

THE GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE

by WILLIAM GADSBY

"To the praise of the glory of his grace." (Ephesians 1:6)

As the Lord shall be graciously pleased to give me wisdom and strength,
I shall endeavor to call your attention to three leading particulars;

I. What is grace, God's rich and free grace.

II. Point out some branches of the glory of God's grace.

III. Make a few remarks on some things as connected with our text,
which the Lord has done to the praise of the glory of his grace.

I. What then is God's free grace? The word grace is in almost everybody's mouth who makes a profession of religion. "Salvation is all of grace; we must be saved by grace," are words frequently spoken. But if you will allow the bulk of professors to tell their own tale but for a few minutes, you will find that they either do not understand the meaning of grace, or else they do not mean what they say. There is a large body of professors of religion who say that salvation is all of grace, and then roundly assert that if God does not give all men a chance of being saved, he is an unjust God. What a horrible idea! God unjust if he does not give all men a chance of being saved! If that be true, then instead of salvation being all of grace, it is a debt that God owes to rebel man, and if he does not pay the debt, he is an unjust God; and upon that ground there can be no real thanks due to him, for he only does that which to leave undone would impeach his justice; and if so, how can it be of grace? Grace is free, unmerited, undeserved favor; and if God would be unjust if he did not give guilty man a chance of being saved, then it cannot be of grace, but of debt. (Rom. 4:4)

Salvation is either entirely of grace, entirely of works, or of works and grace together. Now let us hear what God the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, says upon this subject: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. 11:5,6) Thus, beloved, you see that salvation is entirely of God's free grace, and not a debt which he owes to rebel man, nor does it in any measure proceed from the works of man, but is the rich, free, undeserved favor of God to poor, worthless, guilty sinners, who have awfully merited his righteous indignation. And this rich bestowment of grace is without the least idea of worth or worthiness in them upon whom it is

bestowed. (2 Tim. 1:9); Tit. 3:5) Thus God's people will both see and feel that salvation, in all its bearings, is of God's rich, free grace.

We are often told by proud, pompous man, that salvation is within the grasp of every man, and that it is the duty of all men to whom the gospel comes to have saving repentance towards God and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if man has not a natural capability of doing these things, God would be unjust in punishing him for sin. Why, were it possible for the devil to feel shame, he would be ashamed of such a doctrine as that. God unjust if he does not give guilty man a chance of being saved! And if man has not a natural capability of performing the conditions of that chance! The very thought is horrifying to every really spiritual mind. The fact is, we are, in and by and as the effect of the fall of Adam, and by our own awful transgressions of God's holy law, already in a guilty, ruined condition, and stand in need of salvation. It does not need salvation, nor an offer of salvation, to justify God in condemning us. We are already guilty of breaking his holy law, and stand justly condemned by it. (Rom. 3:19) Talk about God not being just in damning guilty man, unless he gives him a chance of being saved! It is awful blasphemy. If ever we are saved, we must be brought by the invincible power of God the Holy Ghost to feel our lost, ruined, guilty condition before the Lord, and that we are so lost and ruined by sin that we have no power to help ourselves. In our legal conflict, we shall try, and try again; but all our efforts will prove abortive; for, with agonizing pain we shall feel that the disease is too deep, and the guilt too awfully great for any human arm to reach or cure.

But, say some, though man has lost his ability to obey, God has not lost his authority to command; therefore, it is the duty of man to have saving faith in the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the fact is, man, in his innocent, holy state, in Adam the first, never had redemption through the blood of Christ. He never did, as an innocent, holy man, by and in his creation relationship, simply considered as the creature of God, possess either pardon of sin or justification through grace by the righteousness of Christ imputed; and, therefore, could not have saving faith in them. These are blessings suited to, and designed for sinners; therefore innocent, holy Adam, and all men in him, could not lose them by the fall, it being impossible to lose that which they never had. They, with all other new covenant blessings, were treasured up in, and secured by the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Head of the church, and for his church. The Lord created man holy in his own image as the God of nature; but supernatural, spiritual, free grace blessings were all secured in Christ. God never trusted Adam the first, nor any other mere man, with the care and charge of them, nor ever will. They were all locked up in the heart of Christ before the world was. "It has pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell." (Col. 1:19)

And, bless his precious name, he is full of grace and truth, and of his fullness his dear people receive, and grace for grace. (John 1:14,16) The eternal, electing love of God is the spring-head of all spiritual blessings, and matchless grace has given them all in Christ, and made them all sure to the seed of promise. This is the word of God, and according to that word we must either stand or fall. Ah! Say some of you, I do not like it.

That may be, and a strong proof it is that you are rotten at heart. Your heart is not made sound and upright in the sight of a heart-searching God, by the divine, quickening, enlightening, teaching power of God the Holy Ghost. If the Lord had made your heart honest, you would like God's word, and though you might tremble at some parts of it, (Isa. 66:2) you would feelingly know that the things we have stated are what just suit your necessitous circumstances, and that you must either be saved by the rich, free, discriminating grace of God, or perish forever; and every gleam of hope you had in this free grace gospel would lead you to bless the Lord for it; and when, by the unctuous power of God the Spirit, you felt your interest in this glorious salvation, you would freely say, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name be all the praise."

Poor vain, proud man may boast of the wonders he both can do, and does; as it is written, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? But what says the answer of God? I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

(Matt. 7:22,23) Who, my friends, can these boasters be? Surely not the people of God, so often called Antinomians. No, no; they have had their mouths stopped by the law of works, and boasting excluded by the law of faith, (Rom. 3:19,27) Therefore it cannot be they. It must be those characters who boast of their mighty doings now, who are often in effect saying, "See what we do for God; see our zeal for the Lord;" and they will do their best to carry it to the bar of God, and boast till the Lord sends them to hell, unless the Lord quickens their dead souls and makes them ashamed of their boasting, to feel and know their ruined, lost condition, and to cry out for mercy and pardon through the precious blood of the Lamb. But if the Lord breaks their hard hearts, gives them a tender conscience, and blesses them with vital repentance towards God and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, revealing Christ in them the hope of glory; then they will feelingly know, heartily confess, and solemnly sing, "Salvation is of grace; sovereign, rich, and free grace."

O the matchless grace of God! What is it? Who can describe it? Let a poor worm venture to drop a hint or two upon it. It is the glorious, rich teeming out of the free favor of God the Father in election and its glorious bearings; of God the Son in redemption, and all he is and has, and has done for his spouse, the church of God; of God the Spirit in his quickening, enlightening, teaching, sealing, anointing, and sanctifying

power. Every act of the eternal Trinity, from the first contrivance of the plan of salvation to the full consummation of it in glory, when and where the whole church shall be with Christ and like him, is all of the rich free favor and sovereign grace of God the eternal Trinity.

Now let me ask you, before I proceed, has the Lord ever teemed a measure of free grace into your heart? Have you ever been solemnly amazed that you are out of hell, and, from a feeling sense of your loathsome condition, cried, "O Lord, I am vile?" And have you been obliged to cry mightily to the Lord for pardoning mercy, and has the dear Lord ever blessed you with a feeling hope in Christ as the salvation of your soul? "O," say some of you, "I have had a pious education, was sent to a pious school, and had pious tutors, and when I came to years of maturity, I became more decidedly pious. I never experienced any particular change, and the minister under whom I sit tells me not to expect any, but simply to believe, and do my duty, and all will be well." Then your minister is one of the devil's quacks, administering the devil's opium, and is doing his best to lull you asleep in carnal security. Eternal truth declares that we have all sinned; that we were "born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mother conceive us;" (Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Rom. 3:12) and Immanuel declares, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Whatever pious education you have had, if God never quickens your dead soul, communicating divine life and light; if you are never, in the court of your conscience, brought in guilty before God, and made to confess your sins with abhorrence, and sicken, under a sense of your vileness, at his feet; if you are never brought, from feeling necessity, to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," (Luke 18:13) and led by the Holy Spirit to believe in and rest upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, but are left to trust in your pious education and decided piety, and so make this the ground and foundation of your hope; you may think me extravagant in what I am going to say, but if this be your case, it is nothing better than idolatry. You set up your piety in the place of Christ, and if you die in that state, your imaginary piety will be fuel for hell flames. Do not mistake me. I do not mean to say that pious acts are idolatry. No; they are good in their place; but when they are trusted in, they become idols, being substituted for Christ, and thus rendered fuel for eternal burning. (Matt. 23:25-28; Rom. 10:2-4; Matt. 7:21-23)

But do I hear some poor soul say, "Ah me! I feel myself lost and ruined; and sure I am, that if ever I am saved at all, it must be by the free teeming out of God's matchless free grace, without any worth or worthiness in me. But I am so vile, guilty, and detestable, that I fear the Lord will never save me?" Come, poor soul; still cry unto the Lord, for his matchless, free, rich grace is just suited to thy condition; and his blessed Majesty says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver

thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Ps. 50:15) You are in your feelings ruined and entirely lost, and God's grace is free in all the rich bearings of it. It is the free teeming out of his sovereign favor to the poor and needy. Worth or worthiness can make no claim here.

"The poorer the wretch, the welcomer here."

And whoever is brought, from feeling necessity, to cry to the Lord for mercy, and really and truly call upon him in the day of trouble, shall in the end, receive manifestative grace in his soul; and of such a soul it shall be said, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles;" "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) Thus proving that grace is free, unmerited, undeserved favor of the Lord.

II. We now come, in the second place, to speak of some things connected with the glory of God's grace.

1. Grace quickens the dead, enlightens the blind, and makes the dumb cry out again, and at last sing for joy. **2.** It pardons the guilty. **3.** It justifies the ungodly. **4.** It brings prisoners out of their prison-house, and sets the captive free. **5.** It communicates divine holiness to the unholy. **6.** It raises the poor man out of the dust, and the beggar out of the dunghill, and sets him among princes, even the princes of God's people; and thus stamps immortal dignity upon the degraded. **7.** It strengthens the weak, confirms the feeble, and upholds the sickly. **8.** It brings poor vile worms to have sweet and solemn intercourse with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. **9.** It restores backsliders. **10.** It brings millions of once poor wretched sinners to ineffable glory, and makes them more glorious than the holy angels; and all to the praise of the glory of God's grace.

1. Then it is one branch of the glory of grace that the Lord, in rich mercy, quickens the dead, enlightens the blind, and makes the dumb to cry, and at last sing for joy. By nature all men are "dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. 2:1,5) and darkness itself. They are in very deed dead to all spiritual and true holiness; not one holy act, holy desire, holy thought, or holy motion can they perform. They are totally dead to the image and life of God, and to all real intercourse with him. They are as unable to perform one spiritual act as a dead corpse is to rise out of his grave, and perform the common functions of life. Do I hear some say, "No, no, not so dead as that; for man is able to read or hear the word of God, and to go to a place of worship; the same legs which carry him to an alehouse would carry him to a place of worship, and with the same tongue and

lips with which he blasphemes God he is capable of saying his prayers?" And so he may, in the letter of it, and a hundred things more, but all this may be done without one particle of spiritual life or vital godliness. You may go through a long round of external duties, as they are called, and add to that a natural belief of the various branches of divine truth, and yet be "dead in trespasses and sins." But if you have no divine life and light from the Lord, but rest for salvation in your external natural duties and belief, you are doing your best to damn your souls comfortably. Men may have a form of godliness, and at the same time deny the power; yea, and go about very zealously to establish their own righteousness, while they have never submitted to the righteousness of God, and cry Peace, peace, where God has not made peace, and so prove they are strangers to vital godliness. May God Almighty, if it be his sovereign pleasure, have mercy upon you, and strip you of your self-righteousness and self-confidence, quicken your dead souls, and make you feelingly know what poor, vile, dead sinners you are by nature and practice, causing you to feel your lost, ruined condition, and cry mightily to God for pardoning mercy.

When God, in his rich grace, takes a poor sinner manifestatively in hand, the first thing he does is give life and light. (Eph. 2:4,5; John 5:25; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Ps. 119:130) Some good men have endeavored to prove that God gives spiritual light before he gives spiritual life; but to me it appears that the Lord communicates them both at one and the same time, and they mostly act in the soul together: "In Christ was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4) And again, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) When this divine life and light are communicated, the dead soul is quickened, and the dark soul is enlightened. We begin to see sin in the light of God's countenance, and even our secret sins are laid open to the conscience, and we both see and feel that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. The pure life and light of God, placed in the conscience against our vile deadness and darkness, horrify the soul; and though we may not be able to account for our feelings and sight, we do find that we have such as we never had before, and such as we cannot get rid of. We now become, in soul feeling, real sinners before a heart-searching God, and really tremble at his word. We both see and feel that God is pure and we are impure, that God is just and we are unjust, and that there is an awful disparity between God and us, and we feelingly cry, "What poor, vile sinner like me can stand before such a holy God, whose law I have broken in so many ways, and whose majesty I have so often insulted?" By this light and life, the soul feels and sees its own inability to help itself, or take one step in self and of self towards obtaining either real holiness or happiness. By this light and life, the living soul in the end both sees and feels that there is no way of access to God, nor acceptance with him, but in the person, blood, and obedience of

the Lord Jesus Christ; but how to get at that, the poor soul cannot tell, till the dear Lord makes manifest in the heart, by the divine power of the Holy Ghost, the truth couched in the following branches of God's word: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" (2 Cor, 5:21) "And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2:10) When the glorious substance of these blessed truths is brought home to the conscience by the power of the Holy Ghost, the soul can then solemnly sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. 27:1) And this is to the praise of the glory of God's grace. In some of God's people this glorious light shines more bright than the sun, and its rays appear to pierce through the whole soul; and with the light the Lord speaks in divine power, "Behold me;" or, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" (John 1:29) or, "Look unto me, and be ye saved;" (Isa. 45:22) and with this makes manifest such a glorious display of the person, beauty, love, and loveliness of Christ crucified, as fills the soul with holy amazement, wonder, love, and praise. Sin and guilt appear to have taken their flight never to appear again, and the soul is swallowed up in praise and adoration. The glory of God appears in all his works and ways; the soul seems as if it were translated into another world, and never expects to be in darkness again, but in very deed feels that blessed truth, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13) Though the Lord acts as a sovereign, and does not always shine in the same conspicuous way into the hearts of all his children, yet he brings them all, in a certain degree, to see light in his light, and feel life in his life, and know and feel that they have no salvation but in the Lord alone. Do I hear some poor soul say, "I have never been able to sing that glorious song, and I fear I never shall be; yet I thirst and pant for it, and glad should I be to know the Lord had indeed quickened and enlightened my soul?" Hear the word of God to his quickened, spiritually taught family; "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) "This portion of God's word," say you, "cuts me up root and branch, for I am all vile, and have no good works to boast of." No, if you thought you had, that would be no proof that you were interested in that salvation which excludes creature boasting. One of the first branches of good works which the Holy Spirit produces in the quickened soul is to give the sinner a tender conscience, and make him honest before God. Then he does not conceal his sin, but, like an honest man, confesses feelingly that he is a vile, ungodly, ruined sinner, and deserves the righteous wrath and indignation of the Lord, and he wonders that he is not already in hell. Whoever may tell him that he is not so base and vile, he both sees and feels that he is, and with shame of heart confesses it before God; and thus it is to the

glory of grace that he is made honest at the feet of the Lord. "And is this a proof of life?" say you. Yes, if in very deed it is felt and truly confessed. (1 John 1:9) It is one thing to acknowledge it with the tongue, and another to feel it in the heart. A man may have head and tongue religion, and never feel one particle of it in his heart; and a head stuffed with the various branches of truth, when the heart is a stranger to them, only produces a religious brain fever, and the poor creature often goes wild in matters of religion. But one proof that the Lord has put his life in the heart, is when in reality they feel themselves poor, deathly, loathsome, base, vile sinners, too deathly to raise themselves up in either hope or faith, or any other spiritual act. Suppose you put two dead corpses together; neither of them would either quake or move; but place a tender, living man bare upon a dead one, and the living man would shiver, and say, "Take me away, or I must die; it is so dead and cold I cannot bear it." Just so it is in a spiritual sense. A man dead in sin is a total stranger to the deadness, coldness, and wretchedness of his heart. He has no real spiritual feeling. But a living soul feels, and groans, and signs and pants, and cries, and shivers under a sense of his deathliness. There are many like Saul of Tarsus before God quickened him. They have many good things to boast of; but when the Holy Ghost gives them divine life, they begin both to see, feel, and confess that they are awful sinners before God; and eventually the poor will feel himself so lost and ruined, that if hell blazed before his eyes, and he were to hear the yellings of damned souls, he has no power to keep himself out of the horrible pit, and before a heart-searching God he declares and confesses that there is no help in him. O, say some, I think in such a case I could hope and believe in and love God, and help my own soul. You have never been there, nor in close legal conflict, heartily tried with hell and destruction in your own conscience, or else you would know better. A poor soul who has had a dead fall, and felt his plague, must have a dead lift, or he never can rise. The poor soul that really believes and feels this has life at the bottom, a life which comes from the Lord, and centers in him, and shall never die; and though it may be like a spark hid in the embers, it shall break forth in God's due time.

Another proof of life is a thirsting for God, the living God, a real panting after the pardoning love, mercy, and grace of God, a spiritual hungering and thirsting after righteousness, such a thirsting as nothing but the Lord can satisfy. All that the world calls good or great will not do for such a soul, and the language of the heart is, "O that I could but in faith and feeling say, 'My Lord and my God.'" (John 20:28) It is not enough to say the Lord, nor thy Lord, nor their Lord, nor your Lord; no, no; the soul thirsts to say, "My Lord and my God;" and nothing short of the Spirit's bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, and that God is his own God, will satisfy such a soul. And when the Lord is graciously pleased to bring the following truths to the heart, it sets all right; and this

is done to the glory of God's grace: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. 13:9) Then will the Lord blessedly say, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid"--hid! Where? In Adam the first? No, bless your poor souls, if it had been, he would have lost it, for he lost all the holy life he had in his own possession. Then, say you, is it hid in myself? Were it hid in yourself, and at your own control, you would lose it too. Then, says the poor soul, where is it hid? "With Christ in God." O the wonders of matchless grace! Hid with Christ in God! Out of the reach of Satan or sin! Who then can destroy it? Honors crown the brow of the eternal Three-One-God! This blessed, spiritual, everlasting life can never be lost, unless Satan, men or sin be capable of storming heaven and plundering the heart of God; for it is hid with Christ in God, and the Lord declares that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. For a manifestation of this glorious life, so as to be able feelingly to say, "Because Christ lives, I shall live also," the quickened soul is daily thirsting and daily wrestling, often in his feelings saying, "O that I did but know that the Lord had pardoned my sins; that Jesus was in very deed my salvation." A self-righteous trumpet-sounder may say, up and be doing; get holiness, get Christ, get God, get sanctification, and all will be well; but all this only increases the fetters and bondage of the soul, who really feels he has no might nor power, but is in very deed lost to all self-hope and self-help. If ever the Lord were to bring these up and be doing characters, in a spiritual sense, to the Red Sea, with the Egyptians close at their heels, crying, "We will overtake, we will destroy," and with insurmountable mountains on each hand, law and justice, and the red gulf before them, that would be the time to try their up-and-be-doing strength. Let a poor sinner be brought into these straits, where nothing but destruction appears behind and before and on each hand, and let him feel as though he were forgotten of God, or only remembered of him to be abhorred by him and plunged into misery; this would try his free-will strength. In this state the poor soul pants, sighs, groans, and thirsts for mercy, rich and free mercy; and here the glorious Lord will appear, and exhibit to view a new and living way, give the soul a dead lift, lead him to Christ, or bring Christ to his conscience, bring him out of his dreadful troubles, set his feet on sure ground, namely, the Lord the Lamb, the Rock of Ages, put a new song into his mouth, even glory to the Lord, and cause him feelingly to know a sweet measure of the power of the glory of grace.

Another proof of divine life and light is a spirit of prayer; for God's living children shall come to him with weeping, and with supplications will the Lord lead them. (Jer. 31:9) It is one thing to say prayers, and another thing to pray in spirit and in truth. When the Lord sent Ananias

to Saul of Tarsus, the Lord said, "For, behold he prayeth;" as if praying was something very wonderful. Now Saul was a stout pharisee, and they made long prayers; so that no doubt he had made and said many a bundle of prayers before then; but he never had in reality prayed before; therefore the Lord introduces it with a "Behold." He knew that, in rich grace, he had granted him a spirit of prayer; and this blessed spirit he gives to all his people when he quickens their dead souls. And when the Lord communicates divine life and a spirit of prayer, he is sure to tear all their old formal prayers to pieces, set fire to them, and burn them up in their consciences. I know it was the case with me, after the Lord had quickened my soul. I soon found that I could not say my old prayers which I had been taught, and I believe, had you put a thousand forms of prayer into my hands, I could not have used one of them. My conscience would have said, this does not suit me; I do not feel that; and the conscience having been made a little tender, it dare not use a swarm of words, without feeling, and call it prayer; therefore they must be thrown on one side. Perhaps some of you may think that you can pray most wonderfully. You utter words very fluently, and think you have a fine talent for prayer; but your conscience never asks you whether or not you feel what you say. No, no; you pray, and that is enough. Do you not know that if saying prayers, or uttering words, is prayer, the devil himself both prayed and had his prayer answered, and that is more than some of you can say; for with all your fine prayers, you cannot give one proof of ever having had them answered. But the devils besought Christ, "If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go." (Matt. 8:31,32) Thus, I say, Satan had his prayer answered, and that is more than some of you can say, with all your fine prayers. A mere muttering, prating noise, uttering a few words well put together, however great the talent manifested therein, is not real, vital prayer. It is only mocking God, and to such characters the Lord says, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." (Matt. 15:8) But the poor, quickened, tried, distressed, tempted child of God will find that he cannot make long formal prayers. His prayers are often very short, the same words over and over again, God be merciful to me; Lord, save me; or, Lord, help me. Well, poor soul, if you are led by the blessed Spirit to search the word of God, you will find that most of the prayers recorded there as prevailing prayers were very short; and, indeed, sometimes not one word is recorded as being said, but it was the prayer of the heart. We find, at the Red Sea, the Lord says to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." Now there is not one word recorded that Moses said to the Lord in prayer, yet the Lord answered him, and made away for the people's escape. (Exod. 14:13-31) And when Amalek came to fight against Israel in Rephidim, Moses stood with his arms lifted up, and the rod of God in his hand, as an

emblem of faith in, and prayer to the Lord; but there is nothing recorded of the words he uttered; and while his hands were held up, Israel prevailed; but when he let down his hands, Amalek prevailed; so when Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other, his hands were steady, and Israel prevailed. But with Moses, Aaron, and Hur all seems solemn silence, very little, if anything, being said; but there was the prayer of faith, and it prevailed. (Exod. 17:8-13) When Peter was upon the water, and found himself beginning to sink, he cried, saying, "Lord, save me." The two blind men followed Christ, crying and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us;" (Matt. 30-34) and the Lord opened their eyes. Sometimes the Lord appears as if he would neither hear nor regard the prayer of a poor sinner; yet his blessed Majesty keeps the poor soul to the point; and while he appears to put him away with his left hand, he secretly draws him with his right hand, and the poor soul still keeps on crying. The poor Canaanitish woman cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David;" and he appeared to turn a deaf ear, and answered her not a word. She then went to his disciples, perhaps to ask them to intercede for her; "and the disciples came, and besought him saying, send her away, for she crieth after us." Then Jesus gave her a solemn repulse, enough to strike her all of a heap; for he said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Now this woman was a Gentile, and if she took this in a literal sense, it left her no room to hope; but necessity will try hard; and, as some people say, break through a stone wall. The dear Lord kept her still crying, so that she came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, help me." Still, he gave her another repulse, and, if possible, worse and worse: "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." Now this repulse would have offended all the pharisees in the world, and they would have been ready to say, "A dog! No more a dog than your honor," and have left him in anger. But real prayer is not to be put off so; therefore she says, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table;" as though she had said, Truly I am a vile dog; but I want a crumb of mercy, and only thou canst give what I need; therefore I cry unto thee for it. And the Lord declared that great was her faith, and she obtained the blessing she needed. Now her petitions were short, "Have mercy on me;" "Lord, help me;" but they were felt prayers, and came from the heart, and the Lord answered them. (Matt. 15:22-28) The poor thief upon the cross had no very long prayer: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:42,43) The poor publican, with burdened conscience, stood, in his feelings, very far off, and dared not approach near, nor even so much as to lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, as a proof of his soul torturing feelings under a deep sense of his guilt, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13) His prayer was short, but the Lord both heard and

answered it; for "he went down to his house justified rather than the pharisee." When the Lord quickens and enlightens a poor soul, and makes him see and feel his guilt and danger, he has no time to form along round of fine worded prayers, nor can he feelingly read those man-made prayers already formed to his hands; but he breathes out before the Lord the feelings of his heart, though it be in broken accents: "Lord, save me; Lord have mercy upon me, a poor, vile sinner;" and sometimes, in sighs and groans, or words, he utters the same again and again. I tell thee, poor soul, for thy comfort and encouragement, that when this is done feelingly from the heart, it is real prayer, and "The Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Thus, the Lord hears and answers the cry of the poor and needy; but the fine, long, self-exalting prayers of the pharisee never reach the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth so as to gain his approbation, and be a means of bringing blessings from above. I have often thought of what an old man once said, who had been at a prayer meeting. There had been several fine prayers said, but the old man observed that all of them stopped in the place till the doors were opened; none went through the roof, and reached the ears and heart of the God of heaven; and I believe this is often the case. But a poor broken-hearted, sighing, panting, groaning, crying prayer, thirsting after Jesus, struggling hard for pardoning mercy, being unable to give up the point, though hard beset without and within, still breathing after God, this prayer reaches heaven, and takes the kingdom by a holy violence: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. 11:12) This is the glorious power of God the Holy Ghost in the heart of a poor sinner. (Rom. 8:26,27) Though the child of God is at times so troubled that he cannot speak, (Ps. 77:4) yet the Spirit indites his unutterable groans, and they shall be answered. An inspired apostle says, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." Neither do we, except God the Spirit teach us. But since Paul's day, we have had many men living upon earth who did not only suppose they knew what to pray for, but thought themselves capable of making prayers for others for hundreds of years to come; and to the present moment there are a great many who think that it is nothing but a bad spirit that induces God's people to object to the use of these ready made prayers. But however a man may be induced to vindicate these man-made prayers, they will never suit a child of God, when sin, death, and hell bear hard upon and in him, and he is at close quarters with God for pardoning mercy; nor do I believe that any minister of Christ uses them in his secret moments, when the Bible seems dark, and his soul is dark, and all appears dark without and within, and he can get neither text nor subject to go before the people with. Then the prayer book will not suit. No; the man is then brought to close quarters with God and conscience; and I believe that if God and conscience were always tenderly and spiritually consulted, prayer books, whether composed by episcopalian or dissenter, would appear, as they really are to a burdened conscience, mere lumber.

But all prayer indited by the Holy Ghost in the soul, though it is but in sighs or groans, shall reach the ears of the Lord, and he will answer it in his own blessed time; for "the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

"Prayer's a weapon for the feeble;
Weakest souls can wield it best."

God sits upon his throne to hear and answer the prayers of his people, and though some of them are in unutterable groans, he will in his own blessed time send an answer of peace. He may for a while forbear, and appear as if he did not hear or regard the poor soul's prayer; still they cry unto him day and night: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." (Luke 18:7,8) Bless his precious name, he has appeared, he does appear, and he will appear for the help and deliverance of the poor and needy broken-hearted sinner; and this is one branch of the glory of his grace. It is the Lord which puts the cry into the heart, and influences the soul to thirst for God, the living God, nor will he suffer the soul to give it up till he drinks a little of the sweetness of sovereign mercy; and this is to the glory of grace.

Another display of the glory of grace is, that the Lord brings the poor sinner to feel that nothing short of Christ will do for him. He must have a glorious Christ, and a perfect, full, and free salvation in Christ. But, say some, if I can but get holiness of heart, will not that save me? I tell thee, poor soul, take away the Lord Jesus Christ, remove Christ out of the world, and there would be no real holiness left. If the poor soul had all the holiness of all the good men in the world from Adam's fall till now, separate from Christ, there has not been, is not now, nor ever will be, holiness enough, separate from the Lord Jesus Christ, to save one sinner. So that if you or I had the whole of what is called holiness, which does not come from Christ, and center in him, being thus destitute of Christ, we must be damned, with all our supposed holiness. Without Christ we must perish: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) This blessed Jesus "shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) All the imaginary holiness in the world, without Christ, would not save one sinner. "But," say you, "you do not understand me. I mean, if I could extract all sin out of my heart, and live a life of holiness, then I should be saved." But that you cannot do; and if you could, it would not save you. What must become of the old score?

You have already sinned, and living holy in time to come would not make up for past offences and guilt. If you think it would, you had better be off to Italy and make merchandize of your works of supererogation. If you believe you can now do enough and have some to spare for old offences, be honest, and set Christ at naught altogether, for you cannot see and feel your need of his precious blood and righteousness; nor can you feel your need of a work of grace begun and carried on in the soul by the invincible energy of God the Holy Ghost; nor do you really believe that it is by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, but the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2:8,9). If ever you are saved, you must be saved by Christ. You must be brought, by the matchless grace of God, to receive Christ by faith; to give him your whole heart, and glorify his name. Bless his precious name, it is he that saves his people from their sins, and this to the glory of his grace. But if you extract sin from your own hearts, you must suppose you save yourselves, and then, if you profess to come to Christ, what do you come to him for? Is it for him to admire you for your exertions in saving yourselves? If it be, you will prove in the end that what is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination to the Lord.

Christ is a complete Saviour; therefore the poor, sin-burdened soul may venture to come unto him with all his sins in and about him, and he shall prove the Lord able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. May the blessed Comforter reveal Christ in you, the hope of glory, and lead you, in faith and in feeling, to embrace him as the Lord your righteousness and strength. Then you will sing the wonders of his immutable love.

2. But, secondly, another branch of the glory of grace is, that it pardons the guilty; and here let it be observed, that God is a just God, as well as a Saviour. (Isa. 45:21) He is bound by all the honors of his glorious nature, that if he forgives a sinner, he must be both faithful and just in forgiving him. (1 John 1:9; Rom. 3:26) When God's people are in legal bondage, they are horror-struck, and confounded to know how it is possible for God to be just and save them; for, in the court of conscience, both law and justice appear against them, nor can they have any hope or rest till Christ is revealed unto them the hope of glory; and though some of the people of God may have a notional knowledge of the method of salvation, it gives them no solid relief till the Holy Spirit brings a message of grace to their conscience. Notional knowledge and the power of divine truth in the conscience are as different as death and life. And God's people will be brought vitally to see and feel that God's glorious method of pardoning the guilty is not like the method of an earthly king pardoning a man condemned to die. No; this pardon only costs the king a single stroke of his pen, as an act of mere mercy; but the method divine grace takes is a method that magnifies the law of God which the sinner

has awfully broken, satisfies divine justice, clears the guilty in a way which honors law and justice, and makes a new and living way to heaven, crowning the eternal Three-One God with all the honor of his rich, free, sovereign grace. All pardoned sinners will be brought to see and feel that their pardon comes through the heart-rending, soul-travailing agonies of the Son of God. Christ stood in his people's law place, bore their sins, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself; (Heb. 9:26-28) and it cost the Lord of life and glory groans, and sighs, and horrors indescribable. In his own soul and body he bore the punishment and hell due to the sins of his church. Their guilt fell upon him; tortured his soul, and broke his heart; (Ps. 69:9) and remember, poor broken-hearted sinner, that thy awful reproaches against the Lord broke the heart of Christ, and filled his soul with horrors, and there was none to take pity upon him or comfort him. No, no; he must have gall for meat and vinegar for drink. Honors crown his brow, though the flames of hell due to his people entered into his holy soul, he quenched them with his heart's blood; and when this precious sin-atonement, wrath-quenching blood is brought to the conscience by the power of God the Holy Ghost, it clears the conscience of guilt and dead works, and brings pardon and peace with it. So that the real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of his sins, according to the riches of his grace. The holy living, the solemn agonies, groans, sighs, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, are the glorious solemn channel through which our pardon comes. O the matchless love and condescension of Christ! Hear, beloved, what he says, when speaking by the Psalmist: "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee." (Ps. 69:5) And again, "For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me." (Ps. 40:12) "But," say you, "there was no foolishness or sin in Christ." No, there was none of his own, inherently or practically; for he was holy, harmless, and undefiled as man, and wisdom itself as God, the holy, just, and wise God-Man; but in his mediatorial capacity, as the head, surety, and representative of his elect, all their sin and foolishness were charged upon him, and placed to his account. Therefore his calls them his own. (Isa. 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21)

Some people say that Christ never bore guilt. Then what broke his heart? For he says, "Reproach hath broken my heart." (Ps. 69:20) But he really and in very deed bore all the soul-damning guilt of his elect, and under that he groaned, and sweat, and bled, and died, and through this solemn channel God proclaims pardon to our consciences. The precious sin-atonement blood of the Lamb forms a blessed part of the song of the church; (Rev. 5:9) and every soul that is led by the blessed Spirit into the

solemn glory of the following portion of God's word will know this to be true: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss," etc. (Phil. 3:8-10)

How gloriously sweet it is for a poor sin-burdened soul to feel pardon sealed upon his conscience by the anointing power of God the Holy Ghost through the precious redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes; and every fresh manifestation of this blessed pardon will be sweet too; for whatever fresh contracted guilt the poor child of God may get upon the conscience; whatever labyrinths of confusion he may be brought into; God's manifestation of love, through the blood of the Lamb, is the method God takes to heal and deliver him; and in this blessed sense, he manifestly kisses their guilt away. I remember, that after my poor heart had wandered from the sweet enjoyment of the Lord, and I had got entangled with some flesh-pleasing idols, the Lord brought me feelingly into chapter 16 of Ezekiel, for that chapter contains a solemn figure of the wandering, backsliding heart of a child of God. Almost every sentence of it cut me up, and I said to myself, this is my case. In a spiritual sense, I am this vile fornicator, I have acted this base part; whatever becomes of these base characters in the end, I must go with them. But I think I shall never forget the conclusion, for a blessed one it is: "And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; (Eze. 16:62) that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." This, this is matchless grace. Here the Lord shames us out of our sins, and kisses us into obedience. (Jer. 31:19,20) This is the Lord's matchless method, and it is to the glory of his grace. When the poor prodigal son left his father's house, took his journey into a far country, and wasted all his substance which was at his own control with riotous living, and a famine arose, he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country to feed swine, and he fain would have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; but the Lord in rich mercy had made his throat too narrow for that. He could not swallow down those husks, nor feed his famishing soul upon them; and here he was, in a poor, forlorn, forsaken, filthy, famishing condition; for no man gave unto him anything that his soul needed. At length the Lord brought him to his right mind, and he said, "I will arise, and go to my father, for in my father's house there is bread enough and to spare. Now, had not the matchless grace of God influenced his heart, he would never have come to this point; but famine pinches, guilt tortures, rags and filth put to shame, sovereign, rich grace draws, and necessities urge, while the secret power of God the Holy Ghost leads and guides, and he arose; but did he go in haste, and at once, to his father's house? He appears to linger. A thousand thoughts occupy his mind, as, "How can I for shame face my father, all want, filth, and rags as I am, and all this the effect of my base proceedings?" Methinks I see him, and in him myself too, for I have been there. I say,

methinks I see him peeping first in one corner and then in another, at a distance from home, hoping some one might see him and let his father know, and yet almost afraid of meeting his father, lest he should have nothing but righteous frowns and displeasure. Sometimes he appears to start back, saying to himself, I cannot go; I dare not go. I am so vile, so base, so sinful, and so wretched, I feel quite ashamed of going; and if he sees any one of the family, though he wants to get home, yet he fears to meet them, and starts back, trying for a moment to hide himself. Still go he must or starve, for hunger pinches and necessity bears all down before it. But mark the glory of grace! While the poor soul stands trembling, groaning, sighing, fearing, and famishing, a great way off in his feelings, yet panting to be there, but scarcely daring to move that way, his father sees him a great way off; and what did he say? Did he say, Yonder is that dirty, ragged, disobedient youth; shut the door against him, and tell him when he comes he shall have no home here; I will not see him, nor have anything to do with him: I will never own him again, nor suffer him to enter into my house? I say, did the father thus say and act? No, no. Bless his precious name, he ran and met him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and I believe he kissed his dirty face clean; for the poor wretch came away from the herd of swine, all in his filth, and dirt, and rags, and we nowhere read that he, or anyone else, had washed him to make him in any sense tidy. He crawled towards home, just as he was, and the father saw him, and had compassion on him, and kissed him, and ordered the best robe to be put upon him, and a ring to be put on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and a feast to be made, (Luke 15) yea, a feast of fat things and wines on the lees, (Isa. 25:6) and the family music to be played, and they began to be merry. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Thus saith the Lord to poor fearful Zion, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. 3:17). Thus the Lord grants a manifestation of pardon, not reluctantly, but with all his heart, and rejoices in making his people rejoice. Bless the loving and lovely name of our Three-One God, in Christ, and by Christ, and through Christ sin is destroyed, and the sinner fully and completely pardoned: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve;" (Jer. 50:20) and when the Holy Ghost brings this truth to the conscience, and seals it there, the pardoned sinner can then sweetly sing, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name." (Ps. 103:1) And this is a blessed branch of the glory of grace.

3. Another branch of the glory of grace is, that it justifies the ungodly. Perhaps some will shrink at this, and say, not so. Well, let us hear what the Lord says, for I had rather have one "Thus saith the Lord," than a thousand thus saith this, that, or the other wise, pious, judicious, learned

man. One "Thus saith the Lord" brought home to the conscience by the power of God the Holy Ghost is worth more than, thus say all the great men in the world. When the Holy Ghost seals a divine truth in the conscience, it is as a nail fastened in a sure place. Then hear the word of the Lord, and may the Lord the Spirit seal it on some poor sin-burdened sinner's conscience, and then he will sing for joy: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. 4:4-8) This is the testimony of God, and must stand, let men say what they will; and God's elect will be brought to feel that they must stand here, or they cannot stand before God at all in any other character than that of vile, guilty, condemned criminals. The poor living soul in his legal toil has worked and worked again and again, till he has worked himself out of the power of working, and is ready to say, "Damned or saved, I can work no longer," and in his own feelings to give it up as a lost matter, truly believing that it is all over with him; for, with all his workings, he can bring nothing but sin to recommend him to the favor of God, and he both knows and feels that the Lord abhors sin. But when he is at his wit's end, the Lord is graciously pleased to reveal the above blessed truth to his conscience, and bless him with a living faith in it, enabling him sweetly to feel and sing, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." He is led by the blessed Spirit to search the word of God, and the God of the word brings to his faith and seals upon his heart one portion after another to testify of this glorious justifying grace, "the Lord our righteousness." (Jer. 23:6) "God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21) And this blessed Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth;" (Rom. 10:4) and, under deep depression of spirit, real faith will be vehemently struggling after the enjoyment of this truth, and the soul will be feelingly crying, "O to be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith!" (Phil. 3:9) The Lord reveals the glorious righteousness of Christ to faith, and faith receives and bears witness to the conscience of its reality, and of its blessed suitableness to the sinner's case and to the honor of God. And it is one branch of the work of faith to enter into the blessedness of this justifying righteousness, and so, under the power and unction of God the Holy Ghost, to bring justification into the sinner's conscience, thus enabling him to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." (Isa. 45:24)

Then, say you, if this is one branch of the work of faith, the sinner is justified by his own works; for faith is his own work. So you may think and say; but the glorious mystery of the truth is this, that faith, with every other grace of the Spirit, is God's work in us, for the Lord works all spiritual work in his people: "Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us." "It is God which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" (Phil. 2:13) and he works in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ." Whatever a poor soul has in him that is well-pleasing to the Lord, it is the Lord that works it there. Yea, his gracious Majesty works in them the work of faith with power. (2 Thess. 1:11) Therefore, they have no works of their own to boast of; and, after all, it is not faith as a grace of the Spirit, nor as an act, that justifies the ungodly; but the glorious object of faith, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ; for he is made of God unto us righteousness, and is the Lord our righteousness, and we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And this blessed righteousness, which is unto all and upon all them that believe, is received into the soul by faith. (Rom. 3:22) Thus grace, sovereign, rich, free, reigning grace, justifies the ungodly; and blessedly sweet it is when by faith we can receive and enjoy this glorious truth. Real faith is an eye to look unto Christ, a foot to walk in and with Christ, a hand to handle Christ, and a tongue to speak to and of Christ. Some people speak about faith as if it were a mere plaything, at the sinner's own control; but however brisk and lively men may be in natural faith, spiritual, supernatural faith, that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit and the gift of God and which works by love, of which Jesus is the author and finisher; this faith can only act and work as influenced and drawn forth by its divine Author. This faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) It is the Lord's witness in the conscience of the reality of that truth. There are times when the child of God, by this faith, under the divine anointing and sealing power of God the Holy Ghost, feels in his own soul that he is a child of God, and that the Lord is his God; and there are other times when the Holy Ghost draws faith into solemn acting's on God's truth, when, according to nature, it would seem as unreasonable for him to believe in Christ as the Lord his righteousness as it would be to talk about a blind man seeing, or a man without legs running, or for a man without arms fighting the greatest warlike champion in the country; for the poor soul feels himself as weak as a worm, with hosts of devils both within and without. This is the time to try the nature and strength of faith; and when the soul is unable to believe in the promise of God, and to cling to, twine around, and hang upon Christ; and when it appears to be sinking a thousand fathoms in a moment, still to cry unto, and hang upon Christ, saying, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come into my soul; I sink in deep waters, where the floods overflow me; I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God;" (Ps. 69:1-3) if the Lord is

graciously pleased to appear with this precious truth in the soul, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God," etc. or, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;" then in very deed the soul will know, in some sweet measure, that God justifies the ungodly by and in the precious righteousness of Christ, and that he can rejoice therein.

Abraham believed in hope against hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. Flesh and blood always make sad havoc with the promise of God. God had promised to Abraham a son, and he had long waited and prayed for it; but no appearing, free-will, like the free-will Arminians in our day and the same principle in our heart, set to work to hasten the promise of the Lord, and Sarah gave her handmaid to her husband; but this free-will act was a means of bringing forth free-will fruit, for it was the cause of abundance of grief, mischief, and confusion. But when Abraham was as good as dead, and, according to nature, Sarah was quite dead, for it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women, then God renewed his promise to Abraham, and blessed him with faith in it, so that he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Now reason and nature said that such a promise, under such circumstances, could not be fulfilled, and therefore reason was ready to swear by the infernal den that there was no ground for hope; but vital faith has neither carnal reason nor fleshly power to aid it. God gives the word, and gives faith to believe it, and against all carnal reasonable grounds, we believe in hope against hope, and give glory to God. Abraham believed, let reason say what it would, and God fulfilled his promise, and this crowned Abraham's faith with the blessing he had long looked for. And so, to the present moment, God's people are sometimes hard put to it. Nature, reason, and all visible appearances say there is no ground for faith, nor anchorage for hope; but the Lord gives faith, and we believe, and in the end the Lord confirms the promise of his truth and grace in our heart, and faith gives him all the glory; for in very deed the glory all belongs unto him. The child of God by faith receives the atonement and righteousness of Christ, and sweetly rejoices in being complete in Christ, and with solemn pleasure says, "He was delivered for my offences, and raised again for my justification, (Rom. 4:25), and this according to the riches and glory of God's grace. (Eph. 1:7; 3:16) "Yes," say some of you, "he thinks he has righteousness in Christ." Think religion is poor dry work, and will never satisfy a child of God. He can have no real rest in his soul till he can go beyond think. Faith never will give up the point till it can and does say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." The righteousness of God by faith the living soul is thirsting and panting for. The dear Lord says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) The inspired apostle says, "To be found in him;" as

though he had said, let me look at myself, or look to myself, where I will if I am not enabled by faith to find myself in Christ, I can find nothing but a guilty sinner. If I look to myself in my tears or prayers, mortifications or duties of any kind, still I am a guilty sinner. I want to be found in Christ, in all my approaches to God, at all times, at home or abroad, in life and at death, "to be found in him." And when the dear Lord gives the poor soul grace and faith to find himself in Christ, wrapped up in the glorious righteousness of Christ, then he both sees and feels that Christ was made sin for him, and that he is made the righteousness of God in Christ. Such is the glory of God's grace, that Christ his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we were healed. (1 Pet. 2:24)

Perhaps here is a poor sinner trembling before God, with guilt charged upon his conscience, and justice appearing ready to cut him down as a God dishonoring rebel; but O how blessed to see Christ stand forth and say, "Charge the sinner's guilt upon me; place it to my account." "But," says the soul, "I am such a vile, base, ungodly sinner." "I died for the ungodly," says Christ; "let all thy vileness be placed to my account." "But I have sinned with a high hand and an outstretched arm." "Place it to my account, for I am a Saviour, and a great one," says the dear Redeemer. "But I have even done violence to conscience, in order to commit sin greedily." "I bore the whole," says Christ. "I put it away by the sacrifice of myself; finished it, and made an end of it, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; and, in rich free grace, I placed my glorious righteousness to thy account, and thou art made the righteousness of God in me." Thus grace imputes God's people's sins to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ to them. This is the glory of grace. The Son makes the sinner free, and he is free indeed; and when the dear Lord reveals this to his heart, it is a sweet reviving cordial to his poor wretched conscience. This, then, is one part of the glory of grace.

4. But we proceed to observe, that it is the glory of grace to bring the prisoner out of prison, and set him at large. By nature, as sinners against God, we are all shut up under the law, and under the power of unbelief as in a prison; (Gal. 3:23; Rom. 11:32) and when the Lord quickens the dead soul and brings the sinner to see and feel what he is, and where he is, he finds he is in a most dismal prison, shut up as a criminal debtor and a vile sinner; nor has he it in his power to get out. He may hear of and see others walking at large, but that only adds to his misery; for his guilty chains are heavy, and a cursing law binds him fast down, and he expects nothing but a just reward for his vile doings, which is, for justice to execute upon him the righteous vengeance of heaven. He feels in his very soul that sentence of death is righteously passed upon him, for a court has been set up in his conscience, and a fair trial has taken place,

and he has been obliged to plead guilty to the dreadful charges laid against him. But just as he is ready to sink into black despair, the Holy Ghost puts a cry into his soul, and gives him a small gleam of hope, and he with his whole soul cries, "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die." (Ps. 79:11) And here he stands shut up at the bar of his own conscience, with a small gleam of hope, almost smothered with a thousand fears; and when he considers his whole case, he finds a little relief that he is permitted and is able to breathe out a sigh for mercy. At this time he hears the dear Lord saying, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." (Job 33:24) This revives his hope, and he begins to feel a little strength. The dear Lord appears, and speaks with that glorious voice which is powerful and full of majesty, and maketh the hinds to calve; and this he speaks: "For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners." (Ps. 64:33; Zech. 9:11,12) The soul is in a blessed measure set at large, and in very deed feels a little of the glory couched in Isa. 61:1-3. The prison doors are thrown open, and the prisoner brought forth to sing the wonders of God's grace. He feels that Christ is given as a covenant to the people, to open their blind eyes, to bring the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. (Isa. 42:6,7) This is a blessed jubilee. Legal debts are discharged, all law demands cleared, and unbelief is obliged to give place to the power of God's voice, and divine faith in the soul, under the secret power of God the Holy Ghost, sings, "He brought me out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake my bands in sunder." (Ps. 107:14) Faith, love, prayer, and praise, but more praise than prayer, are now brought into sweet exercise; and faith is led to discover that this great deliverance is obtained by the blood of the covenant. Christ lives and reigns in the conscience, and the believer crowns him Lord of all, singing with a solemn, indescribable pleasure, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." (Ps. 40:2,3) Then indeed he feels what it is to have liberty proclaimed to his poor captive soul, and to have the beauty of the Lord God put upon him, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. All the powers of his soul are engaged in blessing and praising the Lord. Nor does he dream of being ever taken captive again; but by and by, through the power of unbelief, a tempting devil, and the pride and filth of his old man, he will, if he lives long, find his harp out of tune, and hung by, and his soul brought into bondage, and he will not be surprised to find it written, "Standfast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," (Gal. 5:1) for he feels himself already entangled. Darkness envelopes his soul, and a thousand foes within and without beset him round, nor can he feel sweet freedom with the Lord. David's prayer in the 142nd psalm in many

respects suits him, and he cries out, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." (Ps. 142:7) The Lord, in his own blessed time, is graciously pleased to hear his cry, to bring him again to the sweet enjoyment of his love and loveliness, and to triumph in him as the God of his salvation. And this is a branch of the glory of grace.

5. It is to the glory of grace that it communicates divine holiness to the unholy, and makes them a holy people. (1 Pet. 2:9) God, in his rich grace, communicates a holy life, a holy light, a holy love, a holy humility, a holy meekness--in a word, he makes them partakers of his holiness. (Heb. 12:10) "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17) This holy kingdom is set up and maintained in the soul by the power of God, and stands in God's power, (Luke 17:21; 1Cor. 4:20) and it contains in it the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and is maintained there by the exceeding greatness of the power of God. God stamps his image upon the soul, and the believer is made a partaker of the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness, and in real spiritual knowledge, after the image of him that created him. (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) The real saint is made a partaker of the divine nature, (2 Pet. 1:4) and as God shines into his soul, and gives him vital faith to "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18) And this glass, in which the glory of God is seen, which produces such a blessed effect, is the Lord Jesus Christ, and is looked into as God shines into our hearts. (2 Cor. 4:6) Now here is true holiness, and as the Lord manifestively lives, and shines, and rules, and reigns in the soul, the believer enjoys real holiness. (1 Cor. 3:16) Christ dwells in his spiritual family, the hope of glory; (Col. 1:27) and the Lord both dwells in and walks in his people, (2 Cor. 6:16) and makes them partakers of that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure. (James 3:17) They are made wise unto salvation, and the Lord purifies their hearts by a vital faith in the glorious "mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." One branch of the prayer of the dear Redeemer for his people is, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;" (John 17:17) and, honors crown his blessed brow! He adds, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17:19) The blessed Spirit produces a divine change in their souls, and they are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1:23) This divine change is entirely of God, and not of man; and by the glorious power of God, they "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls." (James 1:21) They are vitally engrafted into Christ the living vine, and the Father purgeth them, that they may bring forth real spiritual fruit. Christ, the incarnate Word, dwells in them, and says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I

have spoken unto you;" (John 15:3) and, as they abide in Christ, and Christ abides in them, they bring forth fruit to the glory of God. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one;" (Heb. 2:11) and thus, by virtue of their union with Christ, and being made partakers of him, they possess real holiness; and all is to the glory of grace. The Lord loves his children too well either to let them sin at ease or live at ease; and though free-willers say that the discriminating grace of God leads to licentiousness, God's quickened family know better, and no others are capable of judging or being witnesses, for they know nothing about it. It is to the glory of grace that the Lord will chasten his people for their sins, not in vindictive wrath, but in love; for as many as the Lord loves he rebukes and chastens. When the dear child of God is under his chastening hand, he is often ready to say, "I cannot be a real Christian, or I could not be so exercised. If the Lord loved me, surely he would not try me in this way." Perhaps all things, both within and without, appear very gloomy, and hurricanes of various kinds come in thicker and thicker every day, therefore the poor soul considers that the Lord does not love him as one of his own dear children. But, poor soul, you cannot be more mistaken. You mistake the design of the Lord; for they are "bastards, and not sons," (Heb. 12:8), whom the Lord does not chastise. Suppose your son and a neighbor's were to quarrel in the street, and do mischief; which of these would you chastise? Surely not your neighbor's son; but you would take your own lad, and lay the rod upon him. And would that be a proof that you did not love him? No; but just the reverse; it is a proof that you do love him; and though every stroke you give him would go to your heart, still you feel yourself bound, in love to him, to chastise him; and if he were very unruly, you would be ready to say, this lad will break my heart if he goes on in this way. The Lord gives proof of his love in not suffering sin to rest upon you, nor you to rest in it; but as a father he will, in love to your souls, chastise you. (Ps. 89:30-33) Bless his precious name, having loved his own, that were in the world, he loved them unto the end; and this is to the glory of grace.

6. It is the glory of grace to raise up the poor out of the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and set them among princes, and make them inherit the throne of glory. (1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 113:7,8) Amazing! What!

The Lord raise beggars from the dunghill and dust, to exalt them to princely authority and majesty! I have often thought upon this with some degree of solemn wonder. Poor soul, have you ever been on this dunghill and in this dust? I can assure you that I have, and know well what it is.

Say you, what is it, then? The dunghill is the old man of sin, or the whole of corrupt nature; and where will you find a worse dunghill than this? Throwing up filth and stench enough to suffocate the strongest man living, if his life were not hid with Christ in God. David appears to have been upon this dunghill when he made the following complaint,

confession, and prayer: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee." (Ps. 38: 1-9) Habakkuk felt rottenness enter into his bones, and his very belly trembled for fear. (Hab. 3:16) Paul says, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). And when a poor child of God gets on this dunghill, and all the light he has only leads him to discover its horrors, and when, in his own feelings, he stands before God in nothing but filthy garments, Satan, standing at his right hand to resist him, and shaking his filthy garments about his conscience saying, "You pray! You hope! What, such a filthy wretch as you! Look at yourself, and all your works, and see what ground such a base wretch as you can have for hope;" carnal reason and unbelief unite with the devil, and this trinity in mischief kick up such a dust in the conscience, that the poor creature stands confounded, and wonders where the scene will end. Have you ever been here, in your feelings? If you have, you know what it is to be horror-struck; and if you have not, I know who has. While the poor soul stands, in this awful plight, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the riches of his grace, appears, gives a glimpse of his love and loveliness, takes the poor beggar off this dunghill, and out of this dust, and sets him among princes, by revealing divine mercy to his heart, shedding abroad new covenant love in his soul, and exalting him to a sweet enjoyment of interest in the glorious righteousness of Christ, and crowning him with loving kindness and tender mercy, and thus sets a fair mitre on his head. Pardon, peace, light, life, love, and righteousness reign in his soul, and he feels that his filthy garments and iniquities are taken away. The Lord sees that all this is done to the glory of grace; and thus his glorious Majesty stamps immortal dignity on the degraded; matchless grace has redeemed them out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign with Christ. (Rev. 5:9,10) In a word, such dignity has God, in rich grace, conferred upon his people, that he calls them the house of his glory, and says he will glorify it. Honors crown the brow of our adorable Lord! He has, in the riches of his grace, raised these poor and degraded people to higher honors than those from which they fell in Adam the first, for the Lord himself is unto them an everlasting light, and of them is truly said, "Thy God thy glory." They are raised manifestively to the glorious dignity of sons and heirs of God through Christ. God, in his new

covenant glory, is the inheritance of his people, and as they stand in union to Christ, as one with and in him, they are, by matchless grace, raised to joint heirship with Christ to immortal glory, bliss, and blessedness. This honor have all God's saints. (Ps. 148:14) This is the glorious church of Christ, (Eph. 5:27) and shall stand forever glorious in and with him. (Isa. 60:19) Here is an eternal, immortal, indescribable glory, and all to the glory of grace.

7. Grace strengthens weak hands and confirms feeble knees. Sometimes the poor child of God is so weak in faith that he dares not call the Lord his God, nor is he able to handle one precious promise or truth of the gospel of God's grace, so as to take real comfort from it. His heart throbs with fear, and his knees tremble under him. He cannot with any sweet confidence draw near unto the Lord; nor does he appear able either to fight the good fight of faith, to stand fast in the Lord, or in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free to resist the devil so as to make him flee from him, or to maintain his confidence in the Lord, so as to feelingly say, "I know in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12) No; he sooner fears that he has neither part nor lot in the matter, and that his enemies will prevail, and bring him to ruin. But when his heart, and hands, and knees, all appear to fail, and he sinks in fear, the Lord appears, and says, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." (Isa. 35:3-6) Then, indeed, a new song is put in the mouth: for the poor soul both hears, and sees, and feels that the Lord has saved him, and that with an everlasting salvation. Then his eyes are opened, and he can see where he has been, and whither grace has now brought him. He can both see, and hear, and feel the goodness of the Lord towards him, and he sings and leaps for joy. He then handles the word of life very sweetly, and all under the unction of God the Holy Ghost, as a blessed branch of the glory of grace. Like Paul, we sometimes have a painful thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet us, and we feel as if it were impossible to bear up under it. We groan, and sigh, and cry for deliverance from it; for we feel as though we had no strength, and fear we must fall before this painful foe. Any trial but this we think we could bear, but this appears to be almost the devil's masterpiece. Night and day it keeps harassing and perplexing our poor souls, and we are at our wit's end. We never felt less strength or less able to bear up, and the fiery darts of hell appear to be hurled into every power of the soul; so that we tremblingly fear that we shall fall into some most horrible crime, and, with a distracted mind, we cry, "Lord, help; Lord, appear; for I cannot stand, I cannot bear up!" And we feel as though the next moment we must sink; but matchless grace speaks in this blessed truth, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." (Isa. 40:31) But the poor soul cries, "Lord have mercy upon me, for I am so distracted I do not know how to wait upon thee; I am all confusion, and my enemies are

wise, powerful, numerous, and vengeful." Then the Lord speaks with a little power, which gives a little hope, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." (Isa. 54:17) With a small degree of hope the soul says, "But, dear Lord, how is this to be proved, when I see such floods of horror ready to burst in upon me, and all my strength gone?" "I am thy great salvation," says the dear Lord; and then his gracious Majesty repeats this truth with power to the heart: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (Isa. 59:19) This gives strength and vigor to the soul, and in the name and strength of the Lord, in solemn triumph it says, "Though a host should rise against me, my heart shall not fear." (Ps. 27:3) The enemy makes a desperate struggle, as if determined to set the word and power of God at nought; but the blessed Spirit appears, lifts up Christ, the glorious standard, in the conscience, defeats the foe, and sets the heart at sweet rest, and, as a glorious act of discriminating grace, reveals this blessed truth to the conscience, which makes all straight: My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." In every deed we can then say, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" (2 Cor. 12: 9,10) for the Lord "giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." (Isa. 40:29) Then we prove that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," for "the lame take the prey." (Isa. 33:23) The Lord will bring "the blind, and the lame, and the woman with child, and her which travaileth with child together; with weeping and with supplications will he lead them; and they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, (Christ, the bread of God, the bread of heaven); and for wine, (the love of a Three-One God, flowing through the blessed blood and obedience of Christ); and for oil, (the divine unction and anointing of God the Holy Ghost, and the joy of salvation); and for the young of the flock and of the herd, all the glorious, delicate, rich blessings of Christ, the Lamb of God, the fatted calf, and the matchless treasures of divine grace; and when the Lord brings them by faith and in feeling here, their souls shall be as a watered garden." (Jer. 31:8-12) This is a blessed measure of the glory of grace.

8. It is the glory of grace to bring poor, vile worms (Job 17:14) to have solemn intercourse with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. They are brought to converse with God in confession, prayer, supplication, praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and if the truth be not in us, we must be the temple of lies and errors. So that if God be true, and sure I am he is, the man who says he has no sin, but is perfect in the flesh, is under the delusion of the devil, for the truth is not in him; but, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the Lord's light we

see sin as it is, exceedingly sinful, and confess it, and pray against it. In God's light, when, by the power of the Spirit, we walk in it, we see a measure of the beauty, love, and loveliness of the Lord, and have real fellowship and agreement with him, both in our views and feelings of ourselves and the glory of the Lord, and in God's time and way we are brought to have sweet and solemn converse with him. (1 John 1:1-3) Have you ever been brought by the power of the Holy Ghost to pour out your souls unto God, and to have fellowship with him in prayer? Have you ever been blessed with vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and had fellowship with him in his redeeming love; in his person, blood, and obedience; in the offices he fills, the names he bears, the characters he sustains, the relationship in which he stands to his church; in the fullness, richness, and freeness of his grace; in the power of his sufferings and resurrection? Has divine grace ever been applied by the power of the Holy Ghost to your heart? Have you ever been enabled to pour out your complaints unto the Lord? And has he in mercy enabled you to see and feel that he has heard your prayers, and that he sympathizes with you in your sorrows, and gives you a glimpse of his beauty? And has he, in the riches of his grace, said unto you, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee?" (Songs 4:7) Have you, in times of great weakness and distress, when you were feelingly sinking, and yet felt your poor heart panting for more freedom with him, and a closer enjoyment of him, but scarcely daring to hope that he would appear, have you, in such a time, felt his blessed Majesty placing his arm of love under you, and saying, "Come with me from Lebanon," etc. (Songs 4:8-10) Then he raised you up above all your guilty fears, yea, and foes too, and truly you had fellowship with him. Have you ever been brought to Gethsemane, and had such fellowship with his sufferings as broke your heart in love to him, and sorrow for your sins, which had put him to such awful pain; and so have been made, in some blessed measure, conformable to his death? Then you have had fellowship with Christ, and could indeed say, "Yea, he is altogether lovely; this is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!" (Songs 5:16) Has the Lord the Spirit ever brought you to have fellowship with the Father, in his eternal, sovereign, free, electing love, as choosing you in Christ, and giving you all spiritual blessings in him, and in making them sure by all that is dear to God and safe to you? Have you ever been brought to have fellowship with God the Holy Ghost, in his soul-quickening, enlightening, reproofing, convincing, commanding, strengthening, supporting, humbling, inspiring, teaching, anointing, and sealing power? Has he put the fear of the Lord in your heart, and given you a tender conscience, made sin bitter and mercy sweet? Have you at times a sense of God's blessed love made manifest, and of God's sweetly meeting you, and conversing with you, in that blessed meeting place, the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, where mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other? (Ps. 85:10) Have you ever been enabled to seclude yourself

from the world, and retire from all creature-bustle, and meet the Lord in this blessed pavilion, and in the secret of his tabernacle, the sweet and precious person and heart of the Lord the Lamb?)Ps. 31:20) Bless his precious name, the Lord sometimes, in a sweet manifestive way, hides his people in this blessed pavilion from the strife of the tongue of the killing letter, the tongue of the frowning and smiling world, the tongue of the violent temptations of the devil, yea, and the tongue of conscience too. All is a heavenly calm and serenity, and God and the soul have solemn intercourse with each other. The Lord smiles, the sinner smiles, law and justice smile, and all smile together. In this solemn place and frame of mind, the soul wishes to stay and converse with the Lord till death. And this is a part of the glory of grace.

9. Grace restores backsliders. Sometimes, after the most solemn moments of intercourse with the Lord, pride begins to creep in, and, from one step to another, the poor soul goes down from Jerusalem, the sweet vision of peace, the glorious city of the church's solemnities, to Jericho, and falls among thieves, who strip him of his raiment, take away, as it respects the manifestation of it in his soul, his garment of salvation and righteousness, the glorious garment of praise, and he sinks into ashes and heaviness. They wound him in his arms and feet of faith, and in all the sweet powers which had been engaged in praising the Lord, and they leave him half dead. They could not kill him outright, though they did their best; for his life was hid with Christ in God; but they murdered all his sweet and sensible enjoyments and comfortable feelings, and left him half dead, to lament his folly of leaving Jerusalem to go down into the world, and a place cursed of God. (Josh. 6:26) Both a priest and a Levite, two of the legal tribe, came that way, and though one did venture to look on him, yet neither of them attempted to afford him any relief. Perhaps they thought he was some dirty Antinomian or other, and said, let the wretch lie in his blood and filth, exposed to shame. I have often observed, that if anyone who maintains the discriminating truths of the gospel falls into open sin, the legal tribe always make the worst of it, and publish it far and near, saying, "Ha! This is their Antinomianism; this is the fruit of their high notions; they are all alike." But if one of their own tribe fall, which is oftener the case than the other, "O poor man," say they, "it is his besetting sin;" or, "it was a sudden temptation," or, "it was done inadvertently;" or "he was led into it by others." In fact, a great number of coverings are manufactured to hide his shame, or at least lessen it; but no mercy is shown to one who has maintained the sovereign discriminating grace of God, and who has insisted upon the glory and essential necessity of its divine power revealed in the conscience. No, no; the mercy of the legal tribe does not run in that channel; therefore, the poor man lay where, and as, the thieves left him; and, poor soul, he felt himself as vile and base as they could see him, and more so. "O awful fool that I am," would be his

language, "to leave such a solemn and blessed place as the vision of peace, to ramble this way! I deserve all that I have, and much more! Wretch that I am! Where can I look for help?" And while thus in his fallen, helpless state, sighing and groaning, saying, "I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart;" (Ps. 38:8) the good Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. No doubt he knew the poor wretch was there, and came on purpose to manifest compassion unto him; for when he was him, he had compassion of him. He went to him in a very gracious way; he went sympathetically into his very case, and poured into his bleeding wounds the healing wine of the blood and love of God, accompanied with the oil of joy, the divine unction of God the Holy Ghost, and bound up his wounds with that blessed bond of love and peace with which his blessed Majesty binds up the broken hearted; and (as if the poor creature had said, "I am so wounded I am not able to walk," and the good Samaritan had said, "well, then, you shall ride)" he set him on his own beast, the white horse of the glorious gospel of God's grace, on which Christ himself rides, conquering and to conquer; (Rev. 6:2) or the red horse of his own solemn sufferings, on which he rode by night among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; (Zech. 1:8) or both in union, as one glorious horse; for when the dear Lord restores the poor backslider, and gives him a sweet, vital, powerful faith in the blood, love, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and enables him to feel the power of this blessed truth, "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him," etc; (Hos. 14:4-6) then indeed the poor soul appears to ride on the high places, and eat the increase of the fields, and suck honey and oil out of Christ, the rock of ages. (Deut. 32:10-14)

But further; the good Samaritan brought him to an inn, and took care of him. He brought him to a faithful ministry of the grace of God, stopping manifestively with him for awhile; and on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, "take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." Now, what was this two pence? Say you.

"The Old Testament and the New," say some. Well; the Bible is a blessed book, but if we only have the letter of the word, we have but the shell. There is a sweet kernel, that nature, in its highest attainments, cannot get at. (1 Cor. 2:14) I believe the word of God is one penny, and the divine quickenings, teachings, anointings, and influences of God the Holy Ghost are the other penny; and when the Lord gives a man these two pennies, and sends him forth to preach the gospel, he is sure to make his ministry a blessing to poor broken-hearted, broken-down sinners. The ministry of a poor creature who has only the letter of the word, be his talents what they may, will be as dry as a chip, having neither life, power, nor unction. He never can really enter into the various cases of God's people, nor the vital power of God's truth, as suited to their cases,

and therefore he is not a fit host to take care of one of the Lord's poor restored backsliders. Blessed be the name of our loving and lovely Jesus, he knows how to fit men to preach the gospel, and feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.

There are times and seasons when some of God's people backslide from the sweet enjoyment of every divine truth, and, in a fit of rebellion, kick against the dispensations of the Lord, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; (Jer. 31:18) or appear like a silly dove without any feeling heart after God and truth, and the Lord appears for awhile as if he were determined to let them have their own way, saying, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." (Hos. 4:17) So the poor soul goes on frowardly till he finds his way hedged up with thorns, nor can he find the flesh pleasing lovers he hunted after. All is pain and sorrow; and then the Lord puts it into his heart to say, "I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now." (Hos. 2:6-8) Blessed be the dear name of the Lord, he sees his distress, hears his groans and cries, and feels for him, and in rich grace says, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus," etc. (Jer. 31:20) O how often is the reproof Paul gave to the Galatians too applicable to God's people (Gal. 3:1-4). And yet after all, rich grace restores the sinner, and brings him to feel the soundings of the Lord's tender, compassionate bowels, and he with solemn pleasure can say, "He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (Ps. 23:3) And this is one branch of the glory of grace.

But, say you, will not such grace lead to licentiousness? No, it will never lead the soul that feels and enjoys it in his heart to licentiousness, but to holiness. A rich display of God's matchless grace in the heart, by the divine energy of God the Holy Ghost, will produce more real holiness of heart in five minutes than all the free-willers with their free-will grace ever produced since the fall of Adam; for it will produce genuine holiness, not fleshly counterfeit holiness merely, which is at best but a whited sepulchre. True holiness comes from the fountain, and leads to the fountain again. (Tit. 2:11-14) Whenever any child of God departs from God's right rules, and commits sin, bringing reproach upon the cause of God and truth, it is not God's rich free grace which leads him into it, but the cursed pride of his old man, with its infernal coadjutors, which induces him to wander, and thus brings him into a snare: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18) Shame and confusion of face are sure to be the effect of a fall, for "when pride cometh, then cometh shame;" but with the meek, humble, lowly receiver and liver upon God's free grace, is wisdom. God's people will take the shame of their sins to themselves, and give all the glory of grace unto the Lord; nor will they ever charge their sins upon the rich

grace of God; and those professors who do, only prove they never felt the power of God's free grace in their hearts.

Let us then crown the brow of the Lord for his matchless grace, who died for us, that we might live to him; and may it be our happiness to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

10. Lastly. It is the glory of grace to bring millions of poor sinners to realms of immortal glory; for, in addition to the one hundred and forty and four thousand which were sealed of the tribes of the children of Israel, there was a great number that no man could number. (Rev. 7:9,10)

For these the dear Redeemer lived and died, rose again, ascended on high, and ever lives and intercedes; and all his blood-bought family must be with him in glory. (John 17:24) He never will leave them nor forsake them. His life, his death, his resurrection, his love, his righteousness, his fullness, his promise, and his oath, all say, "Where I am, there they shall be." Come, poor tried, tempted, disconsolate child of God; a few more struggles with Satan and sin; a few more manifestations of God's grace, and we shall be forever with the Lord, and eternally enter into, and sing the wonders of his love. Then indeed we shall fully trace that the Lord has glorified the house of his glory. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Matchless wonder! Worms like us be made like unto Christ! Yes, bless his precious name, he shall change our vile body, that it maybe fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. (Col. 3:4) There shall we see as we are seen, and never, never sin, but hold uninterrupted communion with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and with the whole church, as one blessed family of God, where all is life, light, love, holiness, bliss, and blessedness, forever shine in and sing the wonders of God's free grace; for Christ will present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but perfectly holy, and without blemish. (Eph. 5:27)

Blessed state! Blessed and holy church! And blessed eternally blessed, the adorable name of our glorious Three-One God, who, in rich free grace, will bring all his people to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, (Matt. 13:43) and soul and body be in full glory with and like the Lord their Head, as the Lamb's wife, made ready for her husband. Then will the marriage be fully consummated, and the bride appear in all her bridal glory. (See Rev. 7:13-17; 19:7-9) In the glory, bliss, and blessedness of Christ, the church shall far outshine the holy angels, and have a higher song of praise to sing than those holy beings. The angels

shine in the perfect creature purity in which they were created, and have to sing of electing, confirming love; but the church will shine in the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the God-Man Mediator. Angels desire to look into the glorious mystery of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; (1 Pet. 1:11,12) but all that they know of the glory of this immortal subject they learn by the church. (Eph. 3:10) Angels do and will sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;" (Rev. 5:12) but they cannot sing, "Who washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. 1:5) No, no; this will be the exclusive song of the church. In this vale of tears, the elect are taught a blessed measure of the mysteries of redemption for themselves, by that glorious Spirit which searches the deep things of God, and reveals them unto his people; but in heaven they shall all be like Christ, fully conformed to his image, and see him as he is. "Now they see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face, and shall know even also as they are known." (1 Cor. 13:12) Thus, as the Lamb's wife, in the glory, bliss, and blessedness of Christ, and one with him, they shall sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5,6) Now and then, when the blessed Spirit puts this precious song into their hearts, they can sing a measure of it here, in this world of tribulation. Sometimes one child of God will be singing while another is in deep mourning, and a third horror-struck with terror under a deep sense of his own vileness and the temptations of Satan; but when the whole family get home, when the body is raised from the dead a glorious body, like unto the body of Christ, and the whole church, soul and body, is with and like Christ, then indeed they shall appear as they really are in Christ. (See Rev. 21:14-17) There shall be no darkness of soul, no deathly feelings, no boisterous sea corrupt nature and Satan's temptations there. No! Death will be swallowed up in victory, for the glory of God and the Lamb is the light therein. (Rev. 21:4,23) All the redeemed throng shall give praise, and honor, and glory, to the Lamb. And this is to the glory of grace.

III. We now come to our third general head, which is to make a few remarks on some things, as connected with our text, which the Lord has done to the praise of the glory of his grace. And upon this head I shall be very brief, only just touching upon a few things without enlarging.

God has chosen a people in Christ before the foundation of the world, to the praise of the glory of his grace. He has predestined them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, and this not from any foresight of their worth or worthiness, but according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace. (Eph. 1:5,6) He has blessed all his chosen, predestinated children with all spiritual blessings

in heavenly places in Christ; (Eph. 1:3,4) to the praise of the glory of his grace. And to prove that this glorious truth does not lead to ungodliness, he has chosen them in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love; and every real believer is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them; (Eph. 2:10) and this to the praise of the glory of his grace. He has made his people accepted in the Beloved; (Eph. 1:6) to the praise of the glory of his grace. Both their persons and spiritual offerings are all accepted in Christ. They have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches, (Eph. 1:7) and to the praise of the glory of his grace. By the glorious power of the Spirit, he makes known unto them the mystery of his will, and in the fullness of time he gathers them all together in Christ; (Eph. 1:9,10) to the praise of the glory of his grace. And as they stand in union to Christ, they obtain an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, (Eph. 1:11) that they might be to the praise of his glory. He blesses them with vital faith according to the working of his mighty power, yea, the same power which raised Christ from the dead; (Eph. 1:19,20) and in his own time, after he has given them faith, he seals them with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession; (Eph. 1:13,14) to the praise of the glory of his grace. He enlightens the eyes of their understanding, that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and graciously gives them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; (Eph. 1:17,18) and all to the praise of the glory of his grace. His gracious Majesty preaches peace to their conscience, and reconciles them to God by the cross of Christ, and brings them to have access to God through Christ by one Spirit, causing them experimentally to feel that they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. He builds the whole church up in Christ, a building fitly framed together, every part of the building in its proper place as it is in union to Christ, as one glorious, compact building for a habitation of God through the Spirit; (Eph. 2) and all to the praise of the glory of his grace. Yes, beloved; and these are but a very few things out of the infinite number that the Lord has done, and is doing, to the praise of the glory of his grace. And all his children, here and in the world to come, shall give all the glory to their Three-One God. Amen.

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