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✓
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EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

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THE LORD WILL GIVE GRACE AND GLORY.

THESE are precious words. They are sweeter than honey, more animating than music, more refreshing than wine. They have often cheered the disconsolate, given courage to the faint, and set on fire the hearts of good men. They are right words. *The Lord will give grace and glory.* Let us weigh their import.

THE LORD. Jehovah, self-existent, independent, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, merciful, and gracious; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. He is almighty, and so cannot be resisted; knows all things, and so cannot be deceived; is all-wise, and so takes the cunning in their own craftiness; is love, and so cannot be unkind; is just, and so can do no wrong; is true, and so cannot lie. He made, supports, guides, and governs all things. Of him, and by him, and to him are all things. The Lord, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, is all our hope and all our salvation.

The Lord will. He has said so. He has sworn so. His word and his oath are "two immutable things." He has covenanted with his people and with his Son to do these things. He never breaks covenant. "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations." His honour is engaged. His truth is pledged. He has already made good his promise to myriads as poor and needy, as weak and helpless, as wicked and rebellious as sinners of the present day.

The Lord will give. He will not bargain and sell, but he will give. Nothing on earth could buy what he is willing to give. All things on earth are of no value compared with what he will give. Rivers of oil, the cattle on a thousand hills, the gold of Ophir are trash in his sight. His blessings are not for sale, but for gift. Purchase them you never can, but you may have and hold them as gratuities. Bring no money, no goodness, no merits of your own with you. "Thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money." "Al-

our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." He will *give* his good things. This suits every man. We are all poor and vile and rebellious and guilty. If we get any thing, it must be as beggars get alms. We cannot, as some of them, plead that we have been made poor by misfortune, by fire or flood or shipwreck or earthquake. Our *iniquities* have been *our* ruin. Sin is a *crime*, not a misfortune. It is *wicked* to be a sinner. Nor can we say, as some beggars, that we are poor by injustice. God has never robbed us. We have robbed him. He has been righteous in all his ways. In him is *no* iniquity. He never gathers where he has not strewed. We have loved sin and estrangement from God. We have destroyed ourselves. Beggars sometimes want but little, one loaf, one garment, one shilling. We cannot say so. We want all things. We need pardon for countless and heinous offences. We need white raiment, a righteousness in which the eye of God can see no rent, no spot, no blemish. We need holiness, strength, instruction. We are as poor as sin can make us. We need all things. Nor can we, like some beggars, promise, that if our present wants are supplied, we will ask no more, but will help ourselves. We shall need more to-morrow than we shall get to-day. We shall need more at death than we shall get in life. Yet we are like beggars, because we need favours, and can give no equivalent in return. We need gifts, alms, gratuities. It is very kind in God to say that he will *give* his blessings. But *what* will he give?

The Lord will give GRACE. That is the very thing we need. We need nothing half so much as grace. Men and angels cannot bestow that. If we can but have grace, we shall have food and raiment and health and friends and comforts, as long and as plentifully as God sees to be best for us. Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He who has grace, shall have whatever else will do him real good.

But what is *grace*? It is kindness to the undeserving. It is favor to the guilty. It is love to those who merited wrath. It is pity to men perishing in sin. It is mercy to the lost. This, all this, is what we greatly need. Unless we get it, we are all dead men. Without it, there is no hope nor help for us. This grace is free. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is the grace of *God*.

It is bestowed by God alone. He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "The LORD will give grace." It is rich grace. So we read, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." Were sweeter words ever uttered? Who would suspect that they were written by a prisoner of the bloody Nero? Paul knew not what day he might be ordered to a violent death, yet he did not spend his time in denouncing tyranny, nor in filling the ears of his friends with the story of his wrongs, but in extolling the grace of God.

This grace is rich in its storehouse. The bosom of God is an ocean of love. This grace is rich in its fruits. They are pardon of sin, acceptance with God, adoption into his family, renewal of heart, repentance, faith, hope, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, humility, courage, contentment, victory; an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. When God gives grace, he gives "more grace," even "grace for grace." The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. This grace is all we need for any trial. "My grace is sufficient for thee." It sustains, it restrains, it cheers, it defends. It makes the triumph sure. It is better than gifts of tongues, of teaching, of miracles, of prophecy, of healing, of casting out devils, of raising the dead, of understanding all mysteries. The least grace is better than the greatest gifts. To hunger and thirst after it, is better than to possess all wealth, all honour, all pleasure besides. Where grace works, it works efficaciously. It is lively, not dead, not dormant, not feeble. It is stronger than man's corrupt nature.

It is greatly celebrated by prophets and apostles. One cries, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Another, speaking for all his brethren, says, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." This grace is much extolled by good, though uninspired men. One says, "Nothing but free grace makes any difference between me and the vilest of sinners." Another says, "There is not a round in the ladder

to heaven, which doth not give to every one that steppeth upon it, just occasion to sing of grace." Another says, "I know no sweeter way to heaven than through free grace and hard trials together. And where grace is, hard trials are seldom wanting." Another says, "Two things I chiefly know: one is, that I am a great sinner; the other is, that Jesus Christ is a great Saviour. O the riches of divine grace." Another dying, said, "I have altered my mind about many things, but I am now of the same mind I was as to grace and salvation through Christ." When Christ shall bring forth the headstone of his living temple, all the redeemed shall "shout, Grace, grace unto it." Nor is this all. "Grace is the silver link that draws the golden chain of glory after it." So we read,

The Lord will give grace AND GLORY. "Grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant. Grace is glory begun, glory is grace made perfect. Grace is the first degree of glory, glory is the highest degree of grace." Grace is worth living for, glory is worth dying for. It is the perfection of holiness and happiness, the fulness of bliss without alloy and without end.

But will the Lord give grace and glory to *sinner*s? Yes, to sinners. Christ says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

But will he give these blessings to *great* sinners? Yes, to great sinners. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," says Paul. Did he not save the chief of the publicans, the chief of the harlots, and the thief on the cross? His "blood cleanseth from all sin."

Do any ask, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered that very question thus: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

But say some, "Is it not too late?" God shall answer: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."