



**GRACE MAKES
NO CONDITIONS.**

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ON one of the gala days at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, soon after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the general gaiety was arrested by the sudden seizure of a courtly stranger by the guard. His singular appearance had created suspicion, and being watched, he was found to be armed, and bent on mischief. The queen, having ordered the guard to

bring the prisoner before her, asked him :

“Who are you ? ”

“Marguerite Lebrun,” was the reply.

“Marguerite ! Marguerite ! ” cried her majesty in wonder.

“Madam, I wear a beard,” tearing it from her face, “and also a man’s apparel ; but I am a woman.”

“Loose your hands,” said Elizabeth to the guard.

“Nay, madam,” replied the prisoner, “I mind not a rough hand ; what is the pinching of an arm to one who carries a broken heart ? ”

“ Who has broken your heart ? ”

“ Elizabeth of England. Madam, you have reft all that my heart did love—how could it help breaking ? My mistress—my queen—my chief beloved, Mary of Scotland—my husband, too—my all. Yes, lady, beggared and broken-hearted, you bid me speak, you bid me tell my errand. I obey. For years my husband and myself had been honoured in her service ; we were with her when, madam, the horror of that scene was a dagger to my husband. I tried, I prayed, that the wound might staunch ; but—but lady, I am a widow. I lost

a loving husband at Fotheringay I felt my heart strings yield, but I vowed over both their coffins that I would live to revenge both, and I came here to fulfil my vow. A few steps more, and I had succeeded."

It cost the queen a stern effort to retain her composure, but she calmly asked :

"What, think you, is my duty in such a case ? "

"Do you ask as a queen or as a judge ? "

"As a queen."

"Then you should grant me a pardon."

"But what assurance can you

give me that you will not abuse my mercy, and thus attempt my life again? My pardon should be based upon *conditions*.”

“Madam, grace fettered by precautions—grace that hath conditions—is no grace!”

“By my faith, my lords,” said the queen, “I have never been read so noble a lesson. Shall I not bid her go?”

Some of her most trusted courtiers remonstrated against the act, but the queen listened impatiently. Turning to the prisoner she said:

“Are you not a French-woman?”

“ I am.”

“ Whither would you go, should I set you free ? ”

“ To my country and my kindred.”

“ Marguerite Lebrun, I will pardon you ; and I do so *without conditions*. You shall have safe and honourable conveyance to your own country. My loyal guards, see that she is cared for.”

The pardoned woman looked with wonder and gratitude and admiration. For the first time during the interview she made an obeisance ; and carried to her grave a reverence for the

queen that could *freely* forgive a great crime.

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As an illustration of sovereign and saving grace, the foregoing incident, culled from English history, is suggestive.

GRACE MAKES NO CONDITIONS.

Doubtless a sinner must own his lost state and his felt need of salvation ere the grace of God can save him. But, when that grace has wrought a sense of need in his soul, and when he stands convicted before God, as Marguerite Lebrun stood convicted

before the queen, and when, like her, he honestly confesses his guilt, and owns that nothing but grace can meet his case, then grace saves him without making any stipulations whatever. Grace *deserves* everything, but *demands* nothing !

When a man receives the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, his entire moral being and life are transformed. But the wonderful changes made in him are not the *conditions* but the *consequences* of his receiving grace. (Titus ii. 12.)

Grace makes no conditions. It never exacts ! It does not say,

“*If* you do, *then* I will do.” No such word as “if” is in the lips of grace when answering the sinner’s deep need. How could grace *be* grace and demand him to do aught to *merit* it? Impossible. What saith the scriptures? “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt.”

If I give half-a-crown *absolutely* to a beggar, that is grace; but if I give it *conditionally*—be the condition ever so small—it ceases to be grace. Suppose I say to him, “If you blacken my boots, then the money is yours.” Well, he does what I

tell him, and with what result ? Simply this : I am under an obligation to him. I owe him half-a-crown, which he claims accordingly. Hence, plainly on the face of it, the reward cannot be reckoned of grace, but of debt. (Rom. iv. 4, 5.)

List to that whisper Satan gives in the ear of yon anxious soul :

“You can be saved only on *the condition* that you are truly penitent.” (Thus occupying the soul *with its sins.*)

Or the whisper is—

“You can be saved only on *the condition* that you live a holy

life.” (Thus occupying the soul with its *life*.)

Or the whisper is—

“You can be saved only on *the condition* that you have the right kind of faith.” (Thus occupying the soul with its *faith*.)

Or the whisper is—

“You can be saved only on *the condition* that you feel happy.” (Thus occupying the soul with its *feelings*.)

Or the old serpent speaks his final lie as he hisses his final and most deceitful condition of all—

“You can be saved only on *the condition* that you hold on

to Christ.” (Thus occupying the soul with its *fears*.)

Thank God, His blessed gospel does not occupy us thus, but fills the eye with Christ! Yes, anxious reader, “the gospel of the grace of God” is preached to you, and He who is well called “the Spirit of grace” still strives with you, and “the God of all grace” still waits for you, to accept as a free gift from His bountiful hands *His unconditional grace*.

S. J. B. C.

THE FAITHFUL SAYING.

THE Saviour came to save
The ruined sons of men ;
Himself a Ransom gave,
Triumphant rose again ;—
Completing all the work of love
Which drew Him from His home above.

Thus efforts of our own
Are needless and in vain ;
Works never can atone
For sin, nor heaven gain ;—
'Tis Christ who saves ! Yea, Christ alone—
Christ on the cross, Christ on the throne.

Sinner, the sinner's place
In self-abasement take :

Own naught can meet your case,
 But grace for Jesus' sake ;—
 Then will His blood your conscience clear
 Grace free your heart from all its fear.

If you the Saviour trust,
 His word and work confess,
 Then prove His grace you must,
 His willingness to bless !—
 He died for you, He lives on high,
 Your soul's deep need can now supply.

Oh! Lord, believingly,
 My empty hands I lift,
 And simply take from thee
 Salvation as a gift :
 The Gift—the Giver, both art Thou,
 And Thou art mine, my Saviour, now.
 S. J. B. C.