

casteth out fear." For instance, there are deliverances from temptation by the removal of temptation; by power being given to resist it; by its edge being abated; by our being enabled to confess the sins that press upon our conscience, and by confession finding relief. So, also, there is at times dropped into the soul some sweetness out of Christ, which yet does not amount to a full deliverance from the temptation under which we may happen to labor. Says some soul, I think I can come in here; I have had some deliverance; I have found some answer to prayer; I have been in great straits, and cried to the Lord, and the Lord has delivered me; I have passed through severe exercises, and in these exercises I have, for a few moments, or for a short season, felt the Lord's light and power; I have had tokens that he has heard my feeble cries. Well, these are deliverances, and if you have had but one deliverance, one answer to prayer, one testimony from the mouth of God, one soft word spoken to your soul, it is an evidence of your deliverance in Christ from eternal perdition. These, then, are some of the blessings which the elect obtain; but God has prescribed a certain channel through which they shall obtain them. Jesus himself obtained salvation for his people through suffering. He did not come into the world as a mighty conqueror carrying all before him, accomplishing the salvation of his people without a sigh or a groan or a tear, without much anguish of body, and without much tribulation of soul; but he was a sufferer every moment of his existence upon earth, and he wrought out the salvation of his dear people through the medium of most poignant suffering. The "election," then, has obtained God's blessings, but, though these mercies are freely given by God, though they are irreversibly granted—for "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance" (upon his part)—though they are freely given, yet the Lord has appointed a certain channel through which they flow. The channel is not the cause of them. None would mistake the course of a stream for its origin and source, and yet the river must run in a certain channel, or it would cease to flow at all. So the Lord has appointed a certain channel for his blessings to flow in; this channel is not the procuring cause of his blessings, but it is the mode in which the Lord bestows these blessings upon his elect. For instance, the Lord, usually speaking, does not communicate blessings to his people, except through the channel of sighs and cries and groans and wrestlings with him for the blessing. It is true that in the first communications of grace, those find it who seek it not, for did the communication of grace to our souls depend upon our seeking it, none of the elect would receive it at all. "I am found of them that sought me not." But the Lord has appointed that his people, when quickened by his Spirit, should ask the blessings he means to bestow: "For all these things," he says, "will I be inquired of by the house of Israel: with supplications will I lead them." The Lord, then, has ap-

pointed prayer and supplication as a means through which he is pleased to communicate these blessings. Thus it is not a matter of freewill on our parts whether we will pray or not; nor is it a matter of duty, but it is a matter of divine teaching. We pray because the Lord himself kindles in our hearts the spirit of prayer. The Lord himself puts certain desires into our souls, pours into our hearts a spirit of grace and of supplications, and then we freely pour out what the Lord pours in. The Lord, then, before he communicates his manifested blessings to his people, works in them (for the most part) these two feelings, a necessity of the blessing that they want, and a hungering and thirsting and panting desire after the manifestation of that blessing. These two ideas are conveyed by the comparison of hunger. Hunger is a painful feeling; there is an absolute necessity connected with it, for if food be not supplied, the man must die. But connected with this necessity there is a longing after food. It is not merely a painful sensation of emptiness and want; but there is a longing, a desire, an intense craving after the gratification of that want. Thus this expression, "hunger," conveys the feelings that are wrought by the Spirit in living souls. They are brought to a feeling of want and destitution, a sense of emptiness and sinking, unless the blessings are communicated to them. But there is something more than the necessity.—Together with the want there is a craving to enjoy food. And out of the working together of these combined feelings there springs a fervent wrestling with the Lord, that he would communicate, and manifest, and bestow his pardon upon the soul. But the children of God may have a long season of spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst before their desires are fully satisfied. The "election" hath obtained righteousness, everlasting righteousness in Christ; but the Lord has appointed that his people should obtain the manifestation of it through deep want, and through fervent intercession. So that, though the blessing is theirs already in the mind of God; though they are freely justified from all things, yet the manifestation of it, the enjoyment of it, the rich experimental revelation of it, they may be, and often are, destitute of for months and weeks and years. Yes, many of God's pilgrims go toiling on through life, and the desired blessing is communicated only a little time before their souls are taken into the eternal enjoyment of it. The Lord sees fit that his people shall be kept humble; he will not suffer them to be deeply entangled in that awful sin of presumption, that is so rife; and, therefore, he sees good that many of his family shall, by the painful exercise, be kept in a state of bondage, darkness and unbelief; and they shall no more be able to deliver their souls out of guilt and condemnation than they would be to create a new sun. But all for wise purposes, that they may be kept back from presumptuous sins, that they may taste somewhat of the wormwood and gall, that they may be baptized with that baptism with which the Lord himself

was baptized, and drink of the cup that he drank of; and thus, when righteousness is revealed and salvation manifested, they learn what it really is, and what a power and blessedness there is in it. Many of the Lord's people go on for weeks and months and years without a clear manifestation of the pardon of their sins; and sometimes, when death stares them in the face or when the wrath of God against sin is deeply felt, or when things in providence take a frowning turn, or when their souls are exercised with powerful temptations, they are cast well nigh into despair, and fear lest the blessing should never be communicated to their hearts.

These very exercises, under the Spirit's teaching, work in them so as to make them dissatisfied with everything short of a manifestation. The guilt that they feel brings them to this spot: pardon must be "something known and felt;" that it must be an enjoined manifestation from God himself; that there is a divine reality in it, and that nothing but the discovery of it with power can really bring their souls into happiness and peace. They could not learn this lesson in any other way; they could not value it. The Lord never bestows his gifts upon unthankful hearts. He prepares and exercises the souls of his children that, when the blessing comes, they shall prize it; shall estimate it, in some measure, at its due worth, and shall thank, bless, and praise God for his goodness to them, the very chief of sinners, and basest of all wretches. So with respect to the love of God; he will teach all his people to sigh, and cry, and groan, and plead, and wrestle vehemently for the manifestation of his love to their souls; know that it is a reality, not merely lip-language, not an unknown something just casually mentioned in God's word; but that there is a spiritual enjoyment of it, through divine manifestation, and that all the elect of God have it shed abroad in their hearts, but before they are short of it; therefore they cannot rest satisfied; short of it, they feel themselves destitute of salvation, and, therefore, until the love of God is experimentally realized and made known by the Holy Ghost to their souls, they cannot be fully persuaded that they are interested in that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

So with respect to deliverance; the Lord has appointed a channel for them to come in, and the channel is temptation. Thus all the elect are exercised, more or less, by temptation. From these temptations they seek for deliverance. And as the temptation is real, so must the deliverance be sure too. It is one thing to see a porter staggering under a heavy burden in the street, and another thing to have the burden on our own back. We might see the burden taken off, it would convey no relief to us; but were we in his place, were we staggering and sinking under the weight, the removal of the burden would be a sensible relief, and we should know the moment when we were relieved, and feel there was a hand that relieved us. So those that are burdened in their consciences with temptations and exercises must have re-

lief. To read how David was relieved, how Peter was relieved, brings them no comfort; they want it as a personal matter, as a realized thing, as what is made known in their consciences and felt with power in their hearts. The election hath obtained eternal deliverance in Christ; but when the Lord gives a deliverance in time, seals a testimony, brings in some timely help which delivers the soul, it is sure evidence of its eternal deliverance, and ratifies and manifests it in the heart. These, then, are some of the things which the election hath obtained, and all the elect of God, who are quickened into spiritual life, are in one of these two states; they have either obtained the manifestation of these things in their consciences, or else they are traveling after the obtaining of them. God has none of those in his dear family who are always at ease, carnal or careless, and utterly reckless whether he will bless them or not. All of his quickened children, in their measure, some more, some less, some to a deeper degree, others in a more shallow degree, but all of his quickened family are exercised with the things of eternity: and those of the quickened elect who have not been brought into the enjoyment of the things of Christ in their hearts and consciences, are at times, as the Spirit of the Lord works upon them, earnestly seeking that they may taste and feel, and handle these divine realities in their souls.

Election, then, in eternity, is the source of every blessing in time: out of it, as out of a root, grow all the branches of the life in the soul. But the way in which the Lord's people get at election, and taste the sweetness of it as sealed upon their souls, is, by passing through those straits and severe exercises, whereby they are brought to the solemn conclusion, that none but the elect are saved; and, that if their names are not in the Book of Life and their personal election is not experimentally made known, they are lost and ruined forever.

"And the rest were blinded."—Solemn words! awful declaration! Look at this assembled congregation, this large multitude. All here present are either elect or non-elect. Your names, each of you, as individuals, were either written in the Lamb's Book of Life before all worlds, or written up to eternal perdition. Now, if you are a living soul, you will be exercised with this matter, and you will have a conviction in your conscience, that salvation must be revealed to you from the mouth of God; and until you get that sweet testimony in your heart, you can never feel fully persuaded of your interest in eternal realities. "And the rest were blinded," what a multitude this comprehends! Look at God's ancient family, those who live in the vicinity of this place of worship, who dwell so thickly in streets and alleys within a circle of half a mile from this Chapel—God's ancient people, the Jews! How blinded they are! We, standing in their privileges, are grafted as Gentiles into the olive tree; and

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