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### SALVATION BY GRACE—FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD.

*By grace are ye saved through faith ;  
and that not of yourselves ; it is  
the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8.*

It may well appear surprising that any one could consent, in any degree, to the doctrine of salvation through the atoning merit of Christ, and yet mix up with that the influence, to whatever extent, of our own works, as if these two things could consist together, or the one did not necessarily destroy the other. There seems, however, to have been a strong bias in the days of the apostle, as has been the case in all times, towards the doctrine of a mixed salvation, partly by grace, and partly by works. Christ's work was needed to supplement man's deficiency. Man, it was thought, could keep the law of God in part: to the extent that he could keep it, his own obedience was a condition of his salvation, and for the rest, Christ's work was ample satisfaction to a holy and righteous God.—It is in opposition to this doctrine, appearing in some shape or other, that the apostle has so frequently to contend; and to uphold the free, unmerited, sovereign grace of God. He cannot speak on the subject of man's salvation at all, without exalting, or warming, upon this point. It was the mystery, the marvel, the magnifying feature of the salvation, which, even if there had been no error of an opposite tendency to controvert, it would have been impossible to lose sight of.—The love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God, was his darling theme. He reminds the Ephesians in what state they were by nature: He speaks of their deliverance from that state, and the end for which they were delivered,—“that in the

ages to come God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus”: and then he adds, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

We have here the source of salvation: “By grace are ye saved”; the means, or instrument, of salvation, “through faith”; and even that faith, we are given to understand is “not of ourselves,” but is “the gift of God.”

The source of salvation, is the grace of God. We must keep in view this grand truth, that we are all guilty before God, and consequently the objects of his merited displeasure. He might have swept us from off the face of His earth; He might have executed upon us the fierceness of His wrath; we might have been the objects of His unmitigated fury for ever. Sin, however perpetrated, by whomsoever perpetrated, merits this at the hand of God. It is not only an evil, but a bitter thing, to depart from the living God. The bitterness tolls upon the evil, the punishment upon the sin: “The wages of sin is Death.” God might have executed the full punishment which sin entailed, nor have afforded, a time of respite, or a way of salvation. As sinners, He was by no means called upon to extend his mercy to us; on the contrary, unless a way could be found, in consistency with His character, by which mercy might be extended, he was bound to condemn us.—His broken law, His own character, the integrity of His moral government, all imprecated vengeance on the heads of the guilty. Nor could any expedient which we could devise, avert the merited punishment. It was impossible for us to