

Peter Sterry

Grace Reigning through Righteousness unto Eternal Life by Jesus Christ

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.5:21. Paul in this Epistle to the Romans doth establish on heavenly grounds, and heavenly pillars of divine truths, and divine arguments the doctrine of Free Grace as a Rock, as a rock of Eternity, on which the Rock himself Jesus Christ, as he is the Mediator of the Covenant, is founded, against which all the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail; he established it against all assaults by which the powers of darkness do invade it; he sets it before us as the root out of which all the most precious and pleasant mysteries of the Gospel do spring, and as the head, which is chief of them all, on which they all depend, from which they all have the life, strength, beauty and sweetness. - The Free Grace of God is the Supreme and Sovereign good in the Covenant of Grace, and in the Gospel, 'tis that from which all the good things of the Gospel flow, on which they all depend, and by which they are all dispensed; as we see it lies plain in the Text, {grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ,} 'tis the great King that reigns, the glorified Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is but the Throne of this grace where it sits, from which it reigns; righteousness is the golden Scepter of this grace, and eternal life the fruit of this grace; this free grace reigns to eternal life, this grace must of necessity be Sovereignly, Supremely, Absolutely, and in every way Infinitely Free and Full when 'tis before eternal life, it being the beautiful cause that produces this blessed effect of eternal life, which comprehends the life of grace and of glory in the whole compass of it. - O the infinite freedom of grace, O the sovereignty and supremacy of grace, of eternal love reigning through righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, reigning over sin and death, and even out of them from the blackest darkness, raising the more beautifully the Temple of Divine Light, and Divine Love. This love signifies a Divine love that flows freely and sweetly from its own nature; O how high a love is that of free grace. O how free is this grace and love in all its sweetness, and how sweet in all its freedom, flowing from the Divine Nature, from the God-head. The best of honey is live honey that drops from the Comb without straining; the purest myrrh is that which comes from the tree of itself; this is love at its greatest height, this is the pure honey of the grace of God, free grace that flows of its own accord, without anything moving, from the nature and heart of God himself. As a Fountain is a treasury of water which continually sends out living streams, as the Sun is a body of light which from the beginning of the world to the end sends out millions of beams every moment, yet it remains still full and undiminished, such is free grace, or God the Fountain of free grace. - Take heed of being strangers, and being enemies to the Grace of God, to Free and Sovereign Grace. How ignorant are many of the Religious Jews among us of the Glory of this Grace, of the power of its reign; this King that reigns by a Scepter of Righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh let no more thine own reason, the free will or power of the creature, or all works arising from these in opposition to the free grace of God, contend with it for the preeminence or co-partnership, to take the Scepter of Righteousness out of his hand; no, free grace hath a most glorious Minister by which he will reign to bring out eternal life through righteousness, and that is Jesus Christ; in the place of

free will, right reason so called, and all created excellencies, he sets up Jesus Christ; free grace reigns through Righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ. - How is that relish of free grace, that savor and esteem of free grace, that eager feeding of the soul on the free grace of God, as the delicacy of Heaven and Eternity which was among the Saints of old, now almost quite lost? How do we play wanton with this grace of God that reigns so freely? We find no relish in it to satisfy our understanding, or to feed and feast our will and affections; take heed I beseech you of thus playing wanton with free grace, whosoever he be that subordinates the free grace of God to anything besides itself, or bounds it in anything besides itself, he that gives it confinement to or dependence on anything of the creature, or subjects the free grace of God to mans reason, or which is the other wantonness, turns this grace of God into a liberty to sin, and makes this high free love a pretense or cloak to licentiousness, he is a stranger and enemy to the grace of God, as 'tis of God, he that sees not God to be all in all, sees nothing at all of God rightly; so he whose heart is not established in the infiniteness, unlimitedness, and independency of Free Grace, in its own freedom and sweetness, transcendent over, antecedent to all good in the creature, he makes the grace of God nothing; grace is no grace, unless it be all grace; abate anything of the freedom of divine grace, and 'tis no more grace at all. "For I testify to every man that heareth the words of the Prophecy of this book; If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this book, and if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." See the danger of adding to, or taking from the word of God; for this word of God is no other than the word of his grace, for no word comes from God to his people, but the word of his grace; it hath its beginning, strength, and end in this grace. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." {Acts 20:32} He takes from or adds to the Word of God, takes from and adds to the grace of God. O my beloved, let us all then, as the glory of God is dear to us, as the peace of our souls and bodies are dear to us, let us take heed of taking from, or adding to the grace of God. If we take from the grace of God anything of its own freedom, of its antecedence to all good in all creatures, God certainly will take from us proportionally of the purity, of the peace, of the power of his Spirit in our spirits, of the comfort and prosperity of our lives, of consolation and joy in death, of our blessedness and glory after death. If we add to the grace of God, any power in the creature, any free will in the creature, any excellency in the creature, God certainly will so withdraw from us, that by it we shall find we add to our corruptions, we add to our care, fear, grief, doubt, despair and anguish, while we live and add to the blackness of darkness in death and after death, if this free grace itself do not interpose and prevent it by its own freedom. Peter Sterry {Free Grace Exalted, 1670}