

THE PATHFINDER

#272

SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE?

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” *Ephesians 2:5-8*.

The term, “*I am a sinner, saved by grace*” has been trumpeted as loudly and with as much conviction as “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” *John 3:16*. It is assumed and believed by quite a number that *being a sinner saved by grace* is just as scriptural as “*For God so love the world....*” To make sure one way or the other, we looked for a scripture reference to that statement, but all efforts failed. Not one was found! But surely, common as it is, the Bible must have it recorded somewhere. For heaven’s sake, we have heard it said and preached all our lives. If that isn’t in holy script, then we might wonder about, “*God helps those who help themselves.*” Ah, that saying is in the same oblivious category.

If this is the case, and it is, could it be that it is not biblically sound? If not, we might be in deep dogmatic *mud*. But we desire the truth above all else! Don’t we? So whether we have been bogged down in religious illusions or not, we will search out the matter, as it is the honor of kings according to do so as we read in Proverbs 25:2.

In this search, and while the answer is unfolding, we pray that the people's lives that have been stirred, churned, tumbled, and even wrecked due to the lack of understanding will not only be set free, but also made free. Frankly, it is time for knowledge to take hold and do its work. Ignorance can no longer be accepted in the ranks of the saints. Let ***Hosea 4:6*** become history: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge...." In doing so thousands of miles of wandering in dry deserts will be averted.

It goes without saying that countless sons and daughters of God throughout the body of Christ have been suffering in so many ways. They have searched everywhere for relief. They have gone hither and yon looking for anything that might set them free from the pain, the sorrow, the rejection, the loneliness. We received a letter from such a one who had read the book of Job with hopes of finding an answer. He also read our study, "*Those Like Job*," but he was still not freed from his very trying hardship. He said that he feels that he is being chastised; even though, like many others who have said the same, he does not know what he has done that has merited God's heavy hand upon him. The young man said that he does not know what to do to get off the *rack* and on the right track to experience fellowship again with God and His life-giving presence. He asked, "Do I just pray unceasingly? Do I just repent? Please help. Thank you."

Since he never responded after writing back to him, I have no idea if my counsel helped or not. Even so, I am sorry to hear that people are in such dire straits, and from the mail we receive, there are many who suffer greatly today with a lot of them feeling the same as this brother, that they are being chastised and want to repent even though they cannot name anything they have done that merits repentance. Some even think that if it is not repentance God is after, perhaps it is penance, like depriving themselves from the joys of life, even food and drink, crawling on hands and knees upon shards of glass to the altar of their church. Ancient mystics, Lady of Fátima and Jeanne-Marie Bouvier Guyon, commonly known as Madame Guyon (in her

early years)^[1], performed self-flagellation on their bare bodies using bundles of stinging nettles. They were not alone in this. It was done by others as well to atone unknown sins that might have been committed, and they supposed the self-induced pain would surely put a smile on their angry God's face. There have been men and women over the centuries who believed and did pathetic things with hopes of appeasing God, some much harsher than stinging nettles; but He still used them in mighty ways. It might be hard to understand; but His gifts and callings have been without repentance and worked exceptionally well.

Later on in Madame Guyon's life, she forsook those ridged religious efforts of attempting to gain favor and union with God.

“Her philosophy became ‘Quietism’—the absolute submission of the human soul to the will of God. Give up all, lay aside all striving, all reaching out, all unrest, cease penance and lie low in the Lord's hand; for He does all things well. Make life one continual prayer for holiness—wholeness-harmony; and thus all good will come to us—we attract the good; we attract God—He is our friend—His Spirit dwells in us. She taught of power through repose, and told that you can never gain peace by striving for it like fury.” LITTLE JOURNEYS TO THE HOMES OF FAMOUS WOMEN by Elbert Hubbard.

The simple truth stands, God does not delight in our pain. How could any father, especially our heavenly Father, be pleased that his children would beat and bloody themselves each day to prove their love in order to win his favor, and so that he would cease from chastising them? Neither would do such, and neither would ever haphazardly punish their children on a whim.

[1] “I tore myself with brambles, thorns, and nettles, which I kept on me. The pain of these later caused my heart to fail, and entirely deprived me of sleep, without my being able to remain sitting or lying, in consequence of the points remaining in my flesh. It was these I used when I could get them, for they satisfied me more than any. I very often kept absinthe in my mouth, colocynth in my food.” Autobiography of Madame Guyon

Moreover, be assured, our Father neither approves of nor requires penance. Godly sorrow that works **repentance**, absolutely. It is that which works salvation and righteousness in our souls. This is a good thing, and when the time comes, we will know from what it is that we are repenting. When we have done nothing that requires us to repent, regardless of how forlorn, forsaken, and hopeless we may feel, neither should we perform some sort of self-inflicting penance, or repent of some ambivalent act that we might have done. We do not repent or beat ourselves over nothing. It does not work that way.

If we are being disciplined, we are made to know the reason why. He never takes us behind the woodshed without letting us know what rebellious act(s) we have done, and rebellion against Him is the only thing I know of that merits chastisement. To be chastised without us knowing what the infraction is would serve no purpose except to harden our hearts against Him. Frankly, most of our hardships are merely part of the human experience. You see, as God's grace rains not only on the just but also the unjust, so do the rains of adversity rain on both the just and unjust. We are not immune to anything that the world of sinners suffer; but by His grace and guiding hand, we will make it all the way through every storm that besets us from time to time.

I know that with some that there has been silence in heaven for half an hour or more. The soothing voice of the Dove has become a distant memory, and in the darkness of night, they feel like they are in a fog, merely going through the motions of living, while inside they are dying.

Many of us have been to barren places at one time or the other; but one thing by which we were lifted from them was when it dawned on us that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we could do to deliver ourselves. Going to church didn't work. Reading the Bible mostly failed. We could get victory once in a while by praying, but that was often short-lived. One brother said that as soon as he thought, spoke, or did something that was

contrary to the Spirit of peace, he would fall back into despair. He began to see that his victory came when he had exhausted all his human efforts, and the only way he was going to be delivered from the anguish was by God's doing. Knowing this came with the understanding that *there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!* Since the brother was not being condemned, he realized that condemning himself was no different than condemning someone else. It was then, as he related, that he began to live again!

Our lives are in God's hands. When He wants something of us, as the good Father that He is, He will work His pleasure in us, and very often, He works in us without us even knowing it.

It is easy to enter into self-condemnation; but keep in mind that this comes from the dragon, the devil in the heavens of our minds; therefore, let us never give our ear to the accuser of the brethren, not even when he accuses you and me; for we are just as much a part of the brethren as the rest of them. Remember, he is the father of lies, he is a liar from the beginning, and there is no truth in him. Therefore, when you have a thought that brings condemnation and torment, you can be sure that it is not the Spirit of Christ, but it is the accuser that wars in the heavens of our adamic minds. It is time to be awakened from our sleep and take on the mind of Christ and hear only His peaceful, life-giving words. "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." *2 Timothy 1:7.*

"We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we will walk in them." *Ephesians 2:10.*

Now, doesn't that relieve us from a lot of guilt and pressure? It should! With our life being God's workmanship and responsibility, there is no cause for us to ever be concerned whether we are a failure or not. If we are failures, then that would make Him a failure. If we can fail, either by choice or by the

weakness of our flesh, then that would make our weakness greater than God's strength, and that is impossible. Can you imagine God being stopped in His tracks because of our weak flesh. Man's flesh cannot win over the Spirit. Weakness does not overcome power. It cannot happen, so let us put it out of our minds, and never think about it again. No one's rebellion or weakness is greater than God's love and strength.

The church of *Eve that's been inspired by the serpent*, has very effectively inflicted its sting deeply into its members making them believe that they are not *in the image and likeness of God*, but are *mere sinners saved by grace*—but it is not so! Don't believe the lie! Don't drink the *Kool-Aid*! It is imperative to stop thinking you are a dual citizen. You cannot be of the kingdom of darkness as well as the kingdom of the light. You are not dead in trespasses and sin as well as being alive in Jesus Christ. There is no such teaching in the Bible. It says that we **“were”** sinners, and it was grace that saved us from that sin! It does not say that we **“are” sinners** and **“at the same time” saved/delivered** by grace. We are certainly saved by God's grace, which is His doing; but we are not to be confessing ourselves as sinners while in the midst of our salvation.

Our dear friend, Royce Kennedy, wrote something about this:

“Back home in my country, there are saints of God whom have walked with God for fifty years. But every time they stand to testify of His goodness, they address themselves as sinners, still standing ‘on repentance grounds.’ They are never taught that one cannot be a sinner, saved by grace. Have you ever heard that statement? Thank God that I am a sinner, saved by grace, they say! But let us set the record straight! Pardon me Sir! Pardon me Madam! One cannot be both at the same time; otherwise one's life is confused, not being able to discern between good and evil. In the true sense of the word, a sinner is one who does not know Christ, or his saving grace. That person has never had Christ to enter into his heart to take up residence within. Being saved by grace means that one is justified by faith, and has

passed from death to life, and has walked away from under the influence of the law of sin and death, to abide forever under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

“But both sentiments or ideologies cannot co-exist: we must either be one or the other! By adding ‘a sinner saved by grace’ it is intended to paint a picture of humility and imperfection that renders us unworthy. But Christ has made us worthy! Timothy, in his letter, points to divine truth and principle that we will do well to believe and appropriate unto ourselves. Taking it from the top in practical terms as Jesus saw it, we are told first of all, that both he that sanctifies [Christ Jesus] and they who are sanctified [all of us] are all OF ONE.” (*He Has Begotten Us In Christ April 2014, Part 2*)

Another said concerning the thought of *sinner saved by grace*:

“This writing comes from my frustration with the Body of Christ accepting any wind of doctrine that sounds plausible. We pronounce this with such vigor, such tenacity. We wear it like a suite of armor, and some would even argue this point to no end. We negate the fact that the Bible itself debunks this statement time and time again, but most of us are not Bible readers; we are Bible hearers. Meaning we listen to the word preached, but don’t search, or read the word for ourselves.

“How many times have you heard someone say, or said it ourselves: ‘I’m just a sinner saved by grace?’ While I will admit that it sounds good and it will make for great preaching; it is not true.

“*1 Timothy 1:15* states: ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...’ If Jesus came to save sinners and we are sinners saved by grace, is Jesus’ coming and death in vain? For the scripture says that He came to save sinners, we therefore say we are saved; what are we saved from if we remain sinners. It is, therefore, impossible for us to be sinners and saved by grace. For if we are sinners saved by grace then our sin remains, and Christ’s death is in vain.

“Now some have commented that the scripture above is not complete, in that Paul continues on saying ‘of which I am chief.’ Therefore, the entire scripture reads as thus ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am Chief.’ This is the scripture they attempt to use to justify this false teaching of Sinner Saved by Grace. However, what Paul is actually saying here is ‘I am the chiefest sinner whom Jesus saved.’ In other words, Paul is attesting to the fact that Jesus has saved him from sin who in his own eyes was a chief sinner due to having been responsible for the deaths of the saints. Paul in no way justifies a person remaining in sin once they confess they have been saved.

“Romans 6:2 states: ‘...How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?’ We were buried into Christ by baptism into his death, and have risen in the newness of life in the likeness of His resurrection. If this be so, then we have been redeemed from the death of sin into the glorious life of Christ who knew no sin. If Christ knew no sin, and we are born into Christ by baptism into a new life free from sin, how say we then; we are sinners saved by grace? Being born of a sinless God, if be that the Holy Ghost which is sinless dwells in us; as stated in the scripture: ‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (1 John 3:9).’

“Sinner saved by grace gives us the consciousness of sin therefore, because I am just a sinner saved by grace, my constant falling into sin is understandable, or even expected. It is often used to make others comfortable in living a saved life filled of compromise. Never able to move into holiness because we are sinners saved by grace. Wherefore, we never obtain the fullness of Christ because we live a life conscious of sin.

“Sinner saved by grace reminds me of sin, therefore, reminding me of death, because the wages of sin is death (see Romans 6:23). It constantly reminds me of the sin I was slave to and brings me back into bondage of sin.

However, if I am simply saved by grace, then am I free from the law of sin and death from which Jesus' blood cleansed me from. Wherefore, we are not sinners saved by grace, we are simply saved by grace, because the saved that I am has freed me from sin that I should not obey sin in the flesh." — James Bligen

One of the paramount illusions of today is that a person may be a Christian, and at the same time be a sinner. Even the thought that "*We are sinners, saved by grace*" is not only misleading, but unscriptural, as we have been noting. Plainly put, salvation and sin do not mix. If people are sinners, they are not saved. To say, that we **were** sinners but are **now** saved by grace would be the truth. If we hold to the scriptures, there is no way to have both—sin and salvation. It would be just as proper to say—*I am a liar, though truthful by grace*; or, *I am a corpse but alive by the power of God*; or, *I am a drunkard, but always sober*—as to say, ***I am a sinner, saved by grace***. The fact is, the expression should not be in present tense, but in the past. This would make it clear that not only the work had been done but when it was done. Again, "***I am a sinner, saved by grace***" will never harmonize: *If a man is a dead corpse, he is not alive; if he is a liar, he is not truthful; if he is a drunkard, he is not sober; if a woman is a prostitute, she is not a virgin...* Got it? The scriptures do not mix things. They place things where they belong, so *if the inner man is a sinner, he is not saved*; but *if that inner man is dead to sin, he is surely saved*. It may be clear that there is sin in the lives of Christians; but this does not declare them to be *sinners saved by grace*. For instance, Preston Eby wrote in his study, FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 12:

"Dead men don't keep on doing evil things and then excuse it by saying that they just didn't know they were dead; it was just such a habit that they have to remind themselves that they are dead so they can learn to act like dead men! What drivel! Yet, I have heard great preachers proclaiming such foolishness, in an effort to rationalize why Christians have fleshly, ungodly

emotions and desires, and do bad things, when their old man is dead! It should be clear to any spiritual mind that either the old man isn't dead or we have misidentified the old man! I think it is the latter. God isn't playing games with us! Do saints still struggle with the carnal mind and the works of the flesh? Do saints still sin? 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (I Jn. 1:8-9).

“Ah, precious friend of mine, ‘sin in our members’ and the ‘old man’ are not the same! Every scripture throughout the whole Bible bears witness to this fact. Let me give it to you in the simplest of terms. There are many, many scriptures, but two will suffice to point the way. ‘For I delight in the law of God after the inward man’ (Rom. 7:22). Notice what the inward man does. He delights in the law of God — righteousness! But even though the inward man, the new man, delights in righteousness, the awful power of sin lies in our members. Now let us look at the old man. ‘Strip yourselves of your former nature (the old man) — put off and discard your old unrenewed self — which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion’ (Eph. 4:22, Amplified). These two passages tell us this: The new man is a nature that delights in righteousness; the old man is a nature that desires or delights in that which is corrupt. The old man, therefore, is our old unregenerated spiritual state in which we desired and delighted in the flesh! Please notice that it is the nature that desires and delights in sin — it is not the ‘body of sin’ (the flesh) itself! It is so important that we see and clearly understand the distinction Paul draws in his writings between ‘sin in our members’ which is ‘the flesh’ — and the ‘old man.’ These are not interchangeable terms! Sin is the power and principle of evil rooted in our members, in our flesh, in our body! The old man, on the other hand, is our old unregenerated spiritual state in which we delighted in the sin in our members! And the new man is our quickened, regenerated spiritual existence by which we now delight in

righteousness. ‘For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my (inward man) mind’ (Rom. 7:22-23). How much plainer can it be!

“Any thinking person should understand that once our spirit is quickened by God’s Spirit our old unregenerated spiritual state **NO LONGER EXISTS!** The scriptures have only one thing to say about your old man...**HE IS DEAD!** Therefore, you are not having any problem at all with your old man, for dead men don’t do anything! The proof of this is that you no longer delight in sin! Oh, yes, sin is still in your members, and you can sin, have sinned, and may sin again. But when you do sin — are you happy about it? Spiritually, does it make you feel good? Does your spirit say, ‘Amen!’ Or is your spirit grieved? Do you now regret your weakness, your failure? Right there is the answer! The nature that delighted in sin is dead, it is gone! Your new man now delights in righteousness! You now want to do what is right, you now desire to please God, you now hunger for righteousness! That is the difference between the old man and the new man. And that is why you have still struggled with the flesh and with sin. If the flesh and sin were the old man, there would be no more conflict. Dead men don’t sin! The fact that there is now conflict in your life between sin and the new life of Christ within you is the proof that your old man is dead and that Christ in you is alive. Before you were regenerated there was no conflict! The old man took pleasure in unrighteousness!” —End quote.

Therefore, dear friends, do you believe that you are *just sinners saved by grace*? If you do, let me first say—***you have not been saved.*** Sinners are in dire need of being delivered from sin. They are yet to be saved. Second, ***you will have no part of God’s great plan of the Age of the ages; for there will be no sinners who will inherit the Kingdom of God!***

Isn’t it time to put fallacious doctrines behind us regardless of how accepted they might be? Just because they are quoted time and again, over and over, and are preached from pulpits around the world does not make

them true. Although Vladimir Lenin said that “*A lie told often enough becomes the truth,*” it is still a lie. It only becomes true in the illusions of people’s minds, and illusions themselves are lies. They are not real. They are not true, and everything in them is just as unreal.

Not only did Lenin understand this principle of the lie, Adolph Hitler’s Propaganda Minister of the Nazi Party, Joseph Goebbels, also understood and used it very well. He was noted to have said basically the same as that founder of the Soviet Union but added to it: “*If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself.*” **The Study Of Philosophy by Andrew Pessin & S. Morris Engel.** But it matters not if the whole world believes a lie, even if the author of the lie himself believes it to be true—it remains the same—**A LIE! A LIE! A LIE!** Sugar might make its poison palatable; but the sweetness does not dilute its power of death, such as the first lie spoken. That is, although not a natural “apple,” it was so sweet, so beautiful, so appealing, so inviting, so tantalizing, appearing so crisp and clean, after eating—**IT WAS A LIE THAT SLEW HUMANITY AND EVERY LIVING THING!**

Regardless of the size of the lie, death is always its fruit, both to the liar and to the one who receives it. For, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and **they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.**” ***Proverbs 18:21.*** They who lie love its caustic flavor will die with the ones to whom they serve it. If Adam and Eve could not escape the sentence of death, how do we think we can do better? It is an impossibility! So please, then! Let us all cease from repeating and believing the lie, especially the lie that says we are “*sinners saved by grace.*” OK?

Elwin R. Roach