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EDITORS' ANNOUNCEMENT

The June issue will complete five years of continuous publication of *The Predestinarian*. Our original desire was to inform many of the existence of an old order group of believers in the absolute predestination of all things and relating doctrines of free grace and our historic defense of the Baptistic faith and practice in continuity from our early American existence. This design, we believe, has been achieved.

There is a sadness to express to our friends that our time has run its course. We have tentatively agreed to cease publication of the magazine with the June issue, and request that no more subscriptions or renewals be sent to us. Those who have already renewed will be reimbursed, based upon a proportional formula, the monies submitted for that purpose. IF, FOR ANY REASON, YOU SHOULD BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE NOT SUFFICIENTLY REIMBURSED YOU, AS OF AUGUST 30, 1985, please INFORM US PROMPTLY. It is not our desire to defraud anyone; however, we are human, and can make mistakes. So please let us know after July 30.

Both of the editors here are overloaded with our secular employment and the amount of time necessary to compose, print, collate, and mail the magazine has simply run out. We do not now have sufficient help, nor see any ahead, to continue the work. A good deal of opposition to the doctrine and our stand on the sanctity of the marriage state on the one hand, and a general lack of interest on the other has caused us to feel our efforts need to be restricted —we are spread too thin.

However, we wish all to know that we still stand four-square upon the free grace doctrines we have advocated. In addition to those historic doctrines, we still maintain the position of the strict and particular Baptists of our heritage, that we believe in a living, vital, and eternal union of the saints with Christ Jesus in an experimental relationship through the indwelling Spirit of God.

THOU SHALT BE RECOMPENSED AT THE RESURRECTION

J.C. Sikes (Continued)

Paul tells the children of the free woman (in the new covenant) to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and be not entangled again (they apparently had been under it once) with the yoke of bondage. It is very evident that those who hold out the promises of rewards, and fear of punishment, to the children of God, as incentives to obedience, are seeking to entangle them with the YOKE OF BONDAGE from which Christ has made them free. No man can read Paul's allegorical narrative of the covenants as illustrated by Hagar and Sarai, in Gal. 4:21-31 and then read the first verse of the next chapter and fail to see that he calls that old covenant of promises of blessings and threats of punishment as incentives to obedience, "the yoke of bondage" from which Christ had set those saints free. That law-covenant was NOT made for "a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." Its subjects are only natural carnally minded men who have no love for God, nor for righteousness, but are only moved to action by CARNAL inducements and selfish motives.

This very same question that I am now discussing came up in the Church at Jerusalem and caused no small dissension and disputations. A council was called, and the apostles and elders were called to pass on the matter. When they had met, certain of the Pharisees that believed rose up and said that it was needful to command them (the believing Gentiles) to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. But Peter rose and answered them saying: "Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now

therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither OUR FATHERS, NOR WE WERE ABLE TO BEAR. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15:8-11, Peter called that old law-covenant, under which men were actuated by the hope of reward and the fear of punishment "a yoke which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear." If serving for reward, and from the fear of punishment (legalism) constituted a yoke that neither the apostles nor the elders of that day were able to bear, do you suppose, dear Reader, that it has become any lighter by this time? All conditionalists are serving under the law. They are trying (but not very hard) to obtain blessings and escape punishment by their own partial, or causal, obedience. They are strictly advocating the principles of the old covenant, and like Israel, being "ignorant of God's righteousness, are going about to establish their own righteousness, and have not SUBMITTED themselves unto the righteousness of God."

There are two kinds of "righteousness" mentioned in the Scriptures. Paul said of Abraham that he should be the heir of the world, was not given to Abraham nor to his seed through the law, but through the "righteousness of faith." Paul said again, "But what things are gain to me, those I count loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffer the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I MAY WIN CHRIST, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, WHICH IS OF THE LAW, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:8) This righteousness which is by the law is from selfish motives. But the righteousness which is by faith is an unselfish righteousness, because its subjects are moved by unselfish motives. Faith works by love, which is the FULFILLING of the law. The law has never been fulfilled, in spirit, except by faith through love. Paul said, "He that loves

another hath fulfilled the law.” (Romans 13:8.) Again he said, “For ALL the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Oh! what a wonderful text! How rich and full it is! Yet its sweetness can never be attained or tasted by man on a conditional basis. Can a man love or not love at his own option? How wonderful is the free grace of love! Its possessor cannot control it, but is controlled BY IT. Faith works by love and sweetly impels its subjects to obey.

We read in the Song of Solomon that love is as strong as death; also that many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned. If love, therefore, is “as strong as death” then who can hinder it from taking its course? Who can prevent it from accomplishing its purpose? Is it left to the free will, or volition of man to yield, or not to yield, to death? Is it conditional with man as to whether he die or not? Can he prevent the grim monster from accomplishing its purpose? If not, then all shades, grades and kinds of conditional salvation are false: for they all teach that man can successfully resist love, and prevent it from accomplishing its purpose.

Jesus said, “If a man love Me, he WILL KEEP My words.” Why is it that man, who loves Jesus, will keep His words? Is not his love for Jesus the cause? Is not every cause adequate to its effect? No man will ever profit spiritually by an act that is not prompted by love. Paul said, “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, [love], it profiteth nothing.” He did NOT say that it would not profit the poor to whom he gave all his goods, but it would not profit himself. Love, which moves a man to deny himself and to sacrifice his own interest for the interest of others, will, though he neither desires nor expects it, finally result in great profit to himself. He is blessed IN the doing of it. But if he is doing it with a view to profit by it he will certainly be disappointed. There

is no self-denial in working for profit: hence, the man who is working for blessings, for a reward, is not, and cannot be, a disciple of Christ for Christ said clearly, “If any man come after Me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16:24,25).

The statement I am answering says, “I agree with your statement that God’s people receive their reward here in this world for all their deeds both good and bad.” This statement is as FAR FROM THE TRUTH AS IT IS POSSIBLE for any statement to be. It cannot possibly be reconciled to the above statement from Jesus. Yet it is a fair SAMPLE of the Conditionalist-Time-Salvation theory. [Ed. note: Invariably when a Conditionalist says a word against our view of absolute predestination, they will automatically add “both good and evil,” or “both good and bad.” Why, I have no idea, unless it is done deliberately to willfully deceive and prejudice their hearers against the truth of God’s Sovereignty. S.C.P.] It is a clear and comprehensive enunciation of the prmciples of the Old Covenant, which Hagar represented which Paul called “a yoke of bondage” from which Christ has made His people free.

The people under that old covenant were TO BE REWARDED IN THIS WORLD for all their deeds both good and bad. There was not a hint in it that there would be ANY rewards for those under it after this life. To be a follower of Christ one must deny himself and take up his cross. Paul said he suffered the loss of all things for Christ (Phil. 3:8) When the Lord sent Ananias to Saul He told him He would show him how great things he MUST suffer for His name’s sake (Acts 9:16). Suffering in this life is the promised lot of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:12). Conditionalists tell us that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will be blessed with the reward of peace and happiness in this world - totally contrary to the plain testimony of Scripture. They have done away with

Christ Jesus entirely, so-to-speak, as their daily Saviour. They only admit Him as their "eternal" Saviour: but they deny that He saves His people daily here in time. They tell us that the children of God "must save themselves" here in time; and to prove it they quote and then misapply the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." But they spoil their argument on that text by quoting to us Paul's words to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine, continue in them: for in doing this THOU shalt both save thyself, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE."

In the first text above they would have us believe each child of God must save himself with this "time-salvation" and in next they would have us believe no one has anything to do in saving them except the preacher! In it Paul asserted Timothy would do the saving BOTH of himself AND them that heard him. The first one gives the preacher no job in this time-salvation but to save himself; the second one gives no one anything to do in saving them but the preacher! If both mean the same salvation, or deliverance, then these two Scriptures contradict each other. Salvation means "deliverance": hence God's children are saved, delivered, many times. David said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD DELIVERETH HIM OUT OF THEM ALL." (Psa. 34:19) No conditionalism here! When the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt, God ordered them to slay a lamb, each family apart. This lamb was to be without blemish because it was to be a type of our Saviour Jesus Christ. God preceded their deliverance from Egyptian bondage by the slaying of this lamb. He made the day on which it was slain the beginning of the year with Israel. He required Israel to commemorate this year, each year, with a seven days feast, which should be to them an ordinance forever, throughout their generations. This was kept up by Israel at that same time each year until Christ came, and He was crucified during this passover as the anti-type of that lamb. Not only did that lamb

represent Christ; but that GREAT DELIVERANCE of Israel's from Egyptian bondage represented our redemption by Christ and our deliverance from under the law and the bondage of sin.

Paul in speaking of this great redemption by Christ said: "Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body has Thou prepared Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." Then Paul adds, "By the which WILL WE ARE SANCTIFIED, by the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL." Meaning once for all time. And a little later he says, "By one offering He HATH PERFECTED FOREVER them that are sanctified."

All the elect of God, whether born or unborn, WERE SAVED from EVERY SIN that ever had or ever would be committed, and perfected forever, WHEN Christ offered Himself without spot to God for them (Heb. 10:1-8). Will some Conditionalist tell us whether or not Jesus, by this one offering put away all the sins of all His people? If so, then answer me one more question: Does God still hold them responsible, and reward them accordingly in this time world for sins for which Christ suffered the sacrifice of Himself? If not, please tell me why you Conditionalists teach that they are rewarded in this world for their deeds.

But let us pursue the matter a little further. After Israel had offered this spotless lamb and had been delivered, which was a figure of our ETERNAL SALVATION: which figure they were required to continue annually till Christ came; they were to select two lambs, just like the first one, to offer as a daily sacrifice. One to be offered in the morning, and the other in the evening. If the first lamb represented Jesus as our Saviour for eternity, then these two must surely represent Him as our Saviour for all time. One represented Him as our Saviour for the day, and the other for the night. This must be

repeated every morning and every evening; thus signifying that Christ is our Saviour every day and every night.

The objector may ask why we need a Saviour every day and night if Jesus put away all of our sins and perfected us forever when He made one offering for us? To which I would answer: Because Jesus put away our sins long BEFORE we were born into the world, and long before we had committed them. Jesus did not die to keep us from sinning, but He died to save us from the consequence of the sins that we do commit. As we are continually committing these sins day and night, Satan the accuser accuses us before God day and night. (Rev. 12:10.) Hence when we are accused before God, we need an Advocate with Him; and John tells us if we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (I John 2:1.) Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God; and Paul says, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25). These Scriptures present to our minds a great court sitting in Judgment day and night, where God sits as Judge, with Christ sitting at His right hand as the Advocate of His people; and Satan as the accuser of that same people, accusing them before God day and night. These are God's elect for whom Christ died, and whom God has freely justified by the blood of Christ. But Satan is not yet ready to acknowledge his defeat; but as in the case of Job, who was a figure of this people, he is trying day and night to get a charge recorded against them in the court of heaven. But as God, who sits as Judge in that court, has justified them freely, and as Christ who died for them is there as their Advocate and Intercessor, Satan has never yet been able to "lay a charge" in that court yet, although he tries continually, day and night. For "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession

for us." Romans 8:33 cf.) Remember, it is the "brethren" that Satan accuseth before God day and night, but has never been able to get a charge laid against them in God's court. But the Conditionalists tell us that he succeeds every time one of the "brethren" does any bad thing, and gets him condemned, in spite of the intercessions of Christ in his behalf, and he is "punished for it in this time-world." Yes, says the statement I am answering: "They receive their reward here in this world for all their deeds, both good and bad."

The Conditionalists have (in their theory) taken away the daily sacrifice, which is Christ, and have set up their own righteousness, as the basis of their daily salvation from their sins which they are daily committing. And thus they have taken away the daily sacrifice, and have set up in its place the "abomination that maketh desolate." They leave Christ out of their daily salvation and teach, saying, We save ourselves from our own sins in time by our own suffering; and We obtain our own blessings in time by our own good works, which we volunteer to perform. Isaiah said, "ALL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS are but FILTHY RAGS." They hold up their filthy rags before God as an offering to obtain blessings, and thus they set up this abomination in the holy place where Christ alone should stand. (see Dan.11:31 and Mark 13:14)

I am truly glad that the Scriptures present Jesus as our daily sacrifice, as our daily Saviour. I am truly glad to feel, and to hope that when I sin, (which I do every day and every hour,) that these sins were atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ; and that He, as my Advocate and Intercessor sits continually, day and night, at the right hand of God, ready every time I sin to meet the arch-enemy's accusation with the proof that He Himself made satisfaction for that sin on the cross. I can boast of a greater Saviour (sic) than any Conditionalist can boast of. I can boast of a Saviour that saved me from all of my sins, while they only claim a savior that saves them from all the sins that they committed before

they were born again, but from then on they are rewarded here in this time world, they say, for all their bad deeds. Their sins that they commit after they are born again must be expiated by their own suffering. They forget, if they ever knew, that no amount of suffering that one can undergo for his own sins can ever remove his guilt. He may suffer the full penalty that has been assessed against him for his sin and be set at liberty, but he is still guilty. Jesus was slain for the sins of His people and has washed all of them from their sins in His own blood. (Rev. 1:5). Those who must suffer for their own sins under God's law, certainly have never had their guilt removed by the blood of Christ, or they surely would know better than that by experience. As Jesus said to Simon, Those who have been forgiven most love most. (Luke 7:4143). This being true, then those who feel that God, for Christ's sake has forgiven all their sins must love Him better than the man who feels that he is punished here in this time world for part of his sins. We love Him because He first loved us. Love for Him is a SUFFICIENT MOTIVE to move those who love Him to serve Him without promise of pay, reward, blessings, or threat of punishment. Love is of God, and is the fulfilling of the law. (John 4:7 and Romans 13:10.) But the question arises, How are we to know that we possess this love which is of God? This question is answered in I John 5:3. John says, "For this is the love of God, that WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: they are NOT GRIEVOUS." If His commandments are grievous to us, so much so that it takes the hope of a reward or the fear of punishment to move us to do them, then we may rest assured that the love of God is not in us.

In the third chapter of John, verses sixteen and seventeen, John gives us another test as to whether or not we have this love of God in us. He says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "But whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and

shuteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" John makes it very plain that those who HAVE the love of God IN THEM need no other motive or incentive to move them to do that which is right. Love being as strong as death, will move those who possess it to lay down their lives, if necessary, for those whom they love. It was the love of God that moved Him to send His Son into the world to die for poor ungodly sinners. It was love that moved our blessed Saviour to lay down His life for us when we were His enemies. And this love, which is of God, is the MOVING CAUSE of EVERY TRULY RIGHTEOUS ACT. In fact, it is God "working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13). But love which is in our hearts is a fruit of the Spirit and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It never works in us alone, but is always accompanied by faith. Without this faith, Paul says, no man can please God. I have already shown that we receive this faith, not through our own righteousness, but through the imputed righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

In fulfillment of that covenant (or counsel of peace) by and through which we were made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, all things that pertain to life and godliness were made ours. To accomplish this, God freely gave His Son, and notwithstanding the fact that His Son, when the time came for the great price to be paid, prayed vehemently for the cup of suffering to pass from Him, yet God did not spare Him, but delivered Him up for us all (the elect.) This having been done, Paul asked, "How shall He not with Him also FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?" This being true, I will boldly assert that EVERY RIGHTEOUS ACT AND RIGHTEOUS THOUGHT of the children of God ARE WROUGHT IN THEM AS FREELY BY THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD as was their redemption, adoption, and their quickening! All shades and grades of Arminian Conditionalism to the contrary notwithstanding.

Peter said to them who had received their

faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." God's children have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is of God; that they may know the things that are FREELY (not: conditionally) GIVEN them of God. And Paul makes that gift embrace all things, whether in time or eternity, that pertains to life and to godliness. That takes it all in as a matter of free grace: experience, faith, hope, life, blessings, chastenings, trials, joys, repentance, good works, etc.

Faith stands out very prominent among the "all things that pertain to life and godliness which God has FREELY GIVEN to His people." Anything that is of faith is by grace. Paul said, "Therefore, it is of faith, THAT IT MIGHT BE BY GRACE, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." No conditionalism here! This shows very positively that a thing must be of faith in order for it to be by grace. The statement that "It is of faith that it might be by grace" signifies that it would not be by grace unless it was of faith. This being true, it follows that every faithful act and thought is BY GRACE also, because they are "of faith." And Paul said, "Whatsoever is NOT of faith is sin." So where does that leave those so-called conditional blessings? (see Romans 14:23.) Can a thing be "of faith" and yet be by works — even works of obedience of the creature? Paul says not. He said, "even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace; and IF BY GRACE, THEN IT IS NO MORE OF WORKS: otherwise grace is no more grace." Keep in mind that all works that are of faith are "by grace." They are of faith that they might be by grace and not of the works of the creature. (Rom. 4:1-16) The works that are the RESULT of faith are said to be WROUGHT

OF GOD, because it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Agreeing that God is merely working out what is already within you only gives strength to this argument; it confirms that all of salvation — even in time — is of grace. Let us here mention a few things that are said to be of faith and are therefore BY GRACE. If it is by grace, then it cannot be conditionally procured.

I will start with Ephesians 2:8,9. "For IT (that faith) is THE GIFT of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man (such as the Conditionalists) should boast." I use this text here because the one I have just been discussing says, it is of faith that it might be by grace; and this one says, "By grace are ye saved through faith." These texts both show that which is of faith is by grace. The modern Conditionalist sets up "two salvations, one by grace in the hereafter, and the other by works in time." If this salvation in time is not BY GRACE, then it is NOT OF FAITH, and "whatsoever is not of faith IS SIN." [Hence, the Conditionalists' "time salvation" which they work out by obedience IS SIN; and if sin, then it is not salvation at all, but damnation. S.C.P.] Moreover the man who works for a reward and obtains it does not receive it as a gracious gift; but as the payment of a debt. For a number of years I was a carpenter. When I agreed to build a house for a man the man that employed me was the party of the first part, and I was the one who had contracted with him to build the house for him was the party of the second part. He furnished me with a plan and specifications. I examined them and agreed to build his house according to the plan and specifications for a specified sum. When I had completed the house, if I had complied with my part of the contract as the party of the second part he, as the party of the first part was due me, as a reward for my labor, the amount that was specified in the contract. He was in debt to me for that amount. When he paid me, it was a reward for my labor, and NOT a gracious gift. The reward was not reckoned by us as being of grace, but of debt. He only paid me what he

owed me. All who work under a conditional contract must get their reward (if they get any) as a matter of debt and not of grace. They must (if their doctrine is true) bring GOD UNDER OBLIGATION TO THEM BY THEIR OBEDIENCE. Do I misrepresent them? I think not. Their works are sinful self-righteous works because they are prompted by a selfish motive — gain to self. They were not of faith; if so, they were by grace, and that which is by grace through faith is UNCONDITIONAL! They must be that way that the promise may be sure.

The Scriptures, old and new, abundantly teach that God does, and will reward every man according to his works. There is no escape from this conclusion. Then it follows as an irresistible conclusion that the works, according to which the reward is rendered, MUST BE OF FAITH AND BY GRACE. Otherwise the reward must be reckoned of debt and not of grace. God gave Abraham faith and then reckoned that faith, and all the works Abraham was moved to do by it for righteousness! All such works are of faith, and the reason is given in the Scriptures: that they may be by grace, that the promise to them that do such works may be sure; and the reward be reckoned of grace and not of debt. We live by faith. (Rom 1:17) We are justified by faith. (Rom 3:28) We stand by faith. (Rom. 11:20; II Cor. 1:24). We walk by faith. (II Cor. 5:7) We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:14) We are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:26) This faith works by love and not by the hope of reward not the fear of punishment. (Gal. 5:6.) Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. (Eph. 3:17). We are saved by grace through faith. (Eph. 2:8) All these things are of faith and therefore BY GRACE. Faith itself is grace; a gracious gift of God and is dealt out to each of God's children by measure. (Rom. 12:3), and is obtained by us (if we obtain it at all) through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Peter 1:1) Hence, faith being grace we can readily understand why it is by grace if it is of faith. All of salvation in time is of faith that it might be by grace and

not left as a matter for boasting by Conditionalists.

The grace, or gift, of faith dwelt richly in Paul and caused him to labor more abundantly than all the others and he therefore said, "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." He was saved by grace through faith, and attributed his labors to the same source that made him what he was. He said, "By the grace of God I am what I am; and that grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD which was with me." God does not consult His subjects as to when, how, or in what form He will bestow His grace upon them. He gave Paul a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him lest through the abundance of the revelation which he had received he should be exalted above measure. This was to humble him and keep him in a state of humility. The man who thinks that he can by his own voluntary obedience bring God under obligation to him and thereby obtain a blessed reward as a matter of debt surely has another "think coming." That man is "exalted above measure" and needs this thorn in the flesh to humble him. Paul severely condemned voluntary humility. (See Col. 2:16-23). It takes suffering to produce an involuntary humility, and that kind of suffering which makes one serve God with all humility of mind and with many tears as it did Paul. (Acts 20:19.)

It is the grace of God that we must have to prepare us to serve God with reverence and godly fear. Solomon said, "By humility, and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life." "It is given unto us in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil 1:29). This thorn in the flesh which God has graciously given us to keep us humble is grievous to be borne and yet it is a very profitable gift. God's grace is many-fold. John said that Christ was full of grace and truth. "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Grace for grace does not mean grace for works! We

receive grace because of grace. Jesus was full of the grace that was treasured in Him for His people before the world began, and it is of this fulness that His people all receive grace in time because it was given them in Christ before time. We are saved and called with a holy calling, NOT according to OUR WORKS, but according to His own purpose and grace that was given us in Christ before the world began. (II Tim.1:9). Here is two-fold grace in one text. The grace of saving, and the grace of calling. Peter said His grace was manifold. And he speaks of the husband and wife as being heirs together of the grace of life. In Acts 18:27, we read of "believing grace."

When Appollos was in Achaia he helped them much, who had BELIEVED THROUGH GRACE. We read in many passages of "JUSTIFYING GRACE." "Being justified FREELY BY HIS GRACE." We also read of "ELECTING GRACE." "Even so then, at this present TIME also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11:5)

And there is SERVING GRACE. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have GRACE WHEREBY WE MAY SERVE acceptably with reverence and godly fear." (Heb. 12:28). Where do we get this godly fear? It is but another department of the MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD. God said by Jeremiah, "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will PUT MY FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS that they SHALL NOT DEPART from Me." But why multiply proofs? The manifold grace of God embraces ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS. And, it is sufficient for His people in every phase of their life. "At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea, as thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be." Paul was given as a pattern to us, if we are God's people; and he said of himself that he "was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious; but I obtain mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our

Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe to life everlasting." Any man who can volunteer to obey God and thus save himself from this suffering does not measure up to the pattern. When Christ appeared to Ananias and sent him to Paul, he said, "I will shew him how great things HE MUST SUFFER for My name's sake. And while Paul was greatly suffering from the thorn in his flesh, which God had graciously given him to keep him humble, he besought the Lord three times that it might depart from him, but the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Cor. 12:9.) Then Paul adds, "Most gladly therefore will I RATHER glory in MY INFIRMITIES, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." When Paul found that his thorn in his flesh WAS A GIFT OF GOD to keep him humble, he said he much rather glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ not depart from him. God told Paul that His grace was SUFFICIENT for him. No Conditionalist can accept this and keep his conditional god on his little throne.

If God's grace is sufficient for us when the messenger of Satan is filling our flesh with evil suggestions then it needeth not to be supplemented with the puny assistance of man. Paul was not asking God for eternal life. It was for relief in his then present trouble, and God assured him that His grace was sufficient for him in time. When the "spirit (of Satan) that is within us lusteth to envy God giveth more grace." As the hymn writers have said:

"Tho' Satan strives your souls t'ensnare,
You're still the objects of My care;
You're near My heart, I'll bring you through;
My grace is sufficient for you."

“The world and Satan strive in vain
Against the chosen few;
Secure of grace’s conq’ring reign,
They all shall conquer too.”

“Twas grace that called our souls at first
By grace thus far we’ve come,
And grace will help us thru the worst
And lead us safely home.”

“Thru many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
‘Tis grace has brot me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.”

“Grace lead my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road,
And new supplies each hour we meet
While pressing on to God.”

No Conditionalist can, in sincerity, sing these blessed old songs. [Note: they no longer have to. Each reprint of the “old school hymnals” leave more and more of the old free grace lyrics out, and include more and more “The devil ran me around the stump; he almost got me every jump” ditties. They fully know they cannot sing them; and are dead set to stamp them out if possible. S.C.P.] It is no wonder that Paul attributed all that he was as a child of God and as a minister and all that he did (that was worth mentioning) to the grace of God. He was in full accord with the prophet Isaiah, when he said, “Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for THOU HAST WROUGHT ALL OUR WORKS IN US.” “I will not dare to speak of any of those things which CHRIST HAS NOT WROUGHT BY ME, to make the Gentiles OBEDIENT by word and deed.’ (Rom. 15:18) We see in this statement of Paul’s, first, that all he did, all that he would dare to speak of, was what Christ HAD WROUGHT BY HIM. Second, what Christ WROUGHT by Paul and MADE THE GENTILES OBEDIENT, both by WORD AND BY DEED. Christ WROUGHT by Paul; not Paul wrought by Christ as the Conditionalist would have it; and MADE the Gentiles obedient. It was not left up to these

Gentiles after regeneration whether they would, or would not, be obedient. God made them obedient, as He does all of His own. Remember that Paul, in speaking of his labors, said, “Yet not I, but the GRACE OF GOD WHICH WAS WITH ME.” If his labors which Christ wrought by him were by the grace of God then it follows that the Gentiles were MADE OBEDIENT by the same GRACE OF GOD. If this is true, then there is no such thing as *conditional* salvation, either for *time or eternity!* Conditionalists seem to have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being very ignorant of God’s righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness which is of God. No man has ever been righteous, in nature, word, thought, or deed, that was not so made by the GRACE OF GOD.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. “And their righteousness IS OF ME SAITH THE LORD.” All Conditionalists lay claim to a righteousness in time which is not of God; but is admittedly, of themselves by their own voluntary action.

As a hymn writer observed:

“Self righteous souls on works rely,
And boast their moral dignity;
But if I lisp a song of praise,
Each note shall echo, GRACE, FREE
GRACE.

T’was grace that quickened me when dead
And grace my soul to Jesus lead;
Grace brot me pardon for my sin,
And grace subdues my lusts within.

‘Tis GRACE that sweetens every cross,
‘Tis GRACE supports in every loss;
In Jesus’ GRACE my soul is strong,
GRACE is my hope, and GRACE my song.

‘Tis GRACE upholds when danger’s near;
By GRACE alone I persevere;

‘Tis GRACE constrains my soul to love,
GRACE, GRACE is ALL they sing above.

‘Tis thus ALONE of GRACE I boast
And ‘tis in GRACE I trust;
For ALL that’s past GRACE is my theme,
For what’s to come ‘tis still the same.

In countless years of GRACE I’ll sing,
Adore and bless my heavenly King;
I’ll cast my crown before HIS throne,
And SHOUT, FREE GRACE, FREE GRACE
ALONE!”

May grace, mercy and peace from God,
the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ be
with all the household of faith.

A poor sinner saved by grace if saved at
all. - J.C. Sikes.

— *Sovereign Grace and Pilgrim*, 1935.

ZEPHANIAH 3

By Mr. P. Brunker, March 14, 1982
At “Ebenezer” Clapham, England

[We had a request for an article upon the important subject of one’s waiting upon: the Lord from some time back. We received this article upon the subject with the following note:

“Stanley,

This article (enclosed) was very descriptive of my life — i.e., how “oppressing” my conduct is to the pure and Holy One. Nevertheless He has given me hope in Him for He is very gracious! This article describes much of that —you may want to print it if you think it will be helpful to others.

May the Lord encourage you in your work for His name’s sake.

Niagara Falls, N.Y.

In Hope, John Palazzo.”]

This prophecy of Zephaniah is very solemn and yet very instructive and encouraging to the true people of God. It is a

prophecy which sets forth the divine purposes of God; its literal setting is the impending desolation of Judah and the restoration of that little remnant, the preservation of the holy city, that which Paul refers to in writing to the Galatians, the city of promise, the children of promise, those who are that remnant according to the election of grace. These are the people who are interested in the blessings which are contained in these prophecies — no one else is. They are not here to be offered to people, they are here to be declared as being the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God.

This verse is a declaration of how the Lord will perform all matters. It takes us beyond the immediate context of the desolation and restoration of the captives of Judah; it takes us beyond material Zion; it takes us to the consummation of all things on the earth, “for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy,” when the Lamb of God will come and consume His enemies with the breath of His coming and all the works of the earth shall be burnt up. What a mercy it will be to be of those people who are unspeakably blessed, those people who will have turned unto them a pure language and which trust in *the name of the Lord*. *They are described* as an afflicted and poor people, contrary to what one would suppose naturally; one would think that the strongest shall prevail, the strongest shall outlive everyone else; but the Gospel is entirely opposite to that — “By strength shall no man prevail.”

The word contains an exhortation: “Therefore WAIT ye upon Me.” To whom is this word addressed? It is addressed to a people upon whom the Lord was shortly going to pour out His indignation and wrath. This chapter concerns particularly the city of Jerusalem. The prophet Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, that good king, who under the Lord’s blessing brought about a measure of restoration. At that time this solemn prophecy pronounced the Lord’s purpose to overthrow even Judah and Jerusalem, that city which for the time was apparently in a good state. I wonder how

many in Josiah's day willingly listened to Zephaniah's prophecy? He was a prophet of trouble and distress and they did not want to hear of that. Before their eyes they had one who under the blessing of God was an instrument of God and who honoured God. The Lord tells us that there was a remnant because otherwise no flesh should be saved, and the Lord declares who they are and He speaks to them, "Therefore wait ye upon Me."

This opening word is very solemn, "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city." How unlike Jerusalem at that time it must have seemed, but the prophet declares it to Jerusalem: "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city." That word "oppressing" seems to be a solemn word to me. My mind went to that word in Amos where the Lord said, "Behold, I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." It is not outward oppression, not of one another, but oppression of sinners concerning their God. God is oppressed with His people, with their unbelief, with their hardness, with their carnality, with their unwillingness to receive the truth; "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city." What is it to be filthy? It is to be one who is unwashed from their filthiness. Jerusalem appeared to be cleansed, restored, and God in His mercy had raised up one to be "The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in" — He will fulfil His purposes. There was no alteration in the counsel of God, but the Word takes us beyond impending wrath of God, even literally in the context, and sets before us a day of blessing and restoration, so the chapter ends with the blessing of the Gospel that was come to the remnant: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments." He sets forth before them a time of healing and restoration and this is contained in this word, "Wait ye upon Me." Having chastened His people, brought them into captivity, laid their heritage waste, the Lord says He will gather the nations together: "My determination is to gather the nations,

that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all My fierce anger."

Now we would leave the context except to observe this word of exhortation or direction from the Lord to this remnant who alone would hear these words: "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord until the day that I rise up to the prey." What does this word "prey" set forth? The word is used of that which is precious, which has been ensnared or taken captive against his will, that which is wounded, that which cannot escape, that which is doomed, apparently, to final and utter destruction. I feel that is the right meaning; in Isaiah we read, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" Now if we view this spiritually, unless we are among this little remnant we shall resist this teaching. The Lord pronounces a woe upon Jerusalem; blessed are we if in our case He pronounces a woe which we are given grace to receive, and when we are therefore lawful captives and justly deserve His judgments. We can enter in a little measure into that which the hymnwriter says,

"And if my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."

We are "lawful captives", we are ensnared by our own sins, our own folly, we have entered into the trap which the adversary laid in the first Adam and which we have only confirmed from the day of our birth until now! It is spoken to such people. This word seemed such a blessed point to me; the Lord says, "Therefore, wait ye upon Me," though the judgment of God is poured upon you, and will literally be poured upon you in a little degree in due course while this is being experienced, "Wait ye upon Me." We have before us the figure of the ensnared beast and it can do nothing but bemoan its wretched state, waiting for the destruction which must inevitably fall. Despite this, "Wait ye upon Me," for this is part of His determined pleasure and counsel. But what will bring us to this state? Only acknowledge that the Lord's Word is true. You will recall that in

parallel passages of Scripture and similar ones concerning Israel, the national people of God, they did not receive instruction. "I said, Surely thou wilt fear Me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings." This is a word spoken to a community whose profession, whose nationality, whose situation was wonderful; they were inhabitants of Jerusalem. How very few really received this correction, how few trembled for the word of the Lord. They said, "The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil;" but a sinner taught of God believes every word of God, he receives in an honest heart every judgment of God; he believes the Lord must be just to His own perfection; that the only way of escape is one which shall glorify God in his salvation. That alone will satisfy a coming sinner: this is what this command holds out.

"Therefore, wait ye upon Me" — for there is an afterwards. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "Wait ye upon Me;" do not struggle to get free because there is no getting away from the truth, no shortening the days of trial, no hastening the judgments of God; but there is obedience to them. What a difference in this from the prophecies of those evil prophets in the days of Jeremiah who resisted the proclamations of God and said, The Lord will not deal with His people this way, He will not lay Jerusalem desolate. Who would have thought that it should be done to Jerusalem? The people could not credit that it could happen to Jerusalem; but those believe these things, who have the solemn and safe witness in the conscience that they are sinners and cannot justify God in our salvation. You cannot justify Him in dealing with you in mercy or tenderness or compassion because His word has gone out against evil; this Lord will not do wrong, He is a just God and a Saviour. These truths will be received, and as they are

received by the Spirit's teaching, grace will be given to look to see whether there by any way to escape. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him." There is a waiting upon God under a realization of the truth, not waiting insensibly but waiting in a captive state, waiting because there is no prospect of deliverance except from Him who alone has the right, the power to give deliverance; He who alone can speak peace and pardon and bring a time of blessing into the soul. It is to such people the Lord says, "Wait ye upon Me." This waiting is a tender, gracious, quiet waiting. It does not relieve difficulty, it does not liberate, it does not bring nearer, as to our view, the day of liberty; but it does work obedience to the truth, it does give humility which is so desirable to a living soul, even a gracious willingness to bear the yoke which Christ speaks of: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." We sang just now (I wonder whether we believe it):

"But when the King Himself was here,
His claims were set at nought:
Would they another lot prefer?"

We would by nature; "We will not have this man to reign over us;" we do not want this humbled, rejected, east-out Man to reign over us, but "Wait ye upon Me;" wait under the Spirit's humbling; wait under His quickening power, as you realize the truth that no man can keep alive his own soul. When we are ensnared in the devil's trap, in the power of the adversary, in such a state there is no ability to live; what little life you have seems to ebb away.

Another point with this captive character

is that no present privilege will provide comfort. I want to impress upon you what the Spirit is setting forth concerning Jerusalem. In the days of Josiah the sun was shining there; there had never been such days; but those who received the truth, those who heard Zephaniah's words and received them in their hearts, would have eaten and drunken in heaviness of heart. They would have fulfilled the true sacrifice to eat the Paschal lamb with bitter herbs, a realization that there is a pathway; "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Every blessed sense of the Lord's mercy to us here will often be attended with that question, What is this for, what is the purpose of this to my soul; what now will ensue, what will come to crush me? "Wait ye upon Me," even in prosperity, because the word has gone forth that this is a poor and afflicted people and those who enter heaven will come out of much tribulation; but they will have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" and they do so under the exercise of waiting. Their eyes begin to fail, they look for the fulfilment of God's purpose, for they have no other refuge, no other prospect of ultimate mercy or final deliverance but the Lord's decree concerning His people. "This people have I formed for Myself; they SHALL shew forth My praise." These people did so literally. Let us go forward some centuries in the history of Israel; what was their state literally? We find this oppressed people under Roman dominion, we find them the tail and not the head, we find them a despised nation. "Can there any good come out of Nazareth?" "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

"Wait ye upon Me." It will be upon that God that poor convinced sinners will wait; they believe that to His dear people everything

is done in covenant mercy, and ever has in view His ultimate glory and their good. What is the exercise of waiting? It is to be waiting for consolation from God's own mouth and by His own power within, not looking for temporal relief, but for that which shall bear its own witness with our hearts that we are born of God. It is that inward witness that a child of God will look for who has not got it in the powerful, unmistakable enjoyment of it. This word is only spoken to the little remnant, but those who hear it, — I am not saying that it was not generally spoken or heard by all and sundry at Jerusalem — but the point is those only hear who have ears to hear. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke His parables to all and sundry, but He qualified them with this "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," evidently very few did. So with the letters to the angels of the churches; many would never receive them; they would understand their words but would not bow to them, would not wait upon Him. Who are the people who hear? Those who receive the word in all its awful threatenings, that God is a consuming fire, that He is a just God, that there is only one way whereby He can save His people and that is through the interposition of himself. The only way whereby His offended justice can be satisfied, the only way whereby the infinite debt can be cleansed away~ is as the fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness in the sinner's own heart. It is for a proving of these things that a child of God who thus hears the word waits. "Wait ye upon Me."

What is this word for? It sets forth the effectual work that has gone before; "Surely thou wilt fear Me." This was a reproof in the days of Jeremiah, so in Isaiah's day, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the

houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." Who receives it? Only that little remnant. There will be a walking out of this experience in our individual cases that the Lord will be faithful to His promise of judgment and chastisement as He will be to His promise of mercy and restoration, and we shall not have the one without the other. The Apostle Paul did not, nor do any of the Lord's dear people. The Apostle describes in the epistle to the Corinthians the pathway he walked in under these various painful experiences and so his pathway will be the pathway of one who is made a partaker of Christ's sufferings. The sufferings which Jerusalem experienced were the sufferings of God's love to them. It is from this love that the unity of the Spirit, the fellowship of Christ in His sufferings is experienced, no other way. It is a mercy if the chastisement of our God brings us to "consider His that endured such contradiction of sinners." There is to be a waiting for Him. In the days when Israel came out of Egypt and to the promised land Moses rehearsed the way in which the Lord had led them. He emphasised that God had not blessed the nation because they were a people greater or more blessed in themselves but because the Lord would love them. He destroyed those nations because of their wickedness, not because of Israel's righteousness. This is a type and it is a warning. He destroyed those nations because of their wickedness. In destroying them He made room for His chosen people who were justified by His own love towards them, not because of what they were but because of their standing in Him, because He set His love upon them. It is attended with solemn warnings, "I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant." Surely My people being settled in such a place will reverence My great and holy name. It was not so, What do we say in our own cases? What self righteousness there is in us left to ourselves, We say, I am thankful I am not like the Pharisee but the publican did

not have eyes for the Pharisee; he had enough work with his own case. "God be merciful to me a sinner." Apart from that convicting power of the Spirit we shall be lifted up with pride, "This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness." [Sounds like a good description of the United States today, does it not? S.C.P.] This is what happens to the church spiritually, the Lord's dear people come to various points in their experience, they grow up, they become self-satisfied, they think they have attained to something; therefore they have fallen from grace, not finally, but they are in need of chastisement and rebuke because they are outside that narrow word which is a solemn standard, "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought." Jerusalem grievously sinned; the Lord said, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Now if such is our state the Lord will rebuke us as He rebuked Jerusalem literally. If we are of that little remnant we shall have grace to bear it, we shall be the chief of sinners, we shall be in need of chastisement. "Therefore, wait ye upon Me." Who can say these things? You who are hell-deserving sinners, you who have despised the pleasant land, who hath lightly esteemed the God of your salvation, who have defiled the privileges which the Lord has granted you. To those who hear such a word there is mercy; to those who understand the wisdom of God in His dealings there is a promise of everlasting mercy, "Therefore, wait ye upon Me"

Waiting will entail the exercise of prayer. What is the exercise of prayer? It is waiting upon God, waiting like a servant, not like someone who is favoured with a court interview, but waiting for the pleasure of the Almighty, waiting the hand of the Master as the Psalmist says, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD

our God, until that He have mercy upon us." I have often laboured this point. It is a wonderful thing when mercy is really FELT, when the Lord talks with you and gives you a court interview and enables you to talk with Him so that your mouth is filled with laughter, and your tongue with singing, "Then said they among the heathen, the LORD hath done great things for them." That is prayer; there is communion; your mouth is opened to hear that blessed command, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." He takes you back to what He has done for you in time past; He is the same God. "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." That is one aspect of this waiting but it is not really applicable to the context; it is what the sinner wants to be, what he longs for, what he waits for, but this is the other aspect of waiting which is equally acceptable in the eyes of the Lord. It is bowing to the pleasure of your God, His frown, His indignation. "Be not silent to me; lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit." This will be the language of our silent waiting upon God and we shall be silent if He is silent to us; there will be no getting round this for a living soul. "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us." Can you feel that the Lord has made you obedient to the truth that there is no reason why you should be of the remnant? Consider this for a moment; when Zephaniah proclaimed these truths generally to the inhabitants of Jerusalem how many were concerned whether they were among those poor people? How many were questioning whether they should be of that remnant who should escape and take root downward and bear fruit upward? Those who were thus favoured and those who

are in the spiritual church of God will tremble at His Holy Word. What a mercy if you have been made by the Spirit obedient to God's truth and your eyes are waiting upon God to see whether He will fulfil His good pleasure to you. This is a fruit of gracious obedience to the pleasure of God. "Therefore, wait ye upon Me" saith God. May the Lord lead us into the truth of it. Amen.

NOTICES

The Bethany churches meet together at Sharon Church, Lake, Mississippi the 2nd Sunday, and Saturday before in April, 1985. Call Waddell Moore, Carthage, Ms.

The Western Primitive churches meet at Mt. Gilead, Hartford, Ala. the third Sunday and Saturday before in April. Call Johnny J. Hall, Slocomb, Alabama for particulars.

"NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS"

By Mr. J. Delves, May, 1952.

'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus~ who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' — Romans 8:1.

It would be a wonderful day if the hymn that has been sung,[Hymn 239 in the Gadsby's selection: "The Lamb is exalted repentance to give" by Stevens.] in the desire of it, were fulfilled in the blessing of God here in the appointments of His house and in the preaching of His Gospel; and if we were favoured with some spiritual entry and experience of what is involved in this verse it will be so with us. The words, I know, are very familiar, but familiarity with the letter of Scripture will never carry a soul to heaven. It is a wonderful mercy that we have such a revelation as this in the word of God, but unless this revelation embraces US our end

will be very, very sad.

It defines a state that applies to a certain people. Not everybody, the Scriptures never speak in that way, the Scriptures draw a line of demarcation between the lost and the saved, and all through, that line, that separating line, divides the two parties, and we shall be found eventually on one side or the other of that line, and that will mark our eternal destiny. O if we could but conceive what it means and will mean to us to be right with God, to have a standing ground for eternity, to be found in Christ, to be free from condemnation, to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, if only we could even faintly realize what is involved in this issue, everything else would just fade away in comparison with it. We are in a poor dying world, and we shall soon have to leave it; and we shall have to leave what we possess in it too. It will make no difference whether it be much or little, but it will make a difference how we appear before God, and before the judgment seat of Christ; and if we appear there without condemnation, if we appear there as justified persons in Christ, our future state will be eternally blessed; but, if we die under the sentence of a broken law, then our ultimate destiny will be awful beyond all description.

Truly it is an amazing consideration that ever it can be possible for a sinner to be free from condemnation! Have not all sinned and come short of the glory of God? They have. Did not all fall in Adam? They did. Have not all been guilty of personal sins? They have. And have we not all broken the law times without number? We have. How true then is that word in the Psalms, "If Thou shouldest be strict to mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand?" Who could stand? But He DOES mark iniquities! It is according to the character of God TO MARK iniquities. He will certainly mark iniquity, either in the person who commits the sin, or in the person upon whom that sin is laid. O! what a mercy it will be for us if our sins were marked at Calvary! If that proves to be the case with us,

then for us there will be no condemnation. There cannot be, It would be, so to speak, a slight upon the substitutionary work of the Redeemer. God forbid!

"Payment God cannot twice demand,
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

What a wonderful word that is for a sinner to hear — "no condemnation!" So the Psalmist follows up that penetrating Scripture in Psalm 130, "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

But there are particular people here described for whom there is no condemnation. They are said to be in a certain state or standing. They are IN CHRIST, that is why there is no condemnation. What a standing that is for one to be in who deserves the bottomless pit! "There is therefore NOW..." Emerging out of intense conflict, the Apostle came to this point. It was the same man who had just said, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" that breaks out like this. It was the same man who had been through these deep waters, who had been in some fellowship with the sufferings of Christ on account of the law of sin in his members, that breaks out in language like this, "There is therefore now no condemnation." But what is so striking about this is that, while in the first verse the Apostle refers to a people in this blessed standing, in the second verse he applies the same truth to his own case; "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made ME free from the law of sin and death." Hath made ME free — that is what I like. He does not say, "Hath made *them* free" which is perfectly true, but that it had made *him* free from the law of sin and death.

To a certain point we can all affirm the truth of the first verse as a wonderful doctrine, but how many of us can come into the second verse and say, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death?" O blessed experience that is in the soul when the Saviour is thus revealed, and when the experience declared in

the 16th verse is known, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." O beloved friends, have you ever had a moment when you could say "Hath made ME free"? when the blessed liberating power of the Gospel has, as it were, just flowed into your soul and made YOU free, made you satisfied and confirmed in your prospect?

It is a wonderful Gospel, and one part of its beauty is its freeness. It is absolutely free. We may be too rich, but we cannot be too poor. And this is the painful part to flesh and blood, the crucifixion, the mortification, the weakening, the killing. But I do not know of anything really sweeter than to enter into what the Lord Himself said concerning the two debtors: "When they had *nothing to pay*, He frankly forgave them both." No condemnation! O, if some of us could go to bed tonight with that word sounding in our souls, how wonderful it would be. At least it would be to any who may be here feeling under the sentence of death and the terrors of a broken law. No condemnation. Why it is like a voice from heaven coming right into the conscience of a confessing sinner: no condemnation. O, but, you say, I feel I deserve it. I do not believe that this word, no condemnation, will ever come in the blessedness of it to any person who does NOT feel that he deserves that condemnation. The work of the law by the Holy Ghost in the conscience strips one of all fancied meetness, brings him to that place to say and to feel,

"Should sudden vengeance seize my breath
I must pronounce Thee just in death;
And if my soul were sent to hell
Thy righteous law approves it well."

Have you ever got down as low as that? If so, I believe I can say that these are the very persons for whom there is no condemnation. O, it is heaven to feel that, and if you really get it in your heart you have got the seal of heaven. O the liberty that such a word brings! It removes that legal bondage, the chains that binds, the cloud of uncertainty, fear and apprehension; it removes it all. If you really

get this in your soul it will be in your experience, so to speak, like a sky without a cloud. The Lord Jesus would be in your soul as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, as a morning without clouds. O contemplate what it means, "no condemnation," no sting in death, no legal terror, no dread of the holiness of God and the effects of a broken law, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

This is a great point. It is to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS that there is no condemnation. But what does that mean, to be IN Christ Jesus? What does Paul mean by such an inference? To be in Christ Jesus is first of all to be in the FATHER'S GIFTS TO HIM. That is a great word the Lord expresses in the 17th of John, "Thine they were and Thou GAVEST them Me." It is to be in that gift. And here we have to observe the Sovereignty of God in appointing some to obtain, this salvation, and His predestinating decree, before the world was formed, of a number unto eternal life. It is very confirming to notice how closely the decree of God in this and the experience in the believer's heart are blended together. It is described by the Lord Himself in the 6th of John where He says, "ALL that the Father GIVETH Me SHALL come unto Me." One flows out of the other. The coming, in the sinner, is the fruit of the gift of God's divine decrees, and this is to be IN CHRIST, it is to be in that Gift. Immutability is here. It is a gift that can never be subsequently revised. Never! Every one was, as it were, there registered for ever and ever who are in the gift; and O, what an amazing mercy to find eventually that we were in that gift by the Father to Christ, of a people chosen, predestinated, predetermined by an immutable purpose, chosen by an unchanging God unto eternal life. This is to be IN CHRIST, and this is where the secret lies, for every one of those was engraven on the palms of His hands, every one of them. O to be IN Christ! The world is passing away, the days are dark and threatening; but to be in Christ is to be safe for eternity. O to be in

Christ!

To be in Christ is to be IN THE COVENANT MADE WITH HIM. It embraces every elect vessel of mercy. It is a covenant made WITH CHRIST, but yet it is made with His people IN Him. God makes this covenant with His people, but not upon any conditions. David was in a wonderfully good place just before he died, when he said, "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made WITH ME, an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." And this is what I want to bring out, to be IN Christ is to be in that covenant ordered in all things and sure. No devil can touch it, though he may touch many a poor sinner in it. Neither can one in it ever be shaken out of it.

"Once in Him, in Him for ever,
Thous the eternal covenant stands."

And truly it is a wonderful covenant. This covenant that was thus sealed with blood, this covenant in which every condition was fulfilled in Christ; we often say that it is a covenant without conditions, but it was not a covenant without conditions with respect to Christ! The conditions of that covenant were that He should suffer the hell that His people deserved, stand in their place, and be accountable to divine Justice for all their sins. They were IN Him THERE, in Him WHEN He groaned and bled on the tree, in Him from all eternity. But O! think of the conditions as far as the Saviour was concerned! Great drops of sweat like unto blood were in those conditions, agony causing drops of blood to fall on the ground under an intolerable load of IMPUTED GUILT, the bruising and wounding of the Father, the awful sword of divine Justice, the ransom-price, conflict, darkness, pain, grief and death were involved. Truly it was a wonderful covenant. It is purely a covenant OF GRACE. But the point is, whether that covenant had ever been made WITH US. Well, say you, I do not know, and how can I know? I believe I can tell you how you can know. If the Lord has ever brought His blessed Gospel into your soul, and given you a taste of forgiveness, He was made a

covenant with you, and He will never go back on what He has done. It is true, He may hide His face, everything may be dark, and you may be shaken even about the most clear things you have had, but NOTHING can actually affect your standing here, "I have made a covenant with My Chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant," and every one in Christ comes within that promise. They are, as it were, bound together by two immutable things, and nothing, not a thousand devils, can get them out of that. O! what a consideration, "no condemnation." No, there never was in this light, for they were from all eternity put into the hands of Christ, given to Him, and a covenant on their behalf was made with Him. And He never failed to fulfil it, did He? Although indeed the load was so great upon Him that it brought Him to the Garden of Gethsemane where He said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." And every one of His children was there with Him in this sense, that they were in the covenant made with Him which there bound them together. Therefore there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. No, no condemnation. This is not something to be taken for granted, is it? Plenty of people take things for granted in religion and talk about loving Jesus, who have never smarted for their sins in secret before God as guilty, hell-deserving sinners. But for God to speak to a sensible sinner and to say "There is therefore now no condemnation" is the greatest miracle that has ever yet been. "No condemnation!"

To be in Christ is TO BE EMBRACED IN HIS EVERLASTING LOVE. That is to be IN Christ. It is said earlier in this Epistle "God commendeth His love for us." How does God commend His love toward us? When the Holy Ghost sheds it abroad in the heart and gives that sinner a view of a dying Saviour — "God commendeth His love toward us in that WHILE we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Let me put it in this way: the sufferings and agony of the Redeemer on Calvary are the highest commendation of God's love to a

sinner. Wonderful love!

“O love of unexampled kind
That leaves all thought so far behind,
Whose length and breadth and depth and
height

Are lost to my astonished sight.”

There is no condemnation here, is there? No, no condemnation; and the attractive feature of this love is that it is everlasting and inseparable love. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ,” said the Apostle, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” By this I take the Apostle to mean more particularly the love of Christ to His people, more than their love to Him; for the dear Redeemer suffered all these things, and death too, even the death of the cross; but it never separated Him from His love; no, instead of that, it was the highest manifestation of it. O! the heights of that word, if we could believe it for a moment,

“For love of me the Son of God
Drained every drop of vital blood.”

For love of ME! You would be glad to get under a hedge and weep with Him if you got that, and it would be wonderfully sweet, for there would be no condemnation there. No, no condemnation. Have you ever received it? Have you ever had a moment when you could feel that God had nothing against you, and you had nothing against God? Perhaps you say, What do you mean, “nothing against God”? I mean no inward, secret rebellion in your heart against the ways of God with you. O it is very blessed, is this reconciliation of the soul, and this sweet flow of His love into the heart, so that all terrors are removed; it is a real coming together between the soul and God, a wonderful coming together. And this is to be IN Christ. “We love Him because He first loved us.” This is to be IN Christ, and they are very sweet moments when you can feel it. To lie upon your bed, perhaps in pain of body, and yet to feel that you are wrapped up in this inseparable love for time and eternity, would break you to pieces. O! it is a

wonderful religion. Why? Because there is no condemnation. This is everything. Do you feel it, or have you ever felt, that you have no dread of God? I do not mean to suggest that you live in such an atmosphere, but have you had a moment when you have felt you would not dread to appear in His presence? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no condemnation there. No. It is an amazing thing that God should love a sinner in the person of his Son! And what a great love it is! It was a wonderful joy to Jeremiah’s heart when the Lord appeared to him saying, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” This is to be IN Christ, to be embraced by His love.

To be IN Christ is to be IN THE UNION SUBSISTING BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH. “His church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” What a union! Naturally speaking, the body cannot live without the head, so neither can the church live without Christ. These are His words: “Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me. Because I live, ye shall live also.” This is to be IN Christ. And are there not times when it seems as if He brings you, In YOUR FEELINGS, into this union? He draws you to Himself. “And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me.” All men, not all the world. What kind of men are they then that are drawn? Well, I can tell you what kind of men they are. They are those who from their heart have to say, “Give me Christ or else I die.” O, say you, I have said that many times. Have you? Well, if you really have said it, you have been emptied from vessel to vessel and have had a painful experience. But still, if we have been brought to say that, “Give me Christ, or else I die” then there is no condemnation. No condemnation. Such a one is in Christ.

Then there is just this in concluding. To be IN Christ is TO BE BLESSED WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HIM. That

covers everything in our lives. "Be careful for nothing." Not a sparrow can fall to the ground without His notice, and "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Blessed with all spiritual blessings, not one or two. No, the beauty of this is that all is complete in Him, and His people are complete in Him. "Ye are complete in Him." "Blessed with all spiritual blessings." Every need will be supplied from His fulness. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Well, perhaps you say, all you have been talking about is very nice, I suppose for some people, but all there seems to be in my religion is condemnation, condemnation, written on everything. Yes, there are many now falling before the Lamb in glory who here found condemnation written on every thing. Once they struggled here below with sin and death and hell, — condemnation — but remember that it is these poor things who feel the sentence of death in their conscience, for whom in the purpose of God there is no condemnation, no condemnation!

May the Lord bring it home to us, for salvation is in it, and the sweetest happiness the soul can know is in this, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It is the work of the Holy Ghost to show you where you stand, whether YOU are in the secret or not. It is a mercy if there is any great concern about it; for if there is no concern, there is no evidence of interest. I know the concern will not bring the consolation, but when the Lord brings it into your heart and speaks forgiveness there, then you will know it, and then you will be able to say with the Apostle here in the 2nd verse, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made ME free from the law of sin and death." O that "me"! I have looked at it heaps and heaps of times, and I believe I have had it, I believe I have known what it is, and it is a wonderful thing, "It hath made me free." May the Lord grant it to us for His name's sake. Amen.

Preached at Shaws Corner Chapel,
Redhill, England, May 23, 1952.

NOTICES

The independent Predestinarian churches will convene, the Lord willing, fo. spring meeting at Philadelphia Church, 7 miles east of Richton, Ms. 1st weekend in May, Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday. The meeting house is locate 6 miles east of Richton off 42, and one mile from 42 on the road to the left passing the creek bridge buttress.

The second annual meeting will be held with Shiloh Church, Frisco City, Alabama the 3rd week-end in May. The meeting house is located on Shiloh Street 1 mile from the city at the city limits on 23 North.

EXPERIENCES

By Frederick W. Keene, 1936

There are experiences known by the called of Jesus Christ which they but little understand. Christ is FELT to be their Saviour and Friend, their only consolation, but at times so variable are their frames and feelings in these matters. There are little seasons when in simplicity, in nearness they are with Jesus; at other times in their soul's apprehensions they are at such a distance; and, falling into unbelief, into bondage of spirit, they feel to be sundered from Him, and, in this suspension of intimacy with the dear Saviour, feel almost as though there had never been real nearness and dearness of union to Him. And in our changed estate, in our unbelief, our ignorance, thoughts arise that Jesus Christ, the Saviour, the immutable Lover of His Church Himself has changed; that His love has waxed cold, that He is indifferent, that the Lord has wearied of us, no more cares for us. Oh how sinful, how shameful are all such imagination! We become wretched, we are in confusion of spirit, we are cast down. Surely the children of God need to be taught of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost all their days. We have need of the Interpreter, the One among ten thousand, the Messenger of the covenant, (Job 33:23;

Mal. 3:1) to show to us the signification, the causes, and what is to be the outcome, the fruit of all the vicissitudes that we undergo in the house of our pilgrimage.

Oh, how gracious in our faith our God is! He is ever mindful of His covenant, and though we are so changeable, helpless, worthless, in ourselves considered, yet thus He speaks, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me." (Isa. 44:21)

While we are in the house of our pilgrimage we are instructed and drawn to follow on to know the Lord, and unto us in all new covenant graciousness His goings forth in our behalf are prepared as the morning. He comes unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain upon the earth (Hos. 6:3). And who are we whom He in such riches of mercy deals with? We are sinful mortals upon the earth; we travel through the wilderness; there we find scorpions, and fiery flying serpents. Our sins, our iniquities, inward vilenesses, we are made to know our own the plague of our heart. (I Kings 8:38). Ah, this is the sore and grief of Israel. II Chron. 6:29) And blessed are we when we are inclined to spread forth our hands and to look unto the God of our mercy with all entreaty for that mercy and grace that come alone from the throne of God and the Lamb. There are many self-sufficient professors of Christ's name and they are ever self-satisfied. They can well supply themselves with all they need who are never poor and needy, emptied and empty, feeble and sore broken. They know no weakness, they never fall down in the dry parched land, and find none to help. But the true child of God, the wayfaring man, Zion's pilgrims, find the way at times is in rough places. Our souls are much discouraged because of the way. (Numbers 21:4)

We faint in the day of our adversities and find to our dismay that we have to confess our strength is small (Prov. 24:10). How shall such weak, such sinful, sin-plagued, yes, and shamefully plagued with an evil heart of unbelief, how shall such unworthy creatures pursue their way to heaven, triumph over the hindrances, vanquish our foes, the world, the

flesh and the devil? "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Oh let me sing with the Apostle, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:28,29).

O ye beloved ones in our precious Christ, do we not learn in every manner of the way that we are feeble and that it is not with us to make the wilderness to rejoice therein with joy and singing? But our Redeemer is strong, and in all graciousness he comes into the wilderness, shows Himself our Saviour and Friend, gives us again to taste the riches of His grace, tells to hearts the divine consoling mystery of His cross, and again as in the days of our youth we sing in the wilderness the grace and triumphs of our Emmanuel over our sins.

Not Withstanding all the vicissitudes of my soul this abides a divine mystery. Christ in my heart, the hope of glory! We are called unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus as vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory. God hath predestinated His chosen to be conformed to the image of His Son, and when He shall appear and descend from heaven we shall ultimately be like Him for we shall see Him exactly as He is. Oh, how blessed to have this hope in us, and thus in our hope to be found in earnest expectation of glorious liberty of the children of God. "Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Faithful is He who hath called us unto this predestinated glory, who also will accomplish it. Now we are in hope of righteousness, in hope of the resurrection of the dead, in earnest expectation of the glorious liberty of the sons of God — waiting for our adoption — to wit: the redemption of the body. How consoling! How sweet! How blessed! is the hope of the

resurrection of the just to immortality and incorruption. This mortal shall put on immortality and this corruption shall put on incorruption. “We look for our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. (Phil 3:21) Then we shall be satisfied for we shall be conformed to the image of our dear Redeemer, and dwell forever with Him in immortal bliss. Oh! what an unspeakable mercy for a poor vile transgressor to be blessed with such a glorious hope!

— *Sovereign Grace & Pilgrim*, 1936.