

THE
SANCTUARY-KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense
of the Holy Scriptures*



SUPPLEMENTARY EDITION – DECEMBER, 2005

**HOW FAR ARE WE WILLING TO
STRAY FROM THE OLD PATHS?**

INTRODUCTION

I N the Introductory section of the pamphlet “RECTIFICATION”, which was “*Devoted to the Refutation of Subtle Error*”, its author, bro. Thomas Williams, penned these words:

“The history of the Gospel of Truth has been one of many ups-and-downs. When freshly revived from the effects of the wounds received in the house of its friends; it has for short seasons been nourished, loved, and defended; but sooner or later –mostly sooner – subtle errors have crept in among its supporters, gradually and steadily supplanting it, not by openly denying its plainest principles; but by so mystifying some of its more difficult elements as to destroy its saving power.”

The Household of Faith has been through much strain in recent years - From the constant barrage and influence of a world totally given to the influence of the flesh, to the divisive pressures of false belief and practice that have come up within the Household itself. Some of these pressures have been subtle, others have not. As we continue the struggle during these evil times to “*hold the beginning or our confidence stedfast unto the end*” (Heb. 3:14), we are again being faced with errors that may seem to be harmless by some, but if left unchecked and without correction seriously undermine fundamental principles of our Faith.

In the 3rd quarter Sanctuary-Keeper we reviewed and expressed opposition to the book *Legalism vs. Faith* that has found a degree of acceptance within Christadelphian ranks. To briefly review, the term “legalism” is being used by those with ecumenical tendencies and false views of Bible teaching to negatively label those who hold to the standard beliefs and practices that Christadelphians have historically contended for. (This tactic has been identified as “positioning” as clearly explained in the latest edition of the *WatchMan*.) While those who are “traditional” in their beliefs are labeled as “legalists”, “Judaizers”, “Pharisees”, etc. those who make such charges are promoting alternate views that are undermining the Truth; most notably in the area of Faith and Works – overemphasizing the issue of “grace” while de-emphasizing the place of works, as well as law and obedience. What may have the appearance as subtle error has in fact led to a whole chain of “mystifying” arguments and conclusions that in fact undercut fundamental Truth.

The matter of “legalism” is not isolated to the book we reviewed in our 3rd Quarter magazine, but has found open promotion within the Unamended community itself. We wish to devote this supplementary issue of the Sanctuary-Keeper to address this latest challenge to the Truth.

TWOFOLD JUSTIFICATION

From *Elpis Israel*, pp. 266,267 (Logos Edition)

In conclusion, I would direct the reader's attention to the fact, that Abraham, was the subject of a twofold justification, as it were; first, of a *justification by faith*; and secondly, of a *justification by works*. Paul says, he was justified by faith; and James, that he was "justified by works." They are both right. As a sinner he was justified from his *past sins* when his faith was counted to him for righteousness; and as a saint, he was justified by works, when he offered up Isaac. Of his justification as a saint, James writes, "Abraham our father was justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar. Faith wrought with his works, and by works was *faith made perfect*. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT *by faith only*" (Jas. 2:21-24) I have termed it a twofold justification by way of illustration; but it is in fact, only one. The two stand related as cause and effect; faith being the motive principle it is a justification which *begins* with the remission of sins that are past, and is *perfected* in obedience unto death. The idea may be simplified thus. No exaltation without probation. If a man believe and obey the gospel his past sins are forgiven him in Christ; but, if after this he walk in the course of the world, his faith if proved to be dead, and he forfeits his title to eternal life. But if on the other hand, a man become an adopted son of Abraham, and "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility" (Rom. 2:7), he will find everlasting life in the Paradise of God.



The Sanctuary-Keeper
P.O. Box 13045
Maumelle, AR 72113

THE SANCTUARY – KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense of
the Holy Scriptures*

“Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”

Num. 18:5

“Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

1 Peter 2:5

“Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name”- Rev. 3:8

SUPPLEMENTARY EDITION - DECEMBER 2005

HOW FAR ARE WE WILLING TO STRAY FROM THE OLD PATHS?

WITHIN the last two years, the Unamended Christadelphian Community has been introduced to several writings in various media where the apparent purpose of the writings is to address the concept of modern day “legalism”, modern day “Pharisees”, and modern day “Judaizers”. One of the first introductory remarks stated in these writings is this – “Do you ever look at sincerely religious people and think to yourself “There is something not right here?” End quote. (Page 17 – June, 2004 Shofar). The writer was applying this statement to those individuals who “profess to be followers of Christ, but they were not happy people.” Although, these people according to these articles “may be sincere Bible students, they have the life drained from them by a misunderstanding of a few basic Bible topics that are as old as God’s Truth”. End quote. (Page 18 – June, 2004 Shofar magazine). This whole series of articles is based on the foundation of the writer’s belief that many modern day Christadelphians are “legalists” who believe that “We earn our way into the Kingdom by following law and therefore God has to give us salvation. The legalist will minimize the aspect of grace and emphasize the aspect of law and obedience. The process of legalism does not take God out of the equation of salvation; it simply relegates him to a lesser part – the lawgiver, not the justifier.” End quote. (Page 18-19 – June, 2004 Shofar magazine).

Throughout the series of articles in the Shofar magazine relating to this subject, the author presents several concepts for the consideration of his readers. As one reads these ongoing articles and new ideas, I think the opening statement in this series of articles applies to these articles - “Do you ever look at sincerely religious people and think to yourself “There is something not right here?” This is the feeling that I get when reading these articles. The brother is putting forward some new ideas and concepts that are not scripturally correct and that could confuse the Babes in Christ and any not in the Truth that may pick up these articles with a desire to learn the one truth about God’s Plan of salvation. We would like to briefly look at these teachings that appear to be un-logical and unscriptural.

Do many Christadelphians believe and teach that we “EARN” our way into the Kingdom of God?

First of all, when have you ever heard from Christadelphian writers that we can “EARN” salvation? The belief of the author that Christadelphians believe that we earn salvation seems to have its roots from a book entitled *Legalism versus Faith*. This concept of legalism as taught by the mentioned book and this series of articles in the Shofar magazine is that “Legalism is the false principle that God grants acceptance to people, considers them righteous and worthy of being in his presence, on the ground of their obedience to a set of rules, apart from putting their trust in God, relying on him, loving him and accepting his love for them.” End quote. (Page 18 – June, 2004 Shofar). The writers and supporters of this book and these articles “want to state clearly that many Christadelphians of today DO (emphasis the author of the articles in the Shofar) have these problems and that they are quite severe in nature”. (Page 22 – June, 2004 Shofar). If this accusation is correct, then those that teach and support this erroneous view should produce **specific** examples from lectures, writings or excerpts from books and articles that put forth the concept that they are teaching against. Until this can be done, those individuals that are calling others Legalists and modern day Judaizers are only doing so from a personal interpretation of the beliefs and actions of other individuals. **Where is the proof?**

As we begin our study of the erroneous doctrines that these articles on “Judaizers” are teaching, we should remember that all of these errors appear to grow out the concept stated above that “many” Christadelphians believe and teach that we “earn” our way into the Kingdom. This is the foundation stone of the path that the author wants to take us down. Here we see a principle that has escaped many. Every false doctrine of teaching begets a multitude of other false doctrines. The opposite is also true. Every doctrine of truth is based on and linked to other doctrines of truth. Hopefully, our readers will be able to see

the illogical progression that was used to put forth the following doctrines throughout the series of articles.

The Grace of God

The author uses Ephesians 2:8-9 as his primary point of reference for his articles. The author uses this concept in these verses as the springboard for every other doctrine that he wants us to believe. Unfortunately, he appears to have an unbalanced viewpoint about God's Grace. He wants his readers to believe that many brothers and sisters believe that we are saved by our works alone. On page 21-22 of the June, 2004 Shofar, the writer uses Matthew 7:20-23 and Matthew 25:34-40 to teach us the difference between brethren who he classifies as a "legalist" and those who he classifies as "a believer". The believer, according to the author, "are serving their brethren in practical matters and not just serving themselves through study and other academic pursuits." The author is trying to teach his readers that the "legalist" only wants to "keep score" concerning their works. Again, this is an accusation that proof should be provided where Christadelphians just want to "keep score" of their good works. These accusations should not be made without specific proof.

Has any Brother or Sister in Christ ever taught that we are not totally dependent on the grace of God? If there have been such teachings, we again ask the author and his supporters to show proof before they embark on a path of teaching that will have such a negative impact on the concepts of Truth. We understand that grace simply means the undeserved and unmerited favor that we receive from the merciful and loving hands of our Father. We must realize that we experience God's grace throughout our lifetime. We understand that God's grace is poured out on His creation in many ways. All of His creation receives the natural benefits of the air we breathe and the benefits of the natural elements. "He sendeth rain on the just and unjust." Matthew 5:45. Most brethren in the world also experience the blessings of a good prosperous life in this world that we live in. These are truly a gift of God's grace. The Brethren of Christ also experiences the grace of God when allowed to come into contact with God's Truth and make a decision to put aside the old man Adam and become a new creature in Christ. Those in Christ receive the grace of God every day of our lives when God strengthens us to overcome the trials and tribulations of the evil world in which we live. We will also experience the ultimate bestowal of God's Grace if we are blessed to be partakers of the divine immortal nature of our Father and His only begotten Son. There are many times when the son or daughter of God receives the gift of God's Grace. No one could dispute that it is only through God's Grace that we are saved from eternal death, saved out of the evil and sin around us, and saved into the everlasting Kingdom of the Righteous Judge and King. However, we are not saved into eternal life at the time of baptism.

Misunderstanding of the concept of salvation

The author of these articles in the pages of the Shofar magazine wants us to believe the following concepts as they relate to salvation that accrues to us when we arise from the waters of baptism. This list was obtained from the articles that were published in the Shofar.

- **Everything** (Bold emphasis – the author of the Shofar articles) that can be done for us in the way of salvation occurs at baptism. (Page 24, July, 2005 Shofar).
- Salvation has already been obtained for us. (Page 26 – July, 2005 Shofar)
- One of the greater dangers in an overemphasis of Bible study is that we constantly want to set up higher and higher knowledge as essential truth. (Page 32- July, 2005 Shofar).
- The Bible teaches us that everything happens at belief and baptism. The Judaizer teaches that everything occurs at the Judgment Seat. Everything from salvation to justification to eternal life to being the Sons of God is moved to the future despite the obvious Scriptural references to these things in the present tense. (Page 34 – July, 2005 Shofar).
- Eternal life, like salvation, is a **present** (emphasis made by the author of the Shofar article) possession. It is a state the believer comes into rather than a physical reality. Eternal life is to be distinguished from immortality in that eternal life simply means "to live forever". This living forever can be conditional whereas immortality is living forever unconditionally." (page 37 – July, 2005 Shofar).

This same author, in other writings that can be found in the WCF Thought for the Week that was published from September through November, 2004, stated that the believer after baptism immediately returns to a state of being in the Garden of Eden. In the Shofar articles, we see the reason for this logic when the author puts forth his belief that he is not a big fan of the term "probation". In his words, the term "probation" does for a life in Christ what the phrase, "the old ball and chain does for the institution of marriage." (Page 33 – July, 2005 Shofar). However, the author then continues in the same article on page 33-34 to say that if we can reconcile the use of the word "probation" or phrase "probationary walk" with a God "who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved)" and "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ", then let us by all means continue to use the word. If we cannot, then let us open our Bibles and find a phrase more in keeping with this "heavenly calling". End quote. The brother is contradicting his own teaching in his approach to the use of the term "probation" or "probationary walk". First, he says that we

shouldn't use this phrase and then he says we should continue to use it under certain conditions. However, his other teachings that we are back in the Garden immediately after arising from the waters of Baptism, supports this erroneous teaching that we do not enter a life of probation.

All of these concepts that are put forth by the author of these articles that have recently appeared in the Shofar magazine are quite different from the doctrines of truth historically taught and believed by the Christadelphians. The doctrines put forth are probably not meant to intentionally cause any brother and sister of Christ to falter or stumble in their walk in Christ, but, these are definitely new concepts that may cause others to stray from the purity of the one truth and from the gospel taught by the Apostles.

The writer of this Sanctuary Keeper article will probably be accused of taking the words of our brother out of context. To those who will make this accusation, please take the time to read the entire series of articles on the Judaizers that have appeared in the Shofar magazine. Also, read the WCF thoughts for the week that appeared from September through November, 2004.

We have to admit that the author of the Shofar articles does also make the following statements. The discerning reader should see the inconsistencies of the statements below with those that are set forth earlier in this article. Again, all of these quotes were taken from the Shofar articles on this subject.

- Works and Bible study are important, but they will not save us. (Page 26 – July, 2005 Shofar)
- Works are an important part of our spiritual lives, but not because they save us, but because they demonstrate that we are saved. (Page 27 – July, 2005 Shofar)
- Works don't save you, they are a result of faith. (Page 27 – July, 2005 Shofar)
- We (the author of the Shofar article) are not saying that you don't need to read and study your Bible. What we (the author of the Shofar articles) hope is that people will read and study their Bibles for the love of God and for love of His word, not to accomplish something (salvation) which has already been accomplished. (page 29-30 – July, 2005 Shofar)

By God's grace, we do receive salvation. However, salvation is not limited to eternal salvation. What does God teach us about His salvation that is offered to those who desire to be in God's Kingdom? We are taught that we receive this salvation throughout our walk in Christ. Look at these verses. Exodus 15:2, I Samuel 2:1, II Samuel 22:3, Psalms 85:9. Many times in God's Word, the daily salvation that we receive appears to be related to the strength that God provides to us in the time of trouble and the deliverance from the evil

around us. Psalms 37:39 reads – “But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD, He is their strength in the time of trouble.”

The Scriptures also promise salvation through the remission of our daily sins that was made possible by the shedding of the blood of the everlasting covenant. Read Luke 1:76-77, Acts 4:12, Acts 13:47 and Romans 10:10.

We will receive eternal salvation when we hear the welcome words of our master - Matthew 25:21 - “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” This is our hope, not our present possession. Read I Thessalonians 5:8, Hebrews 1:14, Hebrews 9:28 and Matthew 10:22.

What are the doctrines that these articles are teaching that appear to be contrary to the truth of the Bible?

- **Believers receive salvation into “eternal life” at the time of baptism.**

Comments: The concept of salvation appears to be mis-represented with this new idea. We do receive salvation at baptism; however the salvation that we receive at this time from the Grace of God is from a sentence of eternal death and condemnation. We are justified from our sentence of eternal condemnation when we put on the garments of salvation. We are not saved into eternal life; we are saved out of eternal death. We receive a promise of eternal life, not eternal life unconditionally. The author of the Shofar articles on Judaism may mean that we have a promise, but the terminology that he used may lead some astray from the purity of the Truth. There are 11 verses that include the phrase “everlasting life”. Seven of these verses (Dan 12:2, Matt 19:29, John 4:14, John 6:27, John 6:40, Acts 13:46, and Romans 6:22) indicate that the gift of everlasting life is a future gift, while the other four (John 3:16, John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:47) may give the appearance to the uncomprehending mind that everlasting life is a present possession. How do we reconcile this apparently contradictory concept? The only logical explanation is that the four verses also mean that we have a promise of eternal life and not that we have “conditional” eternal life at the present time. The same statement could be made for the occurrences of the phrase “eternal life”. Read Romans 2:7, Titus 1:2 and I John 2:25. The Scriptures do not separate eternal life and immortality. If we have conditional eternal life, then we also have conditional immortality. How can this be, brothers and sisters? Thomas Williams made the following statements. These are extracted from the pamphlet Rectification – Refutation of Subtle Errors

which is included in the book entitled Selected Works of Thomas Williams, page 394-395.

“Now we need not here spend much time on the philology of the words “eternal life”, it is more satisfactory to study the doctrines of the terms. Presently we give the original words and their meanings which stand for “immortal” and “incorruptible,” simply asserting here, that **“eternal life” doctrinally means life manifested in and through incorruptible bodies** (Emphasis mine). In Romans 2, we are, in substance, told, “if you seek for immortality, I will give you eternal life.” If “immortality” is superior to “eternal life,” and the latter only means duration of life for a thousand years, then we are asked to seek for a superior thing and only promised an inferior thing. Reason rejects this as absurd, and concludes that since we are exhorted to seek for “immortality” and promised “eternal life,” the one must be involved in the other, or, in substance, both mean the same thing; and therefore to receive the ‘eternal life’ promised is to receive the “immortality” sought for.

The most instructive and satisfying way to find truth is to compare scripture with scripture. We can be assured that to receive eternal life is to receive immortality thus: Christ is immortal (this is admitted), when he appears “we shall be like him, for we shall see His as He is.” In the resurrection we shall be made ‘equal to the angels’ in that we shall “die no more”. In the resurrection, this mortal shall put on immortality; and at the same time, “eternal life” is received; therefore “immortality” and “eternal life,” doctrinally and in essence, mean the same.” End Quote.

Therefore to believe the concept that we conditionally receive eternal life at the time we rise from the waters of baptism as the author of the Shofar articles wants us to believe, we must also believe that we conditionally receive “immortality” at the same time. We are not accusing the brother of teaching that we have an immortal soul, but this is the logical outcome of the concept of the teaching that we have conditional “eternal life” when we are baptized.

- **There is nothing else to do after baptism to receive salvation.**

Comments: This is not true because salvation into eternal life is a **future** award of the righteous, not a **present** conditional possession. The author stated that all we can do after baptism is to lose our salvation (Page 24 and 38 - July, 2005 Shofar). However, the Scriptures teach us just the opposite. There are things that we must do or God will not allow us to be in His Kingdom and we will not inherit eternal life in the future. God does require certain things from us in order to partake of the Tree of Life, in order to receive this future award. The Scriptures are full of references such as the ones below that indicate that we must be active in the obedience of the Lord’s

commandments. The very meaning of the term covenant implies that we have responsibilities to the requirements of the eternal covenant. These scriptures teach us that we must do these things to **obtain** salvation, thus negating the author’s teaching that we **lose** salvation.

Micah 6:8 – He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD **require** of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Luke 12:48 – For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much **required**.

John 14:15 – **If** you love me, **keep** my commandments.

Revelation 2:7 – To **him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

We cannot dispute the fact that God requires something from us. He has described a very specific way of life that we must follow. This erroneous concept that we are asked to believe by the author of the articles in the Shofar magazine comes very close to the erroneous doctrine of “once saved, always saved”. Those who are not grounded in the Truth or any outside the Truth who read the magazine articles could definitely be lead astray from the simple concepts of salvation that the Word of God teaches those who are willing to come out from Adam and embrace the promises of salvation promised by God and His Son.

- **Believers are back in the Garden after baptism and their life after baptism is not considered probationary.**

Comments: If the author of the Shofar articles and his supporters do not consider our lives to be probationary, then the logical progression **would be** to place us back into the Garden of Eden, the paradise of God. If this is true, then we must ask when did Adam and Eve return to the Garden. When did the natural Israelite return to the Garden after they offered sacrifices accepted by Yahweh? When did Christ return to the Garden? Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden in a state of justification. How can the believers of today who are also in a justified state return to the Garden? How can the believers of today be allowed to return to the Garden after baptism, but Adam was driven out and access denied? What is the basis of the modern believer’s return to the Garden that is different from Adam? Doesn’t the Garden of Eden represent a completely reconciled state with Yahweh, free from any association with sin? We are told that Christ learned obedience by the things that he suffered. Isn’t this a life of probation? If not, then what did he have to learn? Why did he suffer? What if He did not learn

obedience and chose to follow the ways of the flesh? Would God have raised Him from the grave at the time of His death and bestowed upon Him eternal life manifested in and through an incorruptible body? If you answer “No”, (which is the only scriptural answer), to this question, then you must admit that His walk in this life was probationary. The gift of God’s grace into eternal life was dependent on His perfect walk, His total submission to God’s Will even to His voluntary sacrifice of His own life. Was He already in the Garden after He arose from the waters of baptism? Was He immediately in the Garden when He arose from the tomb of death that all mankind succumbs to? If the believers are in the Garden immediately after baptism, then what is the purpose of the Judgment Seat? If they are in a complete state of reconciliation (as the Garden represents) with the Father, then will they be cast out from this state of reconciliation? If they already have conditional eternal life, will that be taken away from them at the Judgment? Why does the Spirit Word tell us in the letters to the seven Ecclesias in Revelation 2 and 3 that the gifts of God’s eternal grace would only be bestowed upon those who “overcome”?

As one considers these concepts that the author of these articles on the “Judaizers” is putting forth on the pages of the Shofar magazine, we have to wonder where these teachings will lead the brothers and sisters of Christ. It appears that the Christadelphian body is taking two different paths regarding the first principles of saving Truth. One is the path that has been taught and believed by those who throughout the ages have tried to maintain the purity of the God’s Truth. The second path is one that some are taking in these last days. It appears that those who choose to walk down this pathway want to be able to find something new that they can believe and try to persuade others to follow them. Hopefully, these individuals may soon realize that the Truth will withstand all attacks upon it and that there is only one path that leads to eternal salvation and a place in God’s Kingdom. Let us all follow this advice from the prophet Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 6:16 - “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein.”

How far are we willing to stray from the old paths? Let us not be as the rebellious individuals mentioned in this verse in Jeremiah and refuse to stand up for and walk in these old paths.

B. Henderson

JUSTIFIED BY GRACE

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:3-7

In the passage that we have provided from Titus 3:3-7, we read that “*through Jesus Christ*” we are “*justified*” by God’s “*grace*”, and “*not by works of righteousness which we have done*”. The thoughts expressed by the Spirit word are similar to what is conveyed in the 2nd chapter of Ephesians where we are told that “*by grace ye are saved*” and “*not of works, lest any man should boast*”. These words and similar passages have been a source of great confusion for those of orthodox Christianity. The matter of exactly what “*grace*” is; when and where we receive the salvation that results from it; the nature of such “*salvation*”; and the place of “*faith* and “*works*” in relation to the subject of “*grace*” has confounded the most “*esteemed*” theologians. Unfortunately, as has been mentioned in the previous article, a spirit of confusion on such subject matter is also being promoted within Christadelphia; which warrants serious attention to this matter.

Definitions

Using this third chapter of Titus as a springboard for the subject, we would first like to provide definition to the words “*grace*”, “*saved*”, “*regeneration*” and “*justified*” as found in the quoted passage from Titus.

- There is little dispute as to the meaning of the word “*grace*”. It comes from the Greek word *charis* which can mean *free, undeserved favor* – or it can quite simply mean *favor*.
- The word “*saved*” is from the Greek *sozo* and indicates *deliverance*
- “*Regeneration*” is indicated by Strong’s as a spiritual *rebirth* or *renovation*.
- “*Justified*” in the original is *dikaioo* and carries the sense of *to render just or innocent*.

“According to His mercy He saved us”

When we consider the principal of being “*justified by grace*” we first have to reflect on what is it that we are being justified from. What is it that we are being “*saved*” or delivered out of, and that requires a “*regeneration*” or spiritual rebirth or renovation?

We are reminded in Romans 5 of one of the most fundamental principles of the scriptures, that by “*one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom* (margin) *all have sinned.*” We know that we are not personally guilty of the sin of Adam, but we are to realize that from our birth we bear the effects of that first sin in our bodies, and are therefore a constituted sinner and under condemnation to death – our very nature/existence is considered to be sin or unclean in the sight of God, and if nothing is done to rectify the situation the result will be eternal death.

At the same time, we are also subject to the acts of transgression that naturally accompany such a condition. In this passage in Titus we read of “disobedience” and following after “lusts and pleasures” that go against Divine Law. This further confirms the teaching of Scripture that there are two kinds of sin: (1) The sinful constitution/ uncleanness that is inherent in our flesh as well as the acts of personal transgression that man is capable of committing if no alternate course is pursued. Both types of sin (the former being the root cause, the latter being the result) must be taken care of in order for God to render us as *just or innocent*.

“Being justified by His grace”

What then is the solution for sin so that we may be pronounced *justified* before God and receive His *grace* or *favor*? The Scriptures are very plain and extensive on this matter. From the animal slain in the Garden of Eden, Abel’s sacrifice, the sacrifices of Abraham, to the ordinances found under the Law delivered unto Moses – all these acts pointed to the necessity of the shedding of blood – but not just anyone’s blood. It was impossible for man to be able to design any device or antidote that could release him from the power of death that the condemnation resulting from Adam’s sin would incur. It would be through, and only through a way that God himself would provide. As is clearly expressed here in Titus, that “way” is through “Jesus Christ our Saviour”. One who was born of a woman, with the same sin-stricken nature and under the same condemnation. But though born of the sin flesh (diabolis) nature, he destroyed it by committing no sin and pouring out his life through the shedding of blood.

These circumstances, the only circumstances that God deemed acceptable for the destruction of sin and death, could only come through the providing hand of God himself. This is where the *grace* or *favor* of God enters the picture. As we have already mentioned, there is nothing that man can formulate in such a self inventive way that will somehow free him from the Adamic sentence. From the very beginning man has attempted but failed in this venture. Adam and Eve used fig leaves to hide their nakedness or fallen condition, but again, without the shedding of blood such an effort was futile. God did not look down on their actions and deem them as well intended, leaving Him indebted to their actions of goodwill. God is indebted to no one. But God, by his grace or *undeserved favor*, provided the means of *deliverance* from the fallen condition by a process of *rebirth* or *renovation* from the constitution of sin, rendering one legally justified from the Adamic sentence, while offering hope of a future inheritance of eternal life. Only God is capable of providing the solution needed

– A solution that involved the condemnation of sin’s flesh through one who would overcome it; an act that was a declaration of God’s righteousness (Rom. 3:25), while not setting aside Divine Justice to lawfully deal with the outcome of the sin committed in the Garden. We personally have had nothing to do in devising this glorious plan of redemption. There is no work we can accomplish or action of any real value that can counterbalance or replace this plan. Yet God, by His *grace*, has offered to us an opportunity of deliverance **IF** we choose to avail ourselves of such a hope through Christ’s sacrifice by the “*washing of regeneration*”.

In Romans 5:16 we read, “*the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*” In verse 17 we are told, “*they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.*” Verse 18 (Diaglott), “*through One Righteous Act, sentence came on All Men to Justification of Life.*” Verse 19, “*by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.*” In Acts 13:39 we read, “*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*” And in Ephesians 2:5 “*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ*”; and continuing to verse 8, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that nor of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*”

So, by the receiving of God’s grace we find justification from the law of sin and death through Christ’s shed blood. Not by our own righteousness but by the imputation of the righteousness of another – that being Christ. By God’s *grace* we have been provided a hope of existence beyond the present, sin stricken world. But it is important to add here, as mentioned in Rom. 5:8, that in order to receive such grace it has to be accompanied by FAITH. In other words, we must have an intelligent understanding and confidence in the Truth of God’s word and His promises previous to and upon our baptism in order for such grace to be received. God’s grace is available to all, but cannot be granted without the faith necessary for approach to God to be possible. Grace is not given automatically to the ignorant masses, but only to those who draw near to God through the means provided in “**sincerity and truth.**”

So when are we “saved”?

Some may stop here with the issue of grace. The assumption is made that since the hope of salvation as seen through the sacrifice of God’s Son is referred to as a free gift and that it doesn’t come by “works” then it is assumed that eternal salvation is a done and irreversible deal. The popular perception of grace is that upon receiving it (as referenced in Ephesians 2 or here in Titus 3) that such a person is then absolutely and eternally “saved”. To those of popular religion it is thought that since “Christ died for us” and if we “accept him into our hearts” that we are automatically and unconditionally given eternal salvation. Though we have not heard this directly taught within the Brotherhood there have been statements made by Christadelphians such as, “EVERYTHING that can be done for us in the way of salvation occurs at baptism”, and that “eternal life is a present possession”; or that “God will not allow us to fail”. Such statements come dangerously close to the views of Evangelical Christianity and spring from a misunderstanding of how the term “saved” refers to our current status

and future hope, and represents confusion as to the conditional aspects of salvation in the relationship between grace and works. But, before we discuss the matter of “works” we need to provide context to the scriptural usage of the word “saved”.

There are three ways in which the term “saved” is used in the scriptures.

- It is used in the past tense in reference to the believer’s release from constitutional relationship with Adam and passing into Christ upon covenant making, through the sacrificial work of Christ. Believers then become part of the seed of Abraham and heirs of such future promises. But the receiving of such promises relies on the meeting of certain requirements that God has set. As we have been considering, Titus 3 bears this usage out very clearly and is how Christadelphians have understood our relationship to the terminology of currently being “saved”. In 2nd Timothy 1:9 we read, *“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.”* What are believers saved from? The Law of Sin and death – the hopeless condition that comes from being “in Adam”. (Other supporting passages: 1st Cor. 1:18; 1st Peter 3:20,21)
- “Saved” is also used in the present tense (continuous tense in the Greek), indicating an ongoing process throughout the believer’s life. In Acts 2:47, according to the R.S.V., it should read, “the Lord added daily such as *were being saved*.” This present tense is further confirmed in 1st Corinthians 1:18, and according to the R.S.V. and Bullinger is to read, “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto *those who are being saved* it is the power of God.” (See also 2nd Cor. 2:15). Though a different form of the word “saved” is used in Philippians 2:12, we read: *“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”* We are NOW working out our salvation, through dependence on God for His guidance and help. The believer is in a conditional or “probationary” position.
- “Saved” is also used in the future tense. It is our hope to be considered as one of the “sheep” at Christ’s Judgment Seat (Matt. 25:31-34), and receive the change of nature (1st Cor. 15:53) when we stand before Christ to be judged according to our works. Matthew 10:22, *“but he that endureth unto the end shall be saved”*. If we already have all the salvation that we will ever receive upon our baptism then why do we hope to be “saved” at Christ’s return? In 1st Timothy we read, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”*; Romans 13:11, *“for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”*; Hebrews 1:14, *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*; and in 1st Thessalonians 5:8, *“let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”*

Concerning this last passage quoted in 1st Thessalonians, we see that salvation is a matter of HOPE. Back in Titus 3 we read that *“we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* As is stated in Romans 8:24, *“hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”*, and continuing in verse 25, *“then do we with patience wait for it.”* To simply say that we have received all the salvation that we will ever get at baptism or that we now possess eternal life is to misunderstand scriptural teaching on the matter. Those outside of covenant have no connection or remote chance of being granted such promises. Those who are “justified by grace” and covenanted do have the opportunity to receive such things, but they are still a matter that belongs to the future and is dependent upon certain conditions being met.

Therefore, though “saved” when “justified by grace” upon our connection to the sacrificial work of Christ it must be understood that a process is involved as to being eternally saved. When baptized into Christ we are in fact “saved” from the law of sin and death, we then pass into a probationary period of trial and development of our knowledge and character – working out “our salvation with fear and trembling”, and then the salvation of our bodies by the “mortal putting on immortality”.

What of “works”?

With a misunderstanding of “grace” and when we are “saved”, comes confusion into how the matter of works fits into the framework – as well as its close relationship to FAITH. As has already been mentioned, many in the world harbor the belief that once grace is received and they are eternally “saved” that it will not and cannot be taken away by a loving and merciful God. They stop at the phrase *“not by works”* as found in Titus 3 and go no further. It has to be understood that once we receive the benefits of the Atonement that our work has just begun.

Once Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us we are expected to develop and live lives that reflect our constitutional status. This is clearly explained in Romans 6; that once our old constitutional standing in Adam (*“our old man”* vs.6) is *“crucified”* through the waters of baptism that *“henceforth we should not serve sin”*. We are further commanded in verse 13 to *“yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”* Referring back to Titus 3, looking further on to verse 8 we read, *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.”* Why should we be careful to maintain good works if the grace that we have received has automatically secured us an eternal reward? In Ephesians 4:1 we are commanded to *“walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”* In 1st Thessalonians 2:12 we read, *“That ye walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory.”* And, in Hebrews 4:11 it is stated: *“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”*

At the Judgment seat our works will be at the center of deliberation as to our future destiny. Matthew 17:27, *“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.**” Revelation 22:12, “Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man **according as his work shall be.**” Regarding the “day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God”, we read “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.”

It is clear from these passages that there are requirements made upon us by God when we receive (through faith) the grace of the Atoning effects of Christ’s sacrifice. Though “justified by grace”, there is a standard set up that all the recipients of God’s grace must live up to. There are laws that we must live by as being under the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus”, and commands that we must follow – “If ye love me keep my commandments”. Upon our baptism we then become “servants”, “slaves” to live lives that reflect a rejection of the fruits of the sin nature and acceptance of complete submission to the righteousness of God – a righteousness that can only bring eternal life. We are to demonstrate a life of faith, in accordance with THE FAITH (Greek – *pistis*) in practical demonstration through our works (James 2:17-26).

If we prove to be faithless and unprofitable servants before God we are in a very real sense showing supreme disrespect for the grace extended to us. It is as if upon receiving a gift from someone, we either tried to return the gift or damaged the gift by abuse and neglect, showing little appreciation or utter contempt for the offer we have initially taken and the individual who has given it to us. In Hebrews 10:26-29 we read, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” This passage does not indicate that just because we sin we lose our salvation, for we know that we have a Great High Priest to approach for the forgiveness of our failings. But it identifies those who live in contempt of God’s ways as a course of life after receiving the atoning benefits of Christ’s blood. To do so is to show an utter lack of appreciation of what has been done for us by the sacrifice of Christ. By such unsavory works we are spoken of as doing “despite unto the Spirit of grace”. Earlier in the book of Hebrews (2:3) it is stated, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?”

All this does not mean that once we are baptized that we are put in a position of “earning” our salvation by some kind of good deeds points system. Even if we do all that we are capable of in serving Christ we are told that at that point we are still “unprofitable servants” (Luke 17:10). At the Judgment Seat, Christ will not “owe” anyone the reward of eternal life. Christ will be looking for those who have done all that they could in the weakened condition to serve him acceptably; those who have

been guided by their faith in God’s promises and have served him obediently in “sincerity and truth”, and when they have failed have regularly approached to the Throne of Grace for forgiveness of their sins. To those who are deemed profitable servants through great effort and tribulation, mercy and grace will be shown and life eternal (i.e., immortality) will be given.

Growing in Grace

In the final verse of Peter’s second epistle we are exhorted to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The Diaglott renders the verse to “grow in **favor.**” The same rendering of the original is found in Luke 2:52, “Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in **favor** with God and man.”

How do we grow in “grace” or favor before God? The way to find such favor is to do as He commands. The Divine record in Genesis informs us that in contrast to the wicked generation around him, that “Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord” (6:8). The reason is given in the seventh chapter, verse 1: “Thee have I seen righteous before me, in this generation”, and in verse 5, “Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him.” Jesus stated concerning himself, “The Father hath not left me alone: for I do **always** those things that please him.” (John 8:9). In order to “grow in favor” after already being “justified by grace”, we must continue a course of obedience, striving everyday to improve and to better exemplify that Divine standard as demonstrated by our Elder Brother.

In Closing

Let us realize and appreciate the fact that we are “justified by grace”, understanding all that the phrase and its connection to the entirety of Scriptural teaching implies; remembering that at one time we were “aliens”, “without hope and without God in the world”, “strangers from the covenants of promise”. But now we are considered “fellowcitizens” and are deemed as being “of the household of God”. This change in relationship was only made possible through the grace of God as seen in the atoning effects of Christ’s shed blood. God did not owe the human race this benefit, but He has mercifully provided us (those who choose to participate) with such a provision that frees us from “the law of sin and death” and gives us the hope of life eternal, while glorifying His name. At the same time, the work is not complete and we have not yet received the ultimate gift of eternal life. We are not to be passive recipients, but active participants, working to “**grow in grace (favor), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**” (2nd Peter 3:18) as we develop over the course of our probationary lives. God’s salvation is a “free gift”, but at the same time we must conform to the conditions and requirements that have been set. So brethren, let us be of that class “who by patient continuance in well doing seek glory, honor and immortality.”

A. Thomas