

EXCERPTS FROM

JANUARY – MARCH 76

THE LINK

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

WORDS OF ASSURANCE FROM ROMANS CHAPTER. 8.

In our studies on the Holy Spirit on Sunday mornings we have constantly turned to the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans; a chapter containing some of the most wonderful truth in the Word of God; but necessarily we have confined our thinking to our subject, consequently many other precious thoughts have been left out. The object of this article is to call attention to a few of the many other gems contained in these verses. Verse one commences - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". The Holy Spirit is very careful in His use of Words, always explicit and plain, but how easy it is for us who are so used to Biblical phraseology to lose the force of the terms used. Condemnation is a word of tremendous import and if we do not grasp its meaning, we shall never appreciate the truth of this verse. Again, it is a legal term, it is pertaining to justice.

The atmosphere of a law court especially a court of criminal appeal is tense and strained, it is peculiar to the set up, and found nowhere else, it is a place where the law is perfectly known and its demands upheld, where offenders are judicially dealt with; the environment is terrifying, and should the word "CONDEMNED" be pronounced upon the convicted criminal it falls with a fearful, knell upon his ears, and fills the very hall with horror. But in the court of Divine justice, it is infinitely more solemn and awe-inspiring, for in that court every child of the human race is cited "BORN IN SIN AND SHAPENED IN INIQUITY", each one enters this world under arrest - "CONDEMNED". We do well to ponder this, it was our position in Adam, - "Children of wrath", but through the 'sovereign grace of our God we are no longer in Adam but in Christ, and because of this there is now "NO CONDEMNATION", but why? because guilt has been removed, no guilt - no condemnation. But how could guilt be removed? one may ask, only by it being transferred. Divine holiness could not pass over it or ignore it, but Divine grace could transfer it, indeed did transfer it; the sins of all believers were transferred to Christ. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" (1S.53.V.6.) "For He hath made Him to be sin for us" (2.CCR.5.V.21.) "He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all" (ROM.8.V.32.). These scriptures bring to us an aspect of truth upon which perhaps we rarely ponder.

We delight to think of the wondrous love of the Saviour, a love which was stronger than death, a compassion for the lost sheep which took Him into the very wilderness of God forsaken Calvary and the intense darkness of Hades. But these words focus the thoughts upon Jehovah laying our iniquities upon Him, of God making Him to be sin, of the Father sparing not His Son. Have we ever paused to think of what it meant to the Father when His own Eternal Son and Co-equal left heaven for earth, when by way of a virgins womb the "Eternal Word" was made flesh. "God is love" says the scriptures, and let us never forget that there is nothing in God's creation so sensitive as love, and never should the thought be with us that Deity is emotionless, nay, the sending forth of the Son was something which the heart of God felt intensely. Weigh carefully the words again "God spared not His own Son", profound, expressive, melting words; knowing full well all that was involved. The transferring of the believers' sin to His own Co-equal, the awful word of "CONDEMNATION" to fall upon His own Beloved; knowing the unbending rigidity of His Holy Law, insisting upon PERFECT obedience, demanding death for all its transgressors, justice stern and relentless, requiring full satisfaction, refusing to "Clear the guilty". Yet God withheld not the only sacrifice which could meet the case. He spared Him not, He never relaxed His Holy requirements, He never abated one whit in His hatred and anger of sin, - no, He spared not His own Son, the utmost farthing was exacted, the last dregs of the cup must be drained. Even when His only Begotten cried in agony from the garden "if it be possible let this cup pass from me" God spared Him not. When vile hands took Him and nailed Him to the tree, the voice of God is heard saying "Awake O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my Fellow saith the Lord of Hosts, smite the Shepherd" (ZECH.13-V.7.) How meaningful are the words of Thomas Kelly's hymn, "Mark the sacrifice appointed! See who bears the awful load, 'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God". "But delivered Him up for us all" the verse goes on to say in our chapter. He spared not Christ that He might spare us.

Of rebellious Israel God once said "How shall I give thee up O Ephraim", but He never said this concerning His only Begotten, but delivered Him up to shame and spitting, to suffering and death - FOR US, Descendants of Adam, defiled, corrupt, vile, CONDEMNED, and on the Saviour was transferred the defilement, on Him was laid the iniquity, to Him was imputed the sin of us all, not all, for this would be universalism, but US all, this is defined in the previous

verses. V.31 asks the question "If God be for us who can be against us?" clearly the us here, are those mentioned in V.30. The predestined, who have been called and justified, Gods elect, the objects of Sovereign Grace, who of ourselves were lost sinners meriting nothing but the wrath of God; but the Saviour has borne the condemnation, and we are justified, there is therefore now "NO CONDEMNATION". This no is emphatic, no condemnation from the law, no condemnation on account of our old Adam nature, no condemnation because of what Satan may charge or bring against us, no condemnation from any source or for any cause, none can lay anything to the charge of Gods elect, no condemnation is at all possible or ever will be, for we are no longer in Adam but in Christ Jesus, and to be in Christ Jesus means to be perfectly identified with Him in the judicial reckoning and dealings of God, because of this "There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION" neither can anything or any being separate us or wrench us from this position Vs 35 - 39 list many things - Tribulations, Trouble, Persecution, Distress, Martyrdom, Distance, Unseen powers, things of the past, Things of the future, but none can ever alter our position or revoke the work of Sovereign Grace, we are:-

IN THAT CIRCLE OF GODS FAVOUR -
CIRCLE OF THE FATHERS LOVE,
ALL IS REST AND REST FOREVER;
ALL IS PERFECTNESS ABOVE.

BLESSED GLORIOUS WORD "FOREVER"-
YEA, "FOREVER" IS THE WORD!
NOTHING CAN THE RANSOMED SEVER,
NOUGHT DIVIDE THEM FROM THE LORD.

This does not mean to say that we shall not meet with many of the things just listed, indeed we shall, and this same chapter deals with the matter; but, reads verse 28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose". High above this poor world with all its sin, its constant activity of evil, its vast hordes of mankind who are blinded by the God of this world and who are against the Lord and His Anointed, sits our God in undisturbed calm, complete master of the situation, and there from the throne of His exalted majesty, "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (EPH. 1. V.11.) By Him "all things WORK", in creation and nature all things work, nothing is idle, everything is energised by God, all move at the imperative bidding of the Creator, but the scripture says

they "WORK TOGETHER", they not only operate, but they cooperate. One old writer said "In the workings of God there is perfect concert, though none but the anointed ear can catch the strains of their harmony", but as far as we are concerned as believers, children of God, His chosen and called ones, all things "WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD". Nothing enters our life by chance, there are never any accidents, everything is moved and controlled by God; not all things are good in themselves, but the end which God has in view is always our good. Suffering, sorrow, disappointment, loss, are all used of the Father to work blessing to them that love God; here is the distinguishing mark of the Christian, the saints are they that love God, and we love Him because He first loved us. Who are "called" the verse goes on to say, This term "called" is never used in the New Testament epistles to signify a mere invitation of the gospel, but always speaks of the inward and effectual call of the Holy Ghost, but further still, it is "According to His purpose". The call is not according to the merits of men, but according to the Divine purpose; "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2. TIM.1.V.9.) We as individuals have ever been in the mind of the Eternal, and ever shall be, He chose us, it was an act of selection, we are marked out for conformity to the image of His Son, we are destined for glory, and although at present we are in a sinful world and beset with manifold temptations, treading a pathway fraught with difficulty and disappointment our God is over and above all, and to us "THE CALLED" all things are subservient to His eternal purposes, to work together for our good and blessing.

Furthermore V.18. states yet another angle, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us". This was certainly not the language of one who had found life's pathway carpeted or bordered with roses, indeed not, but the words of a man who on one occasion received thirty-nine stripes, on three other occasions was beaten with rods, who was shipwrecked and spent 24 hours in the water before being rescued, a man beset with untold perils, of great physical weakness, enduring much pain, suffering privation, hunger thirst, cold, nakedness, imprisonment (2.COR.11.V.24-27.) But, says the Apostle Paul, these things are not worthy subject matter for our reasoning compared with the glory of our calling, at the most it is but a few

brief years and we shall pass from the vale of tears to the land which is fairer than day. To Paul "The glory" was no fantasy, not a beautiful dream, but a deep reality, consoling him in his difficulties and exerting a powerful influence upon his life; the one is earthly he reasoned - the other heavenly. The one is transient - the other eternal.

One glimpse of glory will surely outweigh a lifetime of suffering and disappointment, what are the difficulties of this world compared to Immanuel's Land to which we are destined? One draught of the river of pleasure at Gods right hand, one breath of heaven, one hour with the blood-washed throng shall more than compensate for all the tears and groans of earth. But even deeper still, there will be the glory of perfect holiness. Gods work of sovereign grace in us will be completed, He has promised to "Perfect that which concerneth us". (PS.138.V.8.) We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (ROM.8.V.29.) and when we shall see Him we SHALL be like Him (1.JN.3.V.2.) What a prospect that such glory is to be revealed in us? Wayward, Unworthy, failing creatures, so often out of communion that we can scarcely reflect a solitary ray of His glory in this dark world, nevertheless, one day we are to "Shine as the brightness of the firmament", and when the Lord Jesus returns to earth it is written that "He shall be admired in all them that believe". (2.THESS.1.V.10.) The greatest wonder of heaven will be not the streets of gold, nor the gates of pearl, but redeemed men and women, upon whom is stamped the image of God's Son.

W.H.M.

Shall we ever forget Park Street those prayer meetings, when I felt compelled to let you go without a word from my lips because the Spirit of God was so awfully present that we felt bowed to the dust? And what listening there was at Park Street, where we had scarcely enough air to breathe! The Holy Spirit came down like showers which saturate the soil till the clods are ready for the breaking; and then it was not long before we heard on the right and on the left the cry, "What must we do to be saved?"

C.H. SPURGEON.

O THAT SUCH THINGS MIGHT BE SEEN AGAIN, EVEN IN BIDEFORD.

Announcements & Information.

As one reviews the past quarter, we can use no better phraseology than that of Samuel, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". We have known much of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our gatherings, and God has spoken very definitely and directly many times through His Word, may it be that we have all heeded the voice and profited thereby for God's glory. The prayer meetings too have improved numerically and we have known real seasons of true prayer and thanksgiving, may this continue until we see the whole church being represented from time to time, for we all have equal responsibility in this connection, indeed this is what constitutes fellowship.

The visit of Mr K. Dix was certainly a spiritual high-light again. The report which he brought concerning the work of the T.B.S. was both encouraging and enlightening as they continue to publish and distribute the uncorrupted, truly Protestant version of the Bible. We too should take to heart the fact that inflation is now beginning to have a very serious affect upon such a work as this, and as a church we ought to be very careful to ensure that what we do give is directed into the right channels, that we be not guilty of furthering corrupted and unsound doctrine which abounds today in unsuspecting circles. Few of us will forget the lecture on John Bunyan which Mr Dix brought to us, also the messages on both Sunday morning and evening.

We commence 1976 with a prayer meeting, there will be no speaker on 1st Jan but the whole of the time will be spent in prayer; the meeting will be held in the main chapel and will commence at 7.30. We have three deputation meetings this quarter, O.A.M. in January, L.C.M. in February and S.A.S.R.A. in March. A retiring offering will be taken on each of these occasions for the respective works. The present studies on the Holy Spirit on Sunday mornings will probably end early in the New Year and it is felt that it would be profitable to follow with a series on "The believer's union with Christ".

WHAT IS YOUR HOPE?

Reader, what is your hope about your soul? Have you any, or have you none? Can you tell in what way you expect to be accounted righteous before God?

Depend upon it, these are very serious questions. You and I are dying men. After death comes the judgement. What is your hope of acquittal in that awful day? What are we going to plead on our behalf before God?

Shall we say that we have done our duty to God? Shall we say that we have done our duty to our neighbour? Shall we bring forward our prayers, our regularity, our morality, our church, going, our amendments? Shall we ask to be accepted by God for any of these things?

Which of these things will stand God's eye? Which of them will actually justify you and me? Which of them will carry us clear through judgement, and land us safe in glory?

Absolutely none! Take any commandment of the ten, and let us examine ourselves by it. We have broken it repeatedly. We cannot answer God. Take any of us, and look narrowly into our ways and we are nothing but sinners. There is but one verdict. We are guilty - all deserve hell, all ought to die. How then can we come before God?

We must come in the Name of Jesus, standing on no other ground, pleading no other plea that this - "Christ died on the cross for the ungodly, and I trust in Him."

Oh, believe me, Christ must be all the hope of everyone who would be justified and saved. You must be content to go to heaven as a sinner - saved by free Grace, - simply as a believer in Jesus - or you will never be saved at all. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

(Bishop J.C. Ryle)