

# **Design and Work of God in the Salvation of his People in Christ**

**Robert Tichborne, Lord Mayor of London.**

**“The Rest of Faith; that is, souls fixed and established in God by believing on Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1657**

*EXTRACT: Believers should be exceedingly tender of preserving the glory of God’s grace, for it is by grace that we are saved and only of grace that we are what we are; and for this very cause was faith made the hand to lay hold on grace; grace in God hath not made a hand to destroy itself, as we must be very watchful in this thing, lest we build a shrine unto faith, for that faith cannot be true which doth not solely advance that Gospel of Grace in its riches in Christ; the highest pitch of faith in which it is very glorious, is to apply the grace of God to the soul, and to cast the soul upon the free grace of God in Christ, to un-self the creature, to trample its best works under feet as dross and dung, and resting full in the grace of God through Christ, desiring only to be found in him.*

To believe in what God doth, and in what God saith, as the word and works of God wraps up the Salvation of his people in them, I shall here put them both together, under this consideration. Namely, a brief collection with its proofs of the whole design and work of God in the Salvation of his people. And it is this; to manifest the glory of his free grace in the full redemption of his people through Christ, and in their receiving and applying it to themselves by believing.

First, the great design of God in his saving work to his people is to glorify, or to manifest and declare the glory of his own eternal, original free grace and rich love in Christ Jesus. The free grace and rich love of God is God himself, that God which is an incomprehensible and inexpressible Essence, the true and perfect God, who is first without all cause of being, and of Infinite Great Majesty and Eternal Supremacy, the Almighty God. This is the God of Free-grace. Now the design of this God in the Salvation of sinners, which is the worst and most miserable piece of the whole creation in itself to all eternity, is to glorify, or to manifest the glory of his own free grace. For this, take the testimony of the Holy Ghost by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9:23, “that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy.” The Holy Ghost in the former part of that chapter, pleads the Sovereignty of God; not any piece of clay could find fault with the Potter whatever he made it, nor any creature with God. Now in this verse he tells us, that if any be made vessels of honour, and heirs of glory, it is that God might make known the riches of his glory in his mercy and free grace. As if the Holy Ghost had said, God accounts of his Grace and Mercy to be the riches and excellency of his glory. Now to make it known that this is his great design, God fills heaven and earth with this his glory; as the redeemed in heaven, and the redeemed in earth shall be one in heaven at last, and there in ages to come, even to all eternity, be swallowed up into the exceeding riches and glory of his grace. “That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” {Eph.2:7} And the Holy Ghost in this, and the verse before it, tells us, that it is God’s end and design, in raising us up together, and making us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. If we observe this Scripture, it holds forth this, that all the kindness we receive from God, it is his grace in Christ, and God’s design in the manifesting of his Grace in Christ is to show forth the exceeding riches and glory of it. The whole work of Salvation will clear up this Truth, for if we consider all the subjects of Salvation, we shall find no object for anything of God, but his free grace

and rich love; the pollution of fallen man in his natural condition could not be an object of preservation to the holy, just and pure eyes of an Omnipotent God, nothing but free grace and rich love in God could breathe the breath of life to souls dead in trespasses and sins; and if thus, then it plainly appears, that God's great design in the Salvation of sinners is namely to glorify or to manifest the glory of his own eternal rich love and free grace in Christ Jesus. God will have souls live by his grace, that he might manifest the life and glory of his grace; that grace which giveth life, appears in the life it giveth, so that every saved soul is a monument of the riches and glory of the love and grace of God, and the wise God laid his design sure when he made choice of the Salvation of sinners to manifest the glory of his free grace by.

In the next place, I shall hold forth how God doth accomplish this great end and design of his; namely, by the making the whole frame and work of Salvation to flow from and to depend upon his own grace, so as there is nothing in the whole work of Salvation from first to last, but the free grace of God. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved." {Eph.2:5} The time speaks grace, when dead in sins; this is a season only for grace, and that the grace of God too, appearing, when not only in sin, but dead in sin, past all recovery as from self, if doing could prevail; yet here is no life to do with all, this is only a time for a living love in God to act free grace in, and if ever Salvation comes to souls dead in sin, it must be by this grace. The grace of God saves of itself, without any cause out of itself, and this is the true Salvation of souls dead in sin; "by grace ye are saved;" and to be saved by grace; that is, to be saved in the Salvation of God, the whole work to be of his free grace, not any title of it to ourselves. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." {Rom.3:24} Mark it, there is all self under sin; but saved, justified and acquitted souls from sin are the fruits of God's free grace; though self comes short of the glory of God; yet free grace makes perfection that justifies, and this is the Salvation of God to justify freely by his grace. "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} Here sin and self hath its reign, but it is to death; but all the parts of Salvation is the work of God's free grace; that is grace reigning through Righteousness in Jesus Christ. The Righteousness of Christ to save souls, or Christ made Righteousness to such souls, what is it but the design of God's Grace; that is, grace is supreme, the grace is all the whole work of Salvation; and this Truth will be made more clear in setting forth the parts of this great work of Salvation.

But now consider that God lays this work, {Salvation & Grace,} in the full satisfaction of his own Divine Justice, that so the saved of his grace might stand spotless before him to all eternity. And herein is the mystery of Salvation; that God's Justice is fully satisfied, and yet that his grace in saving his people should be perfectly free; but both these doth plainly appear in the Salvation of God to his people, the work of his free grace.

Now the way of grace in God to satisfy Divine Justice to the full, and to set forth this free grace to all that are saved, is this; namely, to choose out, appoint, and to send Christ in the flesh {God man} to satisfy the Divine Justice of God for man, in whom the wisdom of God giveth full satisfaction to his own justice and perfect Salvation to his people in Christ, by grace. In this glorious mystery, free grace in God is the fountain, full Salvation to Divine Justice the way, and perfect Salvation and Redemption to all his elect body in Christ the end.

I shall now come more particularly to the parts of this great work of God, the Salvation of his own Free grace. And first of God's electing grace. That it is free grace in God which elects to Salvation; that I shall first prove by the subjects of God's Salvation, which are fallen sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins." {Eph.2:1} A lump of sinners dead in trespasses and sins, hath God to choose out as subjects for his love, vessels of honour, and heirs of glory. If grace in God makes not the choice, surely the whole lump of fallen sinners would be left to remain dead in trespasses and sins, but the Apostle tells us that God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. {Rom.9:18} That is, God is full of mercy; but he is a free Sovereign therein, as his mercy lies in his own will, as he chooses his own vessels of mercy, that he might dispense his grace, and make known the riches of his own glory. The Lord chooses whom he pleases, that it might appear that he chooses according to his own

sovereign will and good pleasure; that is, that all his mercy and grace is free, and that the first work or part of the work of Salvation, his election, is of and from his own free and sovereign grace. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." {Eph.1:4,5} That is, God chooses from all eternity, such as he will make his children, and heirs of glory by Christ, and this he doth according to the good pleasure of his own will, for all fell alike in the first Adam, nothing in the one more than in another to move God to love, for all were dead in sins; but the whole work in God is the work of his grace, as it is begun and finished according to the good pleasure of his own will, all is the work of his free grace.

But secondly, whom God thus chooses by his grace, he chooses in Christ. "According as he hath chosen us in him;" {that is in Christ;} so that all along grace is free in God, and the whole work of Salvation only of his free grace. "The gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." {Rom.5:15} Whatever is in Christ is the gift of grace; so that Christ being the way by which God works Satisfaction to his own Justice and Salvation to his people, it is all of grace; the reign of life in saints by Christ is the reign of grace in God to saints through Christ. "Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." {Rom.5:17} God in Christ doth reign over souls in Righteousness as the God of life and Salvation; it is God in Christ, a God of free grace.

But in the carrying on of this work of God's sovereignty and distinguishing grace in the Salvation of his people through Christ, it is needful that Christ take flesh, according to that promise in Genesis 3:15. The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent; and this is accomplished in the fullness of God's time; "for unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given;" {"and the government - of grace - shall be upon his shoulder."} The child which is born is the Son which is given, Christ in the flesh; the Son of God is the gift of God's absolute grace, and this child Jesus is the gift of God's grace, for a Covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." {Is.42:6,7} So that as grace giveth him, so his work in the flesh is that work of grace in all the parts thereof. Thus far we have saints in Christ, and Christ in the flesh, and the free grace of God in all.

That which followeth will appear to be as pure grace in God as what hath gone before, though now God comes to have actual and full satisfaction to his justice. Now the elect are in Christ, and Christ stands for us in the flesh; now the Holy Law and Divine Justice of God comes for fulfilling and satisfaction. But to whom? Why to Christ, so that when Justice is fully satisfied, yet that the whole of Salvation might be a work of God's free grace.

Question: But why should Justice come to Christ for satisfaction? Had he sinned?

Answer: I answer, no; but in the great design of God's grace to redeem his people in Christ, Christ was willingly made sin for us, and took our nature that he might stand before God's Justice in our room as the sinner. The Holy Ghost clears this truth in II Cor.5:21, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;" the verse before clears up this 'he' in the text to be meant of God. "Be ye reconciled to God;" for 'he' hath made him sin; and this 'him' in the text must needs be meant of Christ, for it is said of this 'him' that he knew no sin; that is, he had no sin of his own; he was that spotless Lamb without sin, so was never any in flesh since the Fall from innocency but Christ; so that the Scripture is plain, that God made Christ to be sin for his elect body; that is, not to be guilty of any sin in himself, but to be the Surety, the Debtor, and Paymaster to the Justice of God for all the sins past, present and to come, of all his elect body, so that Divine Justice goes only to Christ for satisfaction, and in Christ Divine Justice hath full Satisfaction, so that Justice and Grace in God are both pure in the Salvation of sinners through Christ that is thus made sin for us. Here we have Christ made both sin and flesh by God, and now in the flesh we shall find Christ making full satisfaction to the Justice of God for all those whom he is made sin for; as Christ came in the flesh to take up the debt of sin for his people, and to lie under the wages of sin, which is death; so in the flesh and in his death he giveth such full satisfaction to Almighty God, that God doth acknowledge himself fully

pleased in the travail of his soul. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." {Is.53:11} That is, God doth behold that Satisfaction which Christ hath made to his Justice for the sins of his people, and in it doth acknowledge himself fully satisfied, and forever well pleased with his elect in him; that whole chapter of Isaiah 53 is a proving of Christ in the flesh being made by God an offering for sin, to be wounded for the transgression of his people and bruised for our iniquities, having the chastisement of our peace put upon him, so that by his stripes we are healed, it having pleased the Lord to lay on him the iniquity of us all.

So that here is not only Christ in the flesh, but Christ made sin for his people; that is, hath all the iniquities of his people laid on him by God, with all the wounds, bruises and chastisements due to them; that is, all the punishment due to sin from God's Justice; and this Christ undergoeth to the utmost, so that by his stripes we are healed; that is, by his sufferings and satisfaction his elect are in the justice of God entirely acquitted and discharged, for God chose Christ to satisfy his justice for sin, and having laid the debt with all the weight of it upon him; and Christ having discharged this debt to the full, God's Justice cannot but discharge it wherever it was due; otherwise as one text speaks, Christ had died in vain, and the design of God's free grace to poor sinners could never be accomplished; so the Apostle tells us, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." {Gal.3:13}

Christ as our Surety and public Redeemer took sin with all its weight and curse upon himself, and what he hath taken from us, he hath fully delivered us from; so that in his satisfaction he doth fully acquit his elect body; the first debtor, from the whole debt and danger of sin, either in curse or punishment; and the Apostle Paul argues out his triumph upon this very consideration; "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again." {Rom.8:33,34} As if the Apostle had said, God doth justify his elect body as he is a just God, for Christ hath died and is risen again; that is, Christ is risen as the satisfier of God's justice in his death, for had not Christ's death satisfied God's Justice when all the sins, curses and punishment of sin, for all his elect body was laid upon him, he could never have risen again; but now he is risen, and risen as the Justifier of his people, and the Satisfier of God's justice. Now if any shall charge the elect of God with what Christ hath borne and satisfied for them, even the justice of God or the just God will acquit them, and if God acquit who can condemn, and therefore the Apostle glories. So the same Apostle speaking of Christ as being risen from the dead, says thus, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;" {Rom.4:25;} that is, it was the sins of his elect that crucified him, and it is the Justification of his elect for whom he died, and for whom he is risen; and as nothing could have crucified him but our sins, so now nothing can condemn those for whom he died, he being risen, his resurrection pleads to all justice, satisfaction in his death; and Christ was therefore delivered up to death for our offenses, that in his resurrection we might be justified from all offenses, God's great aim and design of grace, runs through the former to the latter of these; the Holy Ghost tells us there, "that Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness to everyone that believeth;" {Rom.10:4;} as if he had said, the believing soul shall find that Christ hath fulfilled and hath fully kept the whole Law for him, and so is an end to it for Righteousness; that is, Christ is now the soul's Righteousness and not the Law; the Law is kept and fulfilled by Christ for a believer, so that it cannot charge any soul in Christ to condemnation, but the Righteousness and Justification of the soul in the sight of God is Christ, not the Law; if any soul should keep the whole Law in itself, the Law might have been for Righteousness to that soul, but all have sinned and come short. Now the Law is an accuser and not a justifier, but Christ for his people hath fully satisfied and kept the Law; so that Christ is the Righteousness of his people and an end to the Law for Righteousness. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." {I Tim.1:15} It was the end of God's giving Christ, and of Christ's coming to save sinners from sin, law, death, hell, and all that would ever destroy them, and this end is effected, for Christ did not only die, but is risen; did not only take sin upon himself, but hath satisfied for sin, and all this is the work of grace which appears in this, it is the work of God in

Christ. The Apostle Paul doth acknowledge and confirm this truth. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." {Rom.3:24} The Apostle here says it is redemption through Christ, but that doth not hinder our being justified by free grace in God; though God works through Christ, yet it is all the work of his free grace, it is through Christ, and Christ is through grace, and there is not any title of Redemption or Justification through self, for it is all through Christ and by grace, which is no more but grace working through Christ, the great gift of God's free grace. Whatever God doth in Christ can in no ways diminish free grace, for Christ is the Mediator or middle Person between God and man, in whom God magnifies his grace to man, and gives to his people the riches and greatness of his love wherewith he loved them through him. This indeed doth manifest the wisdom and justice of God to redeem his people through Christ, but in no ways lessens the freeness of his grace, nay it makes it more glorious grace, for that justice is fully satisfied, makes mercy the greater mercy, and the justified is nothing in himself all this whilst but a sinner; now that God should make Christ his way to satisfy his Divine justice by, and to save sinners, this must needs magnify the grace of God, because the saved and the justified are nothing in the work themselves, only sinners and the worst of sinners, saved only of grace by grace, as it is grace in God and grace in Christ, the grace of God through Christ that makes such as are dead in sins to be quickened together with Christ; and from this the Holy Ghost tells us, "that by grace we are saved." Christ came from heaven to do his Father's will; that was to save all which his Father had given him, and not to lose any but to raise them up at the last day. {Jn.6:38,39} God chooses Christ a body, of which he maketh him Head and Saviour, and sends him into the world that he might redeem his body by satisfying justice, so that he might save the whole, and raise them up at that last day as his redeemed bride, and all this the work of God's free grace through Christ, for Christ doth acknowledge that his work of redemption was his Father's will, and his work was to perfect the design of his Father's grace, that all God had given him might be redeemed through him, and justified freely. In the death of Christ God commended his love and grace to us; "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" {Rom.5:8;} mark it, the satisfaction that Christ gave to the justice of God for sinners was so far from being any diminution to God's grace, that it is a commendation of it, or an exaltation and glory of it, for it exceedingly commends the glory of God's love and grace, that Christ should die because we were sinners. Herein lies the immensity of God's love, it is Christ the gift of his grace dying for sinners, this makes all the work grace, grace in God sends Christ to die for sinners, whom otherwise must die eternally in sin. Can there be anything but grace in this; in the Apostles account Christ dying for us when we were sinners, doth much demonstrate the love and grace of God and surely so it doth. Thus doth God save his people by grace and satisfy his justice in Christ. Now Christ having satisfied his Father's justice, fulfilled and kept the Law to the utmost for all his elect body, he bringeth them to the throne of his Father's justice, as well as the throne of his grace, and there God as a just God doth justify Head and members. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." {Col.2:9,10} As if God should say, Christ hath satisfied my justice as God-man, and though my justice be of infinite inflexibility; yet him in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, hath fully satisfied it, and all his members are complete in him, as I have received full satisfaction for them in him, and in him do fully acquit and discharge them of all guilt and unrighteousness before me to all eternity, for ye are complete in him. That is, complete in his completeness; "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Mark it, the end of Christ being made sin was, that in him his elect body might be made the Righteousness of God; that is, that Christ might be our Righteousness as the gift of God, so that Christ being our Righteousness we might be righteous in the Righteousness of God, and so complete in him, namely in Christ, as Christ is the Righteousness of God to his people. So are they all complete in him; and in this the Righteousness of God, saints are justified at the throne of God's justice, and taken up into his bosom of grace, for in union with Christ there can be no condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." {Rom.8:1} Thus doth free grace in God accomplish and finish its work of Salvation for all his elect through Christ. God doth this work in Christ that it might be all of grace, and

that he might take off all boasting in the creature by the Law of faith; {Rom.3:27;} all those whom he chooses from eternity to be heirs of glory, and so he chooses them in Christ, {Eph.1:4,} and those whom he calleth out of nature into his grace, he calleth in Christ; and such as he redeems he redeems through Christ, and makes Christ to be redemption to them. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." {I Cor.1:30} Them which God justifies and makes righteous, he justifies and makes righteous in Christ. {Rom.4:25, Rom.10:3,4} So Christ is made sanctification to his people, {I Cor.1:30, Rom.8:10,} and when saints are taken up into their fullness of glory, then they reap the fullness of their union with Christ. {Jn.14:19, Rom.8:17} So that this whole Salvation is the work and gift of God's free grace wrought in Christ.

Now that it might be free grace in God, and only free grace, which begins, carries on, and perfects this work of Salvation in all the parts and degrees thereof; this is the will of God, that the hand which taketh, receiveth, applieth and appropriateth this free gift of God's grace to the souls of his elect body, should be the hand of faith; so that as it reigns in the souls of believers, it might appear to be of sheer grace and not of works. {Rom.3:24} "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." {I Jn.3:23} The will of God appears in his commandment, and that is to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to believe in Jesus as a Saviour and a Redeemer, to save and redeem his people from their sins. "And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." {Mt.1:21} This is to believe in the name of Jesus, to believe in Jesus, as the Saviour of his people from their sins; this is the will and commandment of God; and in this sense in Scripture, we are often said to be justified by faith. "Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" {Rom.5:1;} that is, not by faith as a meritorious grace to merit Justification, for then it were of works which would destroy the nature of faith, and the design of God's free grace, but by faith as an appropriating and applying hand to lay hold on the Salvation of God's free grace through Christ in the believing of God's Word and Work of Salvation, by his free grace through Christ, so as to cast the Salvation of our eternal souls upon God's free grace alone, in the Satisfaction and Redemption of Christ; and therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, by faith laying hold on Jesus Christ as our Lord Jesus Christ, so the soul comes to be at peace with God, and to find God to be reconciled to it, and is thus justified in its own bosom by believing in Christ; that is, the soul doth now believe all that God hath said concerning Christ, and what Christ hath done and suffered for sinners, and does by faith apply and appropriate this to itself. My Lord Jesus Christ saith a believing soul, whom God made to be sin for me, that I might be made the Righteousness of God in him, upon whom God hath laid all mine iniquities, and the chastisements due to my sins, and by whose stripes we are healed; so that now I stand complete before God in him. Thus by believing and appropriating Christ to our own souls we come to be justified in our own spirits, and to be at peace with God; in believing God to be at peace with us, we come to be at peace with him; that is, all hard thoughts of God they are squelched, unbelief receives a deadly blow, and now the soul believeth in God through Christ, finding God to be a gracious, loving and reconciled Father, and is now at peace with God, or at peace in God, full of peace by believing in God through Christ. This is the Justification that Faith giveth the soul, as it lives upon the peace of God in Christ Jesus, and quiets the soul in this, that God is at peace with it through Jesus Christ, and in this sense through the whole Book of God, we must understand those Scriptures wherein it is said that we are justified by faith. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ." {Gal.2:16} That is, knowing that God doth justify all through Christ by his free grace in believing, and not any by works, we do believe in his free grace through Christ, and are thereby justified, not of works; no, not by faith as a grace, for then by works; but of his grace through Christ, laid hold on and applied by faith the Apostle Paul sets forth "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." {Rom.3:22} The Righteousness of God is the grace of God in Christ, or the grace of God making Christ our Righteousness, which Righteousness of God by Jesus Christ we apply to ourselves by

believing in the God of all grace which made Christ our Righteousness, and in Christ as he is made Righteousness to us. Righteousness is the gift of grace, but if faith as an act in us could justify us, then Righteousness and Justification would not be of grace, but as faith is only a hand to lay hold on Christ, the Righteousness of God, and this faith the gift of God, not of ourselves. {Eph.2:8} So it hath its place and work in the great design of God, the Salvation of his elect in Christ. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." {Rom.10:4} The Holy Ghost doth not there say, that by believing, which is a work of grace in the soul, the soul doth put an end to the Law; that is, satisfy it and make it self-righteous; no, for then Righteousness would be of the Law, but Christ hath put an end to the Law for Righteousness to everyone that believeth; that is, by believing in Christ as our Righteousness, there is an end put to the Law, the Law is no Righteousness, but Christ is Righteousness, and the fulfiller of the Law for all that thus believe on him; faith is only the hand to lay hold of and to appropriate and apply Christ to the soul whom is God's Righteousness, and the fulfiller of this Law for all that do believe on him. Believers should be exceedingly tender of preserving the glory of God's grace, for it is by grace that we are saved and only of grace that we are what we are; and for this very cause was faith made the hand to lay hold on grace; grace in God hath not made a hand to destroy itself, as we must be very watchful in this thing, lest we build a shrine unto faith, for that faith cannot be true which doth not solely advance that Gospel of Grace in its riches in Christ; the highest pitch of faith in which it is very glorious, is to apply the grace of God to the soul, and to cast the soul upon the free grace of God in Christ, to un-self the creature, to trample its best works under feet as dross and dung, and resting full in the grace of God through Christ, desiring only to be found in him. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." {Phil.3:8,9} True faith lifts up God's free grace in Christ, by seeking his Righteousness alone; and aims no higher, but to be a hand to receive the gift of grace in Christ. {Eph.4:7}

The true work of faith in the soul is to bring in Christ, and cast out the Law, as that schoolmaster which kept the soul under fear until Christ came, and to acquaint the soul that it is a child of God through Christ Jesus; and that in Christ it hath everlasting life. {Jn.6:40,47} "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." {Gal.3:26} Thus believing in Christ the soul is strengthened in the inward man, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, {Eph.3:16,16,} and establishing the soul in its union with Christ, that soul which believeth in Christ as the gift of God's free grace, in whom God giveth eternal life, hath this witness in himself. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;" "and this is the record, {or witness,} that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." {I Jn.5:10,11} He is sealed up to the love of God, in believing the record of God concerning his Son; and now the soul believes this word of God, and rests upon it, takes God's word for its eternal Salvation; and this is the true office of faith in the soul to lay hold of the Salvation of God in Christ declared by his word, and to apply and appropriate it to itself, so as to rest and depend wholly upon it for Salvation, and herein the soul comes to have the witness within itself, by believing thus on the Son of God, that it might appear to be the will of God that all which are saved of his grace by Christ should be made partakers of this Salvation in themselves by believing in him. I shall offer two more things in consideration.

First, the Covenant of God's free grace; and secondly, the promulgation and spreading abroad of the Gospel. First, God's Covenant of free grace in which God doth freely engage himself to be our God and that we shall be his people, according to the prophet Jeremiah. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour,

and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." {Jer.31:31-34} {See also Hebrews 8:8-12} In this Covenant God wraps up all the parts of Salvation by grace, and doth fully oblige himself to them all. Now what is the reason that God doth thus oblige himself by Covenant, is it because of himself, that he might not go back from his design of grace to his people? No, for the Lord is a God that changes not, an immutable God. {Num.23:19} God "from everlasting to everlasting." {Ps.90:2} "For I am the LORD, I change not." {Mal.3:6} God makes this Covenant for our sake, that we might believe in him as a God of grace, and a faithful Covenant keeping God; the Holy Ghost argues thus, telling us that a faithful man will keep his covenant, then how much more God; as if he had said, the faithful God hath made his Covenant of grace, that you might believe he will make good his Covenant, as he is absolutely faithful; thus God obligeth his own faithfulness in an Everlasting Covenant of Grace that his people might have both his Grace and his Faithfulness for a foundation of their faith. God will be believed by his people, and therefore he engages himself as a faithful gracious God. To the faith of his people, saith the Lord, I will pardon your sins and remember them no more, I will put my law into your hearts, the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; believe all this, for I will accomplish all saith the Lord; I the faithful, the gracious and omnipotent God; I that am omnipotent, who can hinder me; I that am gracious, so that your sins can be no bar; nay, I that am faithful, I have spoken it and I will make it good, so that we might ask what is the meaning of all this; but that we should believe the faithful word of our faithful and gracious Saviour, as he will oblige his own faithfulness by way of Covenant, that we might believe in the free Salvation of his own grace made out in that Covenant.

Secondly, consider what is God's end in the promulgation and spreading abroad of the Gospel. Is it not that his people should believe in the Salvation of his own grace; why is Christ pleased to be the way of God's Salvation to his people, so that whomever believeth thus on him hath everlasting life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." {Jn.6:47} But that they might believe and be saved by him, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." {Jn.6:29} This is the end of the Gospel, for it is the effect of it, where it works savingly, and it is God's work, or the work of his Spirit in the Gospel, to make souls believe in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; for when Christ sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, he directs them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and bids them to preach this, that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. {Mt.10:6,7} That is, go to poor lost souls in themselves, and tell them that Salvation has been accomplished, that Christ has died; and thus this Kingdom of Grace is at hand, it is near to them, it seeks them, and saves them freely; but what is the end of this, only that the grace of Christ might come to these lost souls, that they might believe in Christ as the Salvation of God and to be saved, and for this end hath God preserved his Gospel in the world, and made it to prosper, against all the power and malice of Satan and his instruments, that thereby his people might hear the glad tidings of Salvation by free grace in Christ, and in the believing of it be saved and established. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." {Jn.6:40} It is not only a bare hearing or seeing of Christ in the flesh, but believing on him, that makes Christ to be everlasting life to the soul; and this is the end of God in the Gospel, that souls might have everlasting life through believing in Christ. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" {Jn.11:25,26} It is faith in the souls of his people that God intends both by giving the Gospel to the world, and preserving it in the world; so that for these two reasons, which might have been exceedingly more enlarged, it doth appear that this is the will of God in keeping his Salvation to be entirely the work of his grace; that the hand which received and applies it should be a hand of faith, which is the work of his own free grace in the soul.