

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:7.

Beloved, this beautiful verse of God’s Holy Scriptures gives a wonderful and powerful suggestion as to what and how we shall be occupied throughout eternity in Heaven; to wit: By the pleasant and delightful acquisition – incrementally and eternally – of holy, celestial knowledge and holy understanding – especially of the ATTRIBUTES of God. In commenting on this verse, John Trapp says that the heart of the verse is the words **“IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US,”** saying, *“We come not to the knowledge of God but by His works.”*

And so it is that throughout all eternity, God will demonstrate – (i.e., *“show,”* or, impart the knowledge of) – His ATTRIBUTE known as His GRACE. Indeed, the RICHES OF HIS GRACE. And how will God impart such wonderful knowledge unto us, more and more, as the years of eternity roll? By His works of Kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Indeed, we have seen that some of those works of God that demonstrate His kindness toward us, are those works involved in visiting His vengeance and eternal wrath upon our murderous enemies; to wit:

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest YET FOR A LITTLE SEASON, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Rev. 6:10,11)

There is an eternal, universal LAW OF LOVE – which the phony, lying, Arminian, sloppy agape love mongers – of the sodomitical persuasion – chose to ignore; to wit: ***“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” I Jn. 3:18.*** By the great and noble works of visiting all their persecutors with wrath and fiery vengeance, God, as it were, proves to His people not only that He loves them, but how very, very much He loves them. Beloved, this is a matter of the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God – another of His holy ATTRIBUTES; to wit:

“Seeing it is a RIGHTEOUS thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” (2 Thes. 1:6)

Jonathan Edwards said, *“The vengeance inflicted on the wicked will be a manifestation of God’s love to the saints. One way whereby God shows His love to the saints, is by destroying their enemies. God hath said, ‘He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye.’ And it is often mentioned in Scripture, as an instance of the great love of God to His people, that His wrath is so awakened, when they are wronged and injured. Thus Christ hath promised that God will avenge His own elect, Luke 18:7,8, and hath said, that ‘If any man offend one of His little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,’ Mat. 18:6. So the saints in glory will see the great love of God to them, in the dreadful vengeance which he shall inflict on those who have injured and persecuted them; and the view of this love of God to them will be just cause of their rejoicing.”*

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And, there is another line of teaching in which God seems to implicate His own RIGHTEOUSNESS, or, His own TRUSTWORTHINESS, if I may so speak; to wit: ***“For God is not UNRIGHTEOUS to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”*** Heb. 6:10. And so, you see, Beloved, there are shown to be two solid grounds upon which GRACE – working through the supernatural FAITH of Christ – I say, upon which GRACE has positioned all God’s elect to lay claim to God’s ***“KINDNESS TOWARD US through Christ Jesus.”*** Thereby is seen, and given unto us, a vast area of celestial KNOWLEDGE, calculated to grow and swell as the millenniums go by – to eternity. Those two grounds upon which we are invited to form up humble prayers and supplications to our Father, are:

(1) Father, for thy name I have suffered severe persecutions at the bloody hands of these, and these, and these, of thine enemies, while on earth, where ***“the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me”*** (Psa. 69:9; Rom. 15:3); ***“As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”*** (Psa. 44:22; Rom. 8:36); Thy grace was working in me, holy Father, both to will and to do of thy good pleasure (Phil. 2:13); and so, holy Father, I humbly petition thee, in the exceeding riches of thy grace, to deal with me only in thy KINDNESS – even that KINDNESS that only a loving, all-powerful God can show; and;

(2) Also, dear Father, I have found in thy Word another ground upon which thou hast invited me to come boldly unto the throne of grace, which seems to imply that it would be an UNRIGHTEOUS thing if thou shouldst turn me away unrequited (or, empty-handed), and fail to deal with me in great, eternal KINDNESS; because, heavenly Father, by thy GRACE working in me – and despite all my many weaknesses and failings – I have ministered to the saints, and do minister, accounting it my highest joy and satisfaction in life; – (and also accounting it proof positive that I love Thee). – I therefore form up my petition, predicated upon this good Word that I have found; to wit: ***“For God is not UNRIGHTEOUS to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”*** Heb. 6:10. Now let us take another look at our text, and this time consider the context; to wit:

“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:7)

What ages are these, where the apostle refers to them as ***“the ages to come?”*** Some say they are the ages to come of the Gospel era, from the days of the apostle Paul to the end of the world. For example, A.R. Fausset says, ***“These good ages, beginning with the first preaching of the Gospel, and thenceforth continually succeeding one another, are not consummated until the Lord’s coming again.”*** And then, strangely, he says, ***“The ‘coming on’ – (i.e., ‘the ages to come’) does not exclude the time then present, but implies the ages following upon Christ’s ‘having raised them up together’ (v. 6).”***

And so, by pointing us to Eph. 2:6 as being the time of the Rapture – (when Christ shall raise up all the bodies of the saints, fashion them like unto His glorious body, and install them along side of Himself on His throne of judgment) – Fausset evidently believed that ***“the ages to come”*** refers to that time frame beginning with the Second Coming and continuing to Eternity. Even so, it appears, does Dr. Gill.

In fact, Gill is strong for it, saying with regard to the clause, ***“That in the ages to come,”*** to wit: ***“THIS IS THE END OF GOD’S PERMITTING SIN,”*** (i.e., God is here pictured as saying something like this, in the vernacular – so to speak – ‘OK, that’s it, you morally perverted mongrel humanoids. I’ve had enough. I’ve permitted you to romp around in your stinking filth long enough. Because I delayed sentence and execution against your evil works, your wicked and corrupt hearts were fully set in you to do evil. **Eccl. 8:11.** Never again ! The Day of my Final Judgment has dawned at last’) – continuing Gill’s commentary: ***“This is the end of God’s permitting sin, in which men are morally dead; and of God allowing them to go on in sin, in a state of unregeneracy; and of his quickening them with Christ, and raising them up, and causing them to sit together with him;”*** ergo, ***“THAT IN THE AGES TO COME he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*** **Eph. 2:7.**

Think of it, Beloved. When this Gospel age closes with the return of Christ, THE ETERNAL DESTINY of every last son and daughter of Adam is fixed – once and for all – forever; to wit:

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev. 22:11,12)

Shortly now, Beloved, the world to come, with all its glories, will replace this sick, shabby thing we now live in. Gill says that this leads him to observe that ***“there will be ages in the other world; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for His people, but He has appointed ages enow (i.e., enough, aplenty) for them to enjoy it in; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in some measure hid; and that these are the produce of the grace of God; and that the exceeding riches of that grace will be then manifested, when it will also appear that God’s giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindness to them; and that eternal happiness will be heartily and freely bestowed upon them, through Jesus Christ their Lord. The Syriac version renders it, ‘That UNTO MEN in ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.’ Eph. 2:7.”***

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679) says that this 7th verse of chapter two is the grand climax of the greatest and longest discourse on our salvation, says he, ***“that I know of in the whole book of God; the Apostle having indeed begun at the 18th verse of the first chapter, and not ended till now.”*** Now, Beloved, coming from a man like the old Calvinistic Puritan preacher, Thomas Goodwin, (not to be confused with the Arminian heretic, JOHN Goodwin, who lived at about the same time – 1593-1665) – I say, coming from a man like Thomas Goodwin, such words are persuasive indeed, as to the value of this text to us, to study and keep always near and dear to our hearts. I feel like we have tapped a gold mine of Gospel truth.

“For these words,” saith Goodwin, ***“being the conclusion of so long a discourse, the Holy Ghost hath the greatest summing up of all in them CONCERNING MAN’S SALVATION THAT IS INCLUDED IN ANY SCRIPTURE. And, the sense of it is this: That whereas the Apostle had set out our salvation as begun, ‘He hath quickened us together with Christ,’ He hath set Christ in Heaven, and there He hath given Him our portion; that is, He hath put, as into the hands of a***

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feoffee (i.e., trustee, fiduciary) *in trust, all the glory we shall have forever; He hath in Him raised us up, and in Him set us together in heavenly places; all the glory we shall have in the other world, which we are to possess, is now put, saith he, into the hand of Christ. To what end? ‘That he might show forth in ages to come,’ EVEN TO ETERNITY, the riches of that grace which he hath intended us in Christ, which he hath already given us in Christ representatively, which Christ hath taken possession of; which, saith he, is so great a glory, as it requires ages to come, an eternity of time, for to spend that treasure which is thus given us in Christ; it requires, as the word is, AGES OF AGES, to spend them and to manifest them; which when those times shall begin, then shall begin the accomplishment of our salvation, and so IT SHALL BE COMPLETE. New bodies and all; i.e., all the rest of our inheritance, which is said to be ‘incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto SALVATION* (i.e., completed, new bodies and all) *ready to be revealed in the last time’* (i.e., our salvation is here called our inheritance, new bodies and all, is NOW READY – and is only waiting to be REVEALED, in the last of the last time, which means at any moment).” **1 Pet. 1:4,5.**

Hence the urgency of it, as reflected in **verse 13**; to wit: **“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the GRACE”** – (Grace is here put for our completed SALVATION, new bodies, inheritance and all) – I say, **“hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation”** – (i.e., at the Second Coming in power and glory) – **“of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 1:13.**

And, more on our COMPLETED salvation; to wit: **“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not,”** – (i.e., knoweth us not as the royal children of the Great King of Glory, soon to be revealed as such, to their utter consternation and amazement), – I say, **“the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet APPEAR what we shall be: but we KNOW”** – (i.e., we have knowledge of this holy mystery, which the world is ignorant of) – I say, **“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”** – (i.e., hope in a COMPLETED SALVATION, new bodies, inheritance and all) – I say, **“every man that hath THIS HOPE in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” 1 Jn. 3:1-3.**

And, just here, let us look again at our text; to wit: **“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:7.** Does it not give to grace the chief place of all, – if we may thus speak, – of all the attributes of God? For instance, look back to the beginning of this discourse, at the **19th verse of the first chapter of Ephesians**; to wit:

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his POWER to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his MIGHTY POWER.” (Eph. 1:19)

And from there, His POWER is given a sort of priority in treatment, almost to the **7th verse of chapter two**, which, as we have seen, is the last verse of the discourse which runs from **Eph. 1:18 through Eph. 2:7**. Again, Goodwin says:

“That God’s utmost end in man’s salvation is the showing forth of that which is in Himself, and the making of it known that it may be glorified, ESPECIALLY to show forth THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. My Brethren, God is glorified by being made known, and that was it that moved His will to show forth what was in Him. You have an express place for it in Rom. 9:22, ‘What if God, willing to...make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy (or, grace), which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called?’ Rom. 9:22-24. What the nature of God is none can know in itself; therefore it must be set forth in its observable effects. In 1 Tim. 6:15-16, the Apostle there showing us the reason why Jesus Christ shall one day come and appear in glory, and in the glory of the Father, as himself tells us, saith it is this: ‘Which in his times HE SHALL SHOW, who is the blessed and only Potentate (or, Absolute Sovereign), the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.’ I take the meaning of the words to be this: God, saith He, is in Himself a God blessed, infinitely blessed, in Himself; He is a Sovereign, one that may choose whether he will communicate this blessedness to any creature – yea or nay; He dwells in light inaccessible, which no eye can see. There must therefore be a showing forth, some way or other, of this glory of His, if ever we come to know it, or be partakers of His blessedness. He hath, saith He, sent his Son, and He means to send Him again at the latter day, principally to this end, that He that is the blessed God in Himself, that is the only Potentate, the Sovereign Lord of all, that doth dwell in light no man can see into, that IN HIS SON WE MAY BEHOLD HIM,” – (‘full of GRACE and TRUTH,’ Jn. 1:14) – “I say, that He may manifest Himself, that He may make known, that He may show forth and communicate that blessedness which is in Himself. Now as this is the reason why Jesus Christ shall appear at the Last Day, so this is the reason also why God hath shown forth anything of His GRACE or of His KINDNESS before the Last Day unto the sons of men; and because God cannot manifest Himself to the full, He hath therefore invented so many several ways, and He hath therefore taken an ETERNITY OF AGES (!) to do it !”

Even, the AGES OF AGES. To wit: Our text. *“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:7.* Think of it, Beloved. Our God is busy inventing, or fashioning, or creating an infinite number of ways – that will take all eternity to display or reveal – to *“show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to us !”* I should have thought that just the appearing of the dear Lord Jesus would have been enough for me – so far as showing forth that attribute of God known as His GRACE. Listen:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.” (Jn. 1:14)

Moreover, when our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt below, He made great and really wonderful claims for showing forth all the attributes of the Father – including especially His GRACE, – in and of Himself; to wit:

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth YE KNOW HIM, AND HAVE SEEN HIM. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but THE FATHER THAT DWELLETH IN ME, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” (Jn. 14:6-11)

Also, we have already received tons of GRACE from our dear Lord Jesus, and tons of knowledge about God’s attribute of GRACE – all according to the recorded testimony of John the Baptist; to wit: *“John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and GRACE FOR GRACE (i.e., tons of GRACE). For the law was given by Moses, but GRACE and TRUTH”* – (i.e., the TRUTH about GRACE) – (I say, GRACE, and the TRUTH about GRACE, by the Ton !) *“came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM (i.e., showed forth and shined forth the Father’s holy and eternal ATTRIBUTES).” Jn. 1:15-18.*

Now we understand that our Lord Jesus Christ will spend eternity – the ages of the ages – showing us more and fresh, new material about the exceeding RICHES of His Father’s GRACE in His KINDNESS toward us ! – all *“through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Beloved, is it not, truly, AMAZING GRACE? and is it not, truly, a SWEET SOUND? Beloved, God is speaking to us through His Word, the Scriptures. They are saturated with His holy ATTRIBUTES; e.g.:

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Tim. 1:17)

God has always spoken to His people, by the mouth of all His holy prophets and scriptures since the world began, in every dispensation and age. **Acts 3:21.** God’s Attributes have remained the same – and are the same today – as when the world began; and GRACE has been the FOREMOST ATTRIBUTE of all to His people, because it gives them peace, assuring them that God the Son has by Himself purged their sins, all pursuant to the GRACE of God the Father. And, Beloved, the best is yet to come for us – as the years of eternity roll – and as we delve, excitedly, ever deeper and deeper – under the tutelage of the Lord Jesus Himself – into the inexhaustible ATTRIBUTE of God’s AMAZING GRACE: That in the ages of ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness to us.

“GRACE, ‘tis a charming sound, Harmonious to the ear; Heav’n with the echo shall resound, and all the saints shall hear; it first inscribed my name in God’s eternal Book; ‘twas GRACE that gave me to the Lamb, Who all my sorrows took. GRACE led my roving feet to tread the Heav’nly road, and new supplies each hour I meet, while pressing on to God. GRACE taught my soul to pray, and pard’ning love to know; and GRACE has kept me to this day, and will not let me go. GRACE all the work shall crown, in everlasting days; it lays in Heav’n the topmost stone, and well deserves the praise.” Amen.