

THE APOSTLES... and the life more abundant
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(JOHN 10:10; ROMANS 5: 17; 2 CORINTHIANS 8:12; 2 PETER 1: 11)

Regeneration, wonderful as the experience might be, is but the introduction to God's great world of truth. As birth must be followed by growth, so conversion must be followed and superseded by holiness. " That we henceforth be no more children. . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things " (Eph. 4: 14, 15). The systematic teaching of the New Testament has much to reveal concerning this glorious theme.

An Abundant Life

The Lord Jesus said, I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Eternal life is the priceless gift which reaches the sinner through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Language cannot express the inestimable worth of this eternal treasure, but we do well to remember that life abundant is to life what a reservoir is to a pool. A drink of cool, refreshing water may revive a thirsty traveller, but it cannot satisfy all the requirements of his future. Eternal life brings to man a taste of the reviving springs of God's unfailing supplies, but the Lord Jesus never promised that this experience alone would meet the Christian's every need. He planned to make it possible for heaven's limitless supplies to flood human souls ; that daily needs should be supplied by the inflow of divine sufficiency.

An Abundant Grace

The apostle Paul wrote, they which receive abundance of grace . . . shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." It will be immediately recognized that Paul's statement introduces a theme of great import. Conversion-the receiving of eternal life-introduces the believer to a spiritual kingdom. This new experience takes him to a place of power within the kingdom. "They shall reign in life." As the late Dr. Campbell Morgan said, " They shall trample under foot the very powers by which they were overcome." Inbred sin would be defeated by this spiritual conqueror who received abundance of grace from God. It might be helpful to link another text with this verse. " Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need" (Heb. 4: 16). Abundance of life and grace is impossible unless we commune with God.

An Abundant Joy

" . . . the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia ; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." This presents a delightful study in extremes. Affliction and joy, poverty and liberality, are brought together as though they belonged to each other. Indeed, this is the case, for when a man has advanced into the realms of abundant blessing, he proves in daily experience that all things are made to work together for his good. He joyfully exclaims, " I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." Affliction is but the sombre setting against which the scintillating jewel of joy is displayed. Deep poverty encourages faith to be increasingly active, and man reaches forth unto the inexhaustible riches of Christ, and rejoices in sacrificial giving. If we may be permitted to change the simile, let us say that abundant life is the fertile soil ; abundant grace is the healthy plant ;

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abundant joy is the radiant bloom which sends forth its
fragrance to attract and enchant all who come within its domain.

An Abundant Entrance

The apostle Peter supplies the glorious climax to this stimulating study. He says in his second epistle, ". . . brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." An abundant entrance. Let us compare an ordinary citizen returning to his home after a brief holiday, with the national hero returning from a far country. The one man returns unnoticed ; the other is awaited by excited, cheering crowds. The one man is forgotten ; the other is given the freedom of the city. Both men obtain an entrance, but the one is given an abundant entrance. Are we justified in assuming that something of the sort happens in heaven? All believers obtain an entrance, for Christian citizenship is registered in the holy city. Yet the King will be waiting for certain saints in order to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Perhaps the angels will line the streets of gold, and the redeemed will sing the songs of the Homeland. Perhaps our loved ones already there will accompany us to the palace of the King. Surely these are the features of an abundant entrance. It can be ours if we gain distinction in the battles of life.

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