

tion of fallen humanity as here given by the inspired Apostle, should we not be justified in saying, that sinful, unredeemed man is the foulest, blackest spot in the universe of God? If he was alone, he would be scorned and dreaded, and no one would come nigh his dwelling; but, because they are many, people take refuge in numbers, in multitudes, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

The most promising and encouraging contemplation on what the Apostle can dwell is, that this disorderly and unhappy state of things is no more,—that new principles and habits of life and character are brought into prominent action,—that he is *raised* from this condition to one of peace, and safety, and dignity in Christ. He lingers on this thought, and accumulates expressions to give expansion and emphasis to its greatness and grandeur. He endeavors to imprint on their minds the great obligation under which they are placed to the great Mover and Deliverer—"God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved), and raised us up together (with Him) and made us sit together (with Him) in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Our reverent thought falters as we attempt to grasp the full import of these words. They are intended (no doubt) to rivet our attention on the fact, that so intimate is the union between Christ and His people, so closely are their interests and destiny linked with His, that in the very facts of His resurrection and exaltation, God has accomplished the resurrection and exaltation of all who are in Him.

The Apostle is very particular in the description of their salvation,—that it is all of *grace*,—that is not bestowed as the reward of human merit, but brought about by the abounding kindness and love of God, upon those who were utterly unworthy of it,—that it is perfectly gratuitous and free. He goes on to show that our faith also is "not of ourselves," but is "the gift of God." It is not a principle originated by ourselves,—it is not a mere intellectual exercise, a mere assent to truth upon sufficient evidence; but involves an operation of God upon our souls, calling it into existence and sustaining its exercise; yet in no way superseding our voluntary agency. Neither is it of works, lest any man should boast. One of the most pernicious and insinuating tendencies of our depraved nature is, to regard with fond complacency what we ourselves do, losing sight of the fact that all we have is the gift of God. Now, the very nature and object of the grace of God in accomplishing our salvation is, to strike at the root of this baneful tendency. If our salvation were of works, then we should have something whereof to glory, and the grace of God would be of none effect; but the fact, that our salvation is altogether of grace, that we receive it by trusting in the sacrificial death and righteousness of another, and that that trust is formed within us by a Divine power, shows us that we must utterly renounce all glorifying in ourselves, and give the glory to God alone.

While the Apostle is very careful to disclaim good works as being meritorious, he does not intend it to be understood that a course of holy obedience to the Divine precepts was a matter of indifference, or did not form a part of