

GRACE,

AND

How God shows it.

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GRACE, AND HOW GOD SHOWS IT.

GRACE is God's great favour to man, when he had sinned away all his privileges. He has brought himself under the judgment of God through sin, whose crowning act was the crucifixion of Christ, the Lord of glory. But grace has found a free channel to flow to all through His death. Otherwise judgment had long ago taken its course, and every soul of man been shut out from the presence of God for ever.

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). But sinful man despised both Him and it. Perfect grace shone out in all His blessed ways. But before man can become the recipient of divine grace, he needs self-judgment, and his natural will is opposed to that. Grace has come to us in Christ, but

it was needful that Christ should die ere it could reign, and flow out freely in all its wondrous and blessed fulness. The barrier of sin between God and the sinner obstructed its course. But God was glorified in Christ, who met and overcame the whole power of Satan, and removed sin from under the eye of God. He came to put it away by the sacrifice of Himself. And as the effect of His death, at the end of all things, it shall be wholly put away for ever from the universe of God.

Now, whilst on the one hand, as we have seen, man's course of sin, culminating in the death of Christ, brought him under judgment, on the other, that same death, having brought glory to God in respect to sin, is the ground on which in righteousness He shows grace to man. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," etc. (Rom. v. 20, 21). Note it well, *grace reigns*. That is exactly what the

sinner needs. It is now waiting upon us. The God of all grace in righteousness shows His favour, not only for our blessing, but for the joy and satisfaction of His own heart of love.

Grace alone can meet the sinner's case. It is the fruit of divine love. God is love. Love is His nature, and is absolute. Grace is one of His blessed attributes, and is relative. God delights to show favour towards all. "All have sinned and come short of his glory." "Being justified freely *by his grace*," etc. (Rom. iii. 24).

All have sinned. There is no exception. *You* have sinned. One unpardoned sin would shut us out from the presence of God for ever. Moreover, we come short (come short this day) of the glory of God. How then could we possibly enter His glory apart from His grace? It is blessed to read the following verse. It is a wonderful epitome of the gospel blessing—the gospel in miniature. "Being," that is, at the

present moment, *now*, “justified,” that is, pardoned, cleared, discharged, and accounted just, “freely,” that is, without act or deed or payment or anything contributory on our part whatever, “by His grace,” that is, the free unmerited sovereign favour of God Himself, “through the redemption,” that is, the infinite worth of the ransom paid, “that is in Christ Jesus,” that is, He Himself is the ransom (1 Tim. ii. 6), and hence redemption is in Him alone, the risen Christ on the other side of death, exalted in the presence of God. He has triumphed over the whole power of the enemy. “Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth a propitiation (or mercy-seat) through faith in his blood . . . to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” What hath

God wrought ? Wondrous indeed is His grace !

“ Grace, free grace, o’er sin abounding,
Ransomed souls the tidings swell ;
’Tis a deep that knows no sounding,
Who its length and breadth can tell ? ”

Are *you* one of the ransomed ones ?

Maybe you will reply, Yes ; it is very wondrous and blessed, but how am I to enter upon it ? The answer is simple, “ *by faith.* ” It is by grace on God’s part that we are justified, and by faith on ours. Hence the apostle says, in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, “ Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access *by faith* into *this grace* wherein we stand, and rejoice (or boast) in hope of the glory of God ” (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 12).

Two things, both the result of faith, are seen in this passage,

peace and standing *in grace*. The desire of the heart of God for us is that we should be at peace with Him and stand in grace before Him. "By faith" we receive these blessings. "By faith" we are justified and have peace. "By faith" we have access into this grace in which we stand. It is impossible for the Christian to stand elsewhere.

People are very afraid of grace, and, in fleshly ignorance, pretend that it will lead to licence. The word of God shows that grace which bringeth salvation produces precisely the opposite effect (see Titus ii. 11-13).

It brings a present deliverance from the dominion of sin, the principle of law, the power of Satan, and the influence of the world. It teaches us not licence, but an all-important and practical lesson, namely, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, that is, everything unsuited to God, and

that conforms with the flesh, and man's world. And further, that we should live soberly as to our own spirits, righteously as to our ways and dealings with our fellow men in this life, and godly as regards Him who has placed us before Himself in such wondrous grace.

Moreover, it teaches us to look for the blessed hope of Christ's return. In the ages to come, God will show the *exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 7).

May the God of all grace give each reader of these lines to know the unspeakable blessing of being justified by His grace as well as that of standing therein, and rejoicing in hope of the glory He has coupled with it.