

## **IRRESISTIBLE GRACE**

What happens when someone becomes a Christian? The world would say it is simply a matter of a person changing their beliefs. A man becomes a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Marxist, an atheist, a Christian: it is all the same process, ultimately. You swap one set of beliefs for another. There is nothing out of the ordinary here, nothing that takes us outside the realm of human psychology. It can all be explained according to the natural laws of the human mind. People change their beliefs; and becoming a Christian is just another example of this general human phenomenon.

The Bible, however, views things very differently. It says that when someone becomes a Christian, something quite extraordinary has happened. And although it does involve a change of beliefs, such as we have just described, it involves far deeper things, things that do take us beyond the realm of ordinary human possibilities. According to the Bible, becoming a Christian is in fact a supernatural event: it can be explained only by the power of God almighty, working in a person's life in a quite uncommon and exceptional way; and the event is portrayed in the language of the Bible as nothing less than a new creation - a new birth - a miraculous resurrection out of death into a new life.

If we ask why becoming a Christian should be so different from any other change of human beliefs, the biblical answer is that Christianity is more than just intellectual belief. Believing in our heads what Christianity says is indeed within our natural grasp. There is nothing supernatural about having a brain-

knowledge of the Bible. True faith, however, the faith that truly puts a person in a right relationship with God, goes much further. As well as the beliefs of the mind, it also embraces what (in popular language) we call the heart and the will - the deepest likes, dislikes, and commitments at the core of our being - the feelings and desires that determine our whole practical outlook on life. In other words, true faith in Jesus Christ includes desiring Christ, and hungering after the blessings of salvation that He offers.

After all, Satan and the demons of hell believe in Christ intellectually; they know full well who He is; their minds may indeed have a better intellectual grasp of theology than our minds do. But no demon has any desire for Christ, any heart for Christ, any willingness to live in the presence of Christ. So true saving faith, the faith that truly saves the soul, includes but goes beyond intellectual belief. It involves a positive inclination of the heart towards the Son of God: a real desire for the life, grace, salvation, and fellowship with God that Christ bestows. Faith penetrates from the brain into the will: from the top of the mind into the bottom of the heart.

And that is why true faith is beyond the natural possibilities of sinful human nature. We recollect the first sermon in the series, where we considered the doctrine of Total Depravity. Outside of Christ, in our fallen and sinful state, we are spiritually dead. Alienated from God, the one fountain of spiritual life, our souls are destitute of all spiritual vitality, and incapable of true spiritual activity. Whatever I may believe in my head - even though, like the demons, I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God - my heart is spiritually lifeless and estranged from my Creator. I have no desire for Him: I do not wish Him to be the centre around which my life revolves.

Therefore, when God's Word comes to us, calling us to turn to Jesus Christ and yield ourselves to Him as our Saviour and Master, that Word meets with no living response. Just as, if I were to try to persuade a dead body to do something - to stand up, to go here or there - the body would not heed my words. Its deadness would resist all my attempts to move it to living action. And so it is with the sinful human heart, left to its own devices and desires: it resists the call of Christ; its spiritual deadness is a dead weight of inertia, that will not move in response to mere words, mere persuasion, mere exhortation.

The Bible teaches that God must do something for us that we cannot do for ourselves. There is this opposition in my dead human heart to God's call in Jesus Christ, whereby He summons me to faith and repentance. Therefore God must do something for me above and beyond mere words. He must put forth an almighty energy that will overcome all the insensitive, unfeeling resistance that my spiritual death opposes to the message of life. This is why God's work in saving the individual is often called Irresistible Grace. It is irresistible in that it successfully overcomes all the innate resistance of our natural unbelief and impenitence - all the inbuilt opposition of dead matter to living impulses. Some Reformed theologians prefer to say Efficacious Grace. This phrase teaches the same lesson: here is a converting energy of God that is efficacious in nature - it actually brings about the conversion of the sinner. It does not leave me to my own devices, but powerfully, effectively, and triumphantly transforms me, from an impenitent unbeliever, to a repentant believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see, then, that Irresistible or Efficacious Grace is the

sovereign power of God, exerted in such a way that a spiritually dead sinner lives again. Left to ourselves, we will never come to Christ, never believe to the saving of our souls, never repent of our ungodliness. How can we? We are spiritually devoid of life, incapable of living spiritual action towards God. But God Himself works within us to produce a result that would be beyond the horizon of human possibility. By the same awesome and mysterious power that in the beginning created the universe out of nothing, He works again, to change an unbeliever into a believer - an impenitent soul into a repentant soul - a man outside of Christ and full of spiritual death, into a man in union with Christ and filled with His Spirit of life.

And therefore the conversion of a sinner is a supernatural work of God. When a person becomes a Christian, something as remarkable as the creation of the universe has taken place, or as extraordinary as a resurrection from the dead. It is no human work, and no credit can be claimed either by the person converted, or by any human agent (such as a preacher) who may have been involved in the conversion. For left to himself, the converted soul would never have obeyed the call of Jesus Christ; and left to himself, the preacher would have been wasting his efforts, since his words in themselves cannot bestow life on the dead. All the credit belongs to God, and only to God. He has blessed the otherwise ineffectual words of the preacher, and galvanised the otherwise unresponsive will of the listener, so that by divine and almighty power the call of Christ strikes home, and sovereignly brings about the otherwise unattainable response of saving faith in the Son of God, and repentance unto life everlasting.

Our confession of faith, the 1689 Baptist Confession, says this

on God's Irresistible or Efficacious Grace: "Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the 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."

Where in the Bible do we see this doctrine taught? One place is Ephesians 1:18-20, where Paul prays "that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints: what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places."

Paul here speaks of an exercise of God's mighty power towards those who believe. What power is this? Verse 20 - the same power that raised Christ from dead. So Paul is speaking about resurrection power: the life-giving power of God that breaks into the darkness of the tomb, and makes the dead rise and live again. There is a mighty working of such resurrection power towards the believer, says the apostle. Some see this as future: a reference to the bodily resurrection of believers on the last day. But the majority of commentators (with whom I agree) see it as a reference to conversion. In other words, when people believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, a mighty divine power - resurrection power - has been at work in

thus converting them to God's Son. Indeed, their conversion is nothing less than a spiritual rising again from a condition of death. This, of course, fits in with what we saw in the first sermon of the series, under the heading of Total Depravity. The state of sin is a state of spiritual death; the soul, having fallen away from God, has abandoned the only fountain of life, and is now the spiritual equivalent of a severed limb, cut off from the source of vitality, all spiritual life extinct. Hence when a sinner is liberated from that awful state, and reunited with God in Christ, the soul of that man or woman has undergone a miraculous resurrection from the dead.

The apostle Paul, then, wants us to know what a mighty and awesome power has been at work in bringing us to Jesus Christ for salvation, and granting us a true faith in Him. It is the same glorious power that worked in raising Christ Himself from the dead. As the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a supernatural event beyond all human power, so also is the conversion of a sinner. Physical death and spiritual death correspond: both are on the other side of the horizon of any human help or natural remedy. So when a soul is converted, brought from spiritual death to life in Christ, a power beyond man and beyond nature has been at work. That soul has been raised from the dead by the almighty, supernatural, sovereign power of God Himself, the great Lord and Life-Giver.

So then, Paul here wishes us to appreciate what a mighty, superhuman work God has performed in us, if we have trusted in Christ for salvation. We have been raised from the tomb! It is "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe", giving us a faith that unites us to Christ - a faith otherwise outside the bounds of human possibility, for those who by nature are spiritually dead. As the early church father

John Chrysostom says: “from understanding who we were, and how we believed, we shall know His power and sovereignty, in turning again to Himself those who had been so long time estranged from Him... Inasmuch as it is by the self-same power by which He raised Christ from the dead, that He has also drawn us to Himself.”

Martin Luther says this: “Faith is no such easy matter as our adversaries imagine, when they say, ‘Believe, believe, how easy is it to believe.’ Neither is it a mere human work, which I can perform for myself, but it is a divine power in the heart, by which we are born anew, and whereby we are able to overcome the mighty power of the devil and of death; as Paul says to the Colossians, ‘In whom you are raised up again through the faith which God works’ (Colossians 2:12).”

If we are Christians, then, do we appreciate what a glorious and divine power has drawn us to Christ, given us faith, and reconciled us to God? Do we realise that outside of Christ and His kingdom, we were not just spiritually imperfect or inadequate or ignorant or wandering, but spiritually dead, so that God almighty, in order to bring us to Himself, had to exert the same sovereign power that raised up Christ from the tomb? Our conversion testifies to the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead!

As I said at the beginning of this study, the Bible compares the conversion of a sinner with a resurrection, a new creation, and a new birth. We have considered this under the image of a resurrection; let us now look at the other two images. First, a new creation. **2 Corinthians 4:6**: “God who commanded light

to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Paul here equates conversion with God’s act of creation on the first day. According to the Genesis account, the first day of creation witnessed the bringing into being of light. “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.” Paul takes this account of the creation of light, and applies it to the conversion of a soul to Christ. Just as God in the beginning spoke into the darkness His creative word, “Let there be light”, and there was light, so the same God has spoken His creative word in our hearts. We were full of spiritual darkness; we had no true knowledge of our Creator; we were without God and without hope in the world; but God spoke - “Let there be light” - and His Word shone in our hearts, and gave us the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

So the conversion of a sinner to the Saviour is put in parallel with God’s creative act on the first day by which He spoke light into existence. Is that not a perfect illustration of Irresistible or Efficacious Grace? The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. Could the darkness itself ever have given birth to the light? No; it needed God’s creative act. But when God spoke, could the darkness prevent God’s creation of light? No; light flooded forth, and the darkness was conquered. So it is in the salvation of a sinner. Our spiritual darkness can never give birth to the light of salvation; it needs God’s creative act. As He said in the beginning, so He must say within us now, “Let there be light.” But when God speaks, can the darkness within us prevent God’s creation of light? No; light floods forth, and our

darkness is conquered. Converting grace is almighty, creative, sovereign, efficacious. As Arthur Pink comments on this verse of 2 Corinthians:

“In the darkness of a heart which, in its native condition, is a chamber of spiritual death, God shines with a light that is none other than Himself. The One who is light irradiates the benighted soul, and in His light it now sees the fullness of truth and grace shining in the face of Jesus Christ. By sovereign fiat and miraculous power the soul is now enabled to discern the glory of the Divine perfections manifested in and through the Redeemer.”

The conversion of a sinner, then, is an act of new creation by God. As Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” The sinner can no more convert himself than he can create a world; but when the power that created the world works to convert a sinner, not all the powers of hell can stop it.

Conversion is also set before us as a new birth. As Christ says to Nicodemus in **John 3:3-5** “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” The kingdom of God is the sphere of salvation, where God is enthroned in the hearts of His people, protecting them from all enemies, conquering the powers of sin, death, and Satan. Yet, says Christ, in order to see this kingdom, to enter it and participate in its blessings, a man must

be born again of the Spirit of God.

And so conversion is once again presented as something beyond human power; for a man is not born of himself. In the physical realm, I did not bring about my own birth; I did not choose my parents, or the time or the place of my coming into the world. So in the spiritual realm: it is the Spirit who gives spiritual birth. I do not bring it about; I do not choose the time or place; but everything lies in the hands of the sovereign Spirit. As Christ goes on to say to Nicodemus, “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” These words portray the unpredictable, uncontrollable freedom of the Holy Spirit in His bestowal of new birth. He surveys the massed ranks of the spiritually dead, and blows upon whomever He pleases to give them life. John Gill comments:

“the Spirit of God is a free agent in regeneration; He works how, and where, and when He pleases; He acts freely in the first operation of his grace on the heart, and in all after influences of it... and this grace of the Spirit in regeneration, like the wind, is powerful and irresistible; it carries all before it; there is no withstanding it; it throws down Satan’s strongholds, demolishes the fortifications of sin; the whole posse of hell, and the corruptions of a man’s heart, are not a match for it; when the Spirit works, who can prevent?”

This, then, is the doctrine of Irresistible or Efficacious Grace. It is the creative power of God, put forth in such a way that those who are spiritually dead live again. By the impulse of our own sinful natures, we will never come to Christ, never entrust our

souls to Him for salvation, never repent of our sin. How can we? We are spiritually destitute of life. Our souls are dead towards God. But God Himself touches our souls with His life-giving hand, and brings about a result that is outside the scope of mere human strength. By His almighty Spirit, God sovereignly works, to transform an impenitent unbeliever into a repentant believer - a man outside of Christ and spiritually dead, into a man in Christ and spiritually alive. Therefore all the praise, all the credit, for our conversion belongs to God, and only to God. **Jonah 2:9**, "Salvation is of the LORD."

Now let us look at two possible objections to this doctrine. The first is as follows. If conversion is the sovereign work of God, not the work of our own wills, then does that not absolve the unconverted sinner of all responsibility to come to Christ for salvation? Could the sinner not just say, "Only God can convert me. Therefore I need not trouble myself. I will carry on as I am. If God converts me, so be it; if He does not, so be it. But it is nothing to do with me. Therefore I released from all responsibility in the matter"?

This objection, however, arises from a complete failure to understand the nature of responsibility. The inescapable fact is, it *is* our responsibility, our duty, to come to Christ for salvation. True, the Bible says we are spiritually incapable of performing this duty, unless God moves us by His efficacious grace; but that does not in the least alter the fact that it is our duty. Duty is not based on ability. Duty is based on the nature of what is right and good. And the nature of what is right and good does not change, merely because my will is spiritually incapable of doing it.

After all, think of Satan and his demons. They are spiritually

incapable of loving or obeying God. Their depravity is absolute; their wills are hardened into everlasting and immutable hostility to their Creator; their spiritual capacity for loving and obeying Him has been eternally destroyed. Would anyone say it is no longer right or good for them to love and obey? That the fallen angels are absolved from all duty to love and obey God? That they are now released from all the bonds of moral obligation, and are no longer accountable for their actions? Of course not. Their incapacity does not alter their duty in the slightest. They still ought to love and obey the Holy and Righteous One who made them, even though their devilish hearts cannot and never will. The right and the good have not changed, merely because of their spiritual corruption and perversity. Surely we see, then, very plainly, that duty and responsibility are not measured according to spiritual ability, but according to the nature of what is right and good. Satan and the demons of hell still ought to love and obey God, even though they are spiritually incapable of it. If that were not true, they could no longer be held morally accountable for their disobedience.

We can apply the same truth to ourselves. It is right and good that I should repent, that I should yield myself to Christ, that I should accept Him as my Lord, my God, and my Saviour. The fact that through sin I am spiritually incapable of doing this, does not mean it ceases to be the right thing and the good thing to do. Despite my incapacity, my duty remains. I ought to repent; I ought to yield myself to Christ; I ought to accept Him as my Lord, my God, and my Saviour. The deep-rooted, stubborn, inflexible sinfulness of my fallen heart means that I never will do these things, unless God by His efficacious grace impels me to do them; but that in no way changes the fact that it is my duty, my responsibility, to do them. The right and the

good have not changed, merely because of my spiritual corruption and perversity.

So the whole idea that if I am unconverted, I have no responsibility to repent and come to Christ, since efficacious grace alone can move me to do it - this whole idea is a fundamental misunderstanding of responsibility. Responsibility is not rooted in ability, but in the nature of the right and the good. Is it right and good that I repent? Then I ought to repent; it is my duty. Is it right and good that I come to Christ? Then I ought to come to Christ; it is my duty. Efficacious grace enables me to do my duty, but it was still my duty all along. My spiritual deadness does not absolve me from the obligation to do what is right and good. If it did, Satan and his demons could no longer be held to account for their hatred of God. I have a responsibility to repent, because repentance is right and good; I have a responsibility to come to Christ, because coming to Christ is right and good. Efficacious grace does not create that responsibility; it simply empowers me to do what was already my responsibility. Unless we grasp this, we will tangle ourselves up in endless confusion, and deaden our consciences to the nature and the imperative of our duty to God.

Where, someone may ask, does the Bible say it is the duty of the unconverted to repent and come to Christ? Consider the following passages:

**John 12:36** “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” Christ gives this exhortation to a group of unbelieving Jews: believe in the light! And by the light, the Lord Jesus Christ of course means Himself. Christ is the true light who shines amid the darkness. So it is the duty of unbelievers to believe in the Son of God as the light of the

world. There is nothing optional about it. Believe in the light, accept the light, so that you may become children of light!

**Acts 17:30-31** “God now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” The apostle Paul here tells us very clearly that God has raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, appointing Him the Judge of the whole world, and that therefore - on that basis - God now commands everyone everywhere to repent. “Repent” here obviously involves accepting Christ - turning away from sin by turning to Christ and yielding to Him. We will stand before Him as our Judge at last; therefore let us bow to Him as our Saviour now. So again, God’s message binds me with a duty to come to Christ.

Finally listen to Paul in **2 Thessalonians 1:7-8** “when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul says we are to *obey* the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that God has given us a Saviour who has made the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for sin by His death on the cross - this Gospel requires an obedient response. We are under obligation to give a positive response to the Gospel once we hear it. And we will be punished for our unbelief on the day of judgment, says Paul, if we fail to give this positive response. And so once again, the Gospel lays upon us the duty to accept the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us keep these two truths, then, equally clear and shining bright in our minds. On the one hand, it is our duty and

responsibility to come to the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation. On the other hand, efficacious grace alone can induce us and enable us to do our duty, to perform our responsibility, so that anyone who obeys the Gospel and comes to Christ owes it to God's grace, not his own will.

More briefly, the second objection to Irresistible or Efficacious Grace, is that it depicts God as forcing people to become Christians. Conversion therefore becomes a kind of violent assault on the personality. Some have even called it a species of rape. This, however, is another fundamental misunderstanding. Reformed theology does not say that God forces people to become Christians. It says something quite different: namely, that God transforms us from within, so that the unwilling become willing. We are not dragged kicking and screaming to Christ. That would not be conversion at all. It would merely be a forced submission to superior power. No, we are not forced to come against our wills, but are made willing to come. As Psalm 110 says of the Messiah, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." Accordingly the 1689 Confession says of the saved that God effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, "yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

The idea, then, that God's grace forces people to become Christians, is in reality a wild caricature of Reformed teaching. There is a whole universe of difference, even on the human level, between forcing someone to do something against their will, and changing their minds about something so that they do it willingly. I could force you against your will to drink something you believed to be poison, by pouring it down your throat at gunpoint. But I could get you drink it willingly, by explaining to you that it is not poison at all, but a medicine that will cure you of an illness you have; my explanation is

persuasive, I change your mind, and you drink it willingly. Something of the sort, albeit on an altogether higher plane, happens when God draws us to Christ. He first works within us to change our minds, our perception of Christ, granting us a new sense of spiritual vision to see Him as the Sovereign Truth and the Supreme Good. Accompanying that radical change of perception comes an equally radical change of will. We now come to Christ gladly. We are not forced to come, but made willing to come. As Christ Himself says in **John 6:44-45**, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. As it is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”

Where does this leave us practically? Let me suggest three lessons in closing. First, a lesson for those who do not as yet have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. It is your duty and your responsibility to come to Christ; yet without God’s efficacious grace, you will never do it. That leaves you with two practical options. You could either say, “I do not care about my duty, I have no concern about my responsibility, I will just go on without Christ.” If that is your response, then you have chosen your fate. You will not then be able to complain on Judgment Day about the loss of heaven, since that was the very destiny you chose on earth. God is simply giving you the fruit of your own choice. On the other hand, you could say, “I do care about my duty, I am concerned about my responsibility, I must come to Christ.” In that case, you should cry to God to grant you His efficacious grace. Pray that He will incline your heart to Christ and draw you effectually to Him, so that you receive and accept Him as your Saviour and Lord. Such a prayer, if sincerely offered, will always be answered; indeed, the very prayer is itself the dawn of grace. Everyone

who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Second lesson: if we are Christians, the doctrine of Irresistible or Efficacious Grace lies at the foundation of our gratitude to God. Why am I a Christian? Why am I converted? Why am I spiritually alive? Because of the grace of God. Not to myself, therefore, but to Him I owe all thanks for my salvation. **Psalm 79:13**, “we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will give You thanks forever; we will show forth Your praise to all generations.”

Third lesson: the doctrine of Irresistible or Efficacious Grace provides our motivation for evangelism. What is the point of witnessing to the spiritually dead? Why speak to a corpse? Pointless indeed, if all we had was the doctrine of Total Depravity. But we also have the doctrine of Irresistible Grace. Therefore we speak, not because our words have power to convert, but because God in His almighty life-giving grace is able to use our words, to wing them with divine efficacy, and make them an instrument of His power to raise the dead. Our hope lies not in our own eloquence, not in our own sincerity, not in the intellectual clarity of our presentation of the Gospel, but in the Efficacious Grace of a sovereign God.

Perhaps the greatest, most eloquent, most successful preacher in the English language was George Whitefield. Myriads were converted to the Lord Jesus Christ under his preaching. Yet did Whitefield think it was his eloquence that converted people? Not at all. He said this: “the power of raising the spiritually dead belongeth only unto God. Do thou therefore, O Holy Jesus, who by Thy almighty word commandest Lazarus to come forth, though he had lain in the grave some days, speak also as effectually to these spiritually

dead souls, whom Satan for many years hath so fast bound by sensual pleasures, that they are not so much as able to lift up their eyes or hearts to heaven.”

So Whitefield believed. With all his eloquence, he knew he could not convert a single soul, but that God’s life-giving grace must work with him and through him. Should that not encourage us, who do not have the eloquence of Whitefield? We do not have his compelling voice, his emotional charisma, or his command of words. But we have the same God. The God of Irresistible, Efficacious Grace who worked through George Whitefield can work through us too: just as powerfully through our words as through his, to bring a person to Christ. For the power lies not in the words, but in the God who chooses to fill the words with the penetrating, illuminating power of His supernatural grace.

May He then encourage us, and work His own work, as His Spirit blows where He wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes, sovereignly bestowing new birth on those in the deadness of sin. With such a God, we can well afford to speak. **2 Corinthians 4:13**, “since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed and therefore I spoke,’ we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus” - and knowing, too, that He can use our feeble words and witness to raise up others from spiritual death into newness of life. May it be so, for the salvation of sinners and the glory of God alone.