

The Mystery of God's Sovereignty in Evangelism

*Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: **for I have much people in this city.** And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. **Acts 18:9-11***

An incredible event takes place while Paul is preaching in the city of Corinth – He is on his 2nd missionary journey – there has been both blessing and opposition to his evangelistic work – in Acts 18, it seems to be implied that Paul was facing fears and fighting struggles within his own heart while he is evangelizing.

So the Lord appears to Paul in a night vision and encourages him with **three comforting realities**:

- 1. He is comforted with His Presence** (*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee,*)
- 2. He is comforted with His Protection** (*no man shall set on thee to hurt thee:*)
- 3. He is comforted with His Sovereignty** (*for I have much people in this city*)

The Sovereignty of God in Evangelism

I. What does this mean?

God is Sovereign in Man's Salvation – General Truth

"...for I have much people in this city"

God is not saying that I know the future and who is going to make a decision to accept or reject me (though this is true).

God is not saying that I looked down the corridor of time and saw who would choose to love me and therefore I chose to love and accept them. **I John 4:19**

What He is saying is this: There is to me or there belongs to me in this city many people who are mine already – **Paul**, you don't know who they are, **and Paul**, they don't know who they are, **but Paul**, I know who they are because I have chosen them to be mine through my Son, Jesus Christ.

So, Paul, do not be discouraged or fearful, but continue in your evangelistic work, because in my sovereignty I am **directing and ordering your work in order to fulfill My own eternal plan** to save my people through your preaching.

Throughout the book of Acts we have a cluster of verses that reveals the sovereignty of God in salvation.

We see this in the death of Christ!

*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: **Acts 2:23***

*“...Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. **Acts 4:27-28***

In Peter's sermon on Pentecost, he announces this truth:

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts 2:39

Luke acknowledges that Paul's success in his first missionary journey is attributed to God's sovereignty

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

We see this work in an individual's heart named Lydia in the city of Philippi

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Acts 16:14

In our **comprehensive ability** – the sovereignty of God is a **profound mystery** - In God's infinite wisdom, His purposes are as good as accomplished.

'for I have much people in this city.'

II. What are the implications?

A. Negative

1. The sovereignty of God is not a hindrance to our responsibility to evangelize.

It is very clear that Paul's vision in the night from God came saying 'I have much people in this city' came in the midst of his

extremely busy work if evangelism. This is not Dr. Stuff Shirt sitting in his theological ivory tower pontificating on the intricate mysteries of salvation. This was a church-planting , evangelist.

Evangelism is the believer's duty

The older theologians spoke of:

a. God's Will of Precept - His published declaration of what man is to do. This is God's law!

b. God's Will of Purpose - He has decreed that He will do what He has purposed to do (which largely secret)

*The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. **Deut. 29:29***

The principle of evangelism is the rule of duty! Our responsibility is to obey God's revealed will – not His secret will. We are to order our lives by the light of His command – not by the mystery of His sovereignty.

2. The sovereignty of God is not a hindrance to the necessity of evangelism.

No man can be saved without hearing the Gospel. This should be clear. Romans 10:13-15, 17

The God who ordained the **end** (salvation) has ordained the **means** (evangelism). If people do not hear the Gospel, they cannot be saved.

@ William Carey developed a great burden for foreign missions. He addressed the Ministers Fraternal of the Northampton Baptist Association in 1787 concerning missions, John Ryland Sr. replied, "Sit down young man. You are an enthusiast! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without consulting you or me."

The reprimand spurred William Carey to greater zeal for missions. In 1792 Carey wrote *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*.

This would become the Magna Carta for the modern mission movement.

William Carey's passion to evangelize was right - God's way of saving men is through His servants going into the world to preach the Gospel.

3. The sovereignty of God is not a hindrance to our inviting people to come to Christ.

Imbedded in the nature of the Gospel is the call to come to Christ.

God offers life to "whosoever will" – God invites all men to come to him – no one is turned away – the invitation is free and unlimited.

*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. **John 6:37***

All men are responsible to believe. The Bible doesn't say men miss heaven because they are not **elect** but because they **neglect** so great salvation.

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **John 3:19***

This should cause us to avoid extremes – isms

“For I have much people in this city...”

B. Positive

The Sovereignty of God is the basis for confidence in evangelism

In this case, it seems very clear that this statement from God was for Paul's encouragement “I have much people in this city”

In other words, Paul your labors are not in vain!

*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. **Is. 55:11***

Some have suggested that an emphasis on the Sovereignty of God is the Death of Evangelism. In Paul's case it appears to be the **life of evangelism.**

C.H. Spurgeon was asked if he could reconcile the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. He replied; ‘I wouldn't try. I never have to reconcile friends.’

They are friends who work together.

The more I understand human nature and the more I am involved in evangelism – I have no hope that my work will ever be successful apart from divine intervention.

Fact is, evangelism is the most **pointless** work apart from God's work apart from God's sovereignty – **John 6:44**

Man's nature is of such that clarity, fervency, organization, promotion, methodology, technology – have no effect apart from divine intervening grace.

Thank God, He does work! 'I have much people in this city'

God's power in calling sinners should cause me to be extremely confident and encouraged in evangelism.

– **"I have much people in this city"**

1. I should be bold in my witness

God is at work. When people naturally reject the Gospel – when they seem resistant – don't be surprised. However, God is able! Even a word can change a life!

2. I should be patient

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover

themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2Tim. 2:24-26

We are in a hurry – God is not! We want quick results – God is working over a lifetime!

3. I should be prayerful!

The very nature of prayer is a confession of God’s sovereignty – God you must work. If you don’t work nothing will happen. All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One come down. God is able to change hearts. God does change hearts! The salvation of sinner depends upon God, therefore prayer is all the more necessary.

The most glorious works of grace that have ever took place, have been in answer to prayer; and it is this way, we have the greatest reason to suppose, that the glorious out-pouring of the Spirit, which we expect at last, will be bestowed.” – William Carey

Then along came William Carey, small town Baptist preacher. He studied the Scriptures, and came to the conclusion that God expects all Christians to play an active role in God’s mission in the world. When Carey initially shared his ideas and his desire to go to India as a missionary to the congregation, one of the elders said, “Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen he will do it without your aid or mine.” Carey didn’t sit down. Guided by the Word, Carey persisted and the Baptist Missionary Society was born, which became a model for sending missionaries into the world from both England and America.

In 1786, he stood up in a ministers’ meeting and told them that it was the duty of all Christians to come together and spread the Gospel around the world. One old hyper-Calvinist in the meeting

shouted, “Young man, sit down—when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid and mine.”

Evangelism is only successful by the activity of God in and upon

“The most glorious works of grace that have ever took place, have been in answer to prayer; and it is in this way, we have the greatest reason to suppose, that the glorious out-pouring of the Spirit, which we expect at last, will be bestowed.”

He did not say there are people in this city that I know are going to make

Whether you agree with this is irrelevant -

How do we face the Sovereignty of God? What about those words like election and calling? What should be our response to this in light of the command to evangelize?

We see three very clear truths concerning the sovereignty of God and evangelism!

1. God is sovereign in man’s salvation! (election) is based in God’s choice – “I have many people in this city.” The sovereignty of God is the ultimate foundation for the salvation of any person.

He did not say there are people in this city that I know are going to make a decision to accept – though that is true – he said there are people in this city that are mine – though don’t know it – but they are mine. God is not looking down the corridors of time at the people who are going to believe – He is looking down the corridors of time at the people he has chosen in Christ. God is

always the first cause of everything. 'We love Him because He first loved us.'

What is meant by sovereignty? God is the Lord and King in this world who directs and orders every event for the fulfillment of His own eternal plan.

Evangelism is a task for all people. It is a task for communicating a message from the Creator to rebel mankind.

How is evangelism affected by our belief in the sovereignty of God?

Sovereignty forms an antinomy in biblical thinking. Sovereignty and responsibility must stand side-by-side – God is the Lord and the Lawgiver. We are responsible to God as Lawgiver and Judge – God is King who rules over all and controls and orders all human deeds. He orders the universe. Man is responsible for His actions and God is sovereign in relationship to those actions.

This antinomy is forced upon us when we consider God's Will!

The Lawgiver:

Eph. 5:17; 6:16

1 Thes. 4:3

The King:

Eph. 1:5, 9, 11

God's will is His eternal purpose for the disposal of His creatures, His will as the sovereign Lord.

1. The Will of Precept

**His published declaration of what man is to do. This is God's law!
This tells us what we should be!**

2. The Will of Purpose

**His (largely secret) decision as to what He Himself will do. This is
God's plan! This tells us what we will be!**

**Both are facts, but how they are related in the mind of God is
inscrutable. God is incomprehensible.**

So – here is the issue:

- 1. Do all things happen under the direct dominion of God?**
- 2. Has God already fixed the future by His decree?**
- 3. Has God resolved whom He will save and whom He will not?**
- 4. How does this bear on our duty to evangelism?**

This is the question that troubles man. Some have come to believe in sovereignty uncompromisingly and without any qualifications. This is different from a generation ago that did not have these same convictions – therefore, should we modify our evangelistic practice – these methods were developed by people who did not believe what we believe about God's absolute sovereignty in salvation – should we not refuse these methods?

Some who do not hold the exact same position on sovereignty – perhaps they do not take it seriously – believe it will mean the death of evangelism. It will undercut the urgency for evangelistic action.

Satan will do anything he can to hold up evangelism. To one group – he tempts them to become inhibited and cynical about current

endeavors – the second group becomes panicky and alarmist – both grow self-righteous and bitter and conceited as they criticize others. Both need to watch out for Satan.

The answer is critical!

1. The sovereignty of God in grace does not affect anything that we have said about the nature and duty of evangelism.

@ Dave Doran – I have concluded that whether you are Arminian or Calvinistic – the real issue is who goes and tells the story?

There are some who can't even spell sovereignty! God's sovereignty and man's duty are not in conflict.

The principle here is the rule of duty – the measure of our responsibility is God's revealed will or precept – not His hidden will of event. We are to order our lives by the light of the law – not by our guesses and plans.

Deut. 29:29 The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

There are things God is pleased to keep to Himself. These things have no bearing on the duty to witness. They are not relevant in any for interpreting any part of God's law. Now the command to evangelize is a part of God's law. It belongs to God's revealed will. It could not be affected in the slightest degree by anything that we might believe about God's sovereignty in election and calling. We are to evangelize universally and without discrimination.

a. This does not affect the necessity to evangelize.

No man can be saved without the Gospel. This should be clear.
Romans 10:12-15

Salvation depends on faith and faith depends on knowing the Gospel. People are saved by coming into contact with the Gospel. The God who ordained the end has ordained the means.

We are vital links in the chain of God's purpose for the salvation of the elect. Because God has determined something does not imply that evangelizing is not needed for its fulfillment. In the parable of the wedding, passers-by came when they heard the invitation.

b. It does not affect the urgency of evangelism.

Men are lost without Christ. We are sent to tell them of the only One who can save. Is not their need urgent? We should never be held back by the thought that they may not be God's elect. The identity of the elect is one of God's 'secret things.' We are called to love of our neighbor period. We are to love 'every man.'

c. This does not affect the genuineness of the gospel invitation.

The Gospel really does offer Christ and the promise of justification and life to 'whosoever will'. God calls all men to repent and invites all men to come. The invitation is for sinners only and sinners universally – the fact that the gospel invitation is free and unlimited is the glory of the Gospel as a revelation of divine grace.

The promises of the Gospel exclude any possibility of God not receiving anyone who comes to Him. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'

It is true that God:

1. Has chosen from eternity those whom He will save.
2. It is true that Christ came to save those whom the Father gave Him.
3. It is also true that Christ offers Himself freely to all men as their Savior

We see these two ideas juxtaposed in the following passage:

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. John 6:38-39

Here is Christ's saving mission – the whole company

He offers Himself without distinction and He will save whom He will if they believe.

These two truths stand side by side.

d. This does not affect the responsibility of the sinner for his reaction to the Gospel.

The man who rejects Christ becomes the cause of his own condemnation. Unbelief is a guilty thing. The unbeliever is offered the Gospel and He could have it if he would – no one is responsible but He.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The Bible never says sinner miss heaven because they are not **elect** but because they **neglect** the great salvation.

Laziness, love of sin, unbelief, and unwillingness to come to Christ are the things that ruin the soul. God gives men what they choose.

2. The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.

Some are fearful that the belief in sovereign grace leads to the conclusion that evangelism is pointless, since God will save His elect anyway; whether they hear the Gospel or not.

We have come to a false conclusion based on a false assumption. The truth is just the opposite. The sovereignty of God in grace is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being pointless.

It creates the certainty that evangelism is going to be fruitful! Were it not for sovereignty evangelism would be the most futile and useless enterprise the world has ever seen – no more complete waste of time under the sun than to preach the Gospel.

Why? Man's spiritual inability in sin.

Fallen man is blinded and cannot grasp spiritual truth – 1 Cor. 2:14

Fallen man is perverted and ungodly in nature – Romans 8:7

Paul asserts that unregenerate man man's failure to receive truth as a matter of fact. This failure is a necessity of nature. It is something certain and inevitable and universal and unalterable – it is not in man to do otherwise than fail in this way.

'neither can he know them'

'neither indeed can be.'

Man in Adam does not have it in him to apprehend spiritual realities – or to obey God's law from the heart. The law of human nature is enmity against God – is enmity against God leading to defection from God. It is instinctive to suppress and evade and deny God's truth – to shrug off his authority and to flout God's law – so that, when he hears the Gospel he disbelieves and disobeys it.

He is dead – incapacitated for any positive reaction to God's Word, deaf to God's speech, blind to God's truth, impervious to God's inducements.

Corpses don't respond!

That's not all – Satan is at work to keep us where we are – he works in the children of disobedience – the two obstacles in the way of evangelism is:

1. Man's natural and irresistible impulse to oppose God
2. Satan's assiduity in shepherding man in the ways of unbelief and disobedience.

What does this mean for evangelism? It cannot possibly succeed. However clear and cogent we may be in the presenting the Gospel. Can you and I by our earnest talking break the power of Satan over a man's life? Can you and I give life to spiritually dead people? Can we hope to convince sinners of the truth of the Gospel by patient explanation? Can we hope to move men by any words of entreaty that we may utter? Our approach to evangelism is not realistic till we have faced this shattering fact. It needs to have an impact on us.

Based on human enterprise, evangelism is a hopeless task. In principle it cannot produce the desired result.

We do not have the slightest prospect that any or all of efforts will bring a single soul to God - clear and attractive preaching; talking to people in a challenging way; organizing special services; distributing tracts; flooding the country with publicity – unless there is some factor in the situation, over and above our endeavors. All is doomed to failure. This is the rock-bottom truth!

Here is the canker that has weakened evangelism – we all agree that it is not in a healthy state – what is the nature of this malady – how is it cured.

Some have concluded that the problem is the belief in the sovereignty of God – a faith that expresses itself in a fresh emphasis on unconditional election and effectual calling.

The remedy – refute these truths, suppress them, discourage people from taking them seriously. How do we explain that the great evangelists of the past believed these things?

Somehow the problem is in the method of evangelistic meetings we hold – perhaps we need to change them – we need to be more somber – do away with appeals and counseling rooms and after-meetings then evangelism would reinvigorate.

It is a deeper diagnosis – this evangelistic malaise is due to a widespread neurosis of disillusionment – an unacknowledged failure of nerve – springing from a long-standing failure to reckon with the fact that evangelism, regarded as a human enterprise, must be expected to fail.

It has been taught that evangelism was sure to succeed if it was regularly prayed for and correctly run. Men like Moody and Torrey were successful. The reason – because God was working in England in an unusual way. However, these type of meetings have become less fruitful.

It has unnerved us because we were not prepared for it. We have come to believe that is going to bless the routine – organization, technique, routine prayers –guaranteeing results. Life will come to a dead town through a special meeting with a special speaker.

We still think this way at the top of our minds – but at the bottom of our minds, in our heart of hearts, we have grown discouraged, disillusioned, and apprehensive. We thought well-planned evangelism was going to succeed - now we are afraid of failure. Yet we struggle to admit our fears.

How do we handle the fact that our planned evangelism is a failure?

We repress our fears! Our evangelism becomes half-hearted. The trouble is our unconfessed doubts as to the worth-whileness of what we are doing.

Why do we have these doubts? We are disillusioned! Why? We have faced repeated failure in our evangelistic techniques in which we once reposed such confidence.

What is the cure?

1. We are foolish to think that any evangelistic technique can guarantee success in conversion
2. It should be no cause for surprise if at any time our evangelism fails to result in conversion – men are by nature are impervious to the Word of God.
3. We are called to be faithful – not successful.
4. We must learn to rest all our hopes of fruit upon the omnipotent grace and power of God.

God does what man cannot do. He works through by His Spirit through His Word in the hearts of sinful men to bring them to repentance and faith.

Phil. 1:29

It is all a gift – Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 11:18 – God works faith and repentance into men's hearts.

Calling – effectual calling – this distinguishes things from an ineffective summons. Is God at work in this heart? This is the

operation whereby God causes sinners to understand and respond to the gospel invitation.

It is a work of creative power – God gives men new hearts, freeing them from slavery to sin, abolishing their inability to know and do God’s truth, leading them to turn to God and trust Christ as their Savior.

God breaks Satan’s hold upon them; delivering hem from the domain of darkness and transferring them into ‘the kingdom of his dear Son.’

The calling creates the response which it seeks – confers the blessing which it invites. ‘Prevenient grace’ – it precedes any motion Godward in the heart of sinful man.

This work dethrones the disposition to resist grace. It is an activity of God in and upon fallen men ‘enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand he things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.’

Jesus taught the universal necessity of this – John 6:44

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Jesus taught the universal efficacy of this – John 6:45

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Jesus taught the universal certainty of it – John 6:37

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Effectual calling is the outworking of God's purpose in election.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

2 Thes 2:13

The author of the call is God

The mode of the call is the Gospel

The issue of the call is a title to glory

Here is why Paul could face disillusionment and discouragement – evangelism is a hopeless task without God. He kept his eyes on the sovereignty of God.

Is. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

He had confidence that wherever the word of the Lord would God would raise the dead. This confidence made him tireless, confident, and expectant in his evangelism. There were ahrd spells and opposition.

In Corinth – there was a time when things were hard; opposition was mounting; Paul was wondering if it was worth persevering.

Go on preaching and teaching – let nothing stop you – there are many people here whom I mean to bring to myself through your testimony of the gospel.

This confirms the prevenient choice of God. This gave Paul hope as he preached to deaf ears and held up Christ to blind eyes. Where Christ sends the Gospel there Christ has his people – bounds in chains of sin soon to be released. This was Paul’s confidence and expectancy.

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, –
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.’*

There is no magic in methods – even theologically impeccable methods – our trust must be in God who raises the dead and who turns men’s hearts – He will give conversions in his on time. Our part is to be faithful in making the Gospel known – sure that our labor is not in vain. This is how the truth of the sovereignty of God’s grace bears upon evangelism.

1. *This should make us bold* – the task is daunting – people at first shrug it off in apathy and contempt. We should not be surprised since people are bondslaves of Satan. We shouldn’t be discouraged – no one is too hard for grace. Just look at Paul himself – You are not wasting your time or on a fool’s errand. Do not be ashamed, half-hearted, or apologetic. You have every

reason to be bold, free, natural, and hopeful of success. God can give His truth an effectiveness that you and I cannot give.

2. *This should make us patient* – we should be patient in the face of a lack of response. God saves in His own time – we demand quick results; anything that takes time and demands sustained effort we tend to be impatient. We get downcast and lose interest in them, and feel that it is useless to spend time on them; and we abandon our efforts. Evangelism demands more perseverance and love and care than most realize – quick results are not promised; this is not a sign of failure; there is the law of sowing and reaping – he has to hear the Gospel and be convinced of it – Paul says they have to hear it, believe it, and then call on the Lord. We are to keep pace with what God is doing in their lives. Your proof of love is seen in your patience with them.

Our patience is found in His sovereignty and the promise of His Word. He kept Abraham waiting for 25 years before he received the promise.

3. *This should make us prayerful* – prayer confesses our impotence and need, acknowledges our helplessness and dependence, and invokes the mighty power of God to do for us what we cannot do for us. We depend wholly on God to make our witness effective. Our confidence is in the God who can give men new hearts.

God intends for us to rely upon Him. Often He withholds His blessings until His people start to pray. This is the universal rule. 'Ye have not because ye ask not.' God will make us pray before He blesses our labors in order that we may constantly learn afresh that we depend on God for everything. We God do give conversions – to whom will we ascribe the glory – to our own

gifts, skills, wisdom, persuasiveness? No but to His work alone – the response is gratitude.

What should be the burden of our prayers? The Holy Spirit would open their eyes; that the Spirit's power would rest upon us; that our evangelism would be fruitful.

Because God is sovereign then we should pray more and not less – constant, faithful, earnest, and persistent.

Belief in sovereignty should not reduce or narrow our evangelism – it should expand it. We should both preach and pray – we should preach because without the knowledge of the Gospel, no one can be saved; we are to pray, because only the sovereign Spirit is us and in men's hearts can make our preaching effective to men's salvation; and God will not send His Spirit where there is no prayer.

Reforming our methods of evangelism are irrelevant if we do not reform our praying – we need a spirit of supplication for evangelistic work.

The way forward in evangelism is to testify of the Lord and to His Gospel, in public and in private, in preaching and in personal dealing, with boldness, patience, power, authority, and love; and that we should also be taught afresh to pray for God's blessing on our witness with humility and importunity. It is as simple—and as difficult—as that.

Forward advance is still on our knees.

The appeal and the application is still prayer.

The sovereignty of God undergirds and upholds us, by creating hope of success; teaches us to bind together preaching and praying; and makes us bold and confident before men; humble and importunate before GOD.