

The Power of the Gospel

Preached at Providence Chapel, Oakham, on Lord's Day
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"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance." 1
Thessalonians 1:5

Election! what a word is that! How distastefully for the most part it falls upon the ears of men! Why is this, but because it so exalts the sovereignty of God, and so loudly declares the fallen, helpless condition of man? But the Apostle speaks the word out plainly enough. He did not keep this doctrine according to godliness back. In the verse preceding our text we meet with these words: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." It is evident from these words that the Apostle knew that those to whom he was writing were amongst the elect of God. But how came he by this knowledge? When he was caught up into the third heaven, did the angel bring to him the golden book, and, turning over the leaves, did he show him in the Lamb's Book of Life the names of those Thessalonians to whom he wrote this epistle? No; nor did he wish to see it; his soul was too much taken up with viewing the beauties of the Lamb to want to glance into the Book of Life to see whose names were inscribed therein. He did not know it from that source. He tells us from what source he did know it. He knew it, first, from seeing their work of faith, their labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and his Father; and, secondly, because his "gospel came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." It is in the same way, my friends, that we must come to know our election. It is not by hearing the doctrines in the mere letter, nor by chattering about them with fluent

tongue; but by having those blessed communications of the Spirit of God whereby "the gospel comes not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" unto us. In opening up this subject, I shall, from the words before us, attempt, with God's blessing, to show three things.

I.—*First*, what is the meaning of the words "*our gospel*."

II.—*Secondly*, what it is for the gospel "*to come in word only*."

III.—*Thirdly*, what it is for the gospel "*to come not only in word, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*." And if the gospel has so come into your heart, you may thus know your election of God.

I.—"*Our gospel*." By the word "*our*" the Apostle seems to embrace not only his fellow apostles, all of whom preached the same gospel, but all his fellow believers. In those days there were not two gospels. The apostles who were sent forth all preached the same gospel. But the word "*our*" includes not only his fellow apostles, preachers and teachers of God's word, but the converts to whom he preached, and, amongst them, these believing Thessalonians; for that gospel became his and theirs when it was received into their hearts by the application of the Holy Spirit. But what does the word "*gospel*" signify? "Gospel" is a good old Anglo-Saxon word of that pure Anglo-Saxon which forms the bulk of our noble language, and means, literally, "good news," good tidings. But if it be good news, it must be good news of something and to somebody. There must be some good tidings brought, and there must be some person to whom it is communicated. This was the good news or glad tidings which the angel of the Lord brought to the shepherds who were keeping watch over

their flocks by night, when he said unto them, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10, 11.) And with this was joined the heavenly anthem, when the angelic choir sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14.) In order, then, that the gospel should be glad tidings, there must be a message from God to man—God being the sender and man the hearer; God the giver and man the happy receiver. But this gospel can only be worthy of the name when it proclaims grace, mercy, pardon, deliverance, and salvation, as free gifts of God's unmerited favour. Otherwise, it would not be a gospel adapted to our wants, to us poor sinners, to us law breakers, to us criminals, to us transgressors, to us arraigned at the bar of justice, to us condemned to die by the unswerving demands of God's holiness. Our gospel will only then be a pure gospel, it will then breathe the very atmosphere of heaven, it will then flow in streams of living water as flowing out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Then it is not only pure of any taint of human merit and creature attainments, but flows clear as crystal, as John saw in vision in the book of Revelation.

It is therefore not only pure but clear, brightly and beautifully transparent. Not being muddied with any admixture of the creature, the image of God is to be seen in it as it flows onward in streams of crystal transparence. Every perfection of Deity is revealed and reflected by the crystal streams of the gospel.

Again; it must be *free*. To suit our case, it must flow without let or hindrance out of the bosom of God into the hearts of his children, so that it may not be obstructed in its course, but come as freely and fully into their heart as Ezekiel in

vision saw the river flow from out of the temple into the desert, and thence into the Dead Sea, healing its salt waters.

This gospel, then, thus pure, clear, and free, is glad tidings as proclaiming pardon through the blood of Jesus Christ, and justification by his obedience to God's holy law. It therefore magnifies the law and makes it honourable; brings glory to God and salvation to the soul. It is a pure revelation of sovereign mercy, love, and grace, whereby each Person in the divine Trinity is exalted and magnified. Now nothing short of this, nothing less than this is *our* gospel, the gospel preached by the apostles and received by the New Testament believers.

If you love a pure, a clear, a free gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, you love it because it is so fully suitable to your wants, so thoroughly adapted to your fallen state, because it not only speaks of pardon, but *brings* pardon; not only proclaims mercy, but *brings* mercy; not only points out a way of salvation, but *brings* salvation with its soft silvery notes to your heart as a sinner. It thus becomes the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

i. But this gospel comes to some "*in word only.*" It never reaches their conscience, touches their heart, or has any saving effect upon their souls. It is in itself a good gospel, a pure, a clear, a free gospel; but as regards many of those to whose outward ears it comes, it produces no effect, it bears no fruit. The seed may be good in itself, excellent of its kind, but if cast upon the pavement there it may lie till trodden under foot of man, or picked up by the birds of the air. There is no fault in the gospel, as there is no fault in the seed which is cast abroad by the hands of the sower. The whole difference is in the ground upon which the seed falls. How many there are, indeed, we may say, by far the greater part

who sit under the sound of the gospel, to whom it comes in word only.

But you may say, "What a singular thing it is that they should come Lord's day after Lord's day on purpose to hear the gospel, and yet not be saved by it, not be blessed by it, not be wrought upon by it, have no interest in it, but live, die, and be damned under the sound of it." This is indeed a mystery; but it always was so. And we may perhaps explain it thus. There is something in the gospel which seems to commend itself to the natural understanding, a something pleasing in it to the natural minds of some men. For there are in it sparkles of divine glory which seem to shine brightly where prejudice is in some measure removed. But apart from this, various motives work in men's minds. Some, from hearing the gospel often preached, have got a notional acquaintance with it, which leads them boldly to contend for it and it only. Yet, as a revelation of God to their soul, as a manifestation of pardon and peace to their heart, as a life-giving word to save them from eternal misery, they know it not, believe it not, feel it not, and realise it not. Thus the greater number of the hearers of the gospel live and die in their sins, just as much as though they had never heard the way of salvation declared, or the work of God on the soul experimentally traced out. It is to be feared there are many more hearers than we think to whom the gospel thus comes in word only. It may touch their natural feelings; it may gratify their love of hearing; it may commend itself to their understanding; it may seem to produce some kind of fruit; but with all this it produces no real spiritual effect, no saving efficacy, and with the gospel sounding in their ears they still live and die in their sin. Now this is no fault of the preacher of the gospel nor of the gospel which he preaches. It is in the hearers who are dead in sin, or dead in a profession. If God do not bestow upon them his supernatural grace nor favour

them with his blessed Spirit, they may hear the gospel all their days, and yet live and die as devoid of faith in the Lord Jesus, as though they had never heard even of his name.

II.—But we pass on to show what it is for the gospel to come *"not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."* My friends, power belongeth not to man. It is a very solemn assertion but it is a very true one that no man can quicken his own soul. It is a very solemn, we might almost say, a tremendous truth, that the gospel only comes in power to those whom God has chosen unto eternal life, and that a man cannot, by any exertion of his own will or power, quicken his own soul into spiritual life, or communicate to it faith, hope, love, repentance, or any saving grace of the Spirit. For so thoroughly dead is he in sin, and such a poor crawling wretch, and cleaving to his mother earth through the fall, that he cannot raise himself up out of this state to newness of life. But O! in spite of all this, the Lord has a people who are dear to him, and to whom he makes himself dear. These are the elect of God; and where the Lord has a vessel of mercy whom he has thus chosen to eternal life, in due time, and in his own time and way, the gospel will be made to come with power to his heart and conscience.

i. But what is meant by the word *"power?"* It is a term much used in the New Testament. "The kingdom of God," it is declared, "is not in word but in power." What then is power? It is a divine operation; God himself puts forth in the soul. It cannot be described by words, nor can language explain it. It must be felt to be known and must be realised in a man's own soul before he can have any conception of it. But "Thy people shall be willing," we read, "in the day of thy power;" and when the gospel does come to the soul by the application of the blessed Spirit, and a divine power

accompanies it, it is made known by the effects which follow. For instance: here is a poor wretch condemned by the Law; he may perhaps see there is salvation in Christ, and he knows there is salvation in no other. O how he begs, and prays, and petitions God to have mercy on him! Continually is he endeavouring to seek God and ask him to have mercy upon his soul; but he cannot get peace to his conscience; he is still in trouble and distress; bowed down with bondage, guilt, and fear. Now where the Lord is pleased to apply some portion of his blessed word to his soul, or to speak home some particular promise, the power that accompanies this, raises up a special faith whereby that portion of God's holy word which speaks of Christ, or that promise is laid hold of. Here then is power communicated with the gospel whereby he believes in the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures; he could not believe it before. No; he might as well attempt to create a world; but no sooner does he believe what the Holy Ghost now applies by a living faith, than a divine power comes into his soul which takes away his doubts and fears, dispels guilt from his conscience, banishes the mists and fogs that for months have hung over his soul, reveals in him a precious Jesus, makes the promises of God to glitter before his eyes like dew drops in autumn, and gives him an unspeakable nearness to God, such as he never knew till the gospel came with power, and faith was raised up in his soul. This is power. Power then does not consist in noise and bluster, fantastic flights of enthusiastic excitement or any such wild delusions. How was it with the prophet Elijah when the word of the Lord came to him, "Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire." (1 Kings 19:11, 12.) In

none of these was the Lord; but "after the fire a still small voice." In this still small voice God was, for when the prophet heard the still small voice "he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave," that he might listen to the voice of God. We should have thought there was a power in the earthquake, in the wind, and in the fire; but God was not in them. In all these loud and visible demonstrations the voice of God was not; in them was no power. But when the still small voice began to speak, it came with that divine savour and unction, and was so evidently the voice of God himself, that it touched the prophet's soul, melted his spirit, and faith was raised up to receive with simplicity what God with authority spake.

Now, tell me, has the gospel ever come to you in power? If it has, it has done something for you. Has it ever, then, dispelled your many doubts and fears; has it ever made Jesus precious to your soul; ever brought with it a promise to your heart; ever given you access to the bosom of God; ever communicated that spirit of liberty and love whereby you were enabled to prevail with God, and get a blessing out of his hands and heart? It is useless to talk of power when nothing is done. A man says to an engineer, "I want you to construct me an engine of a hundred horse power." Now, if the engineer make the engine, and upon trial it is found only of ninety horse power, and the work requires a hundred horse power, the engine is so far useless. Now what would his employer say to him but, "What a mistake you have made. I ordered an engine of a hundred horse power; and this is only ninety. It will not do the work I want. Take it away, and get about your business." So in grace. We want a power that can move certain weights; the weight of sin, for instance, off a guilty conscience, fears of death and hell; the strength of unbelief, the workings of carnal enmity, and many trying assaults and temptations of Satan. We have a

large amount of work to be done; many hundred-weights to be moved—weights, that if not moved, would sink the soul into endless despair. O! what numerous and heavy weights have we to be lifted off; what huge stones to be rolled away from the sepulchre. The world has to be overcome; lusts and passions to be crucified; the old man of sin to be mortified; Satan to be defeated and put to flight. But besides all these enemies to be overcome, there is the soul to be saved, heaven to be brought near, hell put out of sight, the law to be forever silenced, death to be robbed of its sting and the grave of its victory, and an eternal crown of glory to be won. O! what a mighty work has to be done in us and for us—a work which no man ever has done or can do for himself. Now if the gospel does not do all this for us, we may say of it what the contractor would say to the engineer, "It will not do for me; it will not perform my work, take it away; bring me something that will do my work, and I will thank you; but do not deceive me in this weighty and important matter; but bring me an engine that will do my work, or keep it to yourself." This is what we may say to a muddled gospel, a Galatian gospel, which is not the gospel, but a muddy medley of law and gospel. Such a half-and-half gospel will not do your work; will not save or bless your soul; therefore, send it about its business. Do not pause one moment, but say to it, "Get away from me; you will not do my work. I will not take you into my heart; you shall not have a footing in my conscience; I will have nothing to do with you, and you shall have nothing to do with me. My sins are too black and grievous, my backslidings are so great, my lusts and passions so powerful, the world so ensnaring, business so captivating, the devil so tempting that I am sometimes almost at my wits' end. Now, as you cannot help me out of these difficulties nor do for me the work which I want to be done, get about your business; it is of no use my standing here and talking any more to you." This is what I advise you

to say to all or any muddled mixture of law and gospel which may present itself for your acceptance. Say to it, "I have a conscience to be healed, the law to be satisfied, Moses to be silenced, the thunders of Sinai to be hushed; besides all which, there is a poor soul of mine that wants to be saved with an everlasting salvation; and, as nothing but the gospel can do this for me, it has a place in my heart and conscience, and in it I hope to live and die."

This may explain the reasons why the Lord makes so many of his people to sink so low in their souls, and why Moses peals such terrible thunder-storms in their ears. This may serve to explain why their sins press them down like so many tons of lead; why they are frequently assailed with such powerful temptations; why they are so often cast into hot furnaces of affliction, and well-nigh drowned in floods of sorrow. All these painful lessons are to teach them that God only of his infinite mercy and grace can save or deliver them; and that the only way whereby he does it is by his precious gospel being made the power of God unto their salvation. When, then, this gospel comes with power to their soul, "Ah!" they cry, "now I have got it." "This is the very thing for me." "Right at last; right at last." "This is the thing I wanted." A pure, a clear, a free, a precious, an everlasting gospel; unfolding the riches of God's mercy, magnifying his grace, satisfying his law, revealing his pardoning love, and bringing a precious Christ with it into the soul. O, may we not say, as Hart speaks on a similar subject?

"Be this religion mine."

To know, feel, and experience this, is for the gospel "to come not in word only, but also in power." You may depend upon it, that those who have ever felt this power in the gospel, will never part with nor turn aside from such a glorious gospel.

Nay, it will grow upon them increasingly in love and affection; and the more they feel its power, the more will they love and cleave to it. I cannot, therefore, understand the ease of those persons who, after professing the gospel of free grace for many years, in their declining days turn aside from it to embrace a muddy mixture of law and gospel. Nor, indeed, can I understand how anyone, whether, old or young, who has ever felt the power of the gospel even in a small measure, can forsake it for Arminianism and free will. We may ask with the prophet "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?" (Jer. 18:14.) I can understand how one may get entangled with a worldly spirit from too much occupation in business; and how another may be overcome by the temptations of Satan, so as to call everything in question. I can understand, also, how a third may be overcome by the power of sin; but I cannot understand how a man can turn his back upon the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ after he has ever felt its precious power. It seems to me easier for him to turn his back upon all religion, than leave a free grace gospel for a mixture which, in fact, is neither law nor gospel. I find the gospel more and more precious. The more I see of myself as a poor miserable sinner, the more I see, or want to see, of the beauty and to experience the power of a free grace gospel. It was, doubtless, some feeling of this kind which led the Apostle Paul to denounce such thundering sentences against the Galatian churches, for turning aside from the gospel which he had preached unto them, to embrace what he calls another gospel, but which was not the gospel of Christ.

III.—But the gospel came to them "not only in power, *but in the Holy Ghost.*" This is the third point to which I was to call your attention. The Holy Ghost is the third Person in the

Trinity, and it is his peculiar province and divine office to apply the Scriptures to the soul. We see with what power he clothed the apostles when he came down upon them, and what mighty effects he wrought upon the souls of the people under the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost will honour nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ. He never preaches anything to the soul but Christ's gospel; nor is he ever made manifest but in and through this everlasting gospel. Men may talk about the Holy Spirit; they may contend for him and for his operations; but that holy and divine Teacher and Comforter never travels out of Christ's gospel; and all which he reveals, manifests, and applies is from and through the gospel. It either flows out of the gospel or is connected with the gospel. His covenant office is to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to the soul; not the things of Moses, nor the things of self, but the things of Jesus Christ. When, then, the Scripture comes in power, it comes also in the Holy Ghost; that is in the light, life, liberty, and love of the Holy Ghost. By these divine operations through the Scriptures, he makes a man a spiritual man; communicates his gifts and graces to his soul; and raises up that "new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." He comes as a Spirit of grace and supplication; a Spirit of wisdom and understanding; a Spirit of the fear of the Lord; a Spirit of faith in Christ Jesus; a Spirit of hope in his mercy; and a Spirit of love towards his name. He comes as a Spirit of repentance and godly sorrow for sin, making the conscience tender and the heart contrite; and meekens and humbles the soul, conforming it to the suffering image of Christ. He comes as a comforter in the Scriptures to bind up broken hearts and wipe tears from the eye; he comes as a Spirit of truth to lead him into all truth, and instruct him in the blessed realities connected with it.

But the Holy Ghost never comes into any poor sinner's soul except through the medium of the gospel of the grace of God. Have you ever considered that point? You are praying perhaps that the Holy Spirit would teach you and be in you a Spirit of revelation, a remembrancer, a comforter, instructor, and teacher. You pray for his gifts and graces; but have you ever viewed these graces in connection with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Now, if you want the Holy Spirit to come into your soul, you must keep firm hold of the gospel, you must not run away from it to the law or to self, but keep firm, fast hold of it so far as you have felt its power and have faith in it. If you are **tired [tried?]**, still hold the gospel; if tempted, still hold the gospel; if Satan gets you into his sieve, still hold the gospel; if in the furnace of affliction, still hold the gospel. If you are called upon to wade through floods of sorrow, still hold fast the gospel. If Satan tell you you have no part or lot in the matter, still hold fast to the gospel. Let not Satan, if ever you have felt the power and preciousness of the gospel, baffle you out of it, or drive you from it, but hold to the gospel for it is your life. If you are a poor, guilty, conscience-stricken backslider, hold the gospel, for in that alone is pardon and healing contained and revealed. If you are tempted with manifold and grievous temptations, still hold the gospel, for through the gospel alone can come any real or lasting deliverance; and it is through the gospel that you may hope the Holy Ghost will speak a delivering word to your soul. If you are burdened with many doubts and fears of your interest in Christ because you cannot believe, or be what you would, still do hold on firm and fast to it, because it is only by the gospel that these fears can be removed, and a word of peace be spoken to your conscience. If you are wading through deep afflictions, and need a word of consolation, still hold by the gospel; for it is through it that all real comfort is imparted. And may I not ask you whether this is not commended to your conscience as sound doctrine and good

experience? If not, tell me what you can substitute for the gospel? What balm is there to be found any where else for bleeding wounds? What pardon for guilty sinners? What peace for rebels? What terms of composition for enemies, but in the gospel of the grace of God? Where else will you find any thing to suit your case if you are a poor, tempted, tried sinner? Will you go to the law which can only curse and condemn you? Will you go to yourself? What is self? It is a heap of ruins. What then can that do for you? And not only a heap of ruins, but all mouldering ruins—ruins of which every brick has in it the rot and all its mortar fallen into dust. So utterly ruined is self that with all your contrivances to get something out of it, it is like making a rope out of sand, or like drawing up water with a bucket with the bottom knocked out. Where then will you go? After all you must come to the gospel if your soul is to be saved and blessed, and if you are to experience the consolations of the Holy Ghost, who alone can bless and comfort you; for that blessed Spirit only comes by and through the gospel into the heart. I want, with God's blessing, to impress this vital truth upon your mind, that you may not be looking away from the gospel; and as Berridge says, "squint and peep another away," but that you may keep your eyes firmly fixed upon the gospel; for if you believe it, it can and will save your soul. Does not the apostle say that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth? So, then there is neither power or salvation in anything else. Never therefore, expect power, salvation, or comfort but by and through the Holy Ghost preaching the gospel into your heart.

iii. *"And in much assurance."* The word *"assurance,"* here, does not imply that they were necessarily in the enjoyment of an assurance of their personal and individual interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, though I do believe myself that faith always has assurance in it in proportion to its strength. Faith

contains assurance in it, as the flower contains the fruit; and yet, if faith be weak, it does not mount up to the full strength of assurance. But what is assurance? It is really only a large measure of faith, differing from faith not in quality but quantity; not in nature but in degree. Assurance, then, is only faith grown to man's estate, or faith raised up so as to act in a powerful way. It is not, therefore, a gift of the Holy Spirit distinct from faith, but faith drawn out, as it were, and shone upon by the blessed Spirit. It therefore rises and falls, ebbs and flows with faith and the actings of faith. But the "*assurance*" here spoken of is not so much an assurance of interest, as an assurance that the gospel was the gospel of the grace of God. It was therefore, not so much their assurance of their personal interest in the electing love of God, as an assurance that the gospel which Paul preached, and which had come to their souls in power, was the gospel of the grace of God.

Now, have you not sometimes felt this firm and sweet assurance when you could not perhaps feel the certainty of your own salvation? There was something in the gospel as preached in your ears which came with that demonstration and power, that savour and sweetness to your soul, as fully convinced you it was the gospel; and as such, was worthy of all acceptation. Under these feelings you could scarcely forbear, crying out; "This is the gospel; I can live and die by this gospel; I am sure, and more than sure, that this is the gospel. I see a beauty in it; I feel a power in it. I have inward and solemn delight in it; it drops with that savour and sweetness into my soul; it is so commended to my conscience; it so shines into my understanding, that I am sure it is the very gospel of the grace of God; and what I can and do embrace as suitable to all my wants, and glorifying to God." Now, this assurance may not be an assurance of your interest in the gospel, but still it is such an assurance that

the gospel preached in your ears is the gospel of the grace of God, that you embrace it with all the faith that is in your heart. The law has no assurance of this kind, except the assurance that all are cursed who live and die under it. Nor has a muddled mixture of law and gospel this assurance. It may terrify and alarm the conscience, as Wesleyans talk of being shaken over hell, and may produce powerful convictions, and hold the mind in bondage and terror but it does not shine with that beautiful grandeur; it does not warm the soul by its blessed beams nor come with that peculiar demonstration and power which attends the gospel. *That* sometimes carries with it such a blessedness, that it seems so to lift the soul out of itself as to take and carry it gently into the bosom of God. *That* comes with such balmy sweetness into the conscience, and drops with such life and light into the poor benighted spirit, that it dissolves into love every tender affection of the heart. There is something in the gospel which never can be described; it carries with it its own evidence, and shines in the brightness of its own testimony. Wherever this is felt, the gospel has come, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

It is this divine power and heavenly assurance that makes God's people so love the gospel. Men wonder sometimes, and say to one another, "How is it that these people will walk so many miles to Stamford, or Oakham, or elsewhere, year after year, in all weathers, to hear preaching? We wonder why they cannot stay at home, and attend their parish church, or the chapel in the village: but instead of remaining quietly at home, they will trample through mud and mire as if they were mad." Ah! these people do not know the sweetness that there is in the gospel when preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The people of God feel that there is nothing but this which can move the loads of sin

under which they groan, take guilt off their conscience, lift up their affections to God, bring sweet and blessed feelings into their soul, and give them an assurance of their salvation. It is this secret power attending the gospel which makes it fall like dew drops of honey from heaven. And wherever this is felt, it gives such a love to the gospel, that a man cannot help going to hear it: nay, he will time after time walk many miles merely with the hope of feeling one soft touch of this heavenly power. He will come Lord's day after Lord's day, for month after month merely to get a honey drop from the mouth of God through the gospel; and if it be given him, it well repays him for all his toils, his sore limbs, weary feet, and aching head. "O!" says one of these despised ones, "to get a testimony of my interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, in his dying love and precious blood is well worth going many weary miles for." And if he be sometimes overborne with fatigue through the week's work, and feel almost disposed to stay at home, yet says he, "I must go again, for if the Lord should be pleased this day to give me a little taste of the gospel, and of my interest in it, I shall not mind how tired I am at night." This, then, is the secret why the Lord's people travel so far to hear the gospel; and this will explain why they love the preachers of the gospel, the books that savour of the gospel, the people that know the gospel, and feel sweet union with those who have experienced the power of the gospel. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant," which is the gospel; and because this gospel has come to them "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," they love it, delight in it, and cleave unto it. Now, if you can find anything of this in your soul, you are one of the elect of God. "Knowing, brethren beloved," says the Apostle, "your election of God." This was to him a proof of their election of God, that the gospel had come to them "not in word only, but also in power; and in the Holy Ghost,

and in much assurance."

If, then, the gospel has come with these three things into your soul, you are the elect of God. God has chosen you in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, he gave you to his dear Son, that he might redeem you from death and hell. You are saved in him with an everlasting salvation. Walk then worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. Bless and praise the God of all grace for his glorious gospel, and praise that divine power with which his gospel has come into your soul.