

## JESUS AND HIS SHEEP.

John x. 27, 28.

All the truths of the gospel, like the stones of an arch, are intimately connected, afford each other mutual support, forming one united and harmonious whole; but if taken separately and alone, their beauty is gone, their union broken, and their strength destroyed.

It is very desirable to have a comprehensive view of divine truth. The word of God must be studied as a whole. We must consider the relation of one doctrine to another, and attend to the scope of the writer. The two verses before us, contain various sentiments of a very interesting and important nature. Jesus says:—

*My sheep.* This implies their personal and eternal election. You will observe that Jesus calls persons *his sheep*, even before their conversion. "Other sheep *I have* which are not of this fold, them also *I must bring.*" Many of these were *unborn*, and all of them *uncalled* at this time; yet Jesus had them as a donation from the Father. Then as regards the Corinthians he says, "*I have* much people in this city;" Acts xviii. 10. Even in Corinth, where the temple of Venus was built, Christ had *much people.* Thus we find that sinners belong to Jesus by election, before they are his by effectual calling. Election originates with God, is *eternal* in its date, Eph. i. 4; *benevolent* in its design, 2 Thess. ii. 13; *extensive* in numbers, Rev. vii. 9; *personal* in the objects of its choice, Rom. ix. 12, 13; xvi. 13; *sovereign* in its nature, Rom. ix. 15; and *certain* in its accomplishment: Rom. ix. 11. Election rests on the *foreknowledge* of God, 1 Pet. i. 2, and the *immutability* of the divine character ensures its performance: Mal. iii. 6. *My sheep:*

*Hear my voice.* Here is effectual calling. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Multitudes hear the gospel, and perish in unbelief. But Jesus says, "my sheep shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." v. 16. My voice shall not only be heard among them, but be heard by them—they shall hear my voice. To some the gospel comes in "word only," but to Christ's sheep it comes in "power, and in the Holy Ghost." 1 Thess. i. 5. There is no uncertainty about the salvation of the elect. Whatever instrumentality may be employed, it is Christ that brings his sheep to himself. "*I must bring them,*" as a matter of faithfulness to my covenant obligation. Their salvation not being left arbitrary, even in reference to myself. Christ *must* in honor bring those whom the Father hath given him. The purposes of God are unchangeable, and his grace invincible, hence it must prevail. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Some may contradict, blaspheme, and "believe not," but "as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." Acts xiii. 48. "My sheep shall hear my voice."

*And I know them.* Then if so, here is their justification. The word know does not simply mean knowledge, but also to approve, love, care for,—the sheep of Christ are accepted of God through the beloved. When Jesus says to false professors, "I never knew you," he does not mean that he was ignorant of their character, but that he never loved them. They were not his sheep. So Paul says, "For that which I do I allow not." Rom. vii. 15. The same word occurs here—I do not approve of my conduct. But Jesus knows and loves his sheep. They are washed in his blood, sanctified by his grace, and justified in his righteousness. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them."

*And they follow me.* Behold the christian's obedience. We are elected to salvation "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The word of command is follow me. We should imitate the character, and imbibed the spirit, of Jesus. The Saviour's life illustrated his own precepts. There is not an act of obedience required of us, which Jesus himself has not performed. We should follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Christ is the leader of the flock, and his sheep should tread in his steps.

*And give unto them eternal life.* Mark their perfect security and final happiness. To have eternal life, is to possess every blessing that God can give, and to experience all the happiness that we can enjoy. All Christ's sheep will be finally glorified. As Jesus begins this "good work" in his sheep, so he will carry it on. He never left anything in an unfinished state. No reason whatever can be assigned why he should begin a work of

grace in the heart of his sheep and then forsake it. Where the Lord gives grace, he will give glory. "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand."

Thus we see that Jesus "is all and in all;" Col. iii. 11. These are blessed truths in this dark world. Jesus elects, calls, justifies, preserves his sheep, and finally gives them all eternal life. By these doctrines man is stripped of all self-righteousness, proved to be in a lost condition; Jesus is exalted, and salvation by grace is established upon a solid foundation that nothing can ever destroy.—*Primitive Church Magazine.* J. BATES.

## LONDON STRICT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

A Public Meeting of this Association was held at Little Wild-street Chapel, on Tuesday, December 19. After the brethren and assembled friends had taken tea, brother C. Woollacott gave out a hymn, and then said, the following subject had been suggested for consideration: "The danger of Ungodly companions." He then called on the brethren Pepper, W. Bowser, Rothery, T. Price, R. W. Overbury, and Oliver, to address the meeting. The brethren spoke to the damage done to the christian himself from all such unnecessary associations, as well as the injurious effects likely to be produced upon the ungodly; and illustrated by several references, how assimilations to the world, in copying of its inventions, and an imitation of its spirit and maxims, had proved the fruitful source of stagnation and death. But, said one of the brethren, "How beneficial must the influence of the London Strict Baptist Association be, on the churches in union with it, and how calculated to act as a preservative from the evil deplored, and against which it becomes us to be so constantly on our guard." At seven o'clock, after reading the scriptures, and prayer by brother Dickerson, a discourse was delivered by brother J. Woodard, on "the Characteristics of Apostolic Preaching."—Brother W. selected as a text, 2 Cor. ii. 17: "For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God, &c.;" and after tracing up the origin of the gospel ministry to the ancient purpose of love and mercy, and a brief exposition of the context, proceeded to say that two things would engage his attention. 1. The men and their qualifications. 2. The design to be accomplished. Under the first part it was observed, that the apostles were God's chosen ministers—they were partially qualified for their work by Christ's instruction, but the gift of the Holy Ghost was more peculiarly their great qualification. The subject matter of their ministry was the word of God, including Christ personally, as well as the entire revelation of the gospel. Their discourses were full of the word of God literally; hence, they are charged with a message to deliver, not to invent,—they had nothing to do with the arrangement of the message, or how it might be received; their business was simply to minister that which was committed to them. It included both the law and the gospel—they however distinguished these, not mixed them—they preached the law to shut the mouths of sinners, and as introductory to the gospel. Their ministry was said to have been distinguished by great simplicity, by its faithfulness to their divine Lord, and to their hearers; by its adaptation—it was not a general testimony without a distinction or discrimination—by its consistency and harmony—they ministered with dignity and solemnity of manner, and with great tenderness. Under the second branch of the discourse, two things were briefly adverted to, 1. The special: 2. The general results of their ministry. Under the former the great design was said to consist in the gathering together of God's elect—their establishment in grace; and preparation for eternity; and under the latter, their preaching was calculated generally to restrain vice, and to promote civilization and moralization. Throughout the discourse brother W. insisted on the necessity of ministers now carefully observing the pattern and example of the apostles. Brethren Lewis and Wyard took part in the devotional exercises of the evening.

The next Public Meeting will be held at Trinity Chapel, Southwark, on Tuesday, Feb. 20. Tea at five o'clock. Subject for conference among the brethren,—"The Cause of Obstruction to Christian Communion, and its Antidote."—Brother Bonner to preach on the "Origin, nature, and extent of christian duty."—*Id.*

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## SUFFERINGS OF NONCONFORMISTS IN 1686.

Never, not even under the tyranny of Laud, had the condition of the Puritans been so deplorable as at that time. Never had spies been so actively employed in detecting congregations. Never had magistrates, grand jurors, rectors, and church wardens, been so much on the alert. Many dissenters were cited before the ecclesiastical courts. Others found it necessary to purchase the connivance of the agents of the government, by presents of hogsheads of wine, and of gloves stuffed with guineas. It was impossible for all the sectaries to pray together without precautions such as are employed by coiners and receivers of stolen goods. The places of meeting were frequently changed. Worship was performed sometimes just before break of day; and sometimes at dead of night. Round the building where the little flock was gathered together, sentinels were posted to give the alarm if a stranger drew near. The minister in disguise was introduced through the garden and the back yard. In some houses there were trapdoors through which, in case of danger, he might descend. Where nonconformists lived next door to each other, the walls were often broken open, and secret passages were made from dwelling to dwelling. No psalm was sung; and many contrivances were made to prevent the voice of the preacher, in his moments of fervour, from being heard beyond the walls. Yet, with all this care, it was often found impossible to elude the vigilance of informers. In the suburbs of London, especially, the law was enforced with the utmost rigour. Several opulent gentlemen were accused of holding conventicles. Their houses were strictly searched, and distresses were levied to the amount of many thousands of pounds. The fiercer and bolder sectaries, thus driven from the shelter of roofs, met in the open air, and determined to repel force by force. A Middlesex justice, who had learned that a nightly prayer meeting was held in a gravel pit about two miles from London, took with him a strong body of constables, broke in upon the assembly, and seized the preacher. But the congregation, which consisted of about 200 men, soon rescued their pastor, and put the magistrate and his officers to flight. This, however, was no ordinary occurrence. In general, the Puritan spirit seemed to be more effectually cowed at this conjuncture than at any moment before or since. The tory pamphleteers boasted that not one fanatic dared to move tongue or pen in defence of his religious opinions. Dissenting ministers, however blameless in life, however eminent for learning and abilities, could not venture to walk the streets for fear of outrages; which were not only not repressed, but encouraged, by those whose duty it was to preserve the peace. Some divines of great fame were in prison.—Among these was Richard Baxter. Others who had, during a quarter of a century, borne up against oppression, now lost heart, and quitted the Kingdom. Among these was John Howe. Great numbers of persons who had been accustomed to frequent conventicles repaired to the parish churches. It was remarked that the schismatics who had been terrified into this show of conformity might easily be distinguished by the difficulty they had in finding out the collect, and by the awkward manner in which they bowed at the name of Jesus.—*Macaulay's History of England.*

## RUINOUS COST OF THE ARMY AND NAVY.

Since the close of the last war we have expended upwards of £448,000,000, which is more than half the amount spent during the war itself. Last year, being the thirty-third in a general peace, as already stated, we spent in the same way £18,500,000. In two years at this rate of expenditure, our fighting establishments consume a capital equal to that employed in the cotton trade! One year of such an expenditure would pay the wages of 700,000 agricultural labourers, at 10s. a week, being as much as is paid to the peasantry of England and Wales! To expect a reduction of taxation while successive Governments are allowed to pursue this iniquitous system is utterly hopeless, for whatsoever may be saved by retrenchment in other departments, will be immediately expended in sustaining and increasing our naval and military forces. Of the £51,250,000, the estimated amount of the revenue for 1848, above £28,000,000 are applied in payment of the interest of the national debt. Of the remaining £23,000,000, above £16,000,000 are absorbed at once by the national armaments

alone, the cost of which swallows up the whole of the stamp duties, the assessed taxes, and the property and income tax united; is with-in £3,500,000 of the customs' duties; and nearly half as much again as the excise!—When, therefore, the Ministry expressed a desire to diminish our financial burdens, and, at the same time, increased the very expenditure which of all others required reduction, they were simply playing the hypocrite. Had they been honest in their professed desire to economise, they had but to go back to the expenditure of 1837 or 1838, which was found quite adequate for our protection, and the property and income tax might have been altogether dispensed with; or, if that were too sweeping a reduction, by reducing our armed force to the amount at which it stood in 1845, they might have repealed the window tax, which they admit to be a most impolitic impost.—*Reformer's Almanac.*

## AN INCIDENT IN REAL LIFE.

A gentleman in this city has furnished us with the following interesting narrative of one of those real struggles of the young, to assist their parents, which sparkle like diamonds along the pathway of human life. In traits like these there is a moral heroism manifested, which marks the pure gold of human character.—*Wisconsin Paper.*

"Business called me to the United States Land Office; while there, awaiting the completion of my business, a lad apparently about 16 or 17 years old came in, and presented to the receiver a certificate of purchase for 40 acres of land. I was struck with the countenance and general appearance of the lad, and inquired of him for whom he was purchasing the land; the reply was 'For myself, sir.' I then inquired where he got the money; he answered, 'I earned it by my labour.' Then, said I, 'you richly deserve the land.' I then inquired, 'Where did you come from?' 'New York,' said he. Feeling an increased desire to know something more of this lad, I asked him whether he had parents, and where they lived; on this question, he took a seat, and gave me the following narrative:—

"I am from New York State—have there living a father, mother, and five brothers and sisters—I am the oldest child. Father is a drinking man, and often would return home from his day's work drunk, and not a cent in his pocket to buy food for the family, having spent all his days earnings in liquor with his drinking companions; the family had to depend chiefly on mother and myself for bread; this distressed mother much, and had a powerful effect on my feelings. Finding that father would not abstain from liquor, I resolved to make an effort in some way to relieve mother, sisters and brothers from want. After revolving things over in my mind, and consulting with mother, I got all the information I could about the Far West, and started for Wisconsin with three dollars in my pocket. I left home on foot. After spending my three dollars, I worked occasionally a day, and renewed my travel so long as money lasted. By labour occasionally, and the charitable treatment I got on the road, I landed in Wisconsin. Here I got an axe, set to work and cleared land by the job—earned money, saved it, till I gathered \$50, which money I now pay for the 40 acres of land."

"Well, my good lad (for by this time I became much interested in his story), what are you going to do with this land? 'Why, sir, I will continue to work and earn money, and when I have spare time, prepare some of my land for culture, raise myself a log house, and when prepared, will write father and mother, brothers and sisters, to come to Wisconsin and enjoy this home. This land now bought by me, I design for my mother, which will secure her from want in her declining years.' 'What,' said I, 'will you do with your father if he continues to drink ardent spirits to excess?' 'Oh, sir, when we get him on the farm he will feel at home, will work at home, will keep no liquor in the house, and in a short time he will be a sober man.' I then replied, 'Young man, these being your principles so young, I recommend you to improve on them, and the blessing of God will attend you. I shall not be surprised to hear of your advancement to the highest post of honor in the State; with such principles as you have, you are deserving of the noblest commendation.'

"By this time the receiver handed him his duplicate receipt for his 40 acres of land; rising from his seat on leaving the office, he said, 'At last I have a home for my mother!'"