



PEACE,
GRACE, & GLORY.

(ROM, v. 1, 2.)

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LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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(ROM. v. 1, 2.)

PEACE.

WHO does not long for peace? It has been the golden dream of man in all generations ; and yet to-day, with all its boasted achievements and advancement, he is as great a stranger to it as ever.

How true those words of holy scripture—where God has given the sum of all mankind, whether learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious—“*the way of peace have they not known.*” (Rom. iii. 17.) “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii. 23.) “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.” (Isa. xlviii. 22.)

Dear reader, before we proceed

further to look at God's way of peace, and how it can be possessed, let us ask you if you have peace? Not peace of mind as to your circumstances, whether private, public, or political: but *have you peace with God as to your sins?* or is it true of you, "the way of peace *THOU* hast not known?"

Peace with God,

we again repeat, man by nature is a stranger to, and of such it is said, "There is *no peace.*"

Many there are that are resting in a false peace, for Satan knows too well how to lull man's conscience, and rock him to sleep with his lullaby of "Peace, peace, when there is no peace!" Thousands of his poor dupes are thus going down to hell; like the man of whom the story is told, who was seen fast asleep in his boat on the Niagara river, heedless of every call, and deaf to every entreaty, until the

4 PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

small craft neared the mighty cataract: then, as the awful roar met his ears, he started up to find when *too late* the peril he was in, and to meet with his fate in the surging torrent.

Stupefied with the opiates of pleasure, and thus dead to God's warning voice, or else clothed with the fair garment of religious profession, and self-righteousness; deceived, and contented with themselves, they listen to the cry of Satan, "Peace, peace," when there is none. Thus many are resting in a false peace which is none other than

The devil's peace!

As in Jeremiah's day, so in ours, many false prophets have arisen, to whom multitudes give heed, and lend a ready ear, as they tell of no judgment after death, no punishment for the sinner, and no hell for the lost.

Reader, lend not an ear to them if you would be wise, lest you be involved with them in the awful judgment which must be their doom. For, "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

True peace

can only be known in God's divinely appointed way. Since sin has made man a stranger to peace, peace can only be known by the removal of that which has broken the peace, and caused the distance which exists between God and the sinner; for in righteousness God must judge sin, and put the unrepentant sinner away from His holy presence for ever.

Some are seeking to make their peace with God, and if prayers,

tears, or penances could remove the dark stains of sin that rest upon the guilty one, then they might hope at last to make their peace with God ; but since “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22), all is unavailing ; and however earnest a person may be to possess peace of soul, as far as they are concerned (for to make it they cannot) they must remain strangers to it for ever. “None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.”

But if man is helpless to make peace, and you, dear reader, if not at peace, are unable to procure it by your own endeavours, let us tell you the good news that

Peace has been made.

“Peace through the blood of the cross.” Upon the cross the suffering Saviour cried, “It is finished.” Risen from the dead, He appeared

to the disciples, who beheld Him with fear and trembling, and to their troubled hearts He spake the blessed words of peace, saying, "*Peace be unto you,*" and shewed them His hands, feet, and side, the threefold witness that all was done ; the work finished, redemption accomplished, and peace made.

Many years ago, when England and France were at war together, a French vessel set out to trade in the northern seas. She was returning home after being a long time absent, and when off the coast of the northern part of England, the crew's water failed. They would gladly have put into the nearest port to gain a fresh supply, but they feared to do so, lest they should be captured. Day by day passed, and no chance of obtaining the wished-for water arrived ; hope of reaching home without it there was none. Death was staring them in the face

8 PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

unless they put into one of the English ports. At last they could hold out no longer, so they altered the ship's course and steered for the nearest port, preferring to be taken captive by the English, to dying of thirst on the high seas. When they reached land, they were greeted warmly, and their every need supplied by those they thought were hostile to them, for *peace had been made*. All they had to do was to enjoy the fruit of it.

Having made peace, the blessed "peace maker" has taken His seat upon the throne of God in glory, and from that place, by the Holy Spirit, He is now proclaiming to sinners far and wide,

"Peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.)

In no other way could peace be known. A holy God could not pass over sin ; but now in the gospel the wonderful story is told, that

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.) Through the death of Christ, God can now righteously forgive the sins of every one that believes in Him, and finds His joy, too, in justifying every believer in Jesus. “That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom. iii. 26 ; see also Acts xiii. 39.)

Christ having died and risen again, is the proof that the sins once laid on Him have been atoned for, and put away for ever. When He rose victorious out of the grave, death, judgment, and condemnation were gone for Him for ever, and God accounts every believer free and beyond imputation or charge of sin, because Christ is free, having answered every charge, and satisfied the claims of justice for

ever. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Now through the golden gates of redémption, grace can freely flow out, bearing on its bosom forgiveness and peace from God, to all who rest in faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work.

"Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.)

Having delivered Him for our offences, God raised Him for our justification. He raised from the dead the One who on the cross stood in our place, charged with all those sins we righteously deserved to suffer for. Will He ever raise again the question of those sins Christ died for? No, blessed for ever be His name! He is eternally satisfied, and has shewn it out in raising Christ out of death, and

clearing from all charge of sin those who believe. "Therefore being justified by faith

we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ." God is the author and source of it all. To Him be all the praise. And believing on Him who thus delivered Christ for our offences, and raised Him again for our justification, peace is ours—a solid, abiding, and eternal peace, which has God for its resting-place, and the blood of Christ as its foundation.

Thus the believer has a secure foundation for his peace, Christ has made it, therefore it must be stable and unchanging; were it not so, but dependent upon something of man, then how easy it would be to lose this peace! Where this is seen there is no room for God-dishonouring doubts and fears. "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that

condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34)

Happy is the reader if trusting alone in the finished work of Christ for salvation, and resting on God's unchanging word, which gives the knowledge of remission of sins through His precious blood. (Eph. i. 7.) If still a stranger to Him, may you, dear reader, "*acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace.*"

GRACE.

"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 [or favour] wherein we stand." Here the wonders of God's grace shine forth. The past being gone for ever from before God,

peace is the blessed state of the believer, and as the result of it, he has his standing in God's present favour. Wonderful position for the once guilty sinner to be brought into! And all flowing down from God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We find a beautiful illustration of it in the case of Mephibosheth, in 2 Samuel ix. As a descendant of Saul, death was Mephibosheth's appointed portion, but to him David shews the "kindness of God." (Ver. 3.) When he is brought into David's presence, full of fear as to David's intentions toward him, his heart is first set at rest by David's word, "Fear not!" and then into his ears is poured the wonderful story of David's grace and kindness toward him, ending with those words, "Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Here was an excess of grace; not only was he pardoned, *but as a son* he was

henceforth to sit at the king's table. How like God! Out of His treasure house He brings His treasures: and spreads at the feet of the once guilty sinner all "the riches of his grace."

The believer then is brought *NOW* into God's present favour, through the death of Christ; God's perfect love having removed everything that once kept him at a distance from Him, and perfect love having cast out all fear ("because fear hath torment," 1 John iv. 18), he can now be at home and at rest in God's presence, in all the holy, happy liberty, that the knowledge of grace gives him.

All is of grace. The believer is "justified by his grace" (Rom. iii. 24); is "saved by grace" (Eph. ii. 8); has received the forgiveness of sins "according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 7); and "to the praise of the glory of his grace"

shall we be for ever, for "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ver. 6.)

Dear fellow-believer, have you entered into this wondrous fact, and are you in the enjoyment of the blessed place of grace and favour into which it is God's delight to bring all those who believe on His Son? You and I are blessed indeed, and may well join with the apostle Paul to render a tribute of praise to Him who has so blessed us, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Here then are our blessings, not on earth, where they might be spoilt, lost, or tarnished; but in heaven, *in Christ*, where time or age can never

16 PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

dim them, and no power on earth, or in hell, can wrest them from us.

“Hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Not will accept us, but “*hath accepted us.*” Do you realise this? What could be greater, grander, or higher? Some are looking within themselves to find something which they think will commend them to God, but here we find that those who have nothing to commend them to God (see chap. ii. 1-3), are brought into the place of highest blessing, and all on the ground of the rich, sovereign grace of God. “As he [Christ] is, so are we in this world.” Is He free from condemnation? Then, so are we. Is He beyond judgment, and the wrath of God? So are we. Is He in the place of acceptance and favour? Then through grace, dear fellow believer, we can say, “So are we.” “*Because as he is, so are we in this world.*” (1 John iv. 17.)

This is a precious fact, and we should jealously watch against everything that would tend to mar or hinder our full enjoyment of this blessed place of grace or favour in which we stand.

Nothing can alter it.

It is the place God has brought us into Himself, and His desire is that we should fully enter into and enjoy it.

Having saved us and justified us, He has sent down His Spirit to dwell within us. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.)

Here, then, is the power whereby we can enter into and enjoy the wonderful place into which God by His grace has brought us. He has given us His Spirit that we may know those things which He has so freely given unto us. May our great concern be to walk with that Spirit ungrieved within us, so that He may be free to conduct us into all the wonders of grace which God has treasured up for those that love Him.

As we think of the wonders of His grace, we might well bow before Him in wonder and adoration as we exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Being then brought into this

blessed place of favour and acceptance through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, we can look onward to the bright future that lies beyond, and “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

GLORY.

This is the believer's destiny, the glorious hope present before him—
“*The glory of God.*”

As we have already seen, the believer is in Christ's place down here: “As he is, so are we in this world.” And as He is up there, so shall we soon be. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. viii. 29.)

In no less a place than where

Christ is will God place every believer in Him. This is a wonderful statement, but nevertheless true. Only one more link is wanted in the wonderful chain of God's purpose for the believer, and that is by the mighty power of the Spirit, to transplant each one into the glory where Christ is. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Ver. 30.) "*Foreknown,*" "*predestinated,*" "*called,*" and "*justified,*" is true of the believer NOW; but for the last he waits, that is, to be *glorified*.

That blessed desire uttered by Jesus ere He left this world has yet to be fulfilled (and oh, how soon it may be accomplished!), "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me *where I am*; that they may be-

hold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.)

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 14.)

To be with Christ in that glory bright where He is, and where through grace the believer is given a place and a portion, is that for which he

"Rejoices in hope."

Now, "hope" in scripture^s is always connected with the coming of the Lord Jesus for His saints, and with His saints in glory. This is the Christian's proper (and should be his only) hope. Not a hope for pardon, peace, or forgiveness, or a hope to go to heaven when he dies, all that is assured to him in Christ, if a believer in Him; but his hope, as we have already stated, is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the entrance with Him into glory.

Alas ! how few of those who profess to love and follow the Lord Jesus are really looking for Him to come again !

“ But,” says some one, “ do you mean to say that Christ is really coming to take believers out of this world ? ” Yes, dear reader, or rather He has said so Himself. Many affirm that He did not mean, when He said that He would come again, that He was going to take believers to heaven ; but that He intended them to understand that He was coming again to earth to set up His kingdom, and then where He was they should be also. We heartily believe that He is coming again to establish His kingdom, and reign over this earth ; but if words have any meaning at all, we cannot but believe from the teaching of scripture, and from the

blessed words of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is really coming again,

1, *For the saints, to receive them to Himself in glory.*

2, *With His saints, to display them with Himself in glory.*

Let us turn to His own words in John xiv. In chapter xiii. He had been telling them that He was going to leave them (ver. 16); and oh, how deep was the wound caused by these tidings! Then in chapter xiv. He pours in with His own hand the healing balm for their troubled hearts. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*"

It was this blessed hope of the return of the Lord Jesus, to gather all believers to Himself in glory, which animated believers in the early days of the church's history. Of the believers at Thessalonica we read, they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ; and *to wait for his Son from heaven.*" (1 Thess. i. 9.) And in chapter iv. the apostle instructs them in the way in which the Lord is coming for His saints. They, like many believers to-day, were looking for Christ to come and establish His kingdom over this world ; and when death took some of their number away they were filled with sorrow and dismay, thinking that those dear departed ones would lose the joy of Christ's appearing, when He for whom they waited would return. To correct this error the apostle writes to tell them that those who had fallen

asleep (died) would come *with* Him when He was publicly manifested to the world.

Weigh well these precious verses, dear reader, if there be any doubt in your mind as to the fact of the coming of the Lord Jesus to gather His saints together in the Father's house on high.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with him*.” (If, as it is here distinctly stated, that God will bring with Jesus all those who have fallen asleep, then they must have previously been with Him to come with Him, and this the following verses go on to explain and make clear.) “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we

26 PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" (1 Thess. iv. 13-17.)

Here, then, we learn *how* the Lord Jesus is coming *for* His people who have believed in Him: "*Caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,*" are words which admit of no double meaning, and convey to any honest mind the thought intended by the Spirit to be conveyed, that the Lord Jesus when He comes will call all believers to meet Him in the air, where on high they shall be with Him for a

season in the Father's house, previous to His coming *with them* to reign over this earth.

Is this blessed hope yours, dear reader? It should be if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and know the grace of God. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: *looking for that blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing[or appearing of the glory] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii. 11.) Here again we have the believer's *hope* set before us, and that hope connected with the glory and appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. This bright hope should thrill the heart of every believer, instead of which, alas! many give no heed to it, and treat it with cold

indifference. Where can our professed love to the Lord Jesus be, if that which lays so nêar His heart is a matter of little moment to ours? Upon the throne of God He waits in patience for the moment when to Himself He shall receive His blood-bought ones—His church, His bride. (See Eph. v. 25, 27.) In long-suffering grace He waits for others yet to be brought in, to form that blood-bought throng, who shall gather around Him there, the sharers of all His joy, to His everlasting praise. As we think of His patience, that He waits for the time when His blessed unfulfilled desire will be accomplished, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ;" how it should make our hearts burn with deep desire for that blessed time, while keeping them in patience and faithfulness to Him, during the time of His patience and waiting.

Nothing tests our hearts like waiting, as the proverb says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Prov. xiii. 12); but this hope though deferred—and 2 Peter iii. 9 tells us why—should only make us long for it with deeper longing and expect it with more earnest expectation, knowing that every day brings it nearer; and meanwhile, while rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,

"Hope maketh not ashamed ;

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.) Our hearts might faint with unfulfilled desire, and droop with disappointed hope, were it not for the blessed "earnest" now possessed of that which is to come. "That Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemp-

tion of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 13.) Scoffers may scoff, and say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4); but faith reasons not thus, and though His promise still remains unfulfilled we know why; and that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (Chap. iii. 9.)

Soon every hope will be fully realised, and "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away. "He is faithful that promised" is faith's resource, and

" Though men our hope deride,
 Nor will the truth believe;
 We in His love confide,
 And He will ne'er deceive."

“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.” Let us arouse ourselves and trim our lamps, that the light of testimony may shine brighter during His absence, for He is coming! Christ the Saviour is coming! Coming from heaven to change these bodies and fashion them “like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil. ii. 21.)

“Surely I come quickly” is His word to His own, may there be a true response in our hearts, dear reader. *It is Christ Himself who is coming*, the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. Do you not long to see Him? “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath *this hope* in him purifieth him-

self, even as he is pure." (1 John iii. 2, 3.)

May this "blessed hope" keep us true and faithful to Him while He is absent; it will surely have its purifying effect if it is kept bright in view. Faithfulness to Himself is what the Lord is looking for. O dear reader, may you and I be kept true to His dear name! He is coming with the reward of faithfulness. It will be HIMSELF. Listen again to His blessed voice, "I come quickly." Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus!

E. E. N.

