

THE
GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE.

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(READ EPHESIANS I.)

IN a day like the present, when sin is abounding on every hand, when infidelity has shewn itself in a place where the name of Christ is professed, it is a happy thing to be able, unmoved by any of these things, to rest simply on the word of God in the spirit of little children,—just to hear what the Lord says, and to believe it. This, I am more than ever confident, is the way to obtain blessing. It is only as the soul waits upon God and the word of His grace, that it gets instruction; and it is only in proportion as the soul is nourished and established in the truth—it is only as the child of God gets built up into Christ, that he will be able to withstand and overcome the terrible evils of these last days. Sure I am, the soul will never be able to brave the coming storm, of which we have but as yet seen the first droppings, unless it is well settled and grounded in the truth of God. But God is above all, and He will carry those who are subject to Him through all the troubles and trials of the present time.

We need not discuss the infidel questions of the day. The child of God, who knows the power of the word in his own soul, has a full and practical proof of its divine authorship. He knows experimentally that it is God's Word; and, moreover,

he is aware that it is God's grace that has made him know His truth in power. The Word of God carries on the very face of it the clearest proofs of its being the word of none other. Even a casual survey carries with it the most satisfactory conviction; and the more the soul imbued by the Spirit of God enters into it, the more fully it becomes convinced that the thoughts there recorded are none other than those of the living God.

These infidels have never felt the power, the saving power, of the Word; they see its condemning power, and hence their enmity and practical opposition.

But I am being led away into another subject, and from the one which is immediately upon my heart. These thoughts have, however, arisen from the consideration and sense of the wonders of God's grace—the marvels of His love, which He has revealed to fallen man. One has wondered how these infidels could have missed seeing it, at least in some measure; how the story of the Cross could have been read by them, without any apprehension of the grace of God therein manifested.

Truly the heart of man is dead, cold, and beyond all power of feeling. It only proves again that it is of grace that we are saved; that it is because God would, in spite of man's opposition, save whom He would. We are compelled to acknowledge that it is a power outside and apart from man that has opened our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our heart to believe, and our mouth to confess and praise. Truly we learn practically that power belongeth to God,—that while things are impossible with man, all things are possible with God. But I must now turn more immediately to the subject.

In reading the epistle to the Ephesians, one is

struck with the expression, the "glory of His grace." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in 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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, *to the praise of the glory of His grace*, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 3-6.) One is led therefrom to think of the grace and love of God; and not only so, but its fulness—its glory: for God, as He alone can act, when He acts does so fully. That which He does, He does to the full: He does all things perfectly. If He reveals Himself, or anything concerning Himself, that which He does make known is exhibited in its perfection. So it is with His grace. It was God's eternal purpose, according to His own wisdom and prudence, to reveal Himself as a God of GRACE—a God of all grace. It was His heart's desire to show forth Himself as a God who *is* essentially LOVE.

It would have been blessed, indeed, to have seen Him in His loveliness, and to have been made recipients of His loving and lovely acts. But this would not have met and satisfied the desires of His heart. Nothing but a full display of Himself, not only as loving, but as love itself, will give Him perfect rest and satisfaction. His name is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

This is His name, and it is truly blessed; but

it is not His person—it is not what He *is*: they are only adjectives and participles, they are not substantives. Now, God *is* love, and in that particular character He *would* manifest Himself. Such was His heart's desire. May I not say that God, before He had thus revealed Himself, was straitened in Himself—that His heart longed for liberty and freedom to display Himself? May I not say, His bowels yearned within Him for a way whereby to declare His love? His mercy and His grace sighed for emancipation. His affections looked out for an object whereon to pour themselves: His grace longed to unfold itself, that it might flow forth freely in all its reality and in all its plenitude. Nothing less than an exhibition of its *fulness* would meet God's desire or purpose; nothing less than the manifestation of the GLORY of His grace would satisfy the desires of His heart. Be this said in all reverence and godly care, under a solemn sense of the greatness and sublimity of the subject. True, we have liberty—full, perfect liberty in the presence of God; still, we need to walk softly while treading on such holy ground, while meditating for others, as well as for ourselves, on so grand and so sublime a theme. May the Lord keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Now, the character and nature of God's grace is infinitely rich, and therefore He will have it shine forth in its infinity; it is sovereign, and therefore He will have it reign triumphant over every obstacle and over every difficulty. No power, no enemy, in the heavens or on the earth, shall prevail over God's sovereign grace. Supreme it is—supreme it *shall* be. Again, God will display a full measure of grace, and therefore empty vessels must be found, vessels absolutely empty, so as to

be able to receive such a measure of God's grace as He is willing and has determined to bestow; and this measure is, to as full an extent as His power can bestow. God is rich in grace, and therefore they who receive it must be so poor and destitute as to be able to accept it, without any price, in all its divine freeness. Some one has said, that man must *receive* grace without payment, because he is too poor to buy it, and because God is too rich to sell it. God's grace is thoroughly independent, and therefore must be received apart from the remotest idea of human worth or human goodness. God's grace is pure, and must therefore be received in all its purity, apart from any works of any sort whatever on the part of man, for all he does, thinks, or says, is tainted with sin. A tree with a corrupt root cannot possibly do otherwise than bring forth corrupt fruit. And then, further, the moment there is the least particle of works, grace loses its essentiality, and is no more grace. "And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

It was this grace—this rich, sovereign, full, free, pure, and independent grace, that God purposed to display, and sought a way by which He could do so. In His wisdom and prudence He purposed it; at all costs He was determined to make it known. Even though it needed that He should sacrifice the Son of His love He will not spare Him, but freely give Him up. And oh, it is not to angels, or archangels, but to us men He has shewn forth the fulness of His love. Angels look on and wonder, desiring to look into these things—always doing His pleasure; but these He passed by, and took on Him the seed of Abraham. And thus we

see it was the glory of this grace HE desired, and in due time has revealed.

But how has He done it? What is the way—the manner of His love? Towards whom has He opened the floodgates of His grace, and upon whom has He poured out His full, free, and sovereign blessing? Who and where are the objects that are so far from God that it needed infinite grace to reach them? Where are the vessels so empty that it needs so rich and so full a grace as God's to fill? Where the poor so destitute that they have nothing to give for it, but must receive it in all its absolute freeness? Where the hearts so hard as to require Almighty grace to move and awaken them? Where any so stubborn as to need sovereign grace to compel them to receive the blessing? And where are the persons so unworthy, so bad, and so sinful, that it was possible that God could show forth the fulness, the height, *the glory of His grace?*

For it is this, and nothing less than this, that God is declaring and is practically manifesting. It must therefore needs be, that they to whom it is shown are as far gone from original righteousness *as possible*. It is not enough that they be "very far gone from original righteousness," but gone *altogether*; and unless something of this entire corruption of human nature be known, there can be no understanding as to the true nature of grace. Never shall we understand practically what grace is until we know the utter and entire worthlessness of human nature; experimentally, I mean. There may be much known theoretically in the head; but it takes a long time and many a hard lesson for human nature to learn itself. They who wish to learn in any measure what God's grace is, must not expect a smooth

path. It is hard and painful work to know oneself; but that must be known, and fully known, before the glory of God's grace can be fully appreciated. It is true that eternity alone will fully make it known to us. Still, we can learn much, very much of it, even here below; and it is well to learn it, however much it may cost.

But where are we to find the objects—the vessels worthy of grace?—their worthiness consisting in the fact that they are totally depraved—wholly devoid of any good—altogether apart from God, and without hope. The apostle says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed *us*.” Here then are some who are blessed by God. Well, but are they worthy ones—worthy of the *glory* of God's grace? Let us see their qualifications. In the second chapter their state and condition is described. The apostle announces them to have been by nature DEAD in trespasses and sins. Their walk and practice were as bad as their nature. The quality of the fruit corresponded with the corruptness of the root. The corrupt tree produces corrupt fruit. It must be so in the nature of things. And so of the natural man, it is said, his walk is according to the course of this world—this present evil world, which lies in the wicked one. A world filled with people whose hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and their minds carnal and at enmity against God; a world whose god and whose prince is Satan. This was the character of the “*us*,” this is the divine description of what man is; and is it possible for anything to be worse? Such are, indeed, altogether far gone from God—altogether worthless.

These, then, are such as are worthy of the glory of the grace of God. These are objects who are

worthy of the exceeding riches of God's grace and mercy, because of their very badness. Without the sin they would not be worthy. I pause here, dear reader, to ask whether you are one of the "us" as thus described. If you are, you are one worthy of God's love and grace. If, however, you do not know yourself such, then you can know nothing about God's grace. I know that this is a low state of things, but it is true. And it is only in proportion as we practically understand our lost state that we know and value the grace that has delivered us. If we desire to learn the glory of God's grace, it must needs be that we know our utter and entire corruption; that we are infinitely far from God, and wholly under the power of the god of this world, and our doom eternal wrath—everlasting separation from God.

This will have prepared us for the consideration of the manner in which God has revealed His grace. We have found the objects upon whom He *can* pour out His blessings of grace—the vessels which He can fill—the utterly worthless ones.

Now, the first thing God does is to deliver them from the impending doom, the eternal wrath. This the apostle, by the Holy Ghost, tells us He did. We, this "us," have received redemption through the free gift of His only begotten Son, who freely offered Himself to God, that by the shedding of His own precious blood He might redeem from the jaws of the lion, from the power of the grave, and from the torments of everlasting burnings those whom He loved, and him to whom He determined to manifest the fulness, the glory of His grace.

We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Sold as slaves to sin and Satan, we have

been bought with a price,—we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus. Doomed to eternal wrath, we have been delivered therefrom. But by whom? By Jesus, God's own Son, who in due time came forth from God, and, according to His eternal purpose, did die for the sins of His own. Hanging on the accursed tree He paid the penalty of our sins, that we might be for ever free. On the Cross He bare our sins in His own body. Oh! here was a display of love and grace; surely this was grace, wondrous grace, the sacrifice of Christ. By the eternal Spirit He offered Himself to God, and to God He was an offering of a sweet-smelling savour. He obtained at this enormous cost eternal redemption. God was always well pleased with His own Son. The sacrifice of Jesus was a free gift—it was an unspeakable gift. He loved His Church, and gave Himself for it; yea, He loved ME, and gave Himself for ME. Oh, indeed this is a display of love far, very far beyond the comprehension of the heart and mind of poor finite man! Surely His love passeth understanding. Still, great and matchless as this display of grace is, it is not full, it is not the glory of God's grace; it does not satisfy the heart of God. It is only according to the *riches* of His grace. God is not content. Redemption from sin and judgment and wrath does not meet the need of His heart, and so we read, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us *all things*?" The apostle argues that as God has done so great an act of love as to sacrifice His only begotten Son for such worthless sinners, His grace will not stop there, but will also *with Him* freely give us all things. And so He has. He has given, in His grace, all things to the believer; He

has given him a present blessing, a full one too. Not only has He given him redemption and the forgiveness of sins, but He has blessed him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. God's heart must give a full blessing; He knows not anything about short measure; there is no such thing as measure with God when the time has come for the display of the glory of His grace. His grace, we have said, is full, and it must be dealt out according to its fulness. And so in this present time the Christian has a full blessing in Christ. Now that God's heart has found a way to display itself—even the death of Jesus—He can, He does, and He will pour forth upon His children blessing upon blessing. There is now no hindrance; He has now full vent. God is no longer shut up in Himself, and there is therefore no limit to the blessing wherewith He will bless His children. "Tis His great delight to bless us." His grace is unbounded—it is infinite, and therefore He will display it in all its unmeasured fulness. Jesus by His death has met all the need and claims of God's righteousness. God is just in justifying all who believe in Jesus. Hence we know and taste a grace and love that knows no let. The thing is for us to believe God's heart of love towards us, and to enjoy that wherewith He blesses us. Note, it is ALL spiritual blessings He has. Note again, it is a *present* blessing. He HATH blessed us. And further observe, that He blesses with Christ. He does not give apart from Christ. All the blessings are in Christ. Yes, God, I repeat, gives as God, and as He alone can give. Oh, how wondrous is the grace of God! He gives a full and free gift wherewith to fill empty vessels. Thou anointest mine head with oil. Surely we can say, Our cup runneth over.

But I stay again a moment to ask the reader whether he knows anything about this display of grace. Do you, dear reader, know that if you are a believer you have a free, full, and present blessing? Yes; God gives to rebels, to sinners, to those who are as far from Him as possible, an unbounded blessing. But do you know it in any measure, or are you like many Christians, who lightly esteem that which God gives? God gave to Israel of old, manna; He fed them with food from heaven; but, alas! their ungrateful hearts led them to call it light food—they despised it. Oh! are you in any degree like them, despising your blessing? Are you doubting whether God has given you these things? God, blessed be His name! HATH blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN CHRIST. May the God of all grace make His grace to abound towards us, that we may know more and more of our present portion in Christ! All spiritual blessings are ours: life, and righteousness, sanctification, peace, joy, hope, truth, redemption; in a word, all spiritual blessings—Christ Himself is ours, and with Him God has given, freely given, all things. Still, this is not all. It is indeed the riches of His grace, but it is not the glory thereof.

But even the *riches* of God's grace are very, very far beyond the limits of man's thoughts. Oh, how much more so is the glory of His grace beyond man's comprehension! Indeed, we can say, Who can find out God unto perfection? His ways are past finding out. We do not, however, seek to understand and explain it. That is not our part at all. It is ours to hear and behold what God has said and done, and humbly to believe it. This is the secret of blessing; this is the way whereby we can realize and enjoy our great, high,

and holy privileges. May the Lord help us to be more like children in the simplicity of our faith and confidence in God!

God has, as we have seen, shown us the *riches* of His grace in having redeemed our souls from hell and the power of the grave. Blessed be His name! He has, at the great and unspeakable sacrifice of His own Son, taken us out of the miry clay, and set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings. He has, indeed, put a new song into our mouths, even a song of praise to our God. Oh, that our hearts more fully apprehended what His grace has done for us! for then, sure I am, our song would be fuller and more hearty. There would be a more continual spirit of worship and devotion, and a louder and better sustained note of praise to our God. As we have before observed, blessed and wondrous is this display of the riches of God's grace, but it is not all; for God has given us, even in this present time, in addition thereto, *ALL* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Yea, the apostle says, that we may be "filled with all the fulness of God." "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

And yet we are taught to look even for still higher and fuller blessings than these. And what are they? They affect our destiny. We have been

delivered from one extreme—the extreme of sin and eternal wrath; but where have we been brought to? Where has He set our feet? Where are our goings established? He has brought us to God, and He has set our feet and established our goings in the heavenly places in Christ. From the lowest depths of sin and ruin, from eternal wrath, from everlasting burnings He has delivered us, and brought us on the wings of love TO GOD. Ponder this, dear reader; wonder, adore, and worship. “Christ hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” (1 Pet. iii. 18.) “Ye who were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Eph. ii. 13.) We have been predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself—brought into the Holy of Holies by the blood of the Cross, by a new and living way. With boldness, apart from all fear and trembling, we come into the presence of God, and have, in virtue of the blood of Jesus, “access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. ii.) It is our privilege to address Him as Abba, Father. We are brought to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus, and in that communion we are to have, not fear and trembling, but *fulness* of joy. Nothing would have satisfied the heart of our God and Father but His having us brought to Himself. Love delights to have its object near; it cannot bear to have it afar off: and so our God, in His love and grace, has brought us by Jesus Christ to Himself—into close fellowship and communion, so that we can know and converse with Him. Oh, how intimate, how near we are brought to God! And yet, near as it is, close and intimate as the relationship is, it is but the riches and not the glory of God’s grace.

God purposed, in His prudence and wisdom, to

make a full display of His grace, and therefore great and beyond our comprehension as that is which we have been considering, it is not all, and God is not content therewith. Oh, no! He would have us higher and higher yet, and still nearer and nearer to Himself. But how much nearer can He bring us, and how does He accomplish this? He has given to us life—eternal life, and this life is in His Son. And in order that we might be brought as near to Himself as possible, He has caused us to receive the life of Christ as our new life. The old life we once lived He has destroyed, having crucified it with Christ, and He has given us a new life, which life is Christ Himself. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” When God quickened Christ in the grave and raised Him up, He quickened us together with Him, and so made us to have life in and with Christ. He has brought us into such union with His own Son, that we can say we have been “crucified with Christ; nevertheless we live, yet not we, but *Christ liveth in us;*” and the life that we now live we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. We are in Him, quickened *together with Him*, and He is in us—formed in us. What can be more intimate than the believer’s identification with the Christ of God. Nothing can be nearer. The union is most complete. No language can be plainer than that used by God to convey to our minds the close and intimate union and relationship between the believer and Christ. It is for us not to seek to explain but to believe, and so realise and enjoy the blessing. The Lord help us to do so! This great and blessed truth is beyond our finite reason. It is not contrary to it,

but above it. To faith, however, it is true, real, and practical.

But yet further, on this point, we are told that Christ is the Head over all to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The Church is the body, the fulness, or the complement of Christ. Christ is not complete, then, without His body. There would be a want, there would be something lacking in the Christ of God, were He not to have His body, the Church. HE is the Head of the body, and the body is His fulness. He the Head, we the members—the hands, the feet, the eyes, &c. Thus, then, Christ and the Church form one body—as the apostle says, “one new man.” For the building up of which He has appointed His servants, “some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the FULNESS OF CHRIST.” (Eph. iv. 11–13.)

In Corinthians, however, this truth is, if possible, put still plainer, showing how Christ and the body, the Church, form the Christ. “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also the Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) There is one body, and we are all members thereof—“members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” (Eph. v. 30.)

Our first parents in Eden form a beautiful and

striking illustration of this truth, and are no doubt referred to by the apostle in Eph. v. The Eve was taken, or built up, during the sleep of Adam, out of his side, and the two made the one Adam. The moment he arose from his sleep he exclaimed, "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." He knew by faith, I suppose, that she was part of himself, and so he at once acknowledged her as such. The Eve and Adam formed then the one Adam; for God called *their* name Adam. In like manner the Church is taken or built up (Eph. ii.) into Christ, and the two, Christ and the Church, make up the one Christ. In passing from this grand and sublime truth, which can only be appreciated by faith, reason cannot understand it, that is quite out of the question; but to faith it is a most glorious and sanctifying truth; and, therefore, before passing from it, I should like just to quote a few expressions from the Word of God, showing the unity of Christ and His Church.

Jesus prayed, "that they all may be one; as thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." (John xvii. 21.)

We are chosen in Christ; accepted in the beloved; sanctified in Christ Jesus; created in Christ; made the righteousness of God in Him; have all spiritual blessings in Him. Christ liveth in me. Christ formed in you. We are in Him that is true.

Many more to the same import might be noted, but this will suffice for our present purpose.

Then, again, not only are we thus identified and united by resurrection life with Christ, and raised up with Him, but we have been made to SIT TOGETHER in heavenly places IN CHRIST. The Apostle says, "And hath raised us up to-

gether, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." So that, as the hymn says,

"So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He."

Yes, called by a heavenly calling to have fellowship with God's own Son, may we adore and worship Him, who has thus shown forth the riches—the exceeding riches of His grace.

Yet, again, this is not all; truly we can say, there is no end to His grace and goodness. We are made the temples of the Holy Ghost. Having believed in Jesus, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Now, our Jesus does not give blessings to lie in our bosoms dormant; but He gives full and real blessings, which are to be used and enjoyed. To this end He has sealed us with the Holy Ghost, and thereby has set the souls of His people free; for, where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty; and the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, neither is it doubts and fears, and self-bemoanings, but it is "righteousness, and peace, and joy **IN THE HOLY GHOST.**" The Holy Ghost has been given to us to give us liberty in Christ, and to lead our souls into the realisation and the enjoyment of our high and holy privileges. He is in us to glorify Christ, and to take of the things of Christ, and shew them to us, to lead us into all truth, that our souls may ever rejoice in the Lord, and become more and more conformed to Him; that we, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) But why is there so little conformity to the image

and example of Christ Jesus? Why so little true discipleship? Why so little following Him? Why so little bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, &c.? Is it not because we are not filled with the Spirit? And that is the exhortation of the apostle, Be *filled* with the Spirit. Is it not because we are not walking in Him? We have grieved Him, and hence we lose so much blessing to our own souls and to those of others. May the Lord help us to see to it, that we have a full supply of the Spirit.

But still this is not all; higher and higher yet. The Spirit is the earnest of an inheritance which is above and beyond all the blessings we have at this time. An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. What marvellous security! kept by the power of God; sealed unto the day of redemption by the Holy Ghost, and Jesus ever interceding, as our priestly advocate with the Father, maintaining for us failing children our relationship with the Father. What shall we say to these things? What can we say? We can say nothing. All we can do is to sit still and adore the grace that has made us God's, and long for the day when Christ will come, when we shall cast our crowns at His feet, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

For a sealed and kept people, then, there is an inheritance in reserve,—“An inheritance reserved for you who are kept.” All is sure, all is certain. The finished work of Christ on the cross has secured all. It has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and it has

cleansed and prepared an inheritance for us. But wonderful beyond all human reason and comprehension as this is, yet it is not all. It is but the riches, the exceeding riches, of God's grace; it is not the fulness, the glory thereof. It was not meet that the second Adam, the Son of God, should be alone; and therefore our God is gathering in, in this dispensation of His grace, a bride for Him. He is taking out of this world of sin, and death, and corruption a people whom Jesus has taken into union with Himself, and who are to be the Bride of His own Son in glory. Oh, how unspeakably wondrous is the love of God! Oh, ponder the magnificence of God's grace! I say, ponder and consider the fact, that our God has sent into that very world which set Him and all His counsels at nought—which despised and rejected the Son of His love, to form out of that world a body which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. He has espoused that people to His Son as His Bride; and Jesus is coming again for His Bride, to receive her to Himself, and will then conduct her home to glory,—to that place, to that home, which He has gone to prepare for her,—amidst the shouts of praise, and hallelujahs of the countless numbers of the assembled hosts of heaven. “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." And yet, loud and hearty as these notes of praise may and will be, yet we think there will be one far heartier and far louder out of the midst of that assembled host—a mighty cry will come forth from her who is, above all the rest, a debtor to grace. The Church, the Lamb's wife, will be able doubtless to sing the loudest of them all. And oh, methinks her note of praise will reach right above every other note, Victory, victory through the blood of the Lamb! She will take her crowns from her head, and cast them at His feet, owning herself wholly a debtor to grace, and that He alone is worthy of all praise, dominion, and glory.

It is for this Bride that Jesus has gone to prepare a place, and it is for her that He is coming. Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Jesus is the heir of all things. He is God over all blessed for ever; and soon He will take to Himself His great power and reign. With Him His Bride is to reign. We are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. The glory that His Father hath given Him He has given to His Bride. He is to be King of kings and Lord of lords, and His Bride is to have blessed and happy fellowship with Him in His kingdom. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

How soon He will come and take His Bride away I cannot say. Some eighteen hundred years ago He said, "Surely I come quickly." When He will come I cannot tell; but this I feel sure of, that when the last stone of the temple of God has been hewn out of the world's quarry and put into its place—when the last soul that is to make up the complement of the body of Christ has been brought in—when the fulness of Him that filleth

all in all shall have been accomplished,—then, yes, then will He come again. Then

“In brightest glory He will come,
And take His waiting people home.”

Then, as we upward fly, that resurrection word, that shout of victory shall sound forth, and swell the anthems of the skies. Victory, victory through the blood of the Lamb, will be the one universal cry, as the body of the Church's humiliation is changed into the likeness of the glorious body of the Lord Jesus. And yet this is not quite all. It is not quite the glory of His grace. It is not the fulness of blessing. There is a step higher yet; for we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him: still, this is not the fulness of His grace. It is the exceeding riches thereof, indeed, but not the glory thereof. For not only shall we see Him as He is, but we shall know Him even as He knows us. The measure by *which we shall know and be acquainted with Jesus*, our heavenly Bridegroom, will be that whereby He knows us. Oh, we shall see the matchless beauty of Jesus in all its loveliness! We shall know all His inner and deepest perfections with the same knowledge as He knows us. We shall know, understand, and appreciate His heart's affections for His Bride. We shall know all the mysteries and secrets of His love. Oh, surely this is the very glory of His grace! He could not have done more for us than this. What will be the surrounding glories of heaven, compared to the moral beauty, perfections, and glories of the person of the Lord Jesus? Nothing. This, then, I believe to be the glory of God's grace. From the lowest depths of sin and ruin, to the highest place in glory, in fellowship and acquaintance with

the Son of God, knowing Him and all His inexhaustible fulness, even as we are known ourselves by Him. God's eternal purpose was to display the very highest and fullest measure of His grace, and thus He will do it; for nothing less than this would meet and satisfy the mind and heart of Him who is the God of all grace.

Oh, for a heart to praise our God! Oh, for a tongue to tell forth the wonders of His love! Oh, for that day, when without hindrance we shall be able, with full hearts and with unhindered expression, to give unto Him that praise, honour, worship, and glory which are due to Him who loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever; for His is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth are His—His kingdom, and He is exalted as *Head over all. Both riches and honour come of Him, and He reigneth over all; and in His hand is power and might, and in His hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.*

Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name.

E. C.