

PART III.

I SHALL now proceed to select a few of the many scriptures which in my apprehension occupy very hostile positions to offered grace.

The first passage I shall cite is Psalm lxxviii. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* These words were spoken by the sweet psalmist of Israel, and quoted by the great apostle of the Gentiles; who with great judgment and accuracy appropriates the passage to his own subject in order to illustrate and support his own argument. As spoken by David they are the language of *prophecy*; as used by Paul they are connected with *history*. What the one spoke *prophetically*, the other applies *historically*. David used them in a *perspective* sense, Paul in a *confirmative*. And shows

1. *That the SPIRITUAL part of Christ's human nature was in heaven before it was on earth.* To be certain of the correctness of this idea we need only remark the apostle's observations in verse 9, 10, thrown in by way of parenthesis. This is his language, ("now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.") Eph. iv. 19. He descended into the Virgin's womb, called the lower parts of the earth, Psalm cxxxix. 15. dwelt in flesh, and was received up to glory. I cannot think the *grave* can be meant by the lower parts of the earth, because his soul never did descend into that, but rose to glory when the body expired. "To-day shalt thou be with me in para-

dise," was his dying language to a petitioning thief. But as this thought is not connected with the present enquiry I pass it by.

2. *That he received all distributive blessings for his CHURCH.* Thou hast received *gifts* for *men*, even for the *rebellious*, which seem to denote the whole church of God, whether contemplated in a state of spirituality, depravity, or non-existence. Those of them who are his open foes, have a secret interest in his fulness and union to his person. And though they are enemies to God and his gospel, yet as touching the election they are *beloved*; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, Rom. xi. 28, 29. And those who may be ages and ages behind in the great chain of existence will not be forgot: them also must Immanuel bring into natural and spiritual existence, that there may be one fold and one shepherd. The whole church of Christ form one grand chain, let down from the eternal throne into the mighty chasm of moral oblivion, the links of which are discoverable only as they rise to view, and are drawn upon the eminence of spirituality, by the invincible power of omnipotent grace. The whole chain will be lifted out of the muddiest depth of thickening depravity, be washed from its defilement in efficacious merit, brightened for immortality, and glisten in the overwhelming emanations of unclouded Majesty. Offering Christ to all mankind will never add another link to the chain, and blessed for ever be our God that it can never destroy one of the very smallest thereof. We shall discuss the propriety of it in another place.

3. *That his distributive fulness consist of GIFTS.* "Thou hast received *gifts* for *men*," &c. God the Father gave to his Son all spiritual blessings that they might be supplied as from an overflowing fountain, and thereby be encouraged to come boldly to a throne of grace, that they might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need." They were given to the head that they might be realized by the body. The fulness of the head contemplated the deficiency of the

members, and amply provided those supplies which they would require. In the character of *gifts*, therefore, was the church's treasure received by her redeeming Lord and great Trustee, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of the glory of his grace. Eph. i. 3—14. 1 Tim. i. 9.

4. *All those gifts which our treasurer received, were designed to flow through his merit and death.* They were gifts bestowed *above* blood, but gifts which could reach us, only through the death of Christ. Satan contrived to interrupt by crime the flow of sovereign friendship, and would have sunk in ruinable disgrace the whole church of God, had not her Head and Surety have destroyed his efforts and designs, by removing the great water-break, and clearing away all the obstructions which moral evil had thrown across the stream. He did not, in my view, *purchase* those gifts, but opened a passage for their conveyance. In other words, he removed the iniquity of the land, and thus opened the stream of mercy, and the kingdom of heaven for all believers. By these remarks I do not intend to impugn the doctrine of purchased blessings; I probably do not understand it; and if not, of course I have taken up very crude notions on the subject. The reader will remember, that in the progress of an enquiry a person is at liberty, and often under the necessity, of stating his doubts and displaying his ignorance. And in commencing this enquiry, it was my design, not only to investigate the sentiments of others, but to express my doubts, pass my own opinion, and acknowledge my own ignorance. If by purchased blessings, is meant an equivalent paid for them at a full estimation, in the very same sense as the church was purchased; that Immanuel paid for those blessings by commensurate sufferings; that *beside* expiating the sins of his people he suffered additional torture to procure or purchase their sure mercies, I am constrained to tender my unqualified dissent. The form in which I have contemplated the subject involves so many difficulties and even inconsistencies that I am obliged to differ with some on the subject, with whom I should feel the greatest pleasure in agreeing; and with

whom I have the honour of coinciding in many of the most important points of christian doctrine.

Passing these things, the language of the psalmist which I have cited, and on which I am reasoning, is said to retain an allusion to the practice of conquering heroes, in fastening the captives they had made to their carriages, openly exposing them, and joyfully scattering pieces of silver and gold among the spectators: afterwards riding in triumph to the fortified city from whence they came, calling to the porter, demanding access, and celebrating their victory. Then is the spoil of a great prey divided.' Isa. xxxiii. 23.

The Author and Captain of salvation came from heaven; "what, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend *where he was before?*" "He that ascended is the same also that descended." "Lo I come," was the language of his pre-existent Spirit, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. Heb. in the midst of my bowels." Psalm xl. 7, 8. He came to demand deliverance for Jacob, to break their fetters, breathe their liberty, and to bring them out from their prison houses. He fought their foes, and conquered their enemies, was bruised in the conflict, but bled in conquest, expired in triumph, and rose the acknowledged conqueror of men and devils. He struck the decisive blow and laid in humble prostration the combined armies of hell; he tore to shivers the sable emblems of slavery, and hoisting the flag of liberty upon the confines of ruinable thralldom, he uttered the everlasting echo, "*It is finished!*" He loaded his conquering car with spoils from the enemies ground, fettered those who had enslaved his people, and poured the odours of redemption into the regions of bitter servitude. He bound his enemies to his chariot, exposed them to public derision, triumphing over them at his death. He lavished his riches upon adoring and applauding multitudes, rode in victory from the embattled plains to the celestial courts, and in a conqueror's tone demanded access to glory. The everlasting gates lift up their heads, and the King of glory, with stately majesty and swelling triumphs enter in; bestrews the golden floor

with the spoils he took in the day of battle, lives to enjoy the fruit of all his toil, and to reign the monarch of an unlimited empire. He lives to bestow what he has to give, what he will not withhold, and cannot *offer*.

He left his azure throne,
 To bleed in conquest grand ;
 He fought the fight alone,
 And saved a chosen land :
 And now he lives, and now he reigns,
 Through nature's endless vast domains.
 The fruit of all his toil,
 He scatters on the just ;
 Divides his glorious spoil,
 To his admiring host :
 And now he lives, and now he pleads,
 The sov'reign balm of all their needs ;
 The brightest object of the throng,
 The sweetest subject of the song.

If the distribution of spiritual mercies are fairly represented by a general's scattering pieces of money amidst admiring spectators, we shall quickly perceive the inconsistency of offering, tendering, and pressing spiritual mercies. In giving largess to his soldiers or scattering pieces of silver among his friends, the following things are observable, and seem illustrative of spiritual communications.

1. *It displays the conqueror's dignity.* He does not offer, tender, beseech, and entreat people to receive his riches and his spoils, but throws them here and there. They are people whose hearts he has touched, and who are anxious to receive of his abounding mercy. He is found of them that sought him not, Rom. x. 20. Hear him assert his own dignity, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me:"—*I girded thee though thou hast not known me.* "Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have *created* it." Isa. xlv. 5—8. Jehovah maintains his dignity while he imparts his grace. He raises grovelling worms to himself, without descending to grovel with them. He offers not his gifts to the dead, but scatters them freely among the living.

He does not dwell among the tombs to seek the living among the dead, but reigns among his saints, amidst the living in Jerusalem.

2. *The comparison illustrates his sovereignty.* He scatters his favors here and there; one handful in this direction, and another in that. With liberality he has united sovereignty. But offers of grace are opposed to his sovereignty, seeing he is said to die for them all, to offer his salvation to them all, and to wish them all to be saved, yea, even to beseech and intreat them not to damn their souls, but to be ruled by him, and let him save them from the bitter pains of eternal death. Surely offers of grace do but badly illustrate the sovereignty of divine mercy. How much unlike his own independent language, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

3. *We are taught by this figure that all our mercies descend to us in the shape of gifts.* He gives repentance and pardon, Acts v. 35. A heart to know him, Jer. xxiv. 7. His laws into their minds, Heb. viii. 10. Margin, a righteousness to justify them, Acts xiii. 39. "which is to all and upon all them that believe." Rom. iii. 27. In fine, he gives us all things richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. vi. 17. not offer them, to be either accepted or rejected. So that the question may still be put, "who maketh thee to differ from *another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive it?" If God has distinguished some from others by sovereign grace, and sovereignly bestows his favours on them, why should such characters glory as if they were not given sovereignly but offered generally? that they had not received them as *favours*, but accepted them as *offers*? that they were not given independently, but offered conditionally.

Psalm lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them who walk uprightly.* The following remarks may be considered as included in the words—

1. The Lord God *gives* grace in connection with glory; so that grace and glory go together. As an act of the divine mind they were given to the church before the world began; both given at one and the same time. But in point of order, grace lies before glory. Grace is given as a *principle*, before heaven as a *place*. The place involves the principle, and the principle disclose the place. The principle is in *us*, that we may be in the *place*. The principle dispose us for the place, and not the place for the principle. We pass from the principle to the place, and not from the place to the principle. Again, we arrive at the place through the principle, and not at the principle through the place; but wherever the principle is received, the place will be enjoyed. The principle reign in us that we may reign in the place. But how can the principle be offered? If it is offered it can never be received, because principle must precede action. To offer the principle of life to a dead body, provided the body will perform certain actions in a voluntary manner, is a sure way to abuse the understanding, and to claim the privilege of being thought ridiculous. Had the principle of life been only offered to Adam, he would never have had a posterity to ruin and undo; but God *breathed* into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. The principle was introduced before animation was observed.

2. *We may understand the language more comprehensively.* This grace includes every covenant blessing. In the soul it is one principle displaying itself in many different forms; faith, hope, love, joy, patience, &c. all spring from one principle, and are different combinations of spiritual excitement, designated by certain characters, which are adapted to point out their different relations. So in the divine Being, it is favour springing from affection, or his goodwill represented in endless forms and in endless combinations. Election, adoption, justification, pardon, peace, &c. are so many distinct acts of grace, or grace acting in so many modifications. As a prolific principle shews itself in a variety of forms, present new associations, new harmonies and new beauties; so divine grace is the prolific principle of all

spiritual mercies ; and hence we read of “ the exceeding riches of his grace.” Eph. ii. 7.—“ the election of *grace*,” Rom. xi. 5.—and of being predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ Jesus, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his *grace*: and of having redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his *grace*,” Eph. i. 5—8.—of “ believing through *grace*,” Acts xviii. 17.—of being called “ not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and *grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9.—of “ being justified freely by his *grace*,” Rom. iii. 24.—of “ singing with *grace* in the heart,” Col. iii. 16.—of “ everlasting consolation and a good hope through *grace*,” 2 Thes. ii. 16.—of “ fellow heirs of the *grace* of life,” 1 Pet. iii. 7.—of “ standing in *grace*,” Rom. v. 2.—of abundant *grace*, reigning *grace*, &c. A view of these things made the apostle call him “ the *God of all grace*,” 1 Pet. v. 10.

Now, what I have to observe is this, if grace is offered at all, it must be offered in all its acts and modifications ; because it is impossible to separate grace from its acts, or its acts from one another. The same grace that regenerates a sinner elected that sinner before the world began ; so that in offering grace or inviting sinners to believe, is offering to elect them, and predestinate them, as well as to regenerate, &c. which seem extremely absurd. Allow grace to be given, and those absurdities vanish, because regeneration is the fruit of election. To suppose that God will ever bestow the grace of repentance, faith, hope, &c. where he has neither elected nor adopted, is to think without restraint, and to reason without a rule. God has joined them together, and what he has joined let no man attempt to put asunder.

3. *This language points out the unconditional nature of divine grace.* “ He will give grace and glory.” He will not *offer* it, but he will *give* it. No conditions are annexed, no pre-requisites required, for he will *give* it. No worthiness is demanded, for he *gives* it. The peniless need not despond, for he *gives* it. No *cold offers*

shall be made, for it *runs warm* from his heart; *he gives it*. No recompence can be made, no tittle can be done, because he *will give it*. This may sting a proud Armenian, and make self-justiciaries run wild, yet nevertheless he *will give it*. It is his settled and fixed determination. "The Lord hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" Isaiah xiv. 27. These, no doubt, are unwelcome truths to those who are whole and sound; to those robed in the drapery of delusion, and sheltered in the cobwebs of frail morality; but they will ever be glad tidings to the naked, helpless, and undone, who are the only people that need them; "for the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." But though the people rage, and imagine vain things, he will never deviate from his plans; *he will give grace and glory*. Now if he will give it freely, how can he offer it *conditionally*? Can a free gift and a conditional offer, be but one and the same thing?—If he offers a part of grace, provided they will exercise another part in the form of faith and repentance?—If he will not even *offer* grace, except they repent and believe; (for on these conditions the offers are made,) how then can grace be free? How can he *give it*? If he will not part with it only on certain conditions he *must* stipulate for it, at least so I should think. But if he will *give it*, he cannot *stipulate* for it; "otherwise, grace is no more grace, or work is no more work:" and the distinction between grace and works, though founded on practical ideas, must nevertheless be destroyed. I pass on to notice,

Psalm cx. 3. "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" From these words it seem obvious,

1. *That the Lord Jesus Christ has a people.* To say that they are his by gift, acceptance, marriage, purchase, conquest, surrender, confession, &c. would convey but little information, seeing they are ideas generally understood.

2. *His people, by nature, are opposed to his government and grace.* They will not submit to his sceptre, nor seek refuge in his cross. They have neither the will, nor the ability; not the former, because that is

denied in the verse we are noticing; not the latter, for they are *without strength*, Rom. v. 6. which must be understood of *spiritual* and not corporeal strength.

3. *That they possess hostile feeling towards spiritual things.* They are not only without strength, but *ungodly*; “for the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. viii. 7. They go about to establish their own righteousness, though not always of the very best quality; and though they may sometimes have their buildings deranged and destroyed, yet they soon concert other plans, and combine new materials, saying, in the pride of their hearts, the bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars, Isa. ix. 9, 10. we will be more strong and elegant than ever. Alas for them, they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. They “call evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; being wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.” Isaiah v. 20, 21.

4. *That the Redeemer's power is necessary to their regeneration.* This is fairly implied in the words, and is called by the apostle, “the *exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe*,” Eph. i. 19. To break their rocky hearts, to slay their enmity, conquer their prejudices, and destroy their strong holds, there must be *power*. If he gives them a new heart, enlist their affections, guide their wills, and fire their bosoms in his cause, there must be *power*. If they forsake the infernal *corps*, and volunteer in Immanuel's service, as the words are said to signify, there must be *power*. If they leave all and follow him; if they forget their own people, and their father's house, to go after him in a land that is not sown, we hesitate not to say it must be by the exercise of divine power.

5. *This power cannot be resisted.* Thy people *shall* be willing in the day of thy power. The word *day* being an adverb of time may denote either the gospel dispensation, or the period of a sinner's conversion to God. Called *a day*, for its light, heat, superiority,

&c. such is the gospel dispensation, and such is the period of a sinner's regeneration. No force can resist this power because it is omnipotent. If Matthew is bid to follow him, he forsakes all and obey. If Zaccheus is ordered down from the tree he is quickly seen upon the ground, Luke xix. 6. 'The stoutest rebel must resign, at his victorious word.' Yet no *violence* is done to the will, for it *charms* while it *conquers*. Zaccheus received him *joyfully*; salvation was come to his soul as well as to his house; and he stood forth and said, "behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Power is put forth, and a union is both formed and felt, for he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "There is a taking hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew," Zech. viii. 23. And when this is the case there will be a cleaving unto him with purpose of heart. Their language will be something like this:—

"Through floods and flames if Jesus leads
 "I'll follow where he goes;
 "Hinder me not shall be my cry,
 "Though earth and hell oppose."

The reader perhaps can recollect, with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret, when language like this thrilled through his veins, warmed his heart and glowed like a live coal upon his lips. Yes, he recollects those thrice precious seasons,

"Sweet *was* the work, my God my King,
 "To praise thy name give thanks and sing;
 "To shew thy praise by morning light,
 "And talk of all thy truths at night."

But perhaps he is now called to weep at the remembrance of folly, to cry, my leanness, my leanness, and to mourn an absent God. He thinks upon his past enjoyments, 'but, ah! the happy hours are fled.' His Bethels are but seldom.

'Like angel visits—*few and far between.*'

He must remember that light *is* sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart. So that though sorrow may endure for a night, joy cometh in

the morning. But where am I got to! the reader must excuse this digression; feeling have been allowed to guide my thoughts, and as is mostly the case, have led them as a monkey leads a bear—in the most zig-zag direction imaginable. Sober judgment must again grasp the reins and guide our

5th. Observation, which is as follows, *this power will be exercised towards none but his people.* It is *thy* people that shall be willing. Divine power is often represented in a very emphatical manner as relating to God's people. Thus in Zech. x. 8, "I will *hiss* for *them* and gather *them*." He would call them by the musical voice of the gospel as a shepherd calls together his flock by his pipe or whistle. Again, Isaiah xliii. 6, "I will say to the north give up, and to the south, keep not back: bring my *sons* from far, and my *daughters* from the ends of the earth." This is exercising his power in behalf of his people, and they, and they only, will be brought into his house to be beautified with salvation. They are his by *purpose*, *purchase*, and *power*. Purpose looked forward to purchase and power, purchase looked backwards to purpose, and forwards to power. His power stands in his purchase; for he is no more powerful than meritorious. It is not *simple* power that is intended, but power united with merit. Sovereignty guided his purpose, purpose his purchase, and purchase directs his power. They act in mutual conjunction with each other. These are sound ideas militating against almost every error, and I am determined never to give them up, until they are proved by sound reason to be erroneous. The manner in which divine power operates against the doctrine of offered mercy is this: It shows that man is without strength; that divine power will be put forth only in behalf of his own people; that the time of their conversion rests with God, is fixed in his purpose, and developed in his own good time. Offers of grace supposes that man has the ability at all times to accept the offers, which is, effectually to save himself; or if any divine power is necessary it is offered alike to all, so that they all may have it if they will but ask for it;—

that the time of their conversion rests with themselves and not with God. For if sinners have power to comply with the offers at one time I should think they must at another. If they have had salvation tendered to them time after time, year after year, before they receive those tenders, it will not be said that they could not have been converted sooner, had they have chosen thus to have done; and if so the time of their being brought out of darkness into marvellous light rests entirely with themselves, and in fact is virtually effected by them. To deny this is to destroy the notion of offered grace, and to plead for it, is to overthrow the independent government and free grace of Jehovah. Here then is another dilemma in which the advocates for offered grace are necessarily involved. They may take which side they please, but a neutral position cannot be obtained.

But, I said how shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant and goodly heritage among the nations? and I said thou shalt call me my Father, and shall not turn away from me.

Without staying to collect the different opinions respecting this passage, I will briefly state my own. The gentiles are here called a host of nations, or the militia of all nations, as some choose to read the words, and are so called for their multitude, order, courage, and conflict. They are his children attired in princely apparel, equipped in spiritual armour, marshalled round his standard, bearing the ensign of salvation into the enemies' camp, and manifesting an hostile feeling against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And so glorious is their cause, so brilliant their arms, so firm their allegiance and order, and so formidable to their enemies, that they are said to look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. Song vi. 10. Now the question is, how God could put the jews among the gentiles? The jews must be gathered to the fulness of the gentiles, but how can it be accomplished? what plans can be adopted? what measures can be em-

ployed? how can the desirable end be obtained? by what means can they be made to partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree? Some have said oh! do but give us your money and we will convert the world. Amiable men! eloquent speakers! saviours of mankind! Can any class of men, be so ungracious as to refuse their mite; so ungenerous as to give a scanty pittance; yea, so unfeeling as not to give their whole substance? or are they so incredulous as to question such statements? or do they want to see specimens of your ability in a smaller type? Perhaps they would like to have practical proofs of your capacity to break milstones with a feather, or melt pebbles into syrup by the instrumentality of a blow-pipe, before you commenced your operations upon the heart, to break it in pieces and to convert into a gracious consistence. But how is it to be effected? by a universal tender of salvation? no. By telling them that Jesus Christ died for all mankind, but that they must save themselves by him, or that though he died for all mankind, only a part will be saved, and that in fact they must save themselves, or at least be the *means* of their own salvation? certainly not: is it then to be achieved by a general system of ethics? or a universal code of practical morality? or the grand communion of religious creeds? impossible. In Britain it requires omnipotence practically applied to make man a new creature in Jesus Christ. And notwithstanding the plumes with which he has been adorned, and the encircling wreath which have been placed upon his brow, he is every where the same. A world in miniature; agitated by the confluence of his own elements, and destroyed by his own principles. Fleeting as the morning cloud, and transient as the dew; he rises and falls with the passing wind. As lawless and uncertain as air, as turbulent as the ocean, and as furious as devouring flames. His heart is as hollow as the tomb, as hard as the rock, and as deceitful as an eastern brook. 'A thick skinned monster of the mire and the ooze, which no dart can penetrate, no discipline can tame.' They err, says a sensible writer, 'who place him beyond the confines of the whirlpool.' As well

might you attempt to endow vegetation with sense and brutes with reason, as to make unregenerate lifeless persons, alive unto God and wise unto salvation—to swell a rising spark into a rolling star, or change a man into an angel, or an angel into God. When these *trifles* are accomplished men may listen with seriousness to such propositions, or to such declamation. The proverb is, ‘first creep and then go.’ If no man was converted to God till offers of grace converted him, not a solitary individual would ever be converted. By such a scheme no flesh living could be saved; but for the elect’s sake God has *given* them salvation in absolute forms; and by his grace calls them to the enjoyment of it through Christ. This is the plan which God has devised and not man; he has impressed it with his own initials, and stamped upon it the signatures of divine perfection. This plan affords in its principle an amplitude of security for the conclusion. It is the Lord’s doing and is marvellous in our eyes. This plan is founded upon the principles of free grace and divine agency. “I said, thou shalt call me Father,” &c. Mark the sure plan on which God acts; it is, *I said*, and *thou shalt*. God’s sayings are united with the creature’s *doings*. The former gives birth to the latter, and as spiritual excitement is produced by divine agency, there can be no mistake nor no miscarry. The principles of the plan provide the measures, protect the progress, and ensures the crowning end.

In eternity Jehovah formed a spiritual relation of men to himself, and in time he manifests the secret of that relation by his Spirit’s unerring testimony and secret influence, which ‘worketh in them mightily.’ “Because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Gal. iv. 6. or Father, Father; which marks the *frequency* and *fervency* of their cry. Sonship before faith accounts for the discriminating nature of saving faith in the gospel. The reason why one person, and not another has faith, is because one is a son and the other is not. His saints are brought into his church, not to make them sons, but to manifest their sonship by

filial obedience. And to maintain their standing he puts his laws into their hearts, and says, 'thou *shalt* not depart from me.' Persons may be coerced into church fellowship, but that will not alter their *condition*, enable them to produce spiritual fruit, nor give them any lot among all them that are sanctified. Goats may be washed in the same pool with the sheep, and at the same time, but that will never cause wool to grow upon their backs. They may graze in the same pasture and lodge in the same fold, but that will not make them sheep. They may be dressed in sheep's cloathing but that will not alter their nature, and they will be identified as goats whenever they are stripped of their false covering. The assumption of appearance may have its effect, but they will die in the character in which they were born. I write not these things to discourage any individual from pursuing the path of duty, but to show the uselessness of proselytism, and the ineffectual nature of offered grace. Offering grace to all mankind, cannot enlarge the fold nor diminish the number of goats. It cannot reclaim the sheep, much more turn goats into sheep. Things must remain as they are fixed, let people say what they will. Grace omnipotent and operative, must and do begin, carry on, and crown the sinner's salvation. He must in cheerful mood confess, that, to grace he owes his conversion and perseverance, and that to grace he is looking to complete what it has begun.

" Grace taught my heart to pray,
And made my lips o'erflow:
'Tis grace that kept me 'till this day
And will not let me go.

" Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days,
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And *well deserves* the praise."

I have only to add, that some understand this passage as referring to the heavenly state. To this sense I am not averse, though I think the thousand years reign of Christ seem more agreeable. His people will then be a *host of nations*, gathered out of every tribe and nation under heaven. They will in a very eminent