**“Comfort in Conviction” The Signs of the Times, 21, 11.**

E. J. Waggoner

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:7, 8. The first thing that the Holy Spirit does in the way of comforting is to convict of sin. But does the Holy Spirit condemn? Christ said, “I came not to condemn the world.” There is a difference between conviction and condemnation, and in the recognition of this difference we get the Lord. Many suppose that when the Lord reproves, it is a sign of his anger against us. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 167.1}

Conviction is showing a man that he is guilty. Condemnation is the putting of the sentence upon him. We are already under condemnation, because of transgression. Now the Lord comes to us and convicts us by his Spirit, but when he has brought us to this place where we are convicted and acknowledge the fact that we have sinned and are worthy of death, just there the Lord come in and takes away the condemnation. He carries us to that point, and then the sentence is remitted. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 167.2}

God describes himself as the “Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4. He comforts us by showing us sin. The comfort of God’s reproof lies in the fact that the very thing which causes the conviction is the righteousness which is given to take away the sin for which we are convicted. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 167.3}

Now what is the purpose of the comfort which the Lord gives us?—That we may be able to comfort any who are in trouble. God gives us his Spirit in order that we may be able to minister the same to others. So before we can be of any use in proclaiming the message of the Gospel to others, we must receive this comfort in the conviction of sin. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 168.1}

Here is the line between condemnation and justification. We may hold back and pass into condemnation, or we may yield and have no condemnation. If when the conviction comes we accept it, and the righteousness which brings the reproof, then there is no condemnation. But “this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:19. When the Holy Spirit comes, the light is come. It is shining into our hearts to make us see where we have been making mistakes and failings. Many things which we thought virtues we find to be vices. Our diffidence was trust in ourselves, and the fear that we thought was modesty and goodness we find is simply self-love and sensitiveness and the fear of what somebody might say. We thought it was an evidence of our humility, when it was pride. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 168.2}

That is an evidence that “thy light is come.” Now if we cling to self, that light will be condemnation and become darkness, “and if the light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!” We had been in darkness all the time, because the light which was shining had not been received. Now if the light shines and we allow it to become darkness, we are worse off than before. But yielding to it, we who sometimes were darkness become “light in the Lord.” Ephesians 5:8. {SITI March 14, 1895, p. 168.3}

**“Visited and Redeemed” The Signs of the Times, 21, 13.**

E. J. Waggoner

When Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied at the birth of John the Baptist, he said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” Luke 1:68. John’s message was to prepare the way of the Lord. It is specifically prophesied of in Isaiah: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 40:3-5. Further on it says, “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.” {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.1}

The work which John began, therefore, was not only to prepare people for the first advent of Christ, but was to continue until the Lord should come with strong arm to redeem, bringing his reward with him. See Revelation 22:12. So the same work is still going on. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,” and we have it revealed to us now in the things which God has made. The everlasting Gospel is but a call to worship Him that made heaven and earth and all things. The light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon all me. {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.2}

Then we may say the same thing which Zacharias spoke by the Spirit: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” Anyone can say, “He hath visited and redeemed me.” We have redemption through his blood in the forgiveness of sins, because the blood of Christ stands for the life of Christ. We have redemption through his life, for he gave his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28. {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.3}

When did he visit us? Long he has been saying to every one, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Revelation 3:20. He is a welcome visitor, too, because he brings his provision with him, when we have nothing. When we say continually, Lord, abide with us, he does abide. He will stay as long as we are willing to have him, and his presence is life and redemption. This is as really true to-day as when Zacharias spoke, and whoever believes it must be as happy over it as he was. {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.4}

Redeemed! A slave set free! It requires no great stretch of imagination to see how a slave, a captive, driven, scourged, and bound, would feel with his fetters removed, and his freedom given to him. He would be a happy man. He would not receive the news of freedom stoically, and with a long face-not if he believed the message. His heart would be so full he would leap for joy. {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.5}

The Lord wants us to rejoice, not because we think we ought to rejoice, but because we have so vivid a sense of his redemption that we know it to be a fact. We have been captives of a cruel master, and now we are redeemed. We know it because the Lord says so. He has bought us, and given us his own life. Now, when the enemy comes in the form of doubt, in the form of indifference, envy, pride, slavish fear-in a thousand different forms-trying to force us back into bondage, we are to maintain the fact that we are free. Eternal life is our right, through Christ. Let us stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. {SITI March 28, 1895, p. 199.6}