

God's Free Grace

It is said that soon after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, a French lady who had been in her service attempted to assassinate Elizabeth I, Queen of England.

Having been arrested while hanging about the Court, she boldly announced her name and design, expressing regret that she had failed to accomplish her purpose. She was brought into the presence of Queen Elizabeth, who said to her, "What, think you, is my duty upon the hearing of such a case?"

"Do you put the question to me as Queen or a Judge?" asked the prisoner. "As a Queen," was the reply. "Then you should grant me a pardon," she answered.

"But," inquired the Queen, "what assurance can you give me that you will not abuse my mercy and make an attempt upon my life again? Should I pardon, it should be based upon conditions to be safe from your murderous revenge in future."

"Grace fettered by precautions – grace that hath conditions – is no grace," exclaimed the woman.

History states that the remark so charmed Elizabeth that she immediately ordered her release, and bound her to her royal person ever afterwards by the ties of fervent gratitude and devoted affection.

There can be no doubt that "grace fettered by precautions – grace that hath conditions – is no grace." Now, God has not promised or stipulated to give eternal life to the sinner on account of

his belief and confession, but solely on account of the finished work of Christ, for “grace fettered by precautions – grace that hath conditions – is no grace.”

Very often have I known anxious sinners to keep themselves in darkness and distress because they feared their faith was not of the right kind, and not strong enough, as they express it, or because they felt they had not confessed Christ in a proper form. Thus do they unconsciously strive to find a Saviour, not in Christ, but in their belief and confession; and owing to the deep-seated legalism of the human heart, they pervert the very purpose of God in ordaining salvation by faith.

Satan, with his practised cunning, succeeds in turning away their attention from Christ to themselves; and thus, if he cannot destroy them, he keeps them uncertain in their hopes, feeble in their spiritual growth, and “all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15), instead of going forth the emancipated and rejoicing children of light, and of liberty, and of God.