

satisfy that law which we had once broken, except in one way, by suffering its penalty. It was impossible for us to keep it, but even although we could have kept it in all time to come, what could this have availed for past transgression? All resources on our part were cut off; or rather, we had no resource whatever to betake ourselves to. The redemption of our souls must have ceased, because it was precious. But was there no help for us any where else? Might angels not save us? Could these holy and blessed spirits not do anything, to assist their fallen fellow-creatures, appease the wrath of God, and avert the threatened calamity which was too surely impending over our lost world? If they could, we may be sure it would have been done. They would not have stood by uninterested spectators of the sad controversy betwixt God and any portion of His creatures.—The momentous issues which hung upon that controversy, the glory of God, and the eternal well-being of man, would have impelled them to interfere. Think ye, that they would have suffered a whole race of Beings, of powers and capacities like themselves, to perish without remedy, if they could have furnished the remedy? One thing is certain, that they could have done nothing to put man beyond the exercise of Divine mercy. Even the utmost that they could have done would have been but an expedient which God might accept, but which His justice might refuse. Any expedient in the whole compass of the universe could not have set aside God's sovereign prerogative whether to save or to punish. It remained with God to say, whether he would allow of any expedient for the salvation of man, as well as what kind of expedient he would admit of. If he did not execute punishment, it was because of his mercy; or if he accepted of a provision to save his other attributes it was still of His mercy. He could not exercise His mercy, without such a provision as would vindicate his character, and maintain the security and integrity of his government. When, accordingly, he accepted of the mediation of Christ, it was in the exercise of His mercy, and in consistency with His justice. No plan which could be adopted could take man out of the hands of Divine mercy, and no plan could be adopted which did not secure the exercise of Divine justice. In all cases, it could only be by grace that we could be saved. The plan which God actually adopted made the fullest provi-

sion for the vindication of His justice; it upheld the integrity of His throne; while it was the most glorious display of grace or mercy which could be afforded to the universe. Not only was there mercy in the plan, but mercy in the highest degree, the most exalted pitch of mercy.—The love of God overleaped all bounds that it might accomplish its object. It was restrained by no limits but those of justice; and it was in making provision for the exercise of the strictest justice that its greatest glories were exhibited. It was no small difficulty to reconcile the conflicting extremes of justice and mercy. It required the invention of a wisdom no less than Divine, and implied an urgency in mercy's appeals which nothing but the solution of that difficulty could silence. The method fallen upon was a discovery even in the counsels of Jehovah: "I have found a ransom." It was by the Son of God substituting himself in the room of sinners, assuming their nature into union with his own, that in one person, God and man, he might present an atonement for the guilty: this was the expedient. This was the Divine plan; and surely, it must augment our conception of the mercy or grace of God, that when such an expedient was required, when in no other conceivable way could the mercy of God operate, it consented to this expedient, it sought the sacrifice, as it were, that it might rest upon its guilty objects. Justice spent itself upon God's own Son that mercy might be extended to man. The declaration then,—"By grace are ye saved", is the undeniable truth in respect to our salvation. It is this very feature of salvation which ought to render it so attractive to us, which renders it so repulsive. We will not be debtors to grace: we will be justified by works. And yet, who does not see that this is to contradict the very nature of salvation? It were not salvation, if it were not by grace: we are not lost, we are not sinners, if we can justify ourselves. Either we are lost, we are sinners, or we are not. If we are not, then there is no need of salvation; if we are, then we must be saved by grace. It is implied in our very state as sinners that we are the objects of the Divine displeasure, exposed to the Divine wrath, and what can save us from that but the mercy or grace of God? It is the grand, the distinguishing truth which makes the gospel what it is, that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him