

TWO MARVELOUS TRUTHS...

CALLING
AND
ELECTION

By C. H. SPURGEON

“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” – II Peter 1:19.

There are two important matters in religion-secrets, both of them, to the world – only to be understood by those who have been quickened by divine grace:

“CALLING AND ELECTION”

By the word “calling” in Scripture, we understand two things one, the general call, which in the preaching of the gospel, is given to every creature under Heaven; the second call (that which is here intended) is the special call – which we call the effectual call, whereby God secretly, in the use of means, by the irresistible power of His Holy Spirit calls out of mankind a certain number, whom He Himself hath before elected, calling them from their sins to become righteous, from their death in trespasses and sins to become living spiritual men, and from their worldly pursuits to become the lovers of Jesus Christ.

The two callings differ very much. As Bunyan puts it, very prettily, “By His common call, He gives nothing: by His special call He always has something to give: He has also a brooding voice, for them that are under His wing; and He has an outcry, to give the alarm when He seeth the enemy come.” What we have to obtain, an absolute necessity to our salvation, is a special calling, made in us, not to our ears but to our hearts, not to our mere fleshly understanding, but to the inner man, by the power of the Spirit.

And then the other important thing is election. As without calling there is no salvation, so without election there is no calling. Holy Scripture teaches us that God hath from the beginning chosen us who are saved unto holiness through Jesus Christ. We are told that as many as are ordained unto eternal life believe, and that their believing is the effect of their being ordained to eternal life from before all worlds. However much this may be disputed, as it frequently is, you must first deny the authority and full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures before you can legitimately and truly deny it.

And since without doubt, I have many here who are members of the Episcopal church, allow me to say to them what I have often said before, “You of all men, are the most inconsistent in the world, unless you believe the doctrine of election, for if it be not taught in Scripture, there is this one thing for an absolute certainty, it is taught in your Articles.” Nothing can be more forcibly expressed, nothing more definitely laid down, than the doctrine of predestination in the Book of Common Prayer; although we are told what we already know, that the doctrine is a high mystery, and is only to be handled carefully by men who are enlightened.

However, without doubt, it is the doctrine of Scripture that those who are saved, and are called as the effect of that first choice of God. If any of you dispute this, I stand upon the authority of Holy Scripture; aye, and if it were necessary to appeal to tradition, which I am sure it is not, and no Christian man would ever do it, yet I would take you upon that point, for I can trace this doctrine through the lips of a succession of holy men, from this present moment to the days of Calvin, thence to Augustine, and thence on to Paul himself, and even to the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The doctrine is, without doubt, taught in Scripture, and were not men too proud to humble themselves to it, it would universally be believed and received as being no other than manifest truth. Why, sirs, do you not believe that God loves His children? And do you not know that God is unchangeable? Therefore, if He loves them now, He must always have loved them. Do you not believe that if men be saved, God saves them? And if so, can you see my difficulty in admitting that because He saves them, there must have been a purpose to save them – a purpose which existed before all worlds? Will you not grant me that? If you will not, I must leave you to the Scriptures themselves, and if they will not convince you on the point, then I must leave you unconvinced.

It will be asked, however, why is calling here put before election, seeing election is eternal, and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our calling: we cannot tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called. We must, first of all, prove our calling, and then our election is sure most certainly.

“Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified”. Calling comes first in our apprehension. We are by God’s Spirit called from our evil estate, regenerated and made new creatures, and then, looking backward we behold ourselves as being most assuredly elect because we were called.