

is written upon all your comforts, your comforts and consolations are all deeply enamelled with the free grace of God; and that much of his free love is laid out in your comforts and consolations. And thus I conclude with the words of my text: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace; comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

SERMON III.

"For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—EPH. II. 8.

IN the former exercise I have been shewing you the freeness of the love and grace of God in the matter of our comforts and divine consolations. I shall now, in the third place, shew you the freeness of the grace of God in reference to our salvation and eternal glory, and therefore follow these words which the apostle speaks at the latter end of verse 5, "By grace are ye saved;" and so you see the same in verse 8, "For by grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

But why should he say the same words again in so short a compass? Why, it was to shew, not only that his heart was full of the free grace and love of God, but to shew, also, that he thought he could never speak enough of it, and therefore he repeats it, "By grace ye are saved:" "For by grace are ye saved." That is to say, from first to last you are saved by the free grace and love of God.

From whence, then, I take up this doctrine:

That there is much of the free love and grace of God laid out in the matter of our salvation and eternal glory.

For the clearing of this point, I shall endeavour to shew you,

First, That it is a matter of infinite happiness and of great concernment to go to heaven and to be saved for ever.

Secondly, To shew you how this mercy is obtained, this

mercy of salvation and eternal glory; I shall shew it is of free grace and free love.

Thirdly, I shall answer two objections.

Fourthly, I shall shew you wherein the free grace and love of God appears in the matter of our salvation.

Fifthly, Shew you why God chooseth to save the children of men in a way of free love and grace.

First, I shall speak a little by way of introduction: it is a great matter and of infinite concernment to be saved and to go to heaven for ever. For,

1. You are thereby saved from wrath to come. You count it here a great matter to be saved from the wrath of man, but it is a far greater mercy to be delivered from the wrath of devils, to be delivered from their fury and malice, and not to lie at their mercy to all eternity. Yea,

2. You shall be delivered from all sorrow, both inward and outward; and if so, how blessed and happy are you, for you shall die in the Lord: "And blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours," &c. Rev. xiv. 13. It is a mercy to have meat and drink, and a bed to lie on, but it is a greater mercy not to need them: in heaven you shall be freed from these needs and necessities. You walk here, but it is with a burden; you hear now, but it is with a burden; you repent now, but it is with a burden: but in heaven you shall be freed, not only from the guilt of the neglect of duty, but from the burden of duty also; heaven knows of no duty that hath a burden with it. Thus you shall be freed. Again,

3. You shall not only be freed from these troubles, but you shall also be brought into a possession, into "an inheritance that is incorruptible, that fadeth not away;" where you shall enjoy the company of saints and angels, and that without suspicion or jealousy one of another. Here you have the company of saints, but either you suspect them or they you, either they are jealous of you or you of them; but heaven knows no suspicions, no jealousies; saints live there without suspicions.

4. If you go to heaven and be saved, you shall then be filled with glory. If you have but a little taste of glory here, you are ready to break under it, under a little glory; but the time will come when you shall be filled with glory, and your

hearts shall bear up under it ; your bodies shall be changed ; “ your vile bodies shall be changed, and made like unto Christ’s glorious body ; ” you shall be filled with glory, soul and body both. Yea,

5. If you be saved, your graces shall be always in act, always in exercise ; your understandings shall be fully enlightened, your difficulties shall be removed, and you shall see them all little and easy upon you, and your wills, hearts and affections shall be drawn out to God with infinite satisfaction and infinite delight : “ I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, ” Psalm xvii. 15. All delight ariseth from enjoying things suitable : now what is more suitable for a rational creature than to enjoy his ends. When a husband hath been at sea from his wife half a year or a year, what joy it is to her to see him come home again. So for a poor soul to see Christ, what joy is it, after he hath withdrawn himself a great while ? Here we have communion with Christ but in part, and interrupted ; but then you shall be ever, for ever with the Lord, and have communion with him without interruption. Now we see joy and glory but darkly ; and if there be so much sweetness to see Christ in a glass, oh, then, what sweetness will it be to see him face to face, and enjoy him for ever. And, to say no more,

6. If you be saved you shall have the knowledge of the continuance of this condition. Though a man’s condition be never so happy in itself, yet if he think it will not continue, that man is unhappy in the midst of his happiness. This is the unhappiness of hell, men shall know and be assured that they shall never be delivered out of it, never, never, never : and this is the happiness of heaven, that men shall always rejoice, and shall be assured that they shall so continue to do ever, ever, ever.

Secondly, But in what way does a man come to this attainment ; how and in what way is a man saved ? Why in a way of free love and grace, for if God bestow any thing in a way of gift, it is free, for what is more free than gift. Now do but consider what these things are which are called in Scripture, salvation ; and you may observe that they all come in a way of gift.

Sometimes salvation is put for the Author of salvation, Jesus Christ : “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in

peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," Luke ii. 29, 30. That is, Christ the Author of our salvation. And so saith Christ to Zaccheus, "This day is salvation come to thy house;" that is, Christ. Now this salvation is obtained in a way of gift. Saith Christ to the woman of Samaria, "If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink," &c., John iv. 10. He calls himself the gift of God.

Sometimes salvation is put for the means of salvation, for the gospel: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation," Heb. ii. 3; that is, the means of salvation, the gospel. This salvation is also called the gift of God: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xiii. 11.

Sometimes salvation is put for eternal glory. "Who would have all men to be saved, both Jew and gentile." And this salvation is the gift of God too. Rom. vi. 23, "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Now salvation, as to the Author of it, as to the means of it, and as to the salvation itself; it is all of free grace, all given in a way of free love and grace; and therefore it must needs be that much of the free grace and love of God is laid out in our salvation.

Thirdly. But you will say, If it be so, that by free grace we are saved, then what need we use the means of salvation; you say we are saved by grace, by free grace, wherefore then need we endeavour?

Yes, we are to endeavour: do you not use your endeavour to get your daily bread? and yet that is the gift of God. Your livelihood is the gift of God, for you say, "Give us this day our daily bread." It is then the gift of God, and yet we are to use the means. And so we are to do what we can, although not what we should in the matter of our salvation; because by our endeavour and using the means we shew our dependence upon God, and our obedience to him, because he hath commanded it. For,

Again, Although, I say with the apostle, "By grace ye are saved, and not of works;" yet works are necessary, good works are necessary in regard of our thankfulness to God; and necessary, as they are an evidence of our salvation, saith the apostle; although I say, by grace ye are saved, yet you

are to be in the performance of good works. Eph. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" the same word, good works. That is the third general. But,

Fourthly, Wherein doth the freeness of the grace of God appear in the matter of our salvation?

There is a great deal of free grace in this, that God should ordain us to eternal life and salvation. 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Again,

To name them. Is it not great grace, mercy and favour, that God should send his own Son from heaven to die for us and to purchase our salvation, yet so he did. "Ye are bought with a price." What price? "The blood of Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for you," 1 Tim. ii. 6.

Is it not a great mercy, a very great favour, that we that had broken the first covenant, and had not performed the conditions of it, that we should be set up again as I may say; that God should set us up again, under another covenant, that runs without any condition; and yet so he did, Heb. viii. 10. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law into their mind and write them in their heart, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

Yet further, it is in the matter of our salvation, as it is in the matter of our consolation and comfort; and as I said of that, so I say also of this: That the greater, and the more glorious any mercy is, and the more worthy and great the person is that giveth it, and the more unworthy the person is that receives it, the more doth the grace of him appear who giveth it; now what greater mercy, what more glorious mercy, than heaven and salvation? It is called the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven; it is called the kingdom of glory, and eternal glory; it is called joy, enter into the joy of our Lord: and great is the joy of our Lord; that joy which was set before Christ, that is the joy of the saints in heaven, "It is such as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii.

9. Paul was wrapt up to heaven, but when he came down he was not able to declare the glory thereof; those that are in a war, are better able to declare the passages of it than those that write it, but yet they are not able to declare it all. So the apostle could speak something of this great and infinite glory, but was not able to declare it all. There was one, who was asked by his prince, What God was? he desired first, two days to answer, when they were past he required four days, and after four days, he asked eight days to answer; so if you should ask me what glory that is, which is in my text, I must take two days, and then four days, and then eight days to answer, and yet then I should not be able to declare, nor be able to express, this glory which is wrapt up in this one word, salvation.

But it may be this blessed estate is bestowed only upon those that are worthy? No, not so, this is most commonly bestowed upon those that are most unworthy: what is more unworthy than a dog? Why, was not Stephen looked upon as a dog? Yea, were not the Gentiles looked upon as dogs? Saith Christ; "Why cast ye the children's bread to dogs?" Now though salvation was of the Jews, for Christ came of the Jews, yet salvation is now for the Gentiles; and among the Gentiles who was more unworthy than a blasphemer, and a persecutor of the saints and servants of God, and such a one was Paul, and yet he was saved, though he was not only undeserving of it, but deserving quite the contrary; now who more undeserving than those that deserve the contrary? yet by grace even they are saved, therefore, saith the Psalmist, Ps. viii. 3. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him," &c. So I say, that the more glorious any mercy is, the more unworthy the receiver is, and the greater he is that gives, the more free is the thing given, and thus it is with our salvation. Salvation is a great, and glorious mercy, and this salvation is given, and that is great and glorious too, and it is given unto man who is most unworthy, and it is given by God who is most infinite and excellent above us. But again.

The more God doth cross hands in the matter of our salvation, the more free is his grace, in his bestowing of it upon

us: for as I shewed you before, that God doth cross hands in the matter of our comforts, so I say now, that God doth cross hands in the matter of our salvation also; for he doth often save them that are most unlikely to be saved, as Paul, and Matthew the publican, and who more unlikely than Zaccheus or the thief on the cross, or the jailor? yet were these saved, though very unlikely to be saved. And so on the contrary, who more likely to be saved, than the young man in the gospel, that came to Christ, yet you know he was rejected: the young man he comes unto Christ, and says, Matt. xix. 16. "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? Says Christ, Keep the commandments; All these things have I kept, saith he, from my youth upward; then saith Christ, Go, sell all that thou hast and then thou shall have treasures in heaven, and it is said he went away sorrowful." Mark now, was not this a forward young man, a very forward man, "all these, saith he, have I kept from my youth upward," and Christ doth not contradict him, and yet notwithstanding, this man could not do what Christ commanded him, he could not sell all he had; it was too hard for him to learn that lesson which Christ set him, for it is said that he went away sorrowful; and therefore saith Christ, "A rich man shall hardly enter in the kingdom of heaven:" and what is this but only to shew that God doth often cross hands in the matter of our salvation, to shew that "the first shall be last, and the last first," for God loves to cross hands in the matter of our salvation; and therefore we find in Scripture that there are some that come to Christ and say as the scribe in Matt. viii. 19: "Master, I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest," and Christ seems to put him off, and yet in the next verse almost he puts one forward, and he excuses himself and says, "Suffer me to bury my father," but Christ saith, "Follow me," &c. Thus you see what crossing of hands there is in the matter of our salvation, to shew "the first shall be last, I say, and the last first." Friends, stay but a little while, until the day of judgment, and then you will see what crossing of hands there will be; then you shall see some men at the right hand of Christ, whom you would have thought would never have been saved, and then also you shall see some on the left hand of Christ, whom you would have thought

would never have been there. God, I say, will cross hands in the matter of our salvation, and the more he doth so, the more doth the freeness of his grace appear to them that are saved. Again,

Yet one thing more, the more our salvation is laid upon the arch or pillar of grace and love, the more free is the grace of God, and the more free it doth appear in the bestowing of it. Now what are the arches and pillars of free grace and love, upon which our salvation under Christ is laid. I shall name some of them.

The absoluteness of the covenant. That God justifies the ungodly. Thus our righteousness is not in us but in Christ. That the guilt of our sins by which we lay liable to condemnation is removed. That a little sincerity covers a great deal of infirmity. That what God calls our's is not indeed our's, but God's, as our graces, our duties, which are not indeed our's but God's. That God will in due time glorify us and honour us. Sin doth provoke God and causeth him to be angry with us, but grace doth provoke him to love us; and therefore the pillars of our salvation are laid under Christ upon grace, upon free grace and love: and thereby the freeness of the grace of God doth the more appear in the matter of our salvation. And that is the fourth general. But then,

Fifthly, Salvation is a work of grace; and seeing we are saved by grace alone, why then doth God choose to save men in this way of free grace? I answer,

It is because this is the most honourable way unto God. The papists are not ashamed to say that it is most honour to a man to be saved by works, but I am sure it is more honour and more honourable unto God to save by his free grace.

If there was somewhat of the good pleasure of God in the world's condemnation, all the reason in the world then that there should be free grace in the way of salvation. Pray how came Adam to stand for the whole world? He was not chosen by us, why it was the good pleasure of God that he should stand for the whole world, and that he sinning, we should be all guilty of sin by, and through him: so I say, if there was, as I may speak with reverence, somewhat of the good pleasure of God in the old world's condemnation, why then should there not be free grace in the soul's salvation, Rom. v. 15. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift,

for if through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

God would have heaven and salvation to be of one piece; he would have the work of heaven to be the same; now there were many angels that fell, and many thousands that stood, why how came they to stand that did stand, more than the others that fell? it was only by free grace, they were elect angels. Now men and angels in heaven are of the same choir and sing the same song; and therefore those men that are saved, oh, who are they? why they are the elect, and they have great cause to glorify the grace, the free grace of God.

God saves men in a way of free love and grace, because none shall miss of salvation. As God will punish and condemn all the proud, all the wicked, that none shall escape; so he will also save all that he hath a mind to save, by free grace because they shall not miss of salvation.

God will save men in such a way as whereby he may be glorified to all eternity, and therefore he saves them in a way of free grace and love; for what have we to praise God for in heaven, but only for free grace, free grace, to glorify his name for that; therefore I say, God will save men in this way of free love and grace, that he may be thereby glorified hereafter to all eternity, and thus I have done with the doctrine; now go along with me a little by way of application.

If we be saved by free grace, if free grace and love be the foundation of our salvation, why should we not then stand clear from all our own works, as to the meritorious ends of them; for grace and works are opposed, and therefore faith as a work can neither justify nor save. I confess the apostle saith, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," but what follows, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 12, 13.

If we be saved by grace, why should we not be tender of the grace of God, of the name of God, of the free grace of God, and of the great name of God. Are you saved by grace and will you turn grace into wantonness? Oh, my friends, I say, if you be saved by grace and by grace alone, how

tender should you be of the name of God and of the free grace of God.

If we be saved by grace, then we may here see the reason why many do take so much pains as they think for heaven, and yet fall short of it and go to hell; why it is because salvation lies under the conduct of free grace. Some men abstain from sin that they may not be damned, others perform holy duties, read and hear, &c., that they may go to heaven, yea "many strive and shall not enter," because salvation is of free grace.

If by grace ye are saved, and that there is much of the free grace of God in our salvation, why then should you doubt of it? I confess it is a hard thing to have assurance of your salvation, and if you have it, it is free grace to you more than to another, and free grace is the founder of it, if you have it. But yet, O soul, if by grace we are saved let us not then doubt of it, for it is most sure; if you are saved by grace, I say, why doubt ye then, oh, ye of little faith. O christians, comfort yourselves with these words, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xii. 32. It is his good will and pleasure, it is in a way of free grace and love.

But you may say though it be in a way of free grace and love, yet it may not be for me, it may none of it be mine, saith the soul.

Nay, say not so, but mark what an inference the Psalmist makes and draws up from this general. Psalm cxxx. 4, 5: "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope." And so in Psa. ciii. speaking at large of the grace, mercy and goodness of God, in the 8th verse he saith: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy;" but what is the conclusion: "Bless the Lord all ye his hosts, bless the Lord all his works, bless the Lord O my soul." The very last words are, "bless the Lord O my soul;" from the consideration of the freeness of the grace of God in general he draws up this conclusion, "bless the Lord O my soul."

But you may say: Though God will save by grace, yet surely all shall not be saved by grace. Shall all men be saved; is God so free?

No, all men shall not be saved, for saith the apostle, Gal. v. 15: "We through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith; for in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but the new creature." But shall not all be saved? No, saith the same apostle, Eph. v. 6: "Let no man deceive you, for no whoremonger, nor unclean person, &c., hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God." There is no place for unclean things in heaven. You know what the apostle saith to the Galatians, "The inheritance is not to the bondwoman nor to her children." So that I say that God doth not save all, but those he doth save are saved by free grace.

But you would know who those are that are saved, or that shall be saved for ever; why, thus briefly only to name things:

Look who those are that are justified, they shall be certainly saved.

Those that are willing to part with all for Christ and for the service of Christ, they shall certainly be saved. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. xix. 29.

They that stand at Christ's right hand here, they shall be sure to stand at Christ's right hand at the day of judgment; and so be saved. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of his Spirit; he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing," 2 Cor. v. 5; it is the very same word which is used for "work out your own salvation," &c. So that there is a working up of the soul unto eternal glory; and if Christ hath wrought you unto the self-same thing whilst you live here, then you are at his right hand now: and then you may be sure to stand at his right hand at the day of judgment, and so shall be sure to be saved for ever to all eternity.

Those that are tender to Christ's little ones, that are tender to those that are despised in this world, and ready to help and assist them according to their wants, they shall surely be saved for ever. "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I

was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; in prison, and ye came unto me. And the righteous answer, Lord, when did we see thee sick, or naked, or hungry, and fed thee, and clothed thee?" why saith he, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matt. xxv. 35. So I say, look who these are that are tender of Christ's little ones and are ready to help them, and to relieve them according to their wants and necessities; those are they that shall be saved to all eternity.

Those that "strive together for the faith in times of affliction," those are they that shall be saved for ever. "That ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel," Phil. i. 27. So I say, look who those are, that in the time of persecution strive for the faith, they shall surely be saved and that to all eternity. Yet one thing more.

Those that come to Christ in time of temptation, they shall be saved freely to all eternity. For saith our Saviour Christ, John vi. 39: "And this is my Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day;" in verse 37, says Christ, "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," and I will give you the reason, saith he, "For it is the will of my Father that I should lose none which he hath given unto me, but that they should rise at the last day." How is it therefore with you, holy and beloved brethren in the Lord? Do you come to Christ in your temptations? Do you strive together in love for the faith in time of persecution? Are you tempted; are you brought low? Remember this, that Christ is able to raise you up and to save you to all eternity; and therefore, O soul, doubt not of your salvation.

But some may say, I am guilty of this doubting, what shall I do that I may not doubt of my salvation?

This is too large a subject to speak to now, I shall only say this to it. Let me desire you to study much the freeness of the grace of God in general; and consider also much and frequently, the particular instances of grace and mercy that God hath shewn to others, and you will find it is all of free grace; yea and this scripture shews you that all is of free

grace ; and therefore though it be a hard thing for us to get assurance of our salvation ; yet the particular instances and examples of the mercies that God hath bestowed upon others, should much encourage us and bear us up, and should stir us up to get assurance. Grace and mercy being shewn to others doth not only shew that it may be had, but that mercy hath been had. When you see the ice trodden then you say you will venture. So you say, such a one was unworthy, such a one profane, and yet he hath obtained mercy and why may not I ? Therefore if you would have assurance of your salvation, think much of the freeness of the grace of God ; and withal consider the particular instances and examples of others, that have obtained this mercy and that in a way of free grace and love too.

And lastly to conclude, Is it so, that God saves the soul freely, and that our salvation is only by the free grace and love of God ? Why then should we not come with boldness for salvation since it is so free ; oh, let none be discouraged, but let it stir us up to come with boldness and to plead for it, if it be free. Is salvation free and will not poor sinners come to receive it ? Come, oh, come freely for salvation, Christ Jesus is willing to make good his own name, and this is his name, he is called " Jesus, and he shall save his people." This is the will also of my Father, that you should come unto me, John vi. Christ Jesus hath now salvation in his hands, and will you not come and ask for it ? But methinks I see salvation in your faces ; methinks I hear a voice among you saying, " What shall we do to be saved ? "

In answer to which thus : " Believe in the Lord Jesus ; and venture your salvation upon him. "

And then if you will be saved you must become as little children ; for saith our Saviour, " unless you become as little children, you cannot be saved. " Matt. xviii. 3. " You cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. " As little children, how ? Why not seeking great things ; little children do not seek great things, you must become as little children, low and humble, not seeking great things, for great things become not little children. You must be willing to part with all at Christ's command and for his service ; and for want of this the young man went away without eternal life : " Go and sell all that thou hast and follow me, and he could not do it ; " and he

lost heaven by it; he would keep earth and he lost heaven by it. But once more,

Be not only willing to part with all for Christ's sake, and at his command; but go and cast yourself at adventure upon his free grace and love, and then go and work, and perform duties and pray and use endeavour; work as if there were no grace to be saved by, and bear thyself still upon free grace, and build upon the grace of God, as though there were no works. Thus do and you shall be saved to all eternity, for ever and for ever.

SERMON IV.

"But so did not I, because of the fear of God."—NEH. v. 15.

In this chapter, there are three things most considerable.

First, The voice or cry, at the beginning of the chapter; "And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives, against their brethren the Jews." And then,

Secondly, you have made known to you, what Nehemiah did in this case, in verse 6, 7, "And I was very angry when I heard their cry, and these words, then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers," &c.

Thirdly, You hear more of Nehemiah's acting at verses 14, 15, "Moreover from that time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor: for the former governors that had been before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver, yea even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because I feared God, because of the fear of God."

From hence then observe this truth or doctrine.

That those that truly fear God will not do as others do.

The true fear of God will keep men from doing those things that other men will do; yea, though an action be to a man's advantage, yet they that fear God will not do it, if