

this phrase, nor any other, to convey the idea intended by it: and as grace is bestowed without human merit, it perfectly embraces the idea of its being free on God's part. It is therefore as inconsistent to say "free grace," as it would be to say free liberty, or a bound bondman.— But the idea intended by some men, is, universal grace, grace possible, and, grace offered to all mankind.— Whether it be universal, possible, or offered to all men, one question will determine, namely: Is it offered to any? We answer, it is never offered; but always bestowed. For love cannot exist without an object. Love cannot be offered: If it falls short of its object, it is not love. If the love of God exists in Deity, it extends already to its object, [the sinner,] and cannot be offered; but will be bestowed and made known sooner or later. If it does not exist in the Trinity, it cannot be offered to men; for to offer a thing that does not exist, is a paradox. Grace offered, would be no grace; since that cannot be grace, which does not extend in its sensible effects to the object of it. Hence, if grace be not offered, it is not possible, but certain; and if not possible, it cannot be universal; unless all mankind universally, and every individual in particular, be the objects of it. Nor do we find in the Scripture a single instance of "grace offered," "free grace," nor any clause that conveys the idea. Mercy is an act of love, rescuing the sinner from deserved punishment. This also is subject to the same restrictions with grace:— never offered; but, in all cases, sovereignly and divinely bestowed; since that cannot be mercy, which is not experienced.

Grace can under no circumstances, be deserved, for our own sakes; for *favor merited, is justice rendered.* If we have any concern in the terms of it, whether it be *our obedience*, or *our asking* for it, this becomes the price of favor, and the favor itself a debt. Proof: "Now to him that worketh is the *reward* not reckoned of grace, but of *debt.*" Rom. iv. 4. Whether law-works, or works of the gospel,—of tongue, hands, or mind; the reward is of debt. It is grace bestowed, that brings us to feel the need of grace. It is mercy bestowed, that leads us to ask for mercy. The guilt and condemnation felt under conviction, are the offspring of the gracious leadings of the spirit of grace.

In its greater latitude it embraces, God's love eternal,—His foreknowledge distinguishing—His purpose unalterable,—His election particular,—His predestination well pleasing,—His covenant triune,—Christ's obedience righteous,—His death atoning,—to us, His wisdom divine,—His righteousness godly,—His sanctification holy,—His redemption complete,—His call irresistible, by His power sweet subduing,—His forgiveness of all sin,—His justification from all guilt,—His faithfulness never failing,—His adoption fatherly,—His glorification of all his chosen.

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In the last chapter of Matthew and 18th verse, we find this saying, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." This is the language of Jesus Christ after his resurrection, when he appeared with his disciples in Gallilee, the place where he had appointed that they should see him. Verse 7, "And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted." (Verse 17.) In this power that is given he further tells his disciples to teach whatsoever he had commanded them, and that he would be with them to the end of the world. Here observe, they were to teach nothing but what he had commanded them. Indeed, I think it would be a very fruitless errand, without the power of Christ going with the individual, when it is evident he has all power. For the very elect, in themselves considered, are no better disposed to the work than those that never shall be wrought upon; but are darkness in their minds, enemies, dead in sin, and by nature children of wrath even as others; their state, therefore, could never be changed or bettered were not this divine power engaged in it. Although Ephraim is a dear son and a pleasant child, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will have mercy on him, saith the Lord. (Jer. 31:20.)

By comparing this with Hosea, 5:13, you will be able to discover that moral endeavors, however powerful, will never bring a sinner to a knowledge of the truth without the Spirit's aid. Though Ephraim saw his sickness, he did not apply unto the Lord, but sent to King Jareb, "yet could he not heal you nor cure you of your wound."

Why would God have mercy on such a hardened individual as this?

Surely not in consequence of his being more likely to seek for mercy or yield than any other; no, but because he is a dear son, the Lord intended to heal him, and the first effect of this healing was Ephraim's applying himself to God, "Turn thou me and I shall be turned." (Jer. 31:28.)

He could then say he was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and acknowledge the Lord as his God. All this is nothing but the effect of the love of God being shed abroad in the heart, (Rom. 5:5,) written not with ink, but by the spirit and power of God. This power, which is given to Christ, will not admit of the least dependence upon creature power to make it successful. "A new heart, also, will I give you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, ye shall be my people and I will be your God." (Eze. 36:26.) These terms are positive, and show the almightiness of power, as in Jeremiah 24:7, "They shall return unto me with their whole hearts."

All which goes fully to establish his power and show that his word will not return unto him void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isa. 55:11.) Many proofs to the same fact might be adduced, but certainly no man will have the presumption to say the word of God will not accomplish that which he doth please. Witness the mighty efficacy of this word in John, 11th chapter 44th verse, "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot, with grave clothes." It did not return void in this case. The centurion appears to be well apprised of this when he says, "Speak the word and my servant shall be healed." (Mat. 8:8.) We find that this power is further manifested, by giving his followers an understanding, that they can know him that is true. (1 John 5:20.) When Christ came to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath day, they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power. (Luke 4:32.)— This appears to be the only reason why they were so astonished at his doctrine, was in consequence of the power of his word. And it astonishes men until this day, though the power is not in man, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," (what for?) "that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." (2 Cor. 4:7.) As power is here again brought to view, it still goes to prove

that it is all of God, and that his word will accomplish the thing whereto he sends it.

This word alone can cleanse a soul from sin, and bring to the marvellous light of gospel truth. "Now ye are clean, through the word I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3.) You see how it was that they were clean, through the word, and that spoken unto them, by the same power and authority, that spake to the unclean devil, and he came out of the man and hurt him not. Although they that stood by were amazed at the word. (Luke 4:35.) Who are to be the happy participants of this word and power? Let Paul answer: (Acts 13:26.) "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you that feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." Here are the very characters pointed out, and without this word abiding in an individual, no matter what he is called, he is nothing more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, and shall become wind. (Jer. 5:13.) "And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them." Yes, they shall become wind; were it not so, what would become of the poor feeble child of God, when dwelling among false teachers, and false prophets that prophecy out of their own hearts, and follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing. (Ezek. 13.) But this is not the way the first epistle of John begins, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." Now notice Ezekiel again, you will find the characters called prophets, that see vanity and divine lies, even seducing the people of God. One built a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar. But blessed be God, he suffers not his people to be overcome. Christ has died for them, and has said in his word which shall not return unto him void, that "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." (John 10.) Who is he that can say one of them will perish, to whom eternal life is given? If you do, you give Christ the lie.—*Wm. M. Mitchell.*

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.

A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.