

SEVERAL SERMONS UPON TITUS II. 11-14.

SERMON I.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—TITUS II. 11-14.

IN the immediate context the apostle had given direction to servants to walk amiably and faithfully in their relations; and the argument which he urgeth to persuade them is, that by this means they would 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' ver. 10; that is, represent it with advantage, and render it acceptable to the respects of others. Duties of relations are of so much use to the quiet and welfare of human society, that, when they are faithfully performed, they do much commend any way or doctrine, and induce others to speak well of it; and therefore, saith he, Be faithful in your relations, that you may make the doctrine of God comely, and adorn the gospel. Now, this adorning the gospel, it is not only an act of policy, but duty; it is but a doing right to the gospel, and giving it its proper lustre. Why? Because the same gospel which calls for duty to God as to his worship, doth also enforce the duties of our relations. A man may put a varnish upon an evil way by a plausible carriage; and though his principle have no tendency to such a practice, he may do it because it is comely in the world. But it is otherwise here. The gospel, that hath appeared to all sorts of men, presseth all sorts of duties. Yea, and which is more, it giveth grace to perform them; for the apostle doth not only argue here, but direct; he doth not only show them what they must do, but how they may come to do their duty in this kind; for saith he, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation,' &c.

In the words you may observe the teacher, the lesson, the encouragement and inducements to learn.

1. The teacher is the grace of God, described, ver. 11.

2. The lesson is the whole duty of our heavenly calling, set forth ver. 12, and there—(1.) Negatively, in departing from evil, 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.' (2.) Positively, in cleaving to that

which is good, 'We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Where you may observe that the duty of the creature is distributed into three ranks and parts, according to the several objects to which it is referred. Soberly we must walk as to ourselves; righteously as to our neighbour; and godly that the Lord himself may not be defrauded of his portion. There are, in a moral consideration, but three things in the world—thyself, thy neighbour, and God; and suitably doth the apostle distribute and parcel out christian offices and duties; soberly as to ourselves, righteously as to our neighbour, and godly as to God.

3. The encouragements to learn, and they are two. If we look forward, there is hope; if we look backward, there is gratitude, or an obligation arising from the death of Christ. In short the two great motives and inducements are the hope of eternal life, and the end of Christ's death. Hope of eternal life: ver. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope,' &c. The end of Christ's death; ver. 14, 'Who gave himself for us,' &c.

The text being long, I shall forbear exposition till I come to handle the several branches.

I shall first begin with the teacher, described ver. 11, 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.' The grace of God is described by its property; it is *χάρις ἡ σωτήριος*, a grace bringing salvation, or tending to salvation, as the word signifies; and by a special adjunct, its present manifestation, *ἐπεφάνη*, 'it hath appeared;' suddenly broken out, like the light of the morning after a dark night; and then there is the extent of that manifestation, it hath appeared to all men. Some indeed refer this extent, not to the word *ἐπεφάνη*, 'it hath appeared,' but to the word, *σωτήριος*, 'bringing salvation;' and they read it as we do in the margin; 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared;' there is not much difference. To supersede all doubt and dispute about the matter, *all men* here signifies all sorts of men; for the apostle had spoken of servants and bondmen, that they in their relations should glorify God; and he proves it by this argument: 'The grace of God hath appeared to all men;' that is, to the bondman as well as to the lord and master; therefore they in their places are to discharge their duties as well as others; for the gospel, as I said, hath appeared to all men, and presseth all sorts of duties.

First, I begin with the thing described, 'The grace of God.' It is a term that admits of divers acceptations. Sometimes it is put for God's eternal favour and good-will; sometimes for the effects of this favour, as grace infused and bestowed upon the creature: Eph. iv. 7, 'To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' Sometimes it is put for the gospel, which is the charter by which we hold this grace; and so it is said, Rom. vi. 15, 'You are not under the law, but under grace;' *i. e.*, under the state of the gospel. Here I take it in the first sense, *viz.*, for the gracious will and good pleasure of God to do good to men, or to show mercy to the creature; for God's kindness and bounty to men is expressed by several terms. The most usual are two—grace and mercy. I will show how they agree, and how they differ. They both agree in this, that they are attributes

which merely respect the creature. The love and knowledge of God first falleth upon himself. God knows himself, and loves himself, and then the creature. But now the mercy and grace of God are merely transient, and pass out to and respect the creature only. God cannot be gracious to himself and merciful to himself, as he loves himself and knows himself; and therefore herein they agree. But now in some respects they differ. Grace properly signifies the freeness of God's love; mercy relates to the misery of the creature. God's external motive is our misery, and his internal motive is his own grace. Mercy respects us as we are in ourselves worthy of condemnation: grace respects us as we are compared with others that are not elected. As, for instance, if the question be, Why any are chosen to life? it is out of mercy, because they are lost and undone creatures. But then if the question be, Why these are chosen above others? then the ultimate reason is God's grace. Once more, the angels that never sinned are saved merely out of grace, and not out of mercy. It is not proper to say they are saved out of mercy, for they were never miserable; but men, that were once miserable, are saved, not only out of grace, but also out of mercy. In short, mercy signifies that love of God which helps the miserable, and grace signifies a property in God to give forth things freely and without desert. Grace doth all gratis, freely, and without any merit or precedent obligation or debt. Note then—

Doct. 1. That the original and first moving cause of all the blessings we have from God is grace.

Survey all the blessings of the covenant, and from first to last you will see grace doth all. Election, vocation, justification, sanctification, glorification, all is from grace. There is a clue of scriptures which will lead us through all these steps, and direct us to grace.

1. For election: Rom. xi. 5, 6, 'There is a remnant according to the election of grace.' And then he adds presently (for Paul cannot mention grace, but he must run out into the praise or vindication of it), 'And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.' Mark the context. The apostle's drift in that place is to prove that all Israel are not cast away; that though the nation of Israel were passed by, yet there was a remnant chosen according to the election of grace. Grace is spoken of by the by, but he takes every little occasion to digress into the commendation of grace. And what doth he say? The foundation and ground of salvation is God's election, and the impulsive cause of election is God's grace. Why is there a remnant? There is an election; and why is there election? It is according to grace.

2. Our calling, when election breaketh out in time and becometh actual. Look, as the heirs of salvation are distinguished from others by election in the purpose and bosom of God, so are they actually distinguished from others by effectual calling: 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.' Why doth God pick and choose, and cull here and there? The only reason is his own grace and his

own purpose. When we come to make choice, we cull and pick out those things that are worthy of our love and respect; and we favour none but for something whereby we may be allured to love them; but God saw nothing lovely in us, but yet calleth us with an holy calling according to his purpose and grace. The same gracious purpose that distinguished them from others before all time, doth in time make an actual choice and distinction between them and others by effectual calling.

3. Justification: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Mark, the apostle useth two words; it is *τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι*, 'by his grace;' and it is *δωρεάν*, 'freely' by his grace; 'freely,' to note the readiness of his inclination; and 'by his grace,' to exclude the merit of our works; or the mere grace of God, not excited or quickened by any works of ours, but acting of its own accord. The scriptures do with such emphatical and redoubled expressions inculcate it, because there are deep prejudices in the proud heart of man, rooted in his nature, against the grace of God.

4. Sanctification, all the parts whereof are called the graces of the Spirit; because, *Gratie gratis datae*; they are not only wrought by the Spirit, but freely given us of God. Thus faith is said to be God's gift: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' And it is given of mere grace; Phil. i. 29, 'To you it is given to believe;' the word *ἐχαρίσθη* signifies 'graciously given;' it is the same word that is used, Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' *χαρίσεται*. The same grace that giveth Christ, giveth faith to believe in Christ, that we may be possessed of his grace.

5. Glorification, which is the complement of all salvation. So Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' Not only all the means and all the tendencies of salvation are of grace, but salvation itself; from first to last it is all of grace. So that when we come to heaven, this will be our great work, to sing forth the praises of grace, and to admire and glorify the grace of God to all eternity.

Secondly, To limit the point. Though it is of grace, yet not to exclude Christ, not to exclude the means of salvation.

1. Not to exclude Christ. The merit of Christ stands well enough with the grace of God: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Freely! you will say; how so, when it was not without so great a price and satisfaction as the blood of the Lord Jesus? Yet, however, it is freely in respect of us, it is by no work of ours; it was the exceeding grace of God to appoint the merit of Christ, that it might be the greater ground of confidence to us. We do not look for things with such certainty which depend upon mere grace, and favour, and good-will, as we do when a thing is established by merit and desert. Now merit in us there could not be without wrong to grace; and therefore the wisdom and love of God hath found out this way of merit in Christ, that we might be more confident of the standing of our privileges, they being bought at so great a price. There was grace in this, that God gave Christ, that the satisfaction is not required of us; and therefore indeed

there is nothing doth so gloriously discover the grace of God as the free giving up of Jesus Christ. God might require satisfaction from the party offending, or the person that had so sinned might bear the blame and punishment; but the Lord hath so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, and that not to angels, but to us. Well, then, it is grace to find out the merit, and grace by which we are interested in it. Christ's merit is most free, both on the part of God the Father freely sending Christ, and on the part of Christ taking this office upon him. It was grace that moved God to give Christ, and grace that moved Christ to give himself, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Nay, after all this, it is grace that gives us faith, that so we may be interested in the merit of Christ, that we which sinned with both hands earnestly, might take hold of God with both hands. And our salvation is carried on in such a way that we may confidently expect his mercy without any violation of his justice and truth. So that it doth not derogate from the grace of God, but much amplify and enlarge it. This is a great part of the grace, that he freely sent Christ to make all sure between us and him.

2. Not to exclude the means of salvation; not faith, nor obedience also, if rightly understood.

Not faith; that may well enough stand with grace: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' There is a condition required, and that is faith; but God himself gives the condition that he requireth. Grace cannot stand with anything that is in man, and of man as the condition of the covenant; yet it stands with faith, because it justifies, not as an inherent quality in us, or as a work done by us, but as it layeth hold of Jesus Christ; and it is not of ourselves, but is the mere gift of grace.

And then for obedience, that is also subordinate to faith, as a necessary fruit and effect of it. As faith is the instrument, so obedience is required as a fruit of faith. Though it come not into justification, yet it is an evidence of our interest in salvation. It is required as a testimony of faith, yet not as a condition, which is a cause of the thing promised. It is required, because though it be not of man, yet it is in man; it is given of God, but it is our work.

The papists, to excuse the grossness of merit, say that our works do not merit but as they come from the grace of God, and as they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. But mark, it is not enough so to ascribe our works to the grace of God; all self-justiciaries will do so, as the pharisee that pleaded his works: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are.' And you confound the covenants when you think that a man may merit of God by his own grace. Adam under the covenant of works might then be said to be saved by grace. Why? because he could not persevere in the use of his own free-will, unless he had received it of God. Well then, grace doth not exclude faith, nor works; not faith as the instrument of justification and as the condition of the covenant; not works, as the fruit and testimony of faith. There is a concurrence of works, but not by way of causality, but order. God will first justify, then sanctify, then glorify, and all of grace. Obedience is the *conditio sine qua non*—the condition without which we cannot be saved. The grace of God is the first moving cause; Christ is the meritorious procuring cause; faith is the instru-

ment; and obedience is the fruit of faith. These are subordinate, not contrary.

Thirdly, My next work shall be to give you some reasons why it must be so that grace is the original cause of all the blessings we receive from God; because it is most for the glory of God, and most for the comfort of the creature.

1. It is most convenient for the glory of God, to keep up the respects of the creature to him in a way suitable to his majesty. Mark, God would dispense blessings in such a way as might beat down despair and carnal confidence at the same time. Man had need of mercy, but deserveth none. Despair would keep us from returning to God, and carnal confidence from ascribing all to God. Therefore, as the Lord would not have flesh to glory, so neither to be cut off from all hope. It is of grace that we may hope, and keep up our respect to God; for there is nothing that keeps up the devotion and respects of the creature to God so much as grace. The psalmist intimates this: 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,' Ps. cxxx. 4. Mercy in God makes us fear, love, and respect him. And it is of grace, that flesh may not glory: Eph. ii. 9, 'Not of works, lest any man should boast;' but that God may have all the glory of his grace. If God did not deal with us upon terms of grace, despair would make us let go all sense of duty, and a guilty creature would stand at a distance, and fly from the sight of God. Some think that the only way to gain men to a sense of religion is by rubbing the conscience, and keeping it raw and sore with terror; but the psalmist saith, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' This is the best way to keep up the creature's respects. False worships are merely supported by terror and fear; but God, that hath the best title to the heart, will gain it by love and grace. But as despair standeth in the way of God's glory, so doth carnal confidence. Now grace taketh off all boasting: 1 Cor. i. 31, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' Here is nothing of pre-engagement, merit, and hire; yea, it is for the glory of the supreme Majesty that he should act freely, and that his blessings should come to us not as a thing deserved but as a gift; and that he should entertain us as a king, not as a host: 'He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price,' Isa. lv. 1. Nothing can be more dishonourable to God than the merit of the creature, for it takes off part of his royalty and supremacy.

2. It is most for the comfort of the creature. Grace is the original cause of all the good we expect and receive from God, that we may seek the favour of God with hope, and retain it with certainty.

(1.) That we may seek the favour of God with hope. If we had to do with justice there could be no hope, for justice giveth only what is due, and doth not consider what we need, but what we deserve. Now mark, the apostle, in the behalf of God, makes the challenge, Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?' Come, let me see that man that durst plead desert with God, and claim anything of him by way of merit. Who will enter that plea?—Lord! give me what thou owest; I desire no more than is due to me; let me not have mercy till I deserve it. Merit-mongers are best confuted by experience. Let them use the same plea in their

prayers which they do in their disputes, and plead the merit of their works, and say, Lord, give me not eternal life, and grace, and favour, till I deserve it at thy hand. Let them thus dispute with God or with their own consciences in the agonies of death, and under horrors of the Lord's wrath. Surely those that cry up the merits of works are men of little spiritual experience, and seldom look into their own consciences, Dare they thus plead with God?—Lord, never look upon me in mercy if I do not deserve it. You shall see the best plea that the eminentest of God's children could make is mere grace. The church speaks thus, Hosea xiv. 2, 'Receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.' It is the form that is prescribed to returning Israel. If you would establish hope with God, this must be your only plea and claim: Grace, Lord! mercy Lord! And David saith, Ps. xiii. 5, 'I have trusted in thy mercy. There is the ground of my confidence. And Chrysostom hath a sweet gloss upon that place, *οἱ μὲν ἀγροὶ, εἰ τοὶ καὶ ἔχοιεν, λεγέτωσαν; ἔγω δὲ ἐν οἴδα, ἐν λέλω, &c.*—If others have anything to allege, let them plead it. Ah, Lord! I have but one thing to say and plead, and upon which to cast all my hopes, and that is mercy and grace: 'Lord, I have trusted in thy mercy.' Thus Ambrose, when he was to die, saith, *Etsi non sic vixi ut pudeat inter vos vivere, &c.*—Though I have not so lived as that I should be ashamed to live, I am not afraid to die. Why? not that I have lived well, but *quia bonum habeo Dominum*, because I have a gracious Lord, and have made grace my confidence. So we read in the Life of Bernard, seeming to be cited before the tribunal of God, when Satan had spoken in his conscience, What! thou look for any favour at God's hand? thou art not worthy. He replies, I confess I am not worthy, nor can I by my own deserts obtain the kingdom of heaven; but I have a double right, *Hereditate patris, et merito passionis*—by the grace of my father, and by the merit of Christ's passion; hereby I can take hold of God with both hands. by grace and merit; not my own, but Christ's. Thus God's best servants, their hopes have been established this way, by casting themselves upon mercy and grace.

(2.) That we may retain the favour of God with certainty: Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.' We should never else be secured against doubts and fears. Believers, that offend daily, would be left to a sad uncertainty; but now we can the better expect glory when the foundation of it is laid in grace. I remember the great patron of the merit of works, Bellarmine, concludeth out of Bernard, *propter incertitudinem propriæ justitiæ, et periculum inanis gloriæ, tutissimum est fiduciam totam in solâ Dei misericordia et benignitate reponere*—Because of the uncertainty of our own righteousness, and the danger of vain-glory, I confess it is the safest course to put our trust in the sole mercy and grace of God.

Use 1. To persuade us, if grace be the cause of all the good we enjoy, not to wrong grace. Why? For this is to close and stop up the fountain; yea, to make grace our enemy; and if grace be our enemy, who shall plead for us? Angry justice must needs take up the quarrel of abused grace, and then there is no help; yea, grace itself would complain of the wrong received to God, and will solicit our judgment and

vengeance; the advocate will become an accuser. But how do we wrong grace? I answer—five ways—

1. By neglecting the offers of grace. Such make God speak in vain, and to spend his best arguments to no purpose: 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.' By the grace of God is there meant the offers of grace in the gospel. Now, we receive it in vain when all the wooings and pleadings of grace do not move us to bethink ourselves and look after our salvation. It is a great affront you put upon God to despise him when he speaks in the still voice. Look, as when David had sent a courteous message to Nabal, and he returns a churlish answer, it put him in a fury: 1 Sam. xxv. 34, 'Surely there had not been left by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.' So how angry will the Lord be against those that despise his grace, and all the renewed offers and messages of love, and prefer the profits and pleasures of the world before him! It may be you do not return a rough and churlish answer, and are not scorers and opposers of the word, but you slight God's sweetest message, when he comes in the sweetest and mildest way. The complaint in the gospel was, Mat. xi. 17, 'We have piped unto you, and you have not danced.' It is not, We have thundered unto you, and you were not startled; but, We have piped, and ye have not danced. Not to take notice of these sweet allurements and blandishments of grace, that is very sad: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' The greatness of the benefit aggravates the sin. It is great salvation that is offered; there is an offer of pardon and eternal life, but it worketh not if you neglect it. There is a sort of men that do not openly deny, reject, or persecute the gospel, but they receive it carelessly, and are no more moved with it than with a story of golden mountains, or rubies or diamonds fallen from heaven in a night-dream. You make God spend his best arguments in vain if you neglect this grace. Scourge conscience till it ache. What will you do? 'How will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?' God sets himself a-work to gain the heart, and grace hath laid open all its treasures, as a man in a shop to draw in custom; now it is grieved and wronged when it doth not meet with a chapman. This is the charge that is laid upon those, Mat. xxii. 6; when they were invited, 'They made light of it;' they did not take it into their care and thoughts, did not seriously think with themselves, Oh, that God should invite us to the marriage of his Son! They do not absolutely deny, but make excuse; they do not say, *non placet*, but *non vacant*—they are not at leisure; and this made the king angry. When all things are ready, and God sets forth the treasures and riches of his grace, and men will not bethink themselves, their hearts are not ready. How will this make God angry? Such kind of neglecters are said to 'judge themselves unworthy of eternal life,' Acts xiii. 46. You will say, Is there any fault in that? Who is worthy? Should we not judge ourselves to be vile forlorn creatures, unworthy of a look from God, much more of eternal life? I answer—It is not spoken of self-humbling, or of a holy self-condemning, but of those that turn their back upon grace. Grace comes to save them, and God makes them an offer as though they were worthy; and they judge themselves un-

worthy, and plainly declare they were altogether not worthy of this grace. All men are unworthy enough of eternal life, and God hath cause enough to condemn them; but they chiefly judge themselves unworthy, that is, in fact declare themselves to be so, that have received the honour and favour of a call. Grace hath spoken unto them, and made them an offer of pardon and salvation, and they turn the back upon it, as if it were not worth the taking up on God's terms; and such are all ignorant sots and deaf worldlings.

2. Another sort of men that wrong grace are those that refuse grace out of legal dejection. Many poor creatures are so vile in their own eyes that they think it impossible they should ever find favour in God's eyes. Oh! but consider, cannot the riches of grace save? When God shall set himself on purpose to glorify grace to the full, cannot it make thee accepted? Wherefore doth God bring creatures to see their unworthiness, but that grace might be the more glorious? Grace would not be so much grace if the creature were not so unworthy; therefore you should be glad you have your hearts at that advantage, to be sensible of your own vileness. It is a wrong to grace if you do not fly to it; you straiten the riches and darken the glory of it. It is as if an emperor's revenue could not discharge a beggar's debt. Our ephah is full, brim-full, but God's mercy is over-full. You can speak of sins, and the scripture speaketh of mercy: 'Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' saith Esau, Gen. xxvii. 38. So, hath God but one mercy? Grace is a treasure that cannot be spent, an ocean ever full, and ever flowing: 'Where sin hath abounded, grace did much more abound,' Rom. v. 20. There cannot be so much in sin but there is more in grace. The apostle makes new-coined words when he is to speak of the abundance of grace; *ἐπλεόνασεν* and *ὑπερπερίσσευσεν*. The prodigal could say, There is bread enough in my father's house: Luke xv. 17, 'How many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough and to spare!' There is grace enough in God. If we perish, it is not for want of mercy, but for want of faith. Why should we then put away this grace that is revealed to us, yea, offered to us? If it were to be procured by anything in us we might despair. Take heed of slighting the grace of God; it is God's treasure: so far as you lessen grace, you make God a poor God. Mark that expression, Eph. ii. 4, 'God, who is rich in mercy.' God is lord of all things, but he counts nothing to be his treasure but his goodness and mercy. He doth not say, rich in power, though he is able to do beyond what we can ask or think; nor rich in justice, though he be righteous in all his ways and just in all his works; nor doth he say rich in creatures, though his are the cattle of a thousand hills; but rich in mercy. Therefore take heed of straitening mercy, for so far you lessen God's wealth and treasure.

3. Grace is wronged by intercepting the glory of grace. It is the greatest sacrilege that can be to rob God of his glory, especially the glory of his grace. Above all things in the world, God's glory is the most dear to him; he cannot endure to have a partner. Especially is the glory of his grace dear to him; it is the whole aim of all his dispensations to glorify grace: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' You rob

God of his chiefest honour when you take the crown of glory that is due to grace, and put it upon your own head. As, for instance, when you think he accepts you rather than others for some worth or good qualities that he seeth in you more than in others. Alas! in the light of the gospel such thoughts are not expressed, but they lurk secretly in the heart: Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' A man's heart is very prone to these thoughts: God seeth that I would bring him more glory than another; it is for my righteousness. Grace is wronged also when you are puffed up with anything you have done for God, as if it were done by your own power and strength. A christian in this case should learn the policy of Joab; when he was in a fair way of taking Rabbah, he sent for David to take the honour of winning it: 2 Sam. xii. 28, 'Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take it, and it be called after my name.' So, when we have done anything for the glory of God, let us send for God to take the honour. Thus the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' If there be any excellency, still throw the crown at grace's feet. The industrious servant said, Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;' not my industry, but thy pound.

4. Grace is wronged by turning it into wantonness. It is a heavy charge, and a black note is set on them: Jude 4, 'Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness;' when men sin freely that God may pardon freely; when they presume upon grace, as if that should bear all, and use it as a dung-cart to carry away all their filth; or, like riotous children who have a rich father, therefore spend freely; their father's estate shall pay for all. It is a mighty wrong to grace when we make it pliable to such a vile purpose. You dishonour God and disparage grace when you would make it to father the bastards of your own carnal hearts. You are vile and sinful, and you are so under the encouragements of grace, and the rather because of the abundance of grace; and, like the spider, suck poison out of the flower, and turn it into the nourishment of your lust; or as the salt sea turns the sweet rivers and dews of heaven, and all that falls into it, into salt water; so carnal hearts do assimilate all that they meet with, and turn it into fuel for their lusts. Men would fain sin securely and *cum privilegio*, with licence from heaven; and therefore they take liberty even from the grace of God. This is a vile abuse; a quite contrary way the grace of God teacheth us, 'to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;' and not to be more secure and careless because they have so much grace. But they hail it, and wrest it from its natural end and purpose, and sin freely, because God pardons freely. Grace giveth no such liberty to sin. This is done grievously by the Antinomians, who say grace gives them freedom from the moral law. It is true, grace makes us free, but to duty, not to sin. There is a sad expression, Rom. vi. 20, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' it is a description of the carnal state; duty hath no awe upon his heart. When men think themselves free from the law rather than sin, and when they expect comfort though they walk in the way of their own

heart, they have abused grace, and taken hold of the devil's covenant, and not of God's. There is never any creature freed from the law; God never made a creature to be absolutely *sui juris*, at his own disposal. The angels themselves, though they have many immunities and privileges above us, as being exempted from troubles, diseases, and death, and from the clog of flesh which we carry about us, yet they are not exempted from duty or from a law: 'They do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii. 20. Earthly kings may free some of their subjects from their homage; as Saul made a proclamation, He that doth thus and thus, 'his father's house shall be free in Israel,' 1 Sam. xvii. 25. But God never made any creature to be absolutely freed from a law. But if a man be right in doctrine, though he hold the obligation of the moral law on a believer, yet he may be an Antinomian in practice, and abuse and wrong grace; as thus, if a man slacken any part of his duty for grace's sake, or lets loose the reins of vile affections with more freedom, and saith, God will not be so rigorous, he wrongeth grace. If men be not so watchful and so strict, if men grow more careless, secure and negligent, if they be not so constant in duty, if they lessen aught of their humiliation for sin, or strictness and watchfulness in their conversation, they are as a spider that sucks poison out of grace. A man hath never the more carnal liberty for being acquainted with the gospel. This is the great thing which puts us upon duty and watchfulness, and melts the heart for sin, and awes it, and disposeth it to obedience.

5. Grace is wronged by slighting it after a taste, as carnal professors do: 1 Peter 2. 3, 'If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' A man hath at first a taste, that he may have trial how sweet the ways of God are. Now, if after trial, you are not satisfied, but make choice of the world again, it is a mighty wrong and contempt you put upon grace; for you do as it were declare and pronounce that you have made trial, and upon experience have found the pleasures and profits of the world are better than all the comforts that flowed from the grace of God. The whole aim of the word is to persuade men to make trial of the sweetness of grace: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good,' and that his grace is good. But now your experience is a flat negative and contradiction to the word, and you do as it were say, I have made trial, and I find no such sweetness in it. None wrong grace so much as they that have tasted of grace, and yet have turned aside to the profits and pleasures of the world again, and grow weary after some strictness of profession.

Use 2. To press you to glorify grace. This is the glory God expects from you: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made you accepted in the beloved.' If an artificer show you a curious piece of workmanship, he expects to be praised for his skill. A wrestler that hath foiled his adversary expects to be praised for his strength, not for his beauty: that is not a proper praise. A king in his royal gifts expects to be praised for his magnificence. So suitably the Lord who doth all things freely, and according to the motion of his own will, expects to be praised for his grace; therefore you should be always echoing out, 'Grace! grace!' Zech. iv. 7, and admiring the dispensations of God's love. It is a sure sign a man hath received no

benefit by grace if his heart be not stirred up to praise grace. Certainly he that is a partaker of it must needs be most affected with it. Let us see a little what cause we have to praise God, above the angels, and above other men.

1. Above the angels. I do not mean the bad angels, with whom God entered not into treaty, he dealeth with them in justice, not in grace; but even the good angels. In some respects we have more cause to bless God than even the good angels. Thankfulness and gratitude looks to the freeness and graciousness of the gift rather than the greatness of it; it looks not to the benefit so much as the goodwill of the giver. It is true God hath been exceeding good and bountiful to the angels, in creating them out of nothing, that they are the courtiers of heaven; but mark how good and gracious he is to us above them. The angels never offended him, but he is bountiful and gracious to us, notwithstanding the demerits of our sin; his wronged justice interposed and put in a bar, yet grace breaks out, and is manifested to us unworthy creatures. There was nothing that hindered God from doing good to the angels. A holy God hath a blessed, righteous, holy creature; but justice must be satisfied as to us; we are a generation of sinful men, the wretched children of apostatising Adam. We had forsaken God and cast him off, which the angels never did, that had a long experience of God's goodness and bounty. The very angels wonder at the grace showed to us, especially at that by which justice is satisfied: 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.'

2. Above other men. There is a common and inferior sort of grace, which is made known to all the world. The whole earth is full of his goodness, but this grace that bringeth salvation, that is peculiar to the elect, to a few poor base creatures in themselves, a little handful whom God hath chosen out of the world. John xiv. 22, 'How is it that thou wouldst manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' Free grace doth pick and choose; and how? It chooseth out things that are in themselves of no account. Look, as when God chose a sacrifice for himself, the lion was not offered, but the lamb and the dove; so God hath chosen not those that are accounted gods, but a few despicable creatures. Free grace many times chooseth the worst, that all the glory might be of God. If a man might choose trees for building, he would not choose crooked ones, but those that are straight and fittest for his use and purpose. But when God comes to look among the sons of men, many times he chooseth the most crabbed pieces, and calls them with a holy calling, according to the purpose of his grace. It is a wonder sometimes to see how grace makes the difference between two persons involved in the same guilt. Justice can make no separation; when men are in a like case, they must look for the same judgment; but grace makes a great separation. Many of God's elect are as deep in sin as those now in hell, yet God makes a difference. Both the good and bad thief were involved in the same condemnation, yet one is taken into paradise, and the other went unto his own place. Thus praise and glorify grace.

Hath appeared unto all men.—The word *ἐπεφάνη*, *appeared*, signifies it is broken out of a sudden, like a star, or like a light that was not

seen before ; and so it refers to the late manifestation of the gospel in the apostle's days. Now on a sudden it broke out. So Luke i. 78, 79, 'Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.' It is meant of the breaking out of the gospel, as the day doth after a dark night ; so here the word *ἐπεφάνη* implieth the same.

Doct. 2. That grace in the discoveries of the gospel hath shined out in a greater brightness than ever it did before.

This grace appeareth in the gospel ; there and there only is it clearly manifested.

In the prosecution of this point I shall show—

1. What darkness there was as to the knowledge of grace before.

2. How much of grace is now discovered.

First, What a darkness there was before the eternal gospel was brought out of the bosom of God. There was a darkness both among Jews and Gentiles. In the greatest part of the world there was utter darkness as to the knowledge of grace, and in the church nothing but shadows and figures.

1. This grace was not known in the world, only a little of it was: Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' Some inferior grace was made known to them in the creation and in the course of providence, by showers of rain and fruitful seasons, grace on this side heaven ; but nothing of the secrets of God's bosom, of the incarnation of God, of the expiation of sin by his death, of salvation by faith in the Mediator. This depends not upon the connection of natural causes, but the free pleasure of God ; therefore the angels knew it not till it was revealed in the church : Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' The gentiles, by looking into the order of causes, could never find it out. They might find a first being, and the chiefest good, but not a Christ, not a saviour ; there they sat in the shadows of death, and did not understand nor desire eternal life : Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' Much of God may be seen in the known courses of nature, rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, but nothing of Christ. The apostle speaks it there to dissuade them from the worship of Jupiter and Mercury, and other of the vanities of the gentiles ; he argues from the grace of nature and common benefits which they had received : this were enough to make them acknowledge a divine power. Pray mark, the apostle saith, 'He left not himself without a witness ;' yet he suffered them to walk in their own ways, because he did not reveal his gospel nor give them his Spirit : Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel : he hath not dealt so with any nation ; and as for his judgments, they have not known them ;' Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 'According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith ;'

Eph. iii. 4, 5, 'Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;' Col. i. 26, 27, 'Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in them the hope of glory.' But God suffered them to serve their own lusts, and to carry on that religion which they had feigned to themselves. But then he left not himself without a witness, for they had many corporal blessings, from whence they might easily collect that they should not worship stocks and stones and dead men, but the living God, by whose providence those blessings were dispensed. Though he gave them not the gospel, yet he gave them the light of nature, and the looking-glass of the creatures. There is much ado whether this were *auxilium sufficiens gratiæ*, a sufficient help to convert them, or to bring them to such a condition that they might gain the grace of God. It was enough to oblige them to seek after God, and to convince them that they did ill in worshipping the creatures, but it was not sufficient to find out the true God and enjoy him. Saving grace is not granted by any promise to the improvement of nature. Well, then, though the whole earth be full of the goodness of the Lord, that is, of the fruits and effects of his common bounty, yet nothing of his saving grace is known, till it appeared and broke out in the gospel.

2. To the Jews this grace began to dawn, but it was veiled in figures and shadows, that they could not see clearly. The substance of their doctrine was the same with ours, but there is a great deal of difference in the manner of dispensation; they had the dark text, and we the exposition. There was grace and shadow by Moses, but 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' John i. 17; because here all the types were revealed, and we have the substance itself. Christ is the light of the world. The sun, the farther off it is from rising, the less light it gives. Christ was not then risen, therefore there was but twilight and full of shadows. Grace is opposed to the condemnation of the moral law, and truth to the shadows of the ceremonial law. Christ's offices, his benefices, his person, were but darkly propounded to them. Take but one place for all. Of all the ministers of the legal dispensation, John Baptist saw the clearest; yet, saith Christ, the least of gospel ministers knows more than he: Mat. xi. 11, 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' John drawing nearer to Christ, had a clearer knowledge of the meaning and application of the types than others had; but now those that have lived after the pouring out of the Spirit upon Christ's ascension under the gospel dispensation, have a clear insight into the doctrine of grace, far more clear than it was in the days of John.

Secondly, What and how much of grace is now discovered? I answer—

1. The wisdom of grace. The gospel is a mere riddle to carnal reason, a great mystery: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of god-

liness.' There we read of God and man brought together, and justice and mercy brought together by the contrivance of grace ; here only we see this mystery, that is without controversy great, for these things could not come into the heads of any creatures. If angels and men had been put to study, and set down their way of reconciliation to God, how it should be, they could never have thought of such a remedy as the bringing of God and man together in the person of Christ, and justice and mercy together by the blood and satisfaction of Christ ; this came out of no breast but God ; he brought the secret out of his own bosom. When the question was put in the council of the Trinity, how man that was fallen might be brought again to God, from the depth of misery to the height of happiness, grace interposed, and propounded Christ to be God-man in one person. Oh ! the strangeness and wonderfulness of this contrivance ! If you consider the weakness and vileness of human nature, the infiniteness and excellency of the divine nature, certainly such a plot could not enter into the head of any creature. Upon what grounds could any creature expect such a condescension, that mortal and immortal, infiniteness and finiteness, should come together ? And as the person of Christ is wonderful, so also is his work and business, which was to bring justice and mercy to kiss each other, that justice might have full satisfaction for men's sins, and mercy have full content in procuring their salvation, that grace might be glorified, and yet justice be no loser. When God redeemed the world, he had a greater work to do than to make the world at first. The object of creation was pure nothing, but then, as there was no help, so no hindrance ; but now, in redemption, there was sin to be taken away, and that was worse than anything. We deserved ill, his justice and truth had a quarrel against us, and therefore this was the harder work, and needed more of his wisdom, which now is discovered fully to us in the gospel. When God was to make man, though he was to be his noblest creature next the angels, it was nothing to the divine power to make him of the dust of the earth. Now sin makes us worse than earth : Job xxx. 8, 'They were children of fools, children of base men, they were viler than the earth.' Our condition was worse ; here God's justice opposed ; but grace found out the contrivance, and sent Christ in the form of a servant, who 'was in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' Phil. ii. 6, 7.

2. We discern the freeness of grace in the gospel, both in giving and accepting. Whatever God doth is a gift, and what we do, it is accepted of grace. In giving there is a great deal of grace made known there. The Lord doth all freely : John i. 16, 'And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace ;' that is, for grace's sake he gives Christ, gives faith, gives pardon ; he gives the condition as well as the blessing. Certainly now we have to do with a God of grace, who sits upon a throne of grace, that he might bestow freely to all comers. Out of Christ and in the law, there God is discovered as sitting upon a tribunal of justice, as he is described, Ps. xcvi. 2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' But now, saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in a time of need ;' that we may have mercy for

pardon and for acceptance of our persons, and grace to help us against our weaknesses. This was figured out in the law. Under the law it was figured out by the mercy-seat between the cherubims, from whence God was giving out answers; but there the high priest could enter but once a year, and the way within the veil was not fully made manifest, Heb. ix. 8. There was a throne of grace then, but more God's tribunal of justice; there was smoke and thundering about his throne; but now let us draw near that we may obtain grace, take all freely out of God's hand. Then there is grace manifested in accepting as well as giving. God accepts of serious repentance for complete innocence, of sincerity for perfection, of the will for the deed, of a person for Christ's sake, and of the works for the person's sake. Thus God doth both give and accept freely. That we do is not brought to the balance, but touchstone. Many times a good work is not full weight. God doth not look to the measure, but to the truth of grace; he requires truth in the reins.

3. The efficacy and power of grace is discovered in the gospel. Christ sendeth his Spirit to apply what he himself hath purchased. One person comes to merit, and the other to accomplish the fruit of his merit. Mark, to stop the course of grace, divine justice did not only put in an impediment, but there was our infidelity that hindered the application of that which Christ was to merit; and therefore, as the second person is to satisfy God, so the third person is to work upon us. There was a double hindrance against the business of our salvation—God's justice, for the glory of God was to be repaired, therefore Christ was to merit; and there was our unbelief, therefore the Spirit must come and apply it. First, Christ suffered, and when he was ascended, then was the Spirit poured out. Had it not been for the gospel, we should never have known the efficacy and power of grace. The apostle puts the question: Gal. iii. 2, 'This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' How did you come to be acquainted with grace? This is the seal which God would put upon the excellency and authority of the gospel, that he will associate and join in assistance with it the operation of the Spirit to accompany it. Look, as it is with the sun, light increaseth with heat; the morning beams are faint and gentle; but at noon the sun shines out, not only with glory, but with strength; so it is here; the more the light of the gospel is increased, the more is the efficacy and power of it conveyed into the sons of men. The dispensation of the law is called the 'oldness of the letter,' and the dispensation of the gospel the 'newness of the spirit:' Rom. vii. 6, 'But now ye are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.' In the mere law dispensation there was only a literal direction, but no strength and ability to perform what is suggested. *Lex jubet, gratia juvat*—The law commands, but all the commands of grace help. There is a Spirit that goeth along with the gospel to qualify us for the duties of it: 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' With the dispensation of the gospel God joins the virtue and power of the Holy

Ghost. The letter convinceth, and so by consequence obligeth to death, for we cannot perform what it requireth of us; but now there is a spirit goes along with the gospel, and so we are acquainted with the efficacy of grace.

4. We are acquainted with the largeness and bounty of grace. The benefits that come by Christ were not so clearly revealed in the law; there was no type that I know of which figured union with Christ. The blood of Christ was figured by the blood of bulls and goats, justification by the fleeing away of the scape-goat, sanctification by the water of purification. But now eternal life is rarely mentioned in express terms; sometimes it is shadowed out in the promise of inheriting the land of Canaan, as hell is by going into captivity; but otherwise it is seldom mentioned: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'But now it is made manifest' (speaking of the grace of God) 'by the appearing of our Saviour Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' The gentiles had but glimmerings and gross fancies about the future state. Life and immortality was never known to the purpose till Christ came in the flesh; and therefore heaven is as sparingly mentioned in the Old Testament as temporal blessings are in the new. In the New Testament we hear much of the cross, of sufferings, and afflictions. Why? Because there is much of heaven discovered. The eternal reward is strong enough, but temporals are not of consideration. Carnal men are of a temper quite contrary to the gospel; they could be content to be under the old dispensation, to have temporal blessings, and let God keep heaven to himself. But this is the great privilege of the gospel, that life and immortality, the blessed hope, the eternal recompenses are now mentioned so expressly, and propounded to our desires and hopes.

5. In the gospel we learn the sureness of grace. God will no more be disappointed; the whole business lies without us, in other hands. In the first covenant, our salvation was committed to the indeterminate freedom of man's will; but now Christ is both a redeemer and a surety. The former covenant depended upon something in ourselves, upon the mutability of our will; but now it is put into the hands of Christ, not only to reconcile us to God, but to preserve and keep us in such an estate. Therefore, Heb. vii. 22, he is said to be 'the surety of a better testament.' Christ stands engaged to see the covenant kept on both sides. God hath Christ to challenge for obedience, and we to give us grace to perform that which God hath required of us; so that now grace in all its glory is made known. The apostle saith, Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.' This is that which makes it sure to all the elect, because God deals with us upon such gracious and free terms.
