

array about him. He looks back, and the storms of Sinai pursue him; forward, and hell is moved to meet him; above, and the heavens are on fire; beneath, and the world is burning. He listens, and the judgment trump is calling; again, and the brazen chariots of vengeance are thundering from afar; yet again, and the sentence penetrates his soul with anguish unspeakable—"Depart, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Thus, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." They are "dead in trespasses and sins," spiritually dead, and legally dead; dead by the mortal power of sin, and dead by the condemnatory sentence of the law; and helpless as sheep to the slaughter, they are driven fiercely on by the ministers of wrath to the all-devouring grave, and lake of fire.

But is there no mercy? Is there no means of salvation? Hark amidst all this prelude of wrath and ruin, comes a still small voice, saying: "Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many."

II. This brings us to our second topic, man's gracious recovery to the favour of his offended God.

I know not how to represent to you this glorious work, better than by the following figure. Suppose a vast graveyard, surrounded by a lofty wall, with only one entrance, which is by a massive iron gate, and that is fast bolted. Within are thousands and millions of human beings, of all ages and classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave. The graves yawn to swallow them, and they must all perish. There is no balm to relieve, no physician there. Such is the condition of man as a sinner. All have sinned; and it is written, "The soul that sinneth shall die." But while the unhappy race lay in that dismal prison, Mercy came and stood at the gate, and wept over the melancholy scene, exclaiming—"O that I might enter! I would bind up their wounds; I would relieve their sorrows; I would save their souls!" An embassy of angels, commissioned from the court of heaven to some other world, paused at the sight, and heaven forgave that pause. Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried:—"Mercy! canst thou not enter? Canst thou look upon that scene and not pity, and not relieve?" Mercy replied: "I can see!" and in her tears she added, "I can pity, but I cannot relieve!" "Why canst thou not enter?" inquired the heavenly host. "Oh!" said Mercy, "Justice has barred the gate against me, and I must not—cannot unbar it!" At this moment, Justice appeared, as if to watch the gate. The angels asked, "Why wilt thou not suffer Mercy to enter?" He sternly replied: "The law is broken, and it must be honoured! Die they or Justice must!" Then appeared a form among the

angelic band like unto the Son God. Addressing Himself to Justice, He said: "What are thy demands?" Justice replied: "My demands are rigid; I must have ignominy for their honour, sickness for their health, death for their life. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission!" "Justice," said the Son of God, "I accept thy terms! On Me be this wrong! Let Mercy enter, and stay the carnival of death!" "What pledge dost Thou give for the performance of these conditions?" "My word; my oath!" "When wilt Thou perform them?" "Four thousand years hence, on the hill of Calvary, without the walls of Jerusalem!" The bond was prepared, and signed and sealed in the presence of attendant angels. Justice was satisfied, the gate was opened, and Mercy entered, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus. The bond was committed to patriarchs and prophets. A long series of rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and oblations, was instituted to perpetuate the memory of that solemn deed. At the close of the four thousandth year, when Daniel's "seventy weeks" were accomplished, Justice and Mercy appeared on the hill of Calvary. "Where," said Justice, "is the Son of God?" "Behold Him," answered Mercy, "at the foot of the hill!" and there He came, bearing His own cross, and followed by His weeping Church. Mercy retired, and stood aloof from the scene. Jesus ascended the hill, like a lamb for the sacrifice. Justice presented the dreadful bond, saying, "This is the day on which this article must be cancelled." The Redeemer took it. What did He do with it? Tear it in pieces, and scatter it to the winds? No! He nailed it to His cross, crying, "It is finished!" The Victim ascended the altar. Justice called on holy fire to come down and consume the sacrifices. Holy fire replied, "I come! I will consume the sacrifice, and then I will burn up the world!" It fell upon the Son of God, and rapidly consumed his humanity; but when it touched His Deity, it expired. Then was there darkness over the whole land, and an earthquake shook the mountain; but the heavenly host broke forth in rapturous song—"Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! good will to men!"

Thus grace has abounded, and the free gift has come upon all, and the Gospel has gone forth proclaiming redemption to every creature. "By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." By grace ye are loved, redeemed, and justified. By grace ye are called, converted, reconciled, and sanctified. Salvation is wholly of grace. The plan, the process, the consummation are all of grace.

"Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise!"

"Where sin abounded, grace hath much