

# WRITINGS OF ADELPHUS

by Adelphus

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*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Adelphus, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

2 Chapters

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## S. Grace

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### Grace

How refreshing it is to our souls to think of the grace of God; for what do we not owe to that grace? May the God of all grace guide us, whilst for a little we dwell upon this blessed aspect of His character towards, us poor sinners! The very fact that we are sinners at once brings in the necessity, that if God act towards us at all, it should be by grace. The Scripture recognizes but two ways of our dealing with God, and He with us, and those ways complete in themselves, either all works, 1:e. obedience, or all grace, 1:e. the ground of works being entirely forfeited, so that entire grace can alone reach the case. Now that there has been a flaw somewhere in his obedience, the most hardy would scarcely dare to deny, and, therefore, if we are to be saved it must be by grace. But without entering on that question now, let us trace a little the stream of grace. That it was grace that set God in motion towards us, for the purpose of our salvation and complete blessing, the Scripture declares to us. For speaking of the calling with which He calls us, " the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Ephesians 1:5), He says it is " to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath bestowed His favor upon us in the Beloved." For so I believe it ought to be rendered. Not so much His bringing us to acceptance in Christ, as He subsequently does, as the original movement of His heart towards us in Christ at first. The word is the same as, " Hail, Mary, highly favored," 1:e. the subject of favor. And as He foreknew, and fore-provided for our case as sinners in the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, this necessarily follows. And as it was grace that began, so grace has equally showed itself forth in all its ways. The dispensational wisdom, wherein God has brought forth His grace, shines marvelously forth. He waited till the law had run its full course, " as a school-master unto Christ," until it had shown by its heavy yoke, which they could not bear, the helplessness of the sinner, man, and the inefficiency of the blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews 10:1-39), to meet the manifested need. He waited, and then in the fullness of time He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under law. What forbearing grace and Wis 1:1-16 How necessary for us-" For I knew thee, that thy neck was as brass"! It came, therefore, at the right time; for "when we were yet without strength (proved to be so dispensationally), in due time Christ died for the ungodly." And, indeed, as I said, God has taken occasion thus to set forth and show forth His grace, and that it is grace. " God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Nor is it this only; but look at the whole calling of the Church, look at what God did for the Church at once, in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ-He took it once from the horrible pit, out of which it was hewed (Ephesians 2:1-3), and at once, at One bound, taking us just as He found us, but putting away our sins by the blood of Christ, " even when, or though, we were dead in sins, He quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And, indeed, the next verse tells us this is to be the thing specially displayed and illustrated hereby hereafter, " That in the ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." And how it loves in that passage to dwell on this one thought of grace; cutting away everything which for a moment could

intercept the view. " For by grace are ye saved through faith," and that very faith (the hand by which we receive it) not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not surely of works, for we are His workmanship, and how can the workmanship boast itself against the workman, as though it were anything in itself?

Then, again, look at the place whereinto we are brought by it. It is not merely a number of blessings, as we have it in our translation (Ephesians 1:3), but one unbroken, unclouded charter of blessing-" all spiritual blessing, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." To return. The more we study the salvation and blessing of the Church in Ephesians 2:1-22; Ephesians 1:1-23, the more do we see that it is, must be of grace. The depth and height of it cuts every string of human claim or strength.

Take another view.- Look at the person in whom this grace comes - God's Son, His only begotten Son, in whom He was ever well pleased, one with the Father; what do we read in that? It is the deepest of all. 'Tis an unspeakable gift. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. " Angels desire to look into it." That it is grace alone carries on the work which itself began, we know to our joy. It is, indeed, God only that works in us, to will and to do of His own good pleasure: "Thou also hast wrought our works in us" (Isaiah 26:12). Further, we know that-- "Who grace has brought, will glory bring, And we shall reign with Him."

He will thus crown His own work.

I say, then, it is well, often amidst the trials and corruptions of the Church, our- own failures and trials, to look away from all to that grace, which stands forth bright and independent of all for us. It refreshes our souls, it animates us afresh, it inspires the freshest and the brightest confidence in God, and again girds us for our work. "Hearken unto me" says the Lord to Israel's remnant (Isaiah 51:1-23), " ye that follow righteousness: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed and increased him." The result is full confidence. "For the Lord will comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

It is both refreshing and profitable to think of the simple grace of God; for the same spirit that works the unconverted to assert salvation by works, works also in us to bring us into bondage, to becloud our apprehensions of the simple grace of God, and thus to cut us off, more or less, from the fountain of all joy, and of all strength. For our \_strength will always be in proportion to our simple apprehension of the grace of God. If that fountain is disturbed, the waters will surely become muddy in our souls. And how decisive is the Spirit of God, knowing the importance of clearness here. He admits of no compromise. Galatians 5:4 -" Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by law [wholly, or in part, for the Galatians did not give up Christ altogether, but would have Christ and something else]; ye are fallen' from grace." That is, ye have left the ground of grace, which admits no compromise.

Yes; the sum of the Gospel will ever be found in its fullness in those words of the Apostle, Titus 2:1-15 The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, godly, and righteously, in this

present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar, or special people, zealous of good works." This is God's golden chain, grace running through all. That grace may, in every way, in heart, and life, have its full effect with us, may well be our prayer.

Adelphus.

## S. Letter on Christ's Person.

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Letter on Christ's Person.

1894 31 Beloved Brother, In reading the letter signed "C." in the Bible Treasury, vol. 19: pages 379, 380, I could not help being struck by the subtlety shown in the extract he quotes from the paper to which his letter refers. The sentence quoted reads, "Personally He (Christ) ever was God; but without ceasing to be that, He has taken a place, as the Second Man, and as He is in that position, so shall we be." Now, it will be noticed that emphasis and stress are laid upon "place" and "position," the deductions and conclusions are made to rest on them. The simple-minded reader is induced to believe that the personal nature and glory of the Blessed Lord are duly recognised: but on examination of the teaching in question, it will be apparent that the dishonouring statements refer directly and positively to the Person of the Lord. For how can omniscience be predicated of a place? or "having life in Himself" he made to refer to a position? The same question may be asked in reference to omnipotence and omnipresence. What have they to do with position or place? I do not attempt to quote scripture to show how again and again these attributes of divinity are asserted of Him, who is God manifest in the flesh. My object is to draw attention to the sleight and cunning craftiness whereby, under pretence of dealing with the characteristics of "place" and "position," the direct personal glories of the Lord Jesus are denied. Nor can it be admitted that "the Second Man" is a place. God formed the first man, and put him in the garden He had made. But the man was not the place, nor was the place the man, as was sadly proved when God drove out the man. So the Second Man is gone to prepare a place (the one belonging to the first having been lost) for His own, to which what He is personally and His work give the title and the blessedness. Nor does it appear correct to assert that "as He is in this position, so shall we be." He is the Head of the body, we are not. He is to be the firstborn among many brethren. In all He is to have the pre-eminence. In virtue of the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. He will sit upon the throne of His glory. All things are to be put under Him. None of these facts can be truly applied to us. May it not confidently be asserted that all a believer's blessedness and blessing depend absolutely upon the personal glory of the Lord Jesus? and that this wicked attack of the enemy is scarcely more dishonourable to Him than it is destructive to the blessedness of the believer? If He could say, He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye, responsively we can say, He that toucheth the Person of God's Christ touches the fountain of our life. O for fervent love to His adorable Person, so that the slightest reflection upon His glory may awaken a holy jealousy in our hearts, constraining us to cling more devotedly to Him!

Yours in Him, Adelphos.

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