

LECTURE XLVI.

EFFECTUAL CALLING.

SYLLABUS.

1. How are we made partakers of the Redemption purchased by Christ? See. Conf. of Faith, ch. 9, Cat. Qu. 29.
2. Whence the Necessity of a Call to man? Dick, Lect. 65. Hill, bk. v, cb. 1.
3. How many calls does God give to men? And what is the difference between Common and Effectual Calling? Shorter Cat. Qu. 31. Larger Cat. Qu. 68. Turretin, Loc. xv, Qu. 1, 4. Hill, bk. v, cb. 1. Ridgley, Qu. 67. Knapp. § 129.
4. What then can be God's true Design in the "Common Call" of non-elect Men; and how may His Sincerity therein be cleared? Turretin,, Loc. xv, Qu. 2. Howe's Works, "Reconcilableness of God's prescience, &c., with the Wisdom and Sincerity of His Counsels." Works of Andrew Fuller. Gospel Worthy of all acceptation, pt. iii. Arminian and Socinian *Polemics*. *Passim*. Hodge's Theol. pt. iii, ch. 14.

“WE are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by Christ's Holy Ghost.” We now come to the great branch of Theology—The Application of Redemption—in which the kingdom founded by Jesus Christ's humiliation is set up and carried on. In this work, His priestly office is only exercised in heaven, by His intercession. It is His prophetic and kingly which He exercises on earth. And the person of the Trinity now

brought into discussion is the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father through the Son. As the doctrines of Creation, Providence, the Law, chiefly concerned the Father; that of atonement and priesthood chiefly concerned the Son; so this brings into view chiefly the Holy Ghost. This would, therefore, be the most natural place to bring into view the doctrine of the Spirit's personality, nature, and agency; but as you have already attended to these, I proceed.

The great necessity for the effectual calling of man is in his original sin. Were he not by nature depraved, and his disposition wholly inclined to ungodliness, the mere mention of a plan, by which deliverance from guilt and unholiness was assured, would be enough; all would flock to embrace it. But such is man's depravity, that a redemption must not only be provided, but he must be effectually persuaded to embrace it. Now since our effectual calling is the remedy for our original sin; as is our conception of the disease, such will be our conception of the remedy. Hence, in fact, all men's theology is determined hereupon, by their views of original sin. We, who believe the unconverted will to be certainly determined to ungodliness, by ungodly dispositions, therefore believe in an effectual and supernatural call. Jno. iii : 5 and 6.

Calvinists admit only two kinds of call from the gospel to man—the common and the effectual. They deny that there is any natural call uttered by the voice of nature and Natural Theology; for the simple reason that whatever information it might give of the being and government of God, of His righteousness, and of His punishments for sin, it holds out no certain warrant that He will be merciful to sinners, nor of the terms whereon He can be so. Where there is no revealed gospel, there is no gospel call. And this is only to say, that Natural Theology is insufficient to salvation.

The common call consists of the preached word, addressed to men's ears and souls, together with (in most, at least), the common convincing operations of the Holy Ghost. This call is made generally to the whole human race in Scripture, and specifically to each adult to whom the gospel comes. The effectual call, we hold, consists of these elements, and also of a work of the Holy Ghost, "whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." Arminians, indeed, assert that the call is one and the same, so far as God's dispensation towards men is concerned, to all under the gospel; and that it only differs by its results in different cases, which difference is made only by man's free will. This we shall more fully disprove when we come to show the

nature of regeneration ; but it may now be disproved briefly by these thoughts : (a). That a difference is asserted between the nature of God's calls ; in Scripture, Matt. xx : 16 ; Jno. vi : 44, 45. (b). That the effectual calling is a result of election ; but the event proves that all are not elect. See Rom. viii : 28 ; xi : 29 ; viii : 30 ; Acts xiii : 48. (c). If the call only differed in the answer made to it by man's free will : 1 Cor. iv : 7, would not remain true ; nor Rom. ix : 16.

God's design in the common call of the unconverted may be said to be threefold. First, it is His appointed and proper means for saving from among them, the elect. And He either must have adopted this generality in the outward call ; or else He must have adopted one of two expedients. He must have actually saved all, or He must have separated the non-elect wholly from the participation of the common call. Had He adopted the latter plan, surely those who now complain of partiality would then have complained far more loudly. Had He adopted the former, where would have been His manifestation of His sovereignty ; and where that evidence of regular customary connection between means and ends, conduct and destiny, on which He has seen fit to found His government ?

God's second design in making the common call universal, was the exercise of the general holiness, goodness, and compassion of His nature, (which generally regard all His creatures), in dissuading all from sin and self-destruction. God's holiness, which is universally opposed to sin, makes it proper that He shall dissuade from sin, every where, and in all sinners. God's mercy and goodness, being made possible towards the human race by their being under a gospel dispensation, make it proper that He shall dissuade all from self-destruction. And this benevolence not only offers a benefit to sinners generally, but actually confers one—i. e., a temporary enjoyment of a dispensation of mercy, and a suspension of wrath, with all the accompanying mercies, and the offer itself of salvation. This offer is itself a benefit : only man's perverseness turns it into a curse. Blessed be God, His word assures us that this common call is an expression of sincere benevolence towards all sinners, elect and non-elect, (a compassion whose efficient outgoing is, however, conditioned, as to all, on faith and penitence in them). Ezek. xxxiii : 11 ; Ps. lxxxi : 13 ; 1 Tim. ii : 4.

God's third design in making the common call universal is, that when men ruin themselves, as He foresaw they would, His holiness, goodness, compassion and truth may be entirely cleared, in their fate, before heaven and earth. It was a part of His eternal plan, to magnify His own goodness, by offering to human sinners a provision for salvation so complete, as to remove every obstacle arising

4. Designs of God in Common Call. To Gather Elect.

To Express His Benevolence.

To Clear Himself.

out of His justice and law; so that in their final damnation, all the universe may see how lovely God is; and how desperate an evil sin is. And this is properly God's highest end.

It has been often charged that, if God makes an internal difference in sinners' hearts, between the common call and the effectual, His wisdom, or His sincerity, in extending that common call to all, is tarnished.

Is the Common Call
Insincere.

In defending God's sincerity and wisdom in this matter, let us make this preliminary remark: That we have discarded the Thomist proposition, which asserts God's efficient *præcursor* in the sinful acts of men. The student may recall our grounds, in the twenty-fifth Lecture, for disencumbering God's providence of that dogma. Hence, we have not to account here for any *præcursor* of God's, in those unbelieving acts of the sinner under the gospel, by which he resists its gracious invitations and commands. All we have to account for is God's prescience and permission of the unbelief and disobedience. So that the problem we have to discuss is exactly this. Is God both wise and sincere, in inviting and commanding to gospel duty, such sinners as He foresees will neglect it; while His own purpose is distinctly formed, not to put forth His omnipotent Spirit, to cause them to submit? That He is wise in doing so, follows without difficulty, from the positions already laid down assigning the several consistent ends God has in view in His dealings with unbelievers. If that part of these ends, which does not include their own redemption is wise, then the providence is wise.

In reply we assert, First: The Scriptures explicitly direct the common call to be extended to all; e. g., Scripture Orders It. Mark xvi: 15. They assert that God does efficaciously persuade some, and not others, to embrace it: Rom. ix: 16; xi: 7. And they also say that God is both wise and sincere in His offers and dealings, Ezek. xxxiii: 11; Luke xix: 42; 2 Tim. ii: 19. Now, in any other science than theology, when facts are ascertained on valid evidence, they are all admitted, whether they can be reconciled or not. I remark farther: that to deny the doctrine of effectual calling does not much relieve the subject; for God's prescience of the actual results of His universal call, involve very much the same difficulties as to His wisdom and sincerity.

Second: The objector says that God cannot have done the thing Calvinists represent Him as doing, because incompatible with His sincerity. But what if we find Him saying that He does this very thing? This is precisely the case. In His Scriptures He represents Himself as giving unquestionable admonitions and invitations to men whom, He expressly declares at the time, He intends to permit to destroy themselves. Compare, for in-

Scriptures Assert the
Very Cases.

stance, Exod. v : i, with vii : 3, 4. In the one text God says to Pharaoh : " Let my people go," while in the other, He informs Moses : " He will not hearken, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt." In Isaiah v : 9, Jehovah commissions Isaiah to preach to Judea : and the tenour of his preaching may be seen in Chap. i : 18 ; which is a gracious offer of cleansing. But in Ch. vi : 11, Isaiah is informed that his preaching is destined to harden his countrymen to their almost universal destruction. Ezek. iii : 7, 11, presents the very same case. One is presented in Matt. xxiii : 33-35, with 37, which is, if possible, still stronger. These cases end the debate, so far as the question of fact goes. My point is, that God here avows the doing of the very thing the Arminians say He must not do. This is a perfect proof, at least, that their difficulty has not arisen from any Calvinistic misstatement of God's plan. We might then, dismiss the debate, and leave them to settle their controversy with God, as best they may.

Third: The course of God's providence in natural things, is liable to the same difficulty. He spares sinners. " He sends His rain on the just and unjust ; and causeth His sun to rise on the good and evil." See Acts xiv : 17. Now Peter (2 Epist. iii : 15) tells us that the " long suffering of our God is salvation." If His admitting sinners to the gospel call, whom He yet foresees to be bent on their own destruction, is insincere ; and the reality of His benefit therein is doubted, because He never efficaciously purposed to make them repent, His providential goodness also is no true goodness. But what sinner believes this? We have here every feature, in which, Arminians say, their difficulty inheres. These earthly blessings are overtures of mercy, and are intended as such. God foresees their neglect, and the continued impenitence of the recipients. Physically, He is able to add to these suaves the other means, and the efficacious grace, which would certainly bring the recipients to repentance. But He does not see fit to add them.

In the fourth place, we find the explanation of the common call, in the views expounded in the remarks upon the design of the sacrifice of Christ.

The student was there advertised, that we should find another application for those important ideas. That subject, and the one now in hand, are obviously cognate : the purpose of God in Christ's sacrifice, and in His offer of its benefits, must be guided by the same attributes of wisdom, benevolence and righteousness. We there saw, that the executive volition which is wise and good, is prompted in God, (as in a lower manner in any righteous creature,) by comprehensive deliberation ; and is not the result of an insulated principle, but of all the right principles of the Agent's nature harmonized under His best wisdom. We saw how a good man may have

Providence Involves
the Same Question.

God's Infinite Good-
ness Regulated by Wis-
dom.

sympathy with a calamity, which he may yet, for wise reasons, freely determine not to relieve. And we raised the question: Since he really has that sympathy, why may he not give candid expression to it in other forms than acts of rescue? Thus, the good and consistent human magistrate makes overtures of mercy to a criminal on given terms: and yet he is well aware that the criminal's malice and contumacy are such, that the terms will be refused; and he is equally fixed in his mind not to degrade the majesty of the law, by pardoning on any lower terms. No one charges this ruler with insincerity or folly. Why may not our God do the parallel thing? We have seen how the extremists, Arminian and ultra-Calvinist, meet in a common ground of cavil: that the difference is; God is able to renew the criminal's heart, so as to ensure his complying with the requisite terms: the human magistrate is not. I reply, that while God has the *δυναμις*, the spiritual might, adequate to renew Satan or Judas, He has not the sanction of His own comprehensive wisdom for doing it. I ask with emphasis: May not God see, amidst the multifarious relations of His vast kingdom, many a valid reason which we have not surmised, for determining that it is not best for Him to do a certain act, to which He feels His power competent? To deny this is insane arrogance. The Calvinist need not fear, lest the Arminian here triumph in representing God's desires as crossed by the invincibility of the creature's perverse free will. My view represents His desires and actions as regulated only by His own perfections: but by all His perfections harmoniously combined. It may perhaps be objected farther, that such a picture of the co-action of God's active principles, and of the rise of His volitions, cannot be correct; because it would represent His purposes as emerging out of a state of internal struggle, during which God would be drawn different ways by competing motives, like a poor mortal. Such a picture, they exclaim, is unworthy both of the majesty and blessedness, and the immutability of God. The sufficient answer is contained in the remark already made in the previous lecture: That God's active principles are not passions. They are principles of action; but they exist in Him in their unchangeable vigour, without agitation, and without passionate access or recess. Hence their co-action in the deliberations of the infinite Mind are without struggle. That this may be so, may be illustrated in some small degree, even to our feeble apprehension. We have adduced the example of the great Washington, contemplating the fate of Andre with profound compassion, and yet with a firm and wise determination to give justice its awful dues. This implied of course, some struggle in Washington's heart. But it is equally obvious, that had it been the lower and feeble nature of a Gates or a Schuyler, (both also sincere and honest patriots) which was called to this solemn task, he would have performed

it at the cost of much greater disturbance to his equanimity. Why would this have occurred? Not because their natures were, really, more compassionate than Washington's: but because his, while capable of a more profound compassion than theirs, was cast in a grander mould, and regulated by a higher virtue and wisdom. It is strength which gives equanimity. Take this instance, which is infinitesimally humble, beside God's majesty: and it will assist us to apprehend how His infinite wisdom may regulate the several infinite activities of His nature, absolutely without a struggle. And let the student bear in mind, that my attempt is not to bring down the actions of the divine Spirit to man's comprehension: they are ineffable: but to prevent other men from cramping, within the trammels of their human logic, the incomprehensible, but blessed, workings of infinite goodness.

Fifth: When we assert this sincere compassion of God in His common calls to the non-elect, we do not attribute to Him anything futile, or insincere; because, in the expressions of this compassion, He always makes an implied or expressed condition: that they shall turn. He does not say anywhere, that He has any desire to see any one saved while continuing a rebel. Nor does He say anywhere, that it is His unconditioned purpose to compel all to turn. But He says, He would like to see all saved provided they all turned. So that His will in the universal call is not out of harmony with His prescience. And last: God's invitations and warnings to those who, He foresees, will reject them, are the necessary expressions of His perfections. The circumstance that a given sin is foreseen, does not rob it of its moral character; and hence should constitute no reason why a righteous God shall forbear to prohibit and warn against it. That God shall yet permit creatures to commit this sin against His invitations, is therefore just the old question about the permission of evil. Not a new one.

Common Call Always
Conditioned.