

THE GRACE OF GOD,
AS DEPICTED IN THE ORACLES OF GOD.
IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

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“ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen.”—Psalm lxxii. 18, 19.

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P R E F A C E.

I AGAIN appear before the public, in the character of an Author; and as my object is to publish truth, that the creature may be abased, the church of God fed, the work of the Redeemer unfolded, the love of the Father extolled, the ministry of the Holy Ghost honoured, and the glorious fulness of Jehovah Jesus held forth, for the edification of the blood-bought objects of everlasting love; I cannot conceive that any apology is needful, from me, to those for whose use this little work is designed. And as to men who know not what truth is, because not under the guidance of the Spirit of Promise, it is neither my desire, nor is it in my power, to adduce any argument that will justify me

before them in its publication. But though the cold-hearted critic may condemn, though the self-righteous pharisee may despise, though the conceited theorist may sneer, and the bold infidel scoff; yet I hope, in the Lord's hand, what I have written will prove beneficial to those "who would see Jesus," and are "enquiring their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." Many such are labouring under the thought that the doctrines of grace have a licentious tendency; which thought has been gendered by the harsh epithets affixed to the lovers of truth by the enemies of Christ, who ("by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,") and nursed in the heart from the fear of indulging sentiments of so God-dishonouring a character as Antinomianism certainly is, in the common acceptance of the word.

But if Antinomianism is, what indeed cannot but be its true meaning, against looking to the moral law for justification before God—a looking off of all creature perform-

ances, and a resting wholly upon the finished work of Christ, for all our salvation: I say if this is the meaning of Antinomianism, then I have advocated it throughout the whole of the following pages, as the only thing that can save the soul, produce holiness, or lead to heaven. The term Antinomianism being derived from two Greek words, ANTI against, NOMUS a law, I am inclined to think that my apprehension of the same is correct, when I say **A REAL ANTINOMIAN** is one who is taught of God to look away from the law of works; and to love a full, free, and everlasting salvation, originating in election union to Christ, established by covenant settlements in Christ, flowing through the heart of Christ, brought by the hands of the Spirit into the soul, and, springing up into everlasting life, leads the possessor to certain glory. This being, in my apprehension, an Antinomian, I am bold to say **THERE ARE NONE BUT ANTINOMIANS IN HEAVEN**. On the other hand, if Antinomianism is, “ continuing in sin that grace

may abound," I deprecate the sentiment as abominable in the extreme: **YET LIBERTINISM, NOT ANTINOMIANISM,** is the right name for such horrid conduct as this. **NOR CAN I THINK THAT ANY MAN LIVING AND DYING AN ANTINOMIAN, IN THIS LATTER SENSE OF THE WORD, CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

Nevertheless whatever may be the conduct of men, whether professed lovers of the doctrines of grace or not, there is one thing which I am quite sure of, namely, the doctrines of grace are heavenly doctrines, and are, for that reason, heavenly in their influence and effects. This being a point which the word of God bears me out in, I have endeavoured to show this in the following pages: that those of the Lord's people who are in a wavering state of mind, in consequence of what the enemies of truth have insinuated, may know that "it is a good thing for the heart to be established with grace."

As there is neither chance, contingency, nor conditionality, in New Covenant truths, but all are yea and amen in the Covenant Head of the church, so that gospel which contains either is not after God. And as Christ has commanded the gospel to be **PREACHED** to every creature, so obedience to this command honours Christ; whereas **OFFERING** the gospel dishonours him. Some persons may think there is no real difference between **OFFERING** and **PREACHING** the gospel, but there certainly is. **OFFERING** Christ to men, is setting man above Christ; **PREACHING** Christ to men, is giving him the glory due to his holy name.

Though the moral duties of the creature are not superseded by the work of our excellent Immanuel, yet they may be performed without any saving interest in him; and, at the same time, the saints of God find it to be not their moral duty, but their spiritual privilege, to live upon him by faith, to approach him with holy familiarity under the

anointings of the Spirit, to have fellowship with the mystery, and to live in conformity to his revealed will. The creature's duty and the saint's privilege are widely different, I have therefore attempted to give the weaklings, among the Lord's regenerate ones, a few hints upon these things; together with a small portion of experimental honey from the rock of ages, and a brief view of several portions of God's word, all of which, if distilled into the soul by the Holy Ghost, will, I doubt not, prove truly useful.

Much more could have been said upon each subject I have introduced to the reader; but if I had done so I should have swelled my book to a size which would have precluded many from seeing it, for whose use it is intended.

I now leave it with the Lord, humbly praying he will own it for much good to all whose desires tally with the words of the Psalmist, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people.

O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." May this be thy petition, dear reader, and may thy petition be heard.

WILLIAM TANT.

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THE GRACE OF GOD,

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CHAPTER I.

The Doctrines of Grace not dangerous.

“The doctrine which is according to godliness.” 1 Tim. vi. 3.

By the true Christian, all that savours of God must be highly esteemed; but by him, who has only the “form of godliness” while “denying the power” thereof, such a religion, as can be taken up and laid down at pleasure, is the only religion either sought after or admired: therefore, the religion of grace being that which forbids “the wise man to glory in his wisdom, or the mighty man to glory in his might, or the rich man to glory in his riches,” Jer. ix. 24. must be hated by all who are so wise, as to think God the Father’s love depends upon their choice; so mighty as to believe God the Son’s salvation is made sure by their strength; and so rich, as to expect they can go to Christ when they please, and that their own diligence is better than the in-dwelling power of God the Holy Ghost. And,

mind to Samuel, who was but a child, in a way he would not to Eli, who had judged Israel many years. He called David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, from the sheep-cote, and made him King of Israel; took Elisha from following the plough to be Elijah's successor; and Amos, from gathering sycamore fruit or wild figs, to be a prophet. Thus God is said to take one and leave another, choose one and reject another, love one and hate another, bless one and curse another, without asking man's consent, or seeking man's approbation. And every objection brought against his sovereignty, in this respect, is thus answered, "Nay, but O man, who art thou, that repliest against God; shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel into honour and another into dishonour?" Rom. ix. 20, 21. We might trace through the New Testament history to establish the truth of election, but let Christ's declaration, in Luke xvii. 34, 36, suffice, "I tell you in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left;" two men shall be lying in one delusion of false religion; one shall be taken therefrom to know the power of godliness, the other shall be left. "Two women shall be grinding together;" two professors shall be working at the law; one shall be taken therefrom to Christ, the end of the law, "the other shall be left." "Two men shall be in the field of profanity, the one shall be taken therefrom to seek God, the other shall be left."

If we look at Bible promises they proclaim election, thus, "this people have I formed for

myself; they shall show forth my praise," Isaiah xliiii. 21. Here the promise is made to those whom God hath formed for himself: and how does he form them? The apostle taught of God gives the answer—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to pass things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." "But of him ye are" who are thus chosen "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Then, it appears, the way in which God forms a people for himself, is by choosing them in Christ, thus constituting him their everlasting standing place for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and by this standing the people are constituted a wise, a righteous, a sanctified, and redeemed people unto God. Therefore, he says, "they shall show forth my praise," not they may, not if they are careful, not if they avail themselves of a future offer, but "they *shall*." This is the end of God's choice, and this end must be answered, because God has provided "all fulness" in Christ; which fulness would be so many dead commodities, if not handed out to "the heirs of promise" at the suited season. But dead commodities are not in Christ, for "in him was life," and "in him is no darkness at all," and if no darkness, no death at all; therefore, they who are formed in Christ

by eternal election *shall*, sooner or later, shew forth God's praise.

“Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end,” Isaiah xlv. 17. This promise is to Israel, that is, God's people interested in the “true Israel,” Christ Jesus, who alone is a “prince with God,” for he honoured his law to its full extent, endured its curse, and satisfied his justice. And under this character, Jehovah thus addresses him—“Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified,” Isaiah xlix. 3; for to suppose the promise belonged to Israel after the flesh is contradicting prophecy, Deut. xxviii. 37. and facts, for they are confounded, as a people, at this very time, being a “proverb and a by-word among all nations.” If then the promise cannot belong to Israel after the flesh, and does belong to those who have an interest in Christ the true “Israel,” then election alone gave them this interest.

“In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory,” Isaiah xlv. 25. Here again the promise is to “Israel.” “The Lord will be the hope of his people,” Joel iii. 16. mark, “of his people,” not the devil's people, and the Lord will have his children well understand, that when he speaks of his people, he means his chosen, thus he says, “my people, my chosen,” Isaiah xliiii. 20. And God says in Joel ii. over and over again, “my people shall never be ashamed,” that is, shall never be ashamed of what he has provided for them, what he has given to them, what he has worked in them, and what he will accomplish upon them: for in another place, speaking to the whole body of his

elect, he says, "that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never more open thy mouth, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 63. Here the Lord is telling his people what he will reveal in them, namely, peace through the blood of the cross, which shall produce the blessed effects of true repentance and godly sorrow for sin.

"At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," Dan. xii. 1. No deliverance from hell, but for those whose names are written in the book of life; therefore Christ says to his disciples, "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." It was not till Judas left the table that Christ said, "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Christ knew spiritual love to the brethren is built upon electing love: Judas was not elected, therefore he only says to the eleven, "love one another." I just notice this to introduce the following promise of Christ, made to "the eleven," and through them to all God's elect, "because I live ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. And after this, Judas (not Iscariot) so clearly saw election, that he exclaimed, "Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" verse 22. And so God has fixed, by an unalterable decree, that his "people shall dwell alone; and shall not be reckoned among the nations." They shall dwell alone in all the purposes of his grace, and to this end God makes all his promises to them in Christ, "according as they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4.

If we look at the characters by which all who are “saved in the Lord, even with an everlasting salvation,” are designated, we shall find that this confirms the truth of election. Thus they are called “the body of Christ, and members in particular,” 1 Cor. xii. 27, they are said to be “the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven,” Heb. xii. 23. they are defined as “they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” Rev. xxi. 27, the “brethren of Christ,” Rom. viii. 29, “the daughter of the king,” Psalm xlv. 13, “the Lord’s portion,” Deut. xxxii. 29. “the children of Zion,” Psalm cxlix. 2, “the flock of God’s heritage,” Micah vii. 14, “a peculiar people,” 1 Peter ii. 9, “the salt of the earth,” Matt. v. 13. God’s “jewels,” Mal. iii. 17, “the whole family in heaven and earth named in Christ,” Eph. iii. 16, “the precious sons of Zion,” Lam. iv. 2. Yea, “the election,” Rom. ix. 11.

What can be more evident than that there is a people loved, in distinction from the world, by God, and that they are his choice; but should there still remain a doubt upon the reader’s mind as to the foregoing being satisfactory proofs of eternal election, I would direct him to the following declarations: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” 1 Peter i. 2. “Shall not God avenge his own elect?” Luke xviii. 7. “An apostle according to the faith of God’s elect,” Titus i. 1. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” Rom. viii. 33. “For the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened,” Matt. xxiv. 22. “Ye are a

chosen generation," 1 Peter ii. 9. "Many be called, but few chosen," Matt. ii. 16. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," 2 Thess. ii. 13. After reading these parts of God's word, I am constrained to believe that eternal election is a truth which is fully established in the Scriptures.

Does, then, this Bible doctrine endanger holiness? By no means, for it emanates from God, who is "glorious in holiness," therefore nothing can come from him that is unholy, or that has an unholy tendency. It cannot endanger holiness, because it gives the persons elected a being in Christ, who is the source of all the holiness a sinner can know, or God can give to a sinner. Does it not tend to negligence concerning eternal realities, encouraging the thought, "if I am elected I shall be saved, therefore I shall not concern myself about the things of God"? Such expressions or thoughts as this do not arise from election; but from the temptations of the wicked one, the carnality of the heart, and the blindness of human nature. Wherever a soul can say, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," he has a right to believe he is elected, because there is no panting after God till the quickening power of the Spirit is known, and a soul is quickened by the Holy Spirit, because "Chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit." But though God hath chosen a people for himself, and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son, and all who pant after God have reason to believe they are chosen of God; yet no man can say he is not chosen, if still in a

state of unregeneracy, because none could be more immoral when in such a state than Mary Magdalene, none more presumptuous than the thief upon the cross, and none more cruel than Saul of Tarsus. Yet where was the man who could say neither of these was a chosen vessel of mercy, even when they were "in bondage under the elements of this world"? And, at the same time, what instance have we that election urged them on to commit iniquity? Not one. Though God fore-ordains his people to be conformed to Christ, yet he does not infuse sin into any; therefore election makes many saints, but not one sinner. Predestination can be no excuse for sin, for no man can tell whether it is God's will to permit him to breathe until he has committed it; therefore no man ever did, and no man ever can, commit sin for the purpose of accomplishing God's will. Whenever sin is committed, God, as God, must be forgotten, and to this point speaks the apostle, "Let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted of God, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Christ's sufferings and death were fore-ordained, but Pilate and the Jews acted wickedly in his crucifixion and sufferings, he for unjustly condemning and scourging him, they for unjustly demanding his death and cruelly mocking him. But does not the enemy of souls make use of this doctrine to lull men into a supine state? There is no craft whatever but what the devil makes use of either to worry and annoy the people of God, or to keep his own subjects in carnal security. Is he not perpetually deluding souls with a contingent representa-

tion of God's mercy, telling them "they will have an opportunity to repent, to turn to God, or to pray upon a death bed"? And if he can deceive men with such a general representation of the mercy of God as this, no wonder if he makes a handle of so great an act of mercy as election, and does deceive some by it who were never chosen to eternal life. He tempted Christ to presumption, for the evangelist informs us "The devil taketh him, and sitteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God cast thyself down, for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." "Jesus said unto him, it is written thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God." If, then, the devil could thus attack Christ, no doubt he often attacks such poor creatures as "sinful man" with the same powerful weapons, saying "If you are elected you will be saved, and if not you will be lost; it is no use resisting me, or fighting against sin, indulge your lusts, give way to the evils of your nature, allow yourself a little liberty in iniquity." And where the grace of election prevent not, these suggestions are listened to and delighted in. But election is not dangerous, notwithstanding this; for, in fact, interest in election is the only security against Satan's devices, as Christ says, "If it were possible they shall deceive the very elect;" implying that it is impossible. And though the devil makes a bad use of it, (and he makes a bad use of it because he was not an elect angel, for it is election keeps angels in heaven; they being