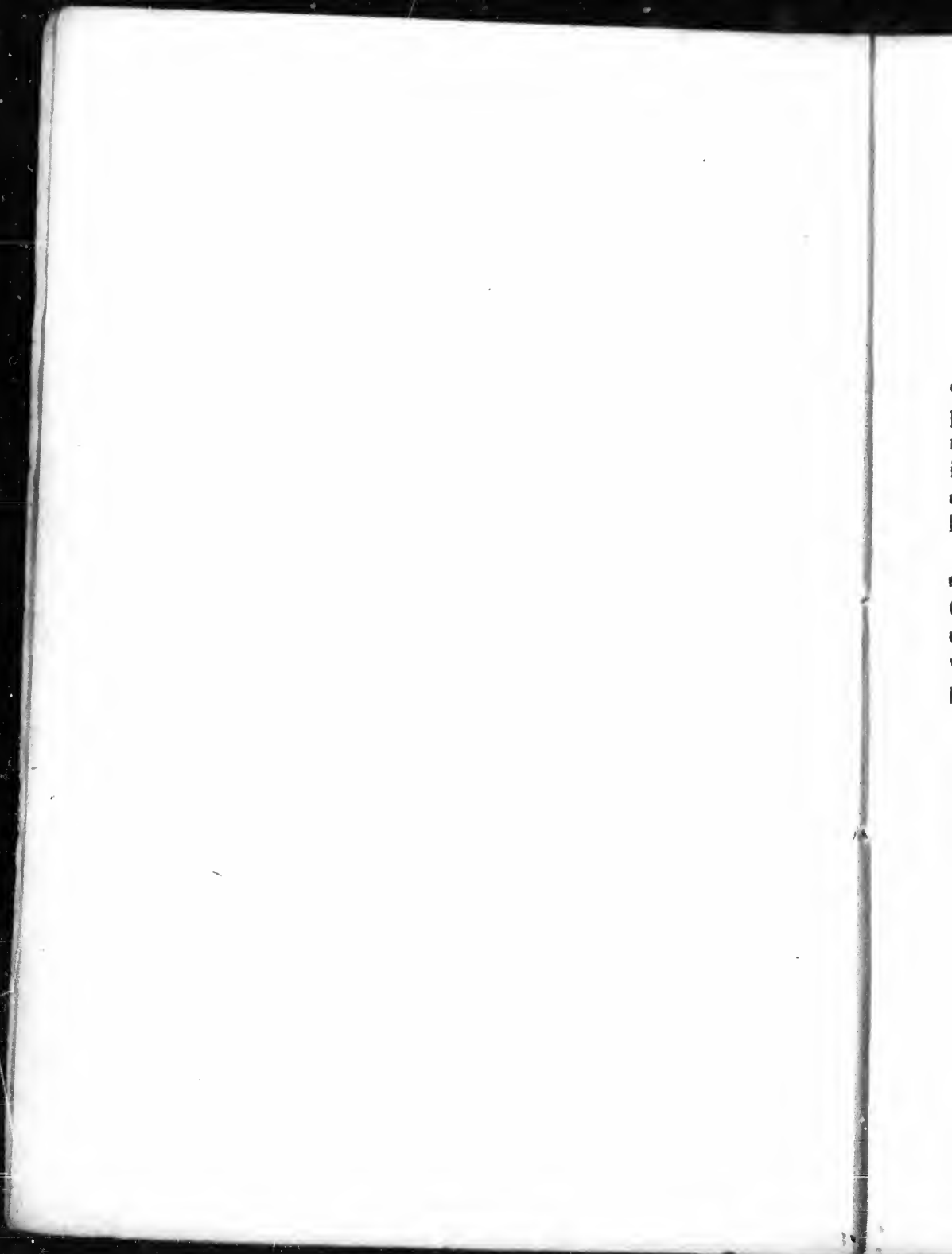
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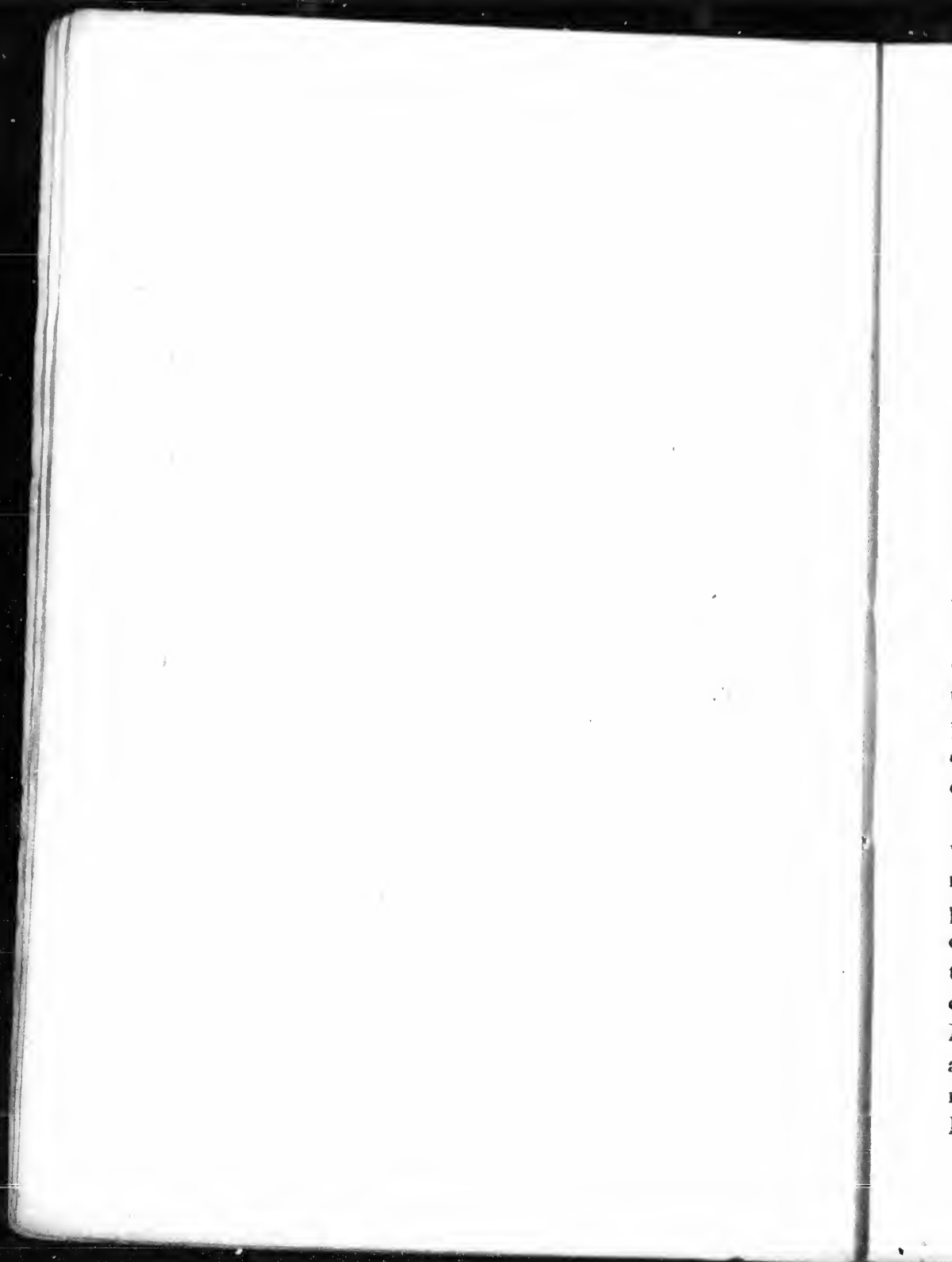
P R E F A C E .

THE following discourse was originally preached to my own congregation. At that time I had not the remotest idea of its publication. It was prepared with the view of correcting the misrepresentations of some *busy bodies*, who were loud in decrying Presbyterianism. A number of my people having expressed a desire to obtain it, that they might peruse it at their leisure, I have consented to publish it.

My object in doing so, is not to advance new ideas upon a subject which has occupied the master minds of the world; but, to express some of their views in a few brief and comprehensive arguments, so as to correct the ignorance of some, confirm the wavering of others, and silence ignorant cavillers. Let truth prevail.

JOHN CAMERON.

January 15, 1862.



DISCOURSE.

“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”—Acts xiii. 48.

Many things both in the natural and moral worlds which in themselves are not desirable, are nevertheless useful and essential as producing the most important results. Violent storms are in themselves not pleasant, but their effects upon the atmosphere and the ocean are essential to the preservation of life and health. War is a grievous calamity to a people, but in many instances it is infinitely preferable to the evils by which it is induced. In like manner, religious controversy is not desirable, on its own account; but it often proves a blessing, by the removal of those errors, by means of which the god of this world blinds the minds of men and destroys their souls.

Let no man be deceived with respect to controversy. The world is full of error. It is natural to man, and can be removed from the heart of man only by the truths of the Gospel. Every man who preaches the Gospel, and “contends earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,” must be a controversialist, for there is not a doctrine of the Bible that has not been denied or perverted. I cannot preach on any subject without opposing the views, and condemning the practices of some persons. Truth cannot be injured by controversy. Error alone will suffer. Hence those who wish to retain and promulgate their errors,

are always loudest in decrying religious controversy. Now, he is unworthy the high and responsible position of a minister of Christ; who, when doctrines are circulating among the people of his charge, which he believes to be unscriptural, fails to proclaim the truth. "O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." —Ezk. xxxiii. 7. It is because I know that false views of the doctrine of election are entertained by not a few, and at present most sedulously propagated among us, that I have resolved to call your attention to a consideration of the subject. In doing so, I shall endeavour to treat of it in as plain and simple a manner as possible. Two things I take for granted. First, that the Bible is a revelation from God, and secondly that being from God, it is all true. Unless you admit the truth of these propositions you may as well return to your homes, as my arguments and proofs are to be drawn from the Scriptures. And here let me remark, that when you come to "search the Scriptures" and reason from them, you will find profundities in them which the most gigantic intellect cannot fathom. At every step in your study of divine truth you are admonished to be humble, and not to allow reason to usurp the place of faith. One of the fatal errors of our day is, that men refuse to place implicit dependence upon the testimony of Him who alone perfectly knows himself, unless they can fully comprehend it. With regard to no part of God's testimony is it more true than of election.

In this passage we have brought under our notice three things.

1. That some are "ordained."
2. That those are ordained to "eternal life."

3. That their subsequent faith is a consequence of their being "ordained to eternal life"

First. Some are "ordained."

The word which is here translated *ordained*, and which does not often occur in the New Testament, means to place in a certain rank or order, and has uniformly the signification of being *disposed* or *arranged* from some external source. Take as examples, Acts xv. 2: "They determined, i. e., *disposed* or *ordained*, that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem." Acts xxii. 10: "It shall be told thee of all things which are appointed, *ordained*, for thee to do." Rom. xiii. 1. "The powers that be are *ordained* of God." This being the correct meaning of the word, the Apostle evidently designed to teach us, that all who believe and obtain eternal life, do so, in consequence of God's arrangement and election of them.

But then you say at the very outset, "I don't believe in the doctrine of election." Come then at once to the Bible, and see if it says anything about *ordaining* or *choosing* or *electing* men. If the doctrine is taught there, it is true whether you believe it or not, and before you reject it, I would most solemnly urge you to ponder seriously the words of Christ. "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16.

Rom. ix. 11: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."

Rom. xi. 5: "There is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Rom. xi. 7: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seek-

eth after; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

Rom. xi. 28: "But as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake."

1 Thess. i. 4: "Knowing brethren your election of God."

2 Pet. i. 10: "Giving all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

I will quote no more. The man who will deny that there is such a doctrine as election, must deny the Bible. It meets us everywhere, both in the Old and New Testament; and whatever be the meaning of the term, it is impossible to peruse the Scriptures, and not feel that the truth which it expresses, must in the sight of God be a vitally important one; and deeply affect the eternal interest of men. Now the meaning of the word *election*, as all admit, is choice.

By whom then are men *ordained* or *elected*? It must mean, either God's ordaining or choosing men; or men's choosing God. It cannot be the act of both. Now we have no knowledge of what God has done in this matter, but from the revelation of his own mind given to us. Come then again to the Bible, and let us ascertain who is the primary agent in *disposing* or *ordaining* men to eternal life. Thus it is written by God.

Num. xvii. 5: "The man's rod whom I shall choose, shall blossom."

Deut. vii. 7: "The Lord did not choose you because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people."

Deut. xvii. 15: "Thou shalt set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose."

1 Chren. xxviii. 4: "The Lord chose me, before all the house of my father to be king over Israel."

Ps. lxxviii. 67, 68: "He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion that he loved."

Matt. xx. 16: "Many are called, but few chosen."

Matt. xiii. 20: "For the elect's sake whom he hath chosen."

John xiii. 18: "I know whom I have chosen."

John xv. 16: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Eph. i. 4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world"

2 Thess. ii. 13: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation."

These are but a few of the many passages where the same truth is taught; showing that the choice is an act of divine sovereignty; and, though there may be difficulties about it, that man can neither comprehend nor explain, does he act a wise part who denies that which meets him on every page of inspired truth? Any one passage of God's word is sufficient to set aside all the opposing views of all the men in the world. Some tell me, "they do not deny election," do not deny that God "ordained men to eternal life;" but their view is, "that men first choose God, and then God confirms the choice of men." I readily admit that man chooses God. And why? Just because God first chose him. This eternal act of the divine mind is the sole cause why any man chooses God.

What I ask is the meaning of the term in ordinary language? You occasionally elect a man to represent you in

General Assembly. Does it mean that your representative first chooses himself, and then, that you choose him, because he had chosen himself? or when you chose me to be your minister, did I first choose myself to be your pastor; and then the congregation choose me, because I had chosen myself? You all know that such is not the meaning of the term in ordinary language. It has but one signification. It means the people choosing their representative by a distinct act of their will, to whom alone the right of choosing belongs. In like manner, the term means in Scripture, the choosing of men to salvation by God; to whom alone the right of choosing belongs.

Again are not the *chosen* invariably spoken of in the Bible as a distinct class of persons, and persons highly privileged because of God's choice of them.

Isa. xlv. 4: "Israel is mine elect, I have called thee by my name."

Isa. lxxv. 9: "Mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants."

Isa. lxxv. 22: "Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

Matt. xxiv. 22: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

Matt. xxiv. 24: "If possible deceive the very elect."

Matt. xxiv. 31: "Shall send his angels, and gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

Luke xviii. 7: "And shall not God avenge his own elect?"

Rom. viii. 33: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

2 Tim. ii. 10: "I endure all for the elect's sake."

Tit. i. 1: "An apostle according to the faith of God's elect."

2 John i. : "The elder to the elect lady and her children."

Will any man read these passages of Holy Writ, and dare assert that there is no such doctrine as election in the Bible; that God does not choose; and that there is not a class of persons every where spoken of in the Bible as the "chosen ones" "the elect of God?" He must be worse than a fool who cannot perceive that the persons so designated are distinguished from the rest of mankind, which distinction is the result of God's choice. Now, observe, when some are *chosen* or *ordained*, others must necessarily be left. You cannot *choose* the whole. You may *take* all, but not *choose* all. There is no meaning in the term election which so frequently occurs in the Scriptures, unless it be an expression of God's mind, with regard to particular nations and persons and things; saying, thus shalt thou be, because I, the Almighty, design thou shouldst be so. Accordingly he makes one class of beings angels, and another men. To the former he assigns heaven; to the latter earth. Are all men treated alike? By no means. One man is born in America where the Gospel with all its attendant blessings is enjoyed, whilst another is born in Africa, where he never will hear the truth. Thus it is that God has always expressed his will; and will men find fault? I know very well that men object to being placed wholly at the disposal of God, and ask: If this be true, why does he find fault? This is an old question, as old at least as the days of Paul, and the only an-

swer which ever was, or will be given to it, is that given by the Apostle. "Nay but O man who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Rom. ix. 20, 21. Election is just the exercise of God's sovereign will to bring about certain events; which, but for the exercise of his will, *never would come to pass.*

Here persons often meet me with the statement. "that if God ordains men to eternal life, it represents God as a partial God, and as dealing unfairly with his creatures, choosing some and rejecting others, and this they cannot believe." Now is it not marvellous, that men will put the matter in this hypothetical form. "*If* God ordains men to eternal life." Surely the many proofs adduced from the Bible are sufficient to convince you. Again, let me observe, that it does seem strange, that those who deny the truth, should represent those who receive it, as preferring charges against God, which are the creations of their own disordered minds. I never say that God is either partial or unjust. You say "my doctrine leads to it." The doctrine is not mine, I gave you no doctrine, but the plain passages of the Bible. I believe these passages; yet I never assert that God is unjust. You deny them, and in addition charge God with injustice and partiality, because of your unbelief.

Now I ask, are men going to charge God with partiality, because he has "*ordained* some to eternal life," and not all? God saw the whole human family in ruin, placed there, not by his decree; but by the abuse of that freedom of will which he bestowed upon them; and are men to charge God

with injustice because in his sovereignty he leaves some to reap the fruit of their doings, whilst he delivers others? These silly objections are based upon the supposition that the sinner has a right to favour from God, which is untrue. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8. I require of every one who raises the cry of partiality against God, because he *ordains* some men to eternal life, and not others; to shew me that all sinners have a right to life; otherwise there can be no partiality. If this can be shown; then indeed partiality is evinced in every thing which God has done and is still doing. It is seen in providing a Saviour for men and not for the angels. It is seen in God's choice of Israel, and not of the Egyptians as a nation to whom he made himself known. It is seen in the command of Christ to his disciples, "not to go to either the Gentiles or the Samaritans." It is seen in giving the Gospel which is essential to salvation to Britain and other countries, and withholding it from China, Japan, and extensive regions in Africa. If sovereignty be partiality, the Bible is full of it; the world is full of it at this moment; and it would be just as well for those objectors to say at once what they believe; that God has not a right to do as he pleases, but only as man pleases; and that Christ who is administering the government of the world, according to the "will of the Father," does not govern it upon the principles of rectitude.

Again the objector says to me, "By holding the doctrine that God 'ordained some to eternal life,' you say God made those who are not ordained to life to be damned." Were it not that I have heard these words used frequently of late; and have been told that I hold such a sentiment; and were

it not, that I know there is a set of low defamers among us "who speak evil of the things they understand not," and try in every possible way to misrepresent the views of Presbyterians, and mislead the unstable, I would not have mentioned it. Its blasphemy is revolting. I know whence it comes. It is the devil's original suggestion to our first parents, translated into modern phraseology to suit the times. "Ye shall not surely die." Do not believe it. God did not make his creatures to damn them.

I will answer this atheistical objection; and I do it for the sake of some among us, who appear to be perplexed by this catch of an argument which is so flippantly bandied about by persons destitute of all religion. It originated with the father of lies; and I wish you to bear in remembrance, that it is precisely the argument which his children the Socinians, Universalists and Deists bring forward against the doctrine of future punishment, and the existence of such a place as hell. They all declare, "God never made men to damn them." The truth is, that every one who brings this forward as an argument against election, is in heart a Universalist. You will never hear it from the lips of an humble believer in the truth.

Now to answer this profane Arminian question: I reply, God did *not* make men with the *intention* of damning them. He did *not* make the fallen angels with the *design* of casting them out of heaven. He did *not* make Adam for the *purpose* of expelling him from Paradise. Nor did he make Judas for the *purpose* of sending him to his own place. The grand design of God in creating angels and men, was neither to save nor destroy them; but to manifest his own glory. "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure

they are and were created." Rev. iv. 11. Every movement of every man, of every angel, and of every nation, formed a part of God's eternal purpose, which is hourly advancing to its completion—the whole to give a display of the divine glory. Yes I repeat it, every man, actively or passively, is working out the purpose of God. If actively, God will glorify himself in rewarding him; but if passively, He will glorify himself in destroying him. This is the purpose of God and it will stand. The cavillings of the wicked will not alter it. "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thought of his heart to all generations." Ps. xxxiii. 11. "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlvi. 9, 10.

If I am asked, did God make the devil and the fallen angels to damn them; I answer God made them, and they are lost eternally; but I deny that He made them for the *purpose* of destroying them. He chose to keep their companions from falling, and they are called the "elect angels." He could have preserved them; but He did not choose to exercise his power in their behalf. They fell, and were "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment," 2 Pet. ii. 4; without any effort upon the part of God to save them, But surely no sane man would undertake to say, this proves that "God made them to destroy them." God's dealings with men differ from his treatment of the angels. All mankind sinned and were lost; but a part are saved. A part of the angels fell; but none of them are saved. It appears then, that a number of men and angels are saved; the cause of which is God's elec-

tion of them. But do these facts prove that the rest whom God in his Almighty Sovereignty passed by, "were made to be damned?" If you will deduce such an inference from the doctrine of election do so; but do not attempt to fasten it upon those who abhor such blasphemy. Here let me call your attention to a few things in connexion with this point.

1. To show you, that your objection to election, "That it follows that God made men to damn them," is of no force, unless you can show that God's choice of some to "eternal life" is the cause of the destruction of the rest of mankind; or that God's plan for saving the former, hinders the latter from getting to heaven. No one believes this, and though some of the lowest grade of Arminians assert that, "if Calvinism be true, then God must compel the non-elect to be lost," it is not true that God "compels any man to be lost" by any thing which he does. Suppose there is no election; will this prevent men from being damned? No, but *all* would be damned. Election alone prevents this awful consequence. Without it, the condition of the whole human family would have been that of the fallen angels, *lost eternally*. Thanks be to God for election.

2. You must remember that whatever God does is right. Again, whatever is right for God to do in time, it must have been right for Him to intend to do from all eternity. If there is any injustice in the case, it is certainly not in the "*ordaining* of some to eternal life," but in damning others. Yet this is done by God the righteous governor of the world every day. Yes multitudes are damned eternally, whether decreed or not. If you get clear of "*fore-ordination*," will this prevent men from going to hell? No, but as I have already asserted, *all* would go to hell. Now if it be not un-

just in God to send sinners to hell, his determination to do so from all eternity cannot be unjust; because it is not his determining to do so, which sends them there; but their own sins, in the commission of which they act as free agents; prompted thereto, by wicked and selfish motives, as Judas was, when he accomplished the will of God in betraying Christ; and Senacherib, when he under the direction of God, chastised the inhabitants of Jerusalem. See Isaiah x.

3. If there be no such thing as the election of some to eternal life, then God who is governing our world, must govern without a fixed purpose or plan. He knows not how many are to be saved; but must wait till he perceives who will receive and who will reject the truth. Every thing in fact is left to chance, or the will of man. But how do such sentiments comport with the teachings of inspiration that "his kingdom ruleth over all." Ps ciii. 19; and that over this world, he sways the sceptre of omnipotence. "I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Dan. iv. 34, 35. Now says the objector, "for God to settle every thing and rule the world accordingly is just," "to make men to damn them." If shallow minded and ignorant creatures will draw such a conclusion from inspired truths, let them do so. "But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." 2 Pet. ii. 12. For God to settle every thing, and then carry

forward the purposes of his will, is the only foundation of a Christian's hope and comfort. It constitutes in the believers' view the very perfection of things. Upon no other principle could the Apostle find the truth, "that [all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii 28.

The man who believes that there is no election, must believe that this world sprang into existence by chance, that the whole planetary system, in which perfect arrangement and wisdom are discernible, is the result of chance; that it is by chance man has more intelligence than the ox or the horse; that when men fell, it was by chance they were not destroyed; that it was by chance Abraham and his descendants, became distinguished from the other nations of the earth, and continue so to this day; that it was by chance such wonderful discourses were made to the world by the prophets of old; that it was by chance Christ came into the world; that it was by chance he died, rose, and ascended to heaven; that it was by chance the Gospel came into the world; that it was by chance it has been proclaimed to some nations and not to others. All these, and a thousand similar facts, must the man ascribe to chance, who denies the doctrine that "God for his own glory hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." The truth is, the denial of it, leads direct to Atheism.

Before I leave this point let me call the attention of those who say that the doctrine of election proves "that God makes men to damn them," to one or two passages of the Bible, which I shall quote without comment; and which such persons would do well to ponder. Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wick-

ed for the day of evil." Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Rom. ix. 17-22. "For the Scripture saith unto Pharoah, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," &c., &c. These are the words of God. In the Bible are many things which no man can reconcile; but in the Bible there is nothing a man need shrink from believing. To believe the testimony of God is every man's first duty; afterward to endeavour to comprehend it. I believe that "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. I believe the offer of salvation in the Gospel is sincerely made to all who hear it. Yet while I believe these truths, I also believe, that those who obtain "eternal life" were *ordained* to it. Do you ask me to reconcile these articles of my faith. I reply, I never attempt it. Fools rush in where angels dare not tread, and I am not of that number. Once, and only once, did I attempt to harmonize the doctrines of the Bible on this subject; and, having wandered through the dark intricacies of Arminianism, I stood upon the threshold of Atheism, when one look into the impenetrable darkness beyond, showed me how terribly I had departed from the light of truth. I no longer fret myself about the apparent difficulties of the Bible. It is enough for me that God has told me that such and such things are true. Man's inability to comprehend never can be a sufficient ground for rejecting any truth. The great danger of our times is, men placing reason above faith, and refusing to

believe what reason cannot grasp. Hence it is that many are "carried about with divers and strange doctrines," and so long as God's testimony is secondary with men, what has been, will be.

Second. Men are ordained or elected to eternal life.

This truth is here distinctly taught us by the Apostle, and this is enough in opposition to every argument which man can advance to the contrary. Observe then.

1. Men are ordained to life. Here we are taught by implication a truth which the Apostle elsewhere clearly asserts; yet which men forget, and because they forget it, fall into grievous errors, denying the doctrine of election, and raising all manner of objections to it: asserting that it makes God "partial" and "unjust." The truth to which I refer is, that men are dead in the sight of God: both legally and spiritually dead, when God "ordains them to life."

When God created man he made him holy, and gave him the freedom of his will, in order that he might be the subject of reward or punishment. It was not whilst viewing him in this condition as a holy being, that there was exercised towards him that act of the divine mind which we call election. Then man had life, God might have ordained him to live in that condition; but there would be no propriety in saying that in such a condition he "ordained him to life." Man however abused his freedom of will and fell. He was righteously condemned by the law of God. He was shut up in prison, and his life forfeited to divine justice. He has no claim on the mercy of God. This be it remembered was the condition in which God found the whole human family, when in the exercise of Almighty Sovereignty, he resolves to save some; revoke the sentence of condemnation,

and rescue them from a doom which all deserved. Keeping these facts before the mind, I ask those who deny election, and dislike *ordination*, to consider what would have been the condition of our lost race without it. Is it not strange that men will quarrel with election, the very thing which has opened heaven to man; which has sent Christ to die for the redemption of man; which has sent us the Gospel, with all its precious promises, to cheer and sustain us amidst the trials and duties of life; and which secures spiritual life to the Christian. Take away the doctrine of election, and you destroy every vestige of my hope. I have no foundation for my hope of glory, but the determination of God's will, as expressed to me in the Bible. "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Ezek. xvi. 6.

2. The character of this life. It is said to be "eternal life."

The deliverance of men from their lost estate by God's electing love, is for ever. On this point of doctrine, one which is so closely connected with man's happiness, the Scriptures are full and explicit, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." John x. 28. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John xvii. 2. "To them who by patient continuance in well

doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Rom. xxvii. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 23. Now this eternal life, embraces several things, which when once enjoyed, are enjoyed for ever. First. It includes pardon; and the sentence which declares a man justified is irrevocable. Verily, verily says Christ, I say unto you, he that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." John v. 24. Second. It includes holiness; which once begun by the spirit of God shall never terminate. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. I. 16. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18. Is it not then strange that with all these plain declarations of the word of God, men will assert that a Christian may loose his life, and that he who once has been converted, may relapse into a state of nature?

It may be said that "man fell from a state of holiness before, and that holy angels fell." True, but he did not fall from a *converted* state; the state in which the Christian now is. He did not fall from a state in which God had *ordained* him to live. His continuance in his former created state of holiness, depended on himself, a fallible being; but, his continuance in his present converted state of holiness, depends not upon himself, but upon God who has declared, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from

me." Jer. xxxii. 40. Again says an Apostle they shall be "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Pet. i. 5. Before the believer can loose this life, God must alter his purpose in reference to him, and this can take place only in consequence of something in his conduct, which God did not foresee when he ordained him to eternal life. But where is the person who believes there can be any thing worse in man after his conversion, than when lying in his blood before his conversion? It is right down blasphemy to assert that God alters his designs in reference to his own elect, "I am Jehovah, I change not." Mal. iii. 6. "He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17. Men often change their designs, and alter their plans; they regret what they have chosen, because reflection and experience convince them of their impracticability; or because obstacles arise which they did not foresee, or because some other plan may have been suggested, which promises more beneficial results. Need I tell you that none of these causes can influence God, who is perfect in knowledge, to alter his purpose. His unchangeableness is a sufficient guarantee for their preservation. "For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mat. iii. 6. "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Third. That faith in man is a consequence of, and co-extensive with, their ordination to "eternal life." As many

as were ordained to eternal life believed. Nothing but deep-rooted prejudice, and wilful perversion of Scripture phraseology, can prevent any man from perceiving that the Apostle intends to convey the grand truth, that whilst some of his hearers "contradicted and blasphemed," and others heard gladly and glorified the word of the Lord; these latter, received the truth because it was determined by God, that it should be so.

God who is the author of man's salvation, has so arranged the plan, that whilst no merit pertains to man, yet there is much to be done by man. It belongs to man to exercise that state of mind which is called faith, without which he cannot have eternal life. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 31. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live." John xi. 25. Here it is requisite that I speak shortly of the nature of faith. You cannot my hearers have perused your Bibles carefully, without perceiving that it is presented to us under a great variety of aspect—such as hearing, knowing, believing, receiving, trusting, &c. It is often called the belief of the truth. If we would understand the Bible correctly, we must contemplate faith under each of these views. The things which we hear; the truths which we know; the blessings which we receive, and the Being whom we trust, may in one sense differ from each other, but in another, they are the same. The result in each case is the same, eternal life. Now one chief cause of error is, that men adopt one view of faith and overlook all others. Sometimes you will meet with a person who boasts in what he calls his "simple belief of the truth." Yet a little conversation with him will convince you that he has no reliance of soul upon Christ. His

“simple belief of the truth” has not yet brought him to the true source of pardon and purity. Again I not unfrequently meet with persons who go to the very opposite extreme, and altogether undervalue the simple truth. They employ themselves with some mysterious workings of their own mind, and are continually attempting to put forth great efforts, which they call resting on Christ. Now nothing is clearer than that such persons are making a Saviour of their own feelings. Such persons despise the word of truth altogether. They will give you long, incoherent and ridiculous stories about their *conversion* and *experience*, and these they make the ground of their faith. I have invariably observed that such persons and their Bibles, soon part company.

The faith that goes no farther than the intellect, can neither sanctify nor save. No faith is saving but that which links a man to Christ. Agreeably it is spoken of as a coming to Christ. “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” John v. 40.

“Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” John vi. 37.

But whatever view my friends we may take of faith, one thing is obvious, that man in his natural state cannot produce it. From first to last it is the gift of God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Eph. ii. 8. This faith which is the gift of God, and the instrumental means of a man’s salvation, belongs only to the *elect of God*: and is bestowed upon them, because from all eternity he did elect them to eternal life through faith. Accordingly we find Paul declaring that he was “an Apostle according to the faith o

God's elect." Tit. i. 1. Now if God gives faith to any man, he must *intend* to do so; and this intention must have been from all eternity. One of the wretched devices of the devil in the present day, is to explain away faith, and represent it as in the power of every unrenewed man to believe without the aid of the Holy Spirit. They make man the beginner of his own salvation. He takes the first step, and God does the rest. He believes, and then God elects him. Now the Apostle's doctrine is the very reverse of this. It is that God *ordained* them to eternal life; and then gives them faith to enable them in due time to come to the possession of it. It is the very same truth which is expressed by Christ in John x. 26: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." To teach that a man can believe, and become united to Christ by any power inherent in himself, is a bold denial of the work of the Spirit altogether. If ever the sinner needs the power of the Holy Ghost at all, it is at the beginning; to bring him out of his state of spiritual death to newness of life in Christ. The great difficulty is at the commencement; and if a man can begin the work, why not carry it forward to its completion? If he can make himself alive, surely he can keep himself alive. Such a man stands in no need of divine grace; and whilst Paul, had to exclaim, "by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. xv. 10; such a man can say by my *own strength* I have passed from death unto life. In one word there is nothing in the whole Christian career which a man cannot do, if he can without the aids of the Holy Spirit begin that career. I am the more full and explicit on this point, as there is at present a pamphlet circulating among us, which represents man as the author of

saving faith, and abounding with the grossest perversions of the teachings both of God and man.

Wherever then God has "ordained to eternal life" faith will be given, because without it the end could not be secured. This I trust will be sufficient to shew the pitiful ignorance and contemptible silliness of those who speak as if the mere act of God in choosing men to life, was all that was necessary to save them; who say, "Well, if I'm elected, I must be saved, let me pursue what course I please." Now, if they mean by the language, "pursuing what course they please;" a course of sin; then I assert that it is *not true*, and farther, that the elect of God, neither *may* nor *can* go on in a course of sin. They will have faith given to them in due time.

Unquestionably God's election of men makes their salvation sure; but makes just as sure on their part, the use of all the means necessary to obtain salvation. They will *believe*, and then "live as they please." Men live as they please, before they possess faith; and they live as they please after they possess it, with this difference however that after they possess faith, they live as God pleases. There is but one kind of election spoken of in the Bible; an election which secures an end, and all the means leading to it. This is God's election. Perhaps no better answer can be given to the continual cavillings, which we hear against this doctrine, than a reference to Acts xxvii., where is recorded the account of Paul's shipwreck whilst sailing into Italy. Nothing is clearer from the narrative than the determination of God that all should be saved. The angel thus addresses Paul, "Fear not Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that

sail with thee." Acts xxvii. 24. Did this assurance of safety, lead Paul to neglect the proper means to secure it? So far from this, "as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foeship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved."

Here then I bid you notice several things. We see

1. That the certainty of an event does not render it unnecessary to use means to secure it. According to the reasoning of some foolish people it does. According to their views Paul should have said, God has determined to save all our lives. I know it is true, it must be accomplished, and it matters not whether the sailors remain in the ship or depart. Paul knew that the event was not more certain than was the use of means requisite to accomplish it.

2. God's determining future events, does not destroy the free agency of man. The agency of Paul, and the sailors was as free, and necessary, as if God had determined nothing about the matter. These remarks are applicable to man's salvation. When God resolved to save his people, he resolved at the same time that they should repent, believe and be holy. In this way, and in no other way can they be saved. "According as he hath chosen us in him, &c., &c.," Eph. i. 4-5.

In conclusion, let me say to all hearing me that whilst this doctrine belongs to the highest order of divine truths, and is therefore not to be concealed or spoken of with bated breath, as if we were either afraid or ashamed of it; but to be freely and boldly proclaimed; still it is not that doctrine which should first engage the attention of sinners. It is speci-

ally suited to afford comfort to Christians. Your first business is with your state as lost sinners before God, and how you may escape the wrath to come. Upon this vitally important point all is clear. You are to break of your sins by righteousness. You are to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. In a state of salvation, the doctrine of election will not perplex you. By the happiness of heaven and the woes of hell, I would urge you all to duty. Thus only can you be happy in time, and glorified throughout eternity. Lord increase our faith. Amen.

