

"FOR THOU SHALT BE RECOMPENSED AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST."

BY ELDER J.C. SIKES, 1934

[Note Added By Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian: Elder J.C. Sikes was raised up by God as one of the greatest defenders of the ancient faith at the turn of this century to oppose, and expose, the new progressive movement of "Conditional Time Salvationists." His chief opponent was Elder Cayce, one of the founding "lights" of the new progressivism among Primitive Baptists; and a worthy opponent he was too: sharp witted, he had a logical carnal mind of exceedingly great comprehension, and used it effectively against the truth of free and sovereign grace. Elder Sikes was no less a match for him. The following is still a worthy piece to our own day — a solid and sound doctrine.]

I will here quote the Conditionalists one statement of Christ's which, without any comment whatever, will absolutely disprove the statement that "God's people receive their reward here in this time world for all their deeds both good and bad". "When thou makest a dinner or supper call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blest; for they cannot recompence thee: for thou SHALT BE RECOMPENCED AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST (Luke 14:14). Let all who believe in Jesus say Amen to this.

I am afraid that our conditionalist brethren are identifying themselves with the rich man who had his good things IN this world: while Lazarus had his evil things here. This is in perfect harmony with what David said in Psalm 73:3-5, "For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men". They receive their good things in this world: but the righteous receive their evil things here. Paul clearly states this fact in I Cor. 15:19, which says "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable". Why so? If we are rewarded in this life for our good deeds why should we be more miserable than the wicked who receive no such rewards? The echo is asking WHY? Paul evidently means that our hope in Christ for better things in the world to come, than any thing received by us here, is all that keeps us from being more miserable than those who have no hope. The statement that I am answering, however, says that God's people receive their reward here in this world for all their deeds, both good and bad.

If the above statement is true, and God's people are rewarded here in this world for their sins, then it is reasonable to suppose that they are more miserable in this life than the wicked are, who will receive their punishment (reward) in the world to come. But is this the truth? Paul said in Titus 2:3, that Christ "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity". The word, "iniquity" covers every shade, grade and character of sin. If Christ took all the sins of His people on Himself as His sins and by His own suffering satisfied divine justice in their behalf, put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, then why must His people BE PUNISHED

(rewarded) either IN THIS WORLD OR THE WORLD TO COME for the SAME sins for which Jesus suffered and died? [Reader, take special note to what follows; for this must be kept in mind while he discusses another aspect of this truth later in the article. Note added by Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.] ANY DOCTRINE THAT SAYS THAT JESUS DID NOT RENDER ABSOLUTE, PERFECT AND COMPLETE SATISFACTION FOR ALL THE SINS OF ALL HIS PEOPLE IS NOT, CANNOT BE, THE TRUTH! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us FROM ALL SIN." God's people were sanctified in God's account WHEN Jesus, by the will of God offered Himself for them once for all time; and by that one offering, HE PERFECTED FOREVER THEM THAT HE SANCTIFIED BY THAT OFFERING (See Hebrews 11:5-14). Any doctrine that presents God as having punished Jesus for the sins of His people AND THEN PUNISHES THEM AGAIN for the SAME sins is not, cannot be the truth. God said Job was a perfect and upright man who feared God and eschewed evil and there was none like him in all the earth. Yet there is NO ACCOUNT in the Scriptures of any other man being turned over to Satan and tormented as he was. Was God rewarding him for his sins in time? Nay, verily, God said to Satan: "Hast thou considered my servant Job; that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me to destroy him without a cause." If language means anything, there is no cause in Job's conduct for which this awful suffering was sent upon him. God said to Satan: "Thou movedst me against him to destroy him WITHOUT CAUSE". From the description that God had just given of Job, we are forced to the conclusion that He meant by the

words "without cause" that the cause for which Job was suffering was NOT due to anything that Job had done. If that was true in Job's case, then why may it not also be true with the rest of God's people? But we are not left to guess at the reason why God's people suffer in this world. Both the old and new testaments abound with testimony on this subject. We read in Daniel 11:35 "And some of them of understanding shall fall, TO TRY THEM, and TO PURGE, and to MAKE THEM WHITE". Also Daniel 12:10: "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried". Job said: "He knoweth the way I take: when HE HATH TRIED ME I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held His steps; His way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. But He is in one mind and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performs THE THING THAT IS APPOINTED FOR ME: and many such things are with Him". Job's sufferings were without cause so far as Job's conduct was concerned; but it was appointed of God for the trial of his faith. Job said: "When HE HATH TRIED ME I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10-14). Peter said: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice inasmuch as ye are PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS; that when His glory SHALL BE revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4: 12-13). And again he said, "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it BE TRIED WITH FIRE, might be found unto honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7).

God's people are NOT rewarded with punishment for their sins neither in this world or the world to come. But let me say with all boldness that at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the last day, they will be rewarded for all the suffering that THE LORD HAS LAID UPON THEM IN THIS LIFE, and also for every good work they have done: for it is wrought by God IN them. [Reader, please follow his thoughts carefully: he will prove his assertion thoroughly beyond dispute; but he is not following the Arminian, nor the Conditionalists' arguments. Recall our note earlier here. Note added by Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.] Paul said, "For our light affliction —light compared to the final suffering of the wicked — WORKETH FOR US a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). And again he said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; if so be that WE SUFFER WITH Him, that we may be glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this PRESENT TIME are not worthy to BE COMPARED with the glory that SHALL BE revealed in us" (Rom. 8:16-18). And again he said, "For unto you IT IS GIVEN in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER for His sake" (Phil. 1:29). Paul here tells us that a belief in Christ and our sufferings for His sake, are both GRACIOUS GIFTS from God. He also said to Timothy, "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him". Time would fail me if I should attempt to cite all the Scriptures bearing on this truth. So I will turn to the FINAL REWARDS of both the RIGHTEOUS and the WICKED and let the Scriptures settle that question forever. Time and space will not allow me to do more than present what the Scriptures say on the subject; but before quoting any Scripture I will say that the Scripture abundantly teaches THAT ALL MEN AT THE

COMING OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD TO COME, WILL BE REWARDED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS. I mean that THEIR FINAL REWARDS will be according to their works. [Note, it is sad we feel it necessary to make this additional note, but again, read what we have called your attention to twice before. What he says here is absolutely Scriptural, but one ought not to yield this precious ground to the Freewillers. Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.] When the "dead, small and great, stand before God and the books are opened, and another book is opened, which is the Book of Life: "and the dead ARE JUDGED out of the things that are written IN THE BOOKS according to their works"(Revelation 20:11-12). There will not be a single evil deed found on record in any of those books AGAINST ONE OF GOD'S ELECT. "Who shall lay a anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Romans 8:33). A pertinent question asked by Paul. In the counsel of peace that was between them both, it was arranged between the Father and the Son that the Son should stand between the Father and His people on the one hand, and between His people and the Law on the other. So when they sinned their sins FELL ON JESUS, who was standing between them and the Law. And when God saw their sins, He saw them on Jesus, on whom they were imputed, and who stood between them and the Father. It is said in Numbers 23:21, that He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has He seen perverseness in Israel. This certainly does not mean the literal house of Jacob, nor to national Israel, for Jeremiah said, "Our INIQUITES like the wind hath carried us away". Jesus called the Jews a perverse generation: and Paul called them a crooked and perverse nation. But Jacob, the Lord's portion and the lot of His inheritance (Deut. 32:9): and the Israel of our God (Galatians 6:16). Not one sin has ever been recorded in God's

book against them: for Jesus said through David, "For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up: and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen on Me" (Psalm 69:9).

This is the Israel that David said "Shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." And it is the Israel of whom Paul spoke when he said, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob". ALL Israel shall he saved: but remember that they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. God has never imputed (charged) any sin to this elect people. David said of them, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity". And Paul said to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

It is evident that if God will not impute, or charge, sin to the account of His people: (and that is what is meant by the word "impute") then when the dead, small and great stand before the Lord and all the books are opened, and the records of heaven are examined there will not be found aught against one of God's elect. They will not be reckoned as having any SINFUL WORKS TO ACCOUNT FOR: hence they will not be rewarded as evil doers. They will have no evil works to follow them to the judgment, as will be the case of the wicked, because their sins were all charged to Christ. But THEIR GOOD WORKS WILL FOLLOW THEM TO JUDGMENT and they will be judged and rewarded according

to their works. We read in Revelation 14:13, "Blessed are the dead which DIE IN THE LORD from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, they shall rest FROM THEIR LABOURS; and THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM". God Himself so arranged before the world began that He would never see any of our evil works in us, but He would (He did) see them in Jesus, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye WERE healed". Jesus received the REWARD OF OUR SINS when He received those stripes that healed us. Listen to what God said concerning Him. "I will also make My First Born higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him forevermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him. His seed also will I make to endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven. If His children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; If they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; Then will I visit —their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail" (Psalm 89:17-33).

The forsaking of God's law and not walking in His judgments, the breaking of His statutes and not keeping His commandments by Christ's children (Behold, I and the children Thou has given Me) are all classed as transgressions and iniquity; and as such were satisfied for by the sufferings of Christ, "For He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for OUR INIQUITIES, the chastisement of OUR peace was upon Him, and with HIS stripes WE ARE healed. Surely! Surely! Surely! this people has no evil, in God's account, to be rewarded for now (Isa. 53:5). But in that great day in the final judgment, when the Judge of the quick (living) and

dead SHALL COME in His kingdom, sitting on His great white throne, with all nations gathered before Him, with the dead small and great, and the books containing every man's account, shall be opened and every one shall be judged out of the things written in the books according to their works (Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:11-12). Then shall every man be rewarded according to his works as they are found recorded in these books.

As first proof, we will take the testimony of Jesus in John 5:28-19: "Marvel not at this, for the HOUR IS COMING in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; They that HAVE DONE GOOD to the RESURRECTION OF LIFE; and they that HAVE DONE EVIL to the RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION". Can language state anything plainer? (What is required of the Lord more for us to believe?) Each is to receive according to his works, whether they be good or evil works. To deny this is to give the lie to the blessed Son of God.

In Romans 2:5-11, Paul said of a certain class: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against THE DAY OF WRATH and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to them who by patient continuance in WELL DOING seek for glory and honour and immortality, ETERNAL LIFE: but unto them that are contentious, and DO NOT OBEY the truth, but OBEY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that DOETH EVIL, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that WORKETH GOOD, to the Jew first,

and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God". Paul here positively asserts that Eternal Life will be rendered to those who receive it, "according to their works." David said in Psalms 62:12, "Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest to every man according TO HIS WORK". Note this is to be when He comes in the glory of His Father and His Father and His Holy angels with Him in the day to come. In Matthew 25:31-46. He tells us just how He will proceed, and just what the final reward of each shall be, He said, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory; and all His holy angels WITH HIM, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall He say unto them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for (note this word "for"; many of our brethren seem to be afraid to use it, but Jesus used it: then why should we not?) I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was a thirst and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came to me". The righteous were surprised and asked Him when they had done any of these things to Him, and He answered, in as much as they had done it to one of the least little ones they had done it to Him. In Matthew 16, He calls this rewarding "them according to their works"; and tells them to come and inherit the kingdom. And to those on His left He said, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels for (because) they had not done these things to His little ones. If we deny that they inherit the kingdom as a reward for their

righteous deeds, then we will be forced to deny that the wicked are sent away into everlasting fire as a reward for (because of) their evil deeds; for the language used in expressing the reason for each is exactly the same. [Note Added By Hoyt D. F. Sparks, 8/15/2005: With much long and thoughtful consideration I cautiously make a few observations at this point on the writings of Elder Sikes on this subject. My hesitating to make some observing comments is to try and assure that I do not cause violence or harm to what Elder Sikes wrote, because it would appear unfair since he is not alive to answer any questions and my feeble attempts at writing, when compared with the writings of Elder Sikes, would be compared to an ant trying to calm a tornado (I'm the ant!). Elder Sikes at this point draws from Matthew 25:21-46 and Revelation 20:11:15 when he asserts that God's people (elect) will undergo some form of judgment at the end of time. In the case of Revelation 20:11-15, Elder Sikes writes that, "the records of heaven are examined, there will not be found aught against one of God's elect. They will not be reckoned as having any SINFUL WORKS TO ACCOUNT FOR; hence they will not be rewarded as evil doers. They will have no evil works to follow them to the judgment as will be the case of the wicked, because their sins were all charged to Christ. But THEIR GOOD WORKS WILL FOLLOW THEM TO JUDGMENT and they will be judged and rewarded according to their works". It is without dispute that God's elect will have nothing sinful brought against them at the end of time, because Christ paid their sin debt. Also, in Revelation 20:11-15, I find nothing there to indicate God's people will be there, especially in any capacity to be judged in any way. In Revelation 20:12 the "dead" small and great standing before God, are those not found in the Lamb's Book of Life; and those not

found in the Lamb's Book of Life are the nonelect. At the beginning of Revelation 20:12 the "dead" (nonelect) are identified as those standing before God, and in the latter portion of Revelation 20:12 these same "dead" are to be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Nothing is mentioned here about God's children being present or judged, but, instead, they are identified by being referred to indirectly in Revelation 20:15 where it is written, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire". Therefore, in this case, God's people are not judged in any way. In the case of Matthew 25:31-46, Elder Sikes correctly writes that all nations will be gathered before Him. But Elder Sikes incorrectly writes that a judgment will take place. HE will "separate" the sheep from the goats by placing the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Those on His right He will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". And to those on His left He will say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels". "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). Therefore, in this case, there is not written here of any kind or type judgment for God's elect (sheep) or the cursed (goats). Instead, both the sheep and goats are identified and separated, and directed to their respective, final destinations. Those that do good by the faith given them in Christ by God, are the elect of God, and their works of faith, given by Grace, are evidence of them being in Christ, for which they can not claim nor get anything because of their works, but is evidence of their safeness and security within their Surety. (Please see my second and last note further on.)]

Some may object to this because Paul said we are saved and called not according to works. He who offers this objection has failed to rightly divide the word of Truth. He has failed to divide between the work of God in Christ Jesus in REDEEMING and saving us from our sins, then ADOPTING us, then CREATING us in Christ as new creatures, then CALLING us by His grace, then dealing with us from henceforth as His children. The paying off of a poor man's debt by a rich man, does not make that poor man the son and heir of that rich man; nor does it entitle him to any part of that rich man's wealth! Neither did redemption from our sins (debts) make us either children or heirs of God, nor entitle us to any of the riches of His glory. But if WE ARE HIS ELECT, it DID PREPARE US to be adopted into the heavenly family, which could not be done while the Law held us as sinners! God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, and had predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. When the fullness of time had come He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law, that we MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION of sons. And having now redeemed and adopted us He creates us anew in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, and called US by His grace. None of this was according to our works. But from now on every blessing that we receive will be according to our works. [The original editor's comment here: "Let the reader read carefully here as Brother Sikes will show that these works also are OF GOD in His people". Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.]

The next question is "How do our good works come? Jesus is said to be the Author of eternal salvation to all them THAT OBEY

HIM; but where do we find it said that He is the "Author of Conditional time salvation" to any one? Eternal salvation will be the reward of all those that obey Him; will it be conditional? no, a thousand times no! Paul said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall OF THE FLESH REAP corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall OF THE SPIRIT REAP life everlasting". Does this corruption which comes to a man who sows to the flesh come as a reward for his sowing to the flesh? If so, does not this life everlasting which comes to the man who sows to the Spirit, come as a reward for his sowing to the Spirit? [By one sacrifice Christ has perfected His church.] This text like all the others cited, presents THE BLESSINGS OF EVERLASTING LIFE as coming according to our works. Again the question forces itself upon us: "Where do our good works come from?" We will let the Scriptures answer this just as they have answered each point that has been so far discussed.

As Paul was given as a pattern to them who should after him believe on Christ to life everlasting, I will take him as a pattern in settling this question. Paul said in I Cor. 15:10, "By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD which was given me". That grace of God that was with him was Christ in him. Christ said: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch CANNOT bear fruit OF ITSELF except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide IN ME. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do NOTHING". But remember that Jesus said the man that abides (dwells) in Him

and He in him, the same brings forth much fruit. Now what does this fruit result in? Paul answers in Romans 6:22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your FRUIT unto holiness, and the end EVERLASTING LIFE". Their fruit, of course, means their good works since they have been made free from sin and become servants of God. If these are optional (as the Conditionalists and Freewillers suppose) with man, he can do or not do, then it must be true that our final destiny is conditional as well. But that position is absolutely untrue. Listen to Paul again, "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath NOT WROUGHT by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed". In making the Gentiles obedient it WAS CHRIST that wrought by Paul, and not Paul that wrought by Christ. Let us hear him again: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, MAKE YOU PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL, WORKING IN YOU that which is well pleasing in His sight, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen".

Now let us examine that favorite text of all Arminians and see if there is anything in it to fit their doctrine. Let us quote the full sentence and then examine it thoroughly. It reads: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, as ye have ALWAYS OBEYED, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for IT IS GOD THAT WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE". We will first examine the words "your" and "own". "Your" shows possession, belonging or pertaining to you. That

which is your own is that which you have a legal right, or rightful title, to, whether you have it in your possession or not. This being true, it follows that Paul was not admonishing those brethren to work in order to make this salvation theirs; but to work out what they already had a rightful title to. No Arminian, or Conditional theory, can stand up under the real and only meaning of the words, "your own salvation" in the above text. It means a salvation that is now by right of ownership [and that salvation is eternal life, which life is of the eternal God from all eternity: hence, eternal salvation! Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian]. But let us, for the sake of argument, grant that it does not mean that. Let us take a stand with Conditional Time Salvationist that it means a salvation in time to be obtained by our own voluntary obedience to God's laws as "conditional thereto". If this is true then why did Paul command them to work it out, seeing he commends them as having "always obeyed"? As children of God they have already been saved from their sins, and called with a holy calling. That was done, NOT according to their works, for they have had no good works at that time. And if as children of God, they have always obeyed, please tell me, Mr. Conditional Salvationist, what do they need salvation from? Again, this text says SALVATION (singular) and not SALVATIONS (plural). If it means that if we disobey, we need to be saved from the sin of that disobedience, and we must work out our salvation from it; then we sin again and we must work out our salvation from that sin, and so on down through life, every time we sin we must work out our salvation from that particular sin; we would certainly have MANY salvations---not just two---before we got through! [Today in many places, the children of these early modernists are not actually preaching

fourteen or fifteen different salvations! Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.]

Again, suppose a child of God should suddenly drop dead or be instantly killed, while in the commission of a very grave sin, what would become of him? He would not have time to even think about working out his salvation from it. He was saved from all the sins that he committed as "an alien sinner", by the blood of Christ. But he must work out his salvation himself, from all the sins he commits after he is born again. If that is so, then he must be lost, because Jesus did not save him from that last grievous sin, and he died without working out any kind of salvation for himself for it. This text does not stop there; it goes on to say, "FOR IT IS GOD THAT WORKETH IN YOU BOTH TO WILL AND DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE".

This brings us to the subject of good works, and also THE SOURCE from which they proceed. The will to do this work which Paul commanded, and the doing of them, were both the work of the Lord. Jesus asserted twice in the fifth chapter of John that He could, of Himself, - DO NOTHING. In the fourteenth chapter he said, "But Father IN ME, He doeth the work". If Jesus could not do anything of Himself, then it is the height of presumption on our part to think that we can. If it was His Father in Him that did the work, and it is God "that worketh IN US both to will and do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), and if He "makes us perfect in EVERY GOOD WORK to do His will", and, "works in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through our Lord Jesus Christ"; then OUR WORKS (if we do any) are by the same power, and from precisely the SAME SOURCE as were the works

of the Lord Jesus. No man who believes the Scriptures will deny this. Isaiah said, "Lord Thou wilt ordain peace for us; for THOU HAST WROUGHT All [note the word "ALL"] OUR WORKS IN US". Peace will be the ordained lot of those in whom God has wrought ALL their works. And let me remark here, that there ARE NO GOOD WORKS, from a Scriptural standpoint, done by man; only such God works IN them. Even our belief in Him is the work of God; and is as great a miracle as the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). Paul said in Ephesians 1:18-20, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places". This shows that the SAME mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead WORKS IN HIS PEOPLE to make believers of them. For that reason Jesus said, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent". Peter writes, "Who BY HIM do BELIEVE in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (I Peter 1:21). In his second epistle, he tells them that they "obtained their faith" through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And in the third verse, "According as His divine power hath GIVEN US ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE and godliness". The word "pertain," as it is used here, means to have relation to. This being true, it follows that our good works (which pertains to life and godliness), if we have any, are THE GIFT of

God. Not only are they the gift of God, but He ORDAINED that we "should walk in them", and He created us in Christ to do them (Eph. 2:10). And He "works in us to will and to do" them (Phil. 2:13), working IN US that which is well pleasing in His sight through our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:20-21). This covers ALL good works, and proves beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there are no good works except such as are wrought of God. All that Jesus did was the "work of God IN Him", for He said, "Believest thou that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, HE DOETH THE WORKS". Jesus did not speak except as the Father gave Him to speak. The ability was not in the flesh; He was kept by the power of God.

I have known for a long time that our limited and conditional-time-salvation friends (?) claim that they can do more than God knew Jesus could do, and what Jesus Himself asserted He could not do of Himself. God promised His hand and KEEP Him, and give for a Covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. Was it needful that God should hold His hand and keep Him? If so, why? This question is already answered in Psalm 91:11-12: "For He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to KEEP Thee in ALL Thy ways. They shall bear Thee up in their hands, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone". To say the least of it, the language of these two Scriptures indicate that God knew Jesus in the flesh would fall if He did not uphold Him. And yet the Conditionalists think Adam was able to stand! without such aid, and that they also are able to stay in the path of obedience without God keeping them in all their ways as He kept Jesus; that they can do good works without God working in them both the will and do, as Paul said He did for the

Philippians. It would take a man that is good in himself to do it; and Jesus positively denied being that kind of a man: "Why callest Thou Me good? there is none good but one, that is, God". [This editor must take issue with Elder Sykes on this point: Jesus was God manifest in the flesh: His point, it seems to me is, that they did not recognize Him as the Son of God, and hence had no right to refer to one they esteemed as a mere fellow mortal as "good". Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian.] All the goodness that was in Him was God in Him; and all the good works He did He attributed to God working in Him. He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work; Very, verily, I say unto you the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise". In other words, He only works when the Father works in Him (I and my father are one), hence all that He does is the work of God in and through Him. If He could not do any good works except when and what the Father worked in Him, it must be the sin of presumption for any man to claim he can do good works without God working in him.

The young man that came to Jesus wanted to know what good thing he could do that he might have eternal life. After Christ assured him there were no good men, He said, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments". The life that the young man was inquiring how to obtain was eternal life; the life that Jesus told him he must keep the commandments to enter into was, of course, the life the young man had inquired about. It was not the life he then possessed, but one he would enter if he kept the commandments. No man whom God is not IN can keep the

commandments. But everyone of God's children can and do keep them when He works in them to do them.

"He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law....love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10). "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). There can be no obedience to God's laws except love be the moving cause of that obedience. If God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, then God who is love, and who is dwelling in him, is the direct and immediate CAUSE OF ALL THE GOOD WORK done by that man. It is God working in him both the will and do of His good pleasure. There are two laws mentioned in Romans 3:27: one is the law of works and the other the law of faith. The natural, carnal, fleshly man, is under the law of works, where the child of God, or spiritual man, is under the law of faith. The law of works, which the natural man is under, is called the law of sin and death. But the law of faith, which the children of God are under, is called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and frees its subjects from the law of sin and death. The law of works appeals to its subjects by promises of great blessings to those who obey it, and threatens dire punishment to those that disobey it. (See the entire chapter of Deut. 18 for the former of these.) See how great the promises, and how terribly awful are its threats, and then remember that he who would live by the law is a debtor to the whole law (Gal. 5:33). And remember also, that whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in ONE POINT is guilty of all (James 2:10). This law was ordained to life if they keep it; for the Lord said by Moses, "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments; which if a

man do, he shall live in them; I am the Lord" (See Lev. 18:5 and Romans 10:5).

But it was also ordained to death, for no man could keep it, and it proved to be to death. Paul said, "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death". The commandment was to keep the whole law. This law persuades and deters those that are under it, by promises and threats; because those that are under it are NOT SUBJECT to the law of faith, which works by love, that the children of God are under. [It is here that the Conditionalists identifies himself – by which law he esteems himself to be subject to. Elder Stanley C. Phillips, Editor, The Predestinarian] The man who is persuaded to do right from either the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment is not moved to do so by faith which works by love, and which cast out fear. Hence his act in so doing is a sin, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). The law of faith does not seek to control its subjects by [cheap] promises of rewards and threats of punishment; the Spirit, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 3:6). There cannot be such a thing as spiritual service to God that is not produced by faith and love. No act that is a product of fear of punishment, or hope of reward can be reckoned as "obedience. No man will ever receive a spiritual blessing as a reward for carnal work. The man who works for such a reason is moved by a carnal, selfish, sinful motive, and therefore is not entitled to, nor will he receive a spiritual blessing for it. The man who seeks to obey the commandments with a hope that he will obtain a reward, or escape punishment thereby will be disappointed for the "hope of the hypocrite shall perish" (Job 8:13). Such men

love not God, but they love themselves, and their work is strictly intended to benefit themselves. Charity, which means love, "seeks not its own" (I Cor. 13:5). And we are commanded to not seek our own, but every man another's wealth (I Cor. 10:24). Faith and love make those who possess them forsake their own interests, and labor for the interest of those they love. Such labor is called in the Scriptures, "the labor of love," because it is prompted by love, and not by the hope of reward or fear of punishment. Those who labor thus are not working for a reward, and yet they shall be rewarded according to their works.

We read in Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE, which you have showed toward His name in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister". No, He will not forget it, but will reward it in that great day when He shall sit them on His right hand, and shall say to them, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". And He will tell them that in as much as they have done it to the least of His brethren they have done it to Him (Matt. 25:31-40). He will reward them according to their works, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS". Again, the very potent question forces itself into our minds: From whence comes ALL GOOD WORKS? For if men are to be rewarded according to their works, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, then it necessarily follows that we must first determine the SOURCE from which good works come, and the POWER that moves men to perform them, and WHAT is considered by God to be those "good works" in order to arrive at a correct conclusion as to whether the rewards

are to be rendered according to these "good" works, or are "conditional."

In Romans 2:5-11, Paul assures us that God in His righteous judgment will "render to every man according to his deeds". Is the reward, then, according to his "deeds," or according to some "conditions" he performed? He assures us that eternal life will be rendered to them who, "by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality." Mark you, this eternal life is to be "rendered to" the man "according TO HIS DEEDS," who, by "patient CONTINUANCE IN WELL DOING, SEEKS for glory and honour and immortality. I will here say very boldly, that there IS NO ESCAPE from the conclusion that eternal life is conditional on our part, IF ALL GOOD WORKS ARE NOT attributable to the Sovereign, FREE, INDEPENDENT, and UNCONDITIONAL GRACE OF ALMIGHTY GOD. Paul attributed ALL he did in the service of God to the "grace of God". He said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; YET NOT I, but the GRACE OF GOD THAT WAS WITH ME". According to Paul, grace labors. All we do that is acceptable to God is the work of grace. Faith and love are both graces of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22). They are never found in any man whom Christ is not in; but they are found in all in whom Christ dwells. Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Christ dwelleth in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5). The man who must be moved to obey the law by the hope of reward, or fear of punishment, is naught but a reprobate, according to the meaning of the word reprobate. He is not of standard purity, or fineness. This is proved by the fact he must be hired, or forced, to his duty. The power that moves God's people to

obedience is within them, and the power that moves the reprobate is outside of him. God said to His people by the mouth of the prophet: "A new heart also will I GIVE you, and a new spirit will I PUT WITHIN you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit WITHIN you, and CAUSE YOU to walk in My statutes, and ye SHALL KEEP MY JUDGMENTS and DO THEM". Does this sound like a Conditionalist? Does this sound like they can do these things or not do them at their own option? God said He would put His Spirit in them and CAUSE them to do them. God's Spirit in them is the cause, and their walking in His statutes and keeping His judgments is the EFFECT of that cause. All good works are the FRUIT of this Spirit of God. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, etc. That is, "good works." If these are all fruits of the Spirit of God, is that Spirit dependent on the volition of man, as to when, where, and in whom it shall bear its fruits? I have not yet met a Conditionalist of any shade or character, that did not preach a dependent god who is governed by man; a god whose entire course of conduct in dealing with men is shaped and determined by what man does. For if God deals with men according to their conduct—which the Scriptures teach — and man is "free to shape his own conduct" as the Conditionalists all say he is: then it follows as a self-evident fact, that man, in determining his own course, determines the course of God in dealing with him.

They tell us that if a man obeys God, He will bless him; and if he disobeys God, He will punish him. They further tell us that it is "left up to man to determine which it shall be". But are we not left to guess whether or not man is left to direct his own steps?

Jeremiah has settled that matter for us. He said, "O Lord, I KNOW that the way of man is NOT IN HIMSELF: it is NOT IN MAN that walketh TO DIRECT HIS STEPS" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Dear Reader, where do you stand in this matter? Do you stand with Jeremiah who says it is not in man to direct his steps, or do you stand with the Conditionalists who say that man is free to choose his own way, and to direct his steps accordingly? Which is your own inward experience? One of these statements is true; one is false. Which one is true to your experience? Of course I am not expecting the carnally minded to receive this, for they are only natural and cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for these things are foolishness unto them, neither can they know them, because such things are spiritually discerned. They are still in bondage under the old covenant of works which Hagar the bond maid represented (Galatians 4:21-31). All who have not been made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus are still under it, and "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage".

MOUNTZION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
717 N COURT STREET
CROWN POINT IND. 46307
<http://mountzionpbc.org>