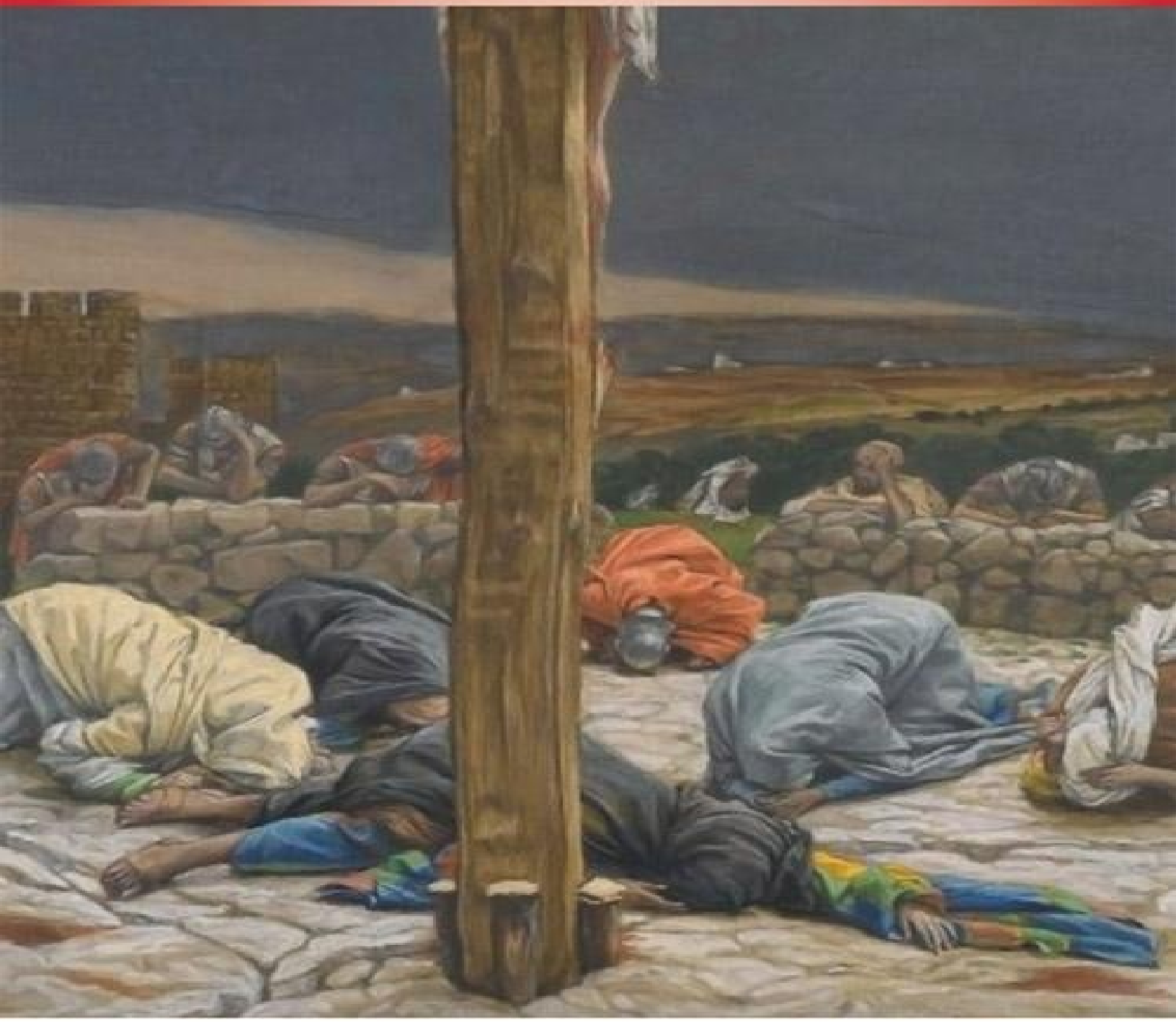
The Sin Bearer



Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

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Horatius Bonar

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1. The Sin Bearer

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."—1 Peter 2:24

Christ bare our sins! The Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all. The words of Peter here are very expressive in the original language. They imply that He carried up our sins with Him to the Cross, and bare them there in all their weight—alone. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Let us consider, first, the load He bore—our *sins*.

When speaking of this burden in the Book of Psalms, He speaks of it as a "burden too heavy to be borne." Both in regard to the number and the weight of these sins they were intolerable. "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me" (Psa 40:12).

There had been sin. That sin must be borne either by the sinner or by one in his room. The penalty must be exhausted. The sinner could not bear it, so as to bear up under it. He must sink into perdition. Nor could he exhaust the penalty, for it is eternal. None but Christ could meet the demand and exhaust the penalty. None but He could bear up under the load, so as to endure the full amount of punishment due. And He has borne it. He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Yet even He groaned beneath the intolerable weight. He Who could uphold all things by the word of His power, was bowed down to the earth with the burden of sin—sin not His own! He Who could with infinite facility sustain the stupendous weight of worlds upon worlds innumerable; He upon Whose shoulders rested the mighty burden of the universe; was pressed even to agony and death, with the load of our transgressions! It was this that in the garden wrung from Him the great drops of blood: it was this that made His soul exceedingly sorrowful even unto death; it was this that nailed Him in agony to the accursed tree; it was this that wrought the death of Him Who was the Prince of life, Who had the keys of hell and death, and covered Him Who was "the light of the world" beneath the darkness of an earthly tomb. Hear how in the Psalms He continually breathes forth the groanings of His wounded spirit beneath the pressure of our iniquities: "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore...I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart" (Psa 38:2, 8). Again, in that Psalm, which we know

was designed to express His feelings under the pressure of our sins when bearing them upon His own body on the tree, hear how He groans under the awful burden, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” etc. Such was the awful burden which He bare on His own body on the Cross. Such was the way in which it crushed and bowed Him down to the earth (Psa 22:1)!

The feelings of the trembling sinner, when awakened under the terrors of the divine law, and made alive to the hell of sin within him, may help to give us some faint idea of the way in which the burden of our sins pressed upon Christ. It is true He had no sin—not the shadow of sin upon Him, for He was the Holy One; yet He speaks always of our sins as if they were His own, as if He had committed them. He felt under them just as if they were His own. He was perfectly holy, yet so closely were our sins bound upon Him by God, that He felt the pressure just as if they were His own. Being our substitute, God dealt with Him as such—as if the sins He bore had really been His, not ours. Being thus in the eye of the law identified with those whose sins He bore, He was made to feel what they would have been doomed to feel, had God left them to reap themselves the fruit of their own transgressions. This awful burden He bore alone. He had none to aid Him; none to relieve Him of any part of its overwhelming pressure. There was none that could assist Him to sustain its load. None could have borne it even had they attempted; but none that really knew what the burden was, would have for a moment thought of attempting it. They would have shrunk from such a perilous undertaking. They would rather have taken upon themselves the burden of upholding the universe, than attempted to bear even one fragment of that load of transgression which Christ bare on the tree. He therefore bore it alone. There was none to divide the burden with Him; nor to uphold Him under it. “My lovers and my friends stand aloof…and my kinsmen stand afar off.” They all forsook Him and fled.

And, as He bare it alone, so He bare it fully and completely. Though He was alone, yet He bore it all; He left no part unborne. Though alone, He was sufficient to bear it all; His being alone did not make His sacrifice less perfect, or its effects less complete. By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. It was an infinite work, but He accomplished it all. It was an infinite burden, but He sustained it all. It was an infinite penalty, but He exhausted it all. Not a stroke was left behind. Not one drop of the cup of judgment put into His hands was left behind. Observe, then, that in bearing our sins He really exhausted the penalty. The penalty was not warded off and prevented reaching us merely; it was exhausted. He bore the punishment which we should have borne, and thereby not merely prevented the law from arresting us with its claims and penalties, but actually satisfied the law to the full. “Christ,” says the apostle,

“hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...” (Gal 3:13).

The work, then, of bearing our sins is a finished work. It was in every jot and tittle accomplished by Christ, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. No part remains for us to do before we can obtain its benefits. No addition can be made to it in any way by us. “It is finished.” It is not as if God had given Christ so much of the work to do, and left it for us to work out the rest in order to be saved. “There is no more offering for sin,” now that He, by His one offering, has perfected forever them that are sanctified, and purchased eternal redemption for us. “He has by himself purged our sins.” He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: the chastisement of our peace was laid on Him: He has finished transgression and made an end of sin: He has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made reconciliation for iniquity. Thus, He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. There has been, once for all, offered a sacrifice such as the sinner needs, and such as God delights in—absolutely perfect and infinitely precious—the sacrifice of the Lamb, without blemish and without spot; the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Here is a sacrifice which has abolished and superseded all other sacrifices, and by that very fact proved itself more perfect, more glorious than all. Here is a sacrifice, which, unlike the legal offerings of old, has never been, nor needs to be repeated, and by that very fact is proved to be more efficacious than all—to have completely attained its end in providing a ransom for the sins of many. Here is set before us a finished sacrifice, and in that sacrifice a finished work; and in that work a finished atonement, a finished righteousness, the righteousness of God—“He was made sin for us though he knew no sin” (2Co 5:21).

Oh, what an infinite treasure house is here displayed, of all that a guilty soul, a burdened sinner can require! Here is an infinite provision for pardon, in Him Who was named Jesus, because He came to save His people from their sins (Mat 1:21). Here is an infinite sufficiency, the sufficiency of Him Who was the Christ, the anointed of the Father, full of grace and truth. Here is infinite fullness, the fullness of Immanuel, God with us. The whole work is done—all things are ready. The Lamb has been slain, atonement has been made, the rock has been smitten, the serpent has been lifted up, the ransom has been paid, the enemy has been vanquished and spoiled, captivity has been led captive, the year of jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord has come! The new covenant has been fully completed, sealed, and ratified—and this is the declaration of Jehovah founded upon it, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb 8:12)!

But, more fully to illustrate the perfect character of this sacrifice—and the completeness of that propitiatory work which is built upon it—let me endeavor to contrast this work with some of man's devices for putting away sin, and secure acceptance with God: let me show you how Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, in opposition to those self-righteous ways in which blinded souls oftentimes seek to bear their own sins; or at least to assist Christ in bearing them.

A. Christ has borne our sins in opposition to our own duties.

First, then, Christ has borne our sins in opposition to our own duties. To be saved by doing something ourselves, and to be saved by believing what another has done, are surely things so totally at variance with each other, that we are at a loss to discover how they could ever come to be confounded, or how anyone professing to look for salvation from what Christ has done, could ever lean upon himself at all. Yet, as it was with the Pharisees of old, who, while most zealous for the sacrificial observances, yet trusted in their own works to make atonement for sin, so it is with many amongst ourselves. They name the name of Christ, yet make a Savior of their duties, their good deeds, their honest or charitable doings, the excellence of their character, their zeal for public welfare, their integrity, their honorable name among men! These are made to occupy the place of Christ in the bearing of their sins. Or if they are not sufficiently self-righteous to lay the whole weight and stress of their sins upon these, yet they persist in laying at least a large proportion of the burden upon them, as if it were the design of the Savior's work, to lay part of the foundation, and leave them to finish it by their own exertions!

One would think that if we really knew what it is to bear the weight of sin—even of one sin—we would shrink from the very idea of giving any share in this. Yet we seem as if anxious to take some part in this awful work; as if covetous of a share in this awful honor. We seem solicitous to try our strength in bearing this tremendous burden, which none but God manifest in flesh could undertake, and whose pressure bowed even *Him* to the dust. We seem as if afraid lest Christ should not have done enough—afraid lest we should be denied the privilege of bearing that which cost Him the strong crying and tears, the agony of the garden, the shame of the Cross, the abasement of the tomb. But all this burden has been borne already by Him, and cannot in any way be borne over again by us. We can neither bear it in whole nor in part. It was not left for us to

begin, neither was it left for us to finish: nor in any way to assist Christ (if we may so speak) in finishing it. Ours is to build upon a finished foundation, to keep the fabric separate from the foundation, and not to add any stones of our own to the sure, the perfect, the precious Stone already laid.

How common is it with many to conceive and speak of the work of Christ, as if the manner in which it was made available for us was by its imparting a meritorious, or at least an acceptable character to our own deeds! As if Christ saved us, not by doing anything for us, as our sacrifice or substitute, not by bearing our sins for us; but by giving such a value to all we do ourselves, as to procure our acceptance with God! What is this but to make Christ the minister both of self-righteousness and sin? It is not to believe in Christ as bearing our sins, but merely as enabling us to bear them ourselves. In opposition to such self-righteous attempts to share with Christ both the burden and the glory of redemption, it is said that Christ His own self bare our sins (1Pe 2:24). The expression is made very strong and particular, just in order to show that it was Jesus and none but Jesus; that it was Jesus and not our duties; that it was Jesus alone, and not partly Jesus and partly our duties, that bare our sins. Our duties then can bear no part of our sins at all. They cannot bear the weight of even one transgression of the law. However numerous and however goodly and excellent these duties may seem; and however few and small our sins may appear: yet still the best and holiest duty that ever a saint performed, cannot bear the weight of even the smallest sin! It is Jesus, none but Jesus, nothing but Jesus—who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He saves entirely Himself; He does not, as some imagine, assist us in saving ourselves; nor does He allow us, as others imagine, to assist Him in saving us.

B. In opposition to all outward ordinances and privileges

Secondly, Christ bare our sins in opposition to all outward ordinances and privileges. How much stress do some lay on ordinances as if they were actually our saviors! These seem all the mediatorship[1] to which many are trusting for removing God’s anger, and securing His favor. They are strict and frequent in the observance of ordinances, and having been so, their idea is that it would be unfair and unjust in God to lay their sins to their charge. That is to say, they substitute ordinances for the sacrifice of Christ. They lay their sins upon these, as if they were sufficient to bear the weight of one single transgression of a soul! They do perhaps admit, that in the observance of these they are defective; nay,

perhaps, that ordinances themselves are weak and unavailing; but then they consider that the object of Christ's death was to give ordinances a value and efficacy which they had not in themselves, by which they are rendered capable of bearing the weight of their sins. That is to say, they imagine by these ordinances to assist Christ in bearing the weight of their sins. And when they find that this does not bring any peace to their consciences, nor relieve them of the burden and sense of guilt, they are ready to say with Israel, "Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not; wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou regardest not" (Isa 58:3). Thus they deny the great truth that the bearing of our sins is a thing already past and perfected eighteen hundred years ago—that Christ only, Christ wholly bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

If trusting to duties for the remission of sin, may be called an attempt to bribe God to forgive us, trusting to ordinances may be called an attempt to flatter God to forgive us. True, ordinances are of God's appointment. True, they are to be diligently observed, and we can expect no blessing when we neglect them. But then they are available only for the purpose for which God has set them up, and for no other. And seeing God has appointed them not for procuring remission of sin, but for the proclaiming remission through another, even through Christ, it is an insult to the God by Whom they were established to use them for an end for which He did not ordain them—it is an insult to that Savior Whose finished work they thus supersede; it is a miserable delusion of hell in the worshipper to take refuge in these as a sacrifice for sin. And this is true of all ordinances, even of that most sacred of all, The Lord's Supper. Even this ordinance, solemn as it is, glorious as it is, is not for the bearing of our sins. It has no more power than the most common rite…to bear one single sin! It tells of sin already borne; borne by Another; borne by Jesus in His own body on the tree. The bread and the wine are placed upon that table, not that they may bear our sins, or any part of our sins, but that they may testify of sins already borne. They are witnesses of sin already atoned for by Another, and not to be again atoned for by us. They seal our pardon, but they do not purchase it. They seal our peace, but they do not procure it. They tell us of sin, whose weight has been already borne. They point away from themselves altogether. They point to Calvary; they point to the Cross; they point to Him Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and Who by that one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

C. In opposition to our own repentance and convictions of sin

Thirdly, Christ bore our sins in opposition to our own repentance and convictions of sin. How much and how often are sinners tempted to make these bear the weight of their sins. The formalist does this when he exalts repentance into the place of Christ, making it his atonement; when he imagines repentance to have of itself any power to procure remission. But I do not speak of the mere formalist; I speak of those in whose souls there is a deeper work going on; in whom there is much real anxiety and earnestness in the matter of religion. They are apt to lay upon conviction of sin, and mourning for sin, a weight which they cannot bear. These are in themselves precious fruits of the Spirit's work in us; but be they ever so precious, they can never be substituted in room of Christ's work for us. They can no more bear the weight of sin than duties or ordinances can. Nay, their very end is to show you that sin is so awful a thing, its guilt so infinite, and its burden so intolerable, that you cannot bear any part of it yourself; and that if one fragment were to be laid on you, it would sink you to the lowest hell.

Convictions then are only precious when they lead you away from themselves to Christ; *the law is still our schoolmaster*, as it was Israel's, to bring us to Christ. Yet how often is an anxious soul led to say—"Oh, if I but had convictions I should have peace." Alas! Alas! Brethren, you know not what you say. Convictions are precious things, but they bring no peace of themselves, but war and storm and trouble. Convictions are precious things, but they are not salvation; they are not the Savior. It is well to be awakened from sleep when danger is hanging over us; but to awake from sleep is not to escape from danger. It is only to be sensible of danger, nothing more. In like manner, to be convinced is merely to be made sensible that your soul is in danger. It is nothing more. It is not deliverance. Of itself it can bring no deliverance; it tells us of no Savior. It merely tells us that we need one.

Yet there are many who, when they have had deep convictions of sin—strong terrors of the law—congratulate themselves as if all were well. They say, "Ah! I have been convicted of sin: I have been under terrors, it is well with me, I am safe." Well with you? Safe? Is it well with the seaman when he awakes and finds his vessel going to pieces upon the rocks amid the fury of the whelming surge? Is it well with the sleeper when he awakes at midnight amid the flames of his dwelling? Does he say, "Ah, it is well with me; I have seen the flames." In this way, sinners are not unfrequently led to be content with some resting place short of the appointed one. Anxiety to have deep convictions, and contentment with them after they have been experienced, are too often the means which Satan uses for turning away the sinner's eye from the perfect work of Jesus, Who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

In like manner, many are led away from the sure foundation by the stress they are disposed to lay upon their own feelings and frames of soul. Most of us have doubtless felt the tendency of the mind to count much upon these, as if our whole forgiveness and peace with God depended upon these—as if we could have no forgiveness, or at least no sense of forgiveness, save when our feelings were of a certain cast, or of a certain degree of warmth and power. But it is most manifest that if Jesus has indeed borne our sins Himself, then nothing in us at all can avail in aught to this end. Nothing can be more dishonoring to Christ than thus to divide the work of atonement with Him. Nothing can be more perilous to the soul than thus to conclude favorably or unfavorably of our good estate, or our acceptance with God, because of the possession or the want of certain joyful emotions of soul. The work of Christ remains perfect, and the foundation of God standeth sure, not withstanding all the fluctuations and uncertainties that may roll over us. We change; it changes not. Our feelings vary; He varies not. His love and favor toward us do not depend upon the warmth or the steadfastness of our love toward Him, but remain ever the same. Our changeful feelings may oftentimes abate our joy, but our peace ought to abide unmoved, our conscious reconciliation ought never to be interrupted. Our peace with God, our forgiveness, our reconciliation flow wholly from the sin-atoning sacrifice of Jesus; and that has no variableness. A conscience once sprinkled with blood will whisper peace even in the darkest hour—when new discoveries of corruption are rising up to alarm and amaze us, and our iniquities seem a burden too heavy to be borne. A soul that realizes and keeps in view the perfect efficacy of that sprinkled blood to purge from dead works, will still possess itself in peace and patience even when all sensible experience of delight has fled, and insensibility and deadness weigh it to the dust. It is not our feeling towards God that is our ground of peace, but His feeling towards us. It is not what we feel in ourselves, but what we know of Him, that produces and maintains the serenity of the soul. He is our rock. He is our peace. He is our all; and we are complete in Him!

D. In opposition to our own faith

Fourthly, Christ bare our sins, in opposition to our own faith, our own graces, and to the work of the Spirit in us. It is not our faith or our holiness that bears the burden of our sins. To make a savior of our faith is as utterly subversive of the Gospel as to make a savior of our works. To trust in our works is self-righteousness—to trust in our faith is the same. There is no merit, no virtue in believing, which we can build a claim upon. To feed upon the consciousness of faith, is not to feed upon the bread of life; to rest upon our act

of faith is to lose sight of Him Who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. Our forgiveness and peace do not rest upon the work of the Holy Spirit in us—nor upon the graces and fruits which He calls forth and ripens in the soul. *It is Christ's work for us, and not the Spirit's work in us, that is the ground of our peace.* Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:21). The work of grace within us cannot bear the burden of our sins; it cannot come in the room of the finished sacrifice and the sprinkled blood, by which, being once purged, "we have no more conscience of sin." It is not upon our growth in grace and in holiness, that we are to rest our peace. It is not thus that a guilty conscience is made clear, or a burdened conscience relieved. No. Christ is our propitiation. Christ is our peace. Christ is our righteousness. We are complete in Him—not in ourselves—not in our holiness—not in our love, but in Him. At all times, and in all conditions, complete in Him, so long as we hold fast our confidence in His name, and rest upon the glorious truth, which, in spite of all fluctuations in us, remains forever the same; that He, His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

Besides, our graces never will grow, the fruits of the Spirit never will ripen, so long as we hang our forgiveness upon them. It is only when forgiven that we begin to grow in grace. It is not till we are at peace with God that we can begin to be holy. And it is by constantly realizing that forgiveness, and taking it in the same way to the end, as we received it when first we believed, that we can make any progress in grace at all. The more we grow in grace, the more shall we see of the infinite sufficiency of Jesus, and our perfect completeness in Him, however poor and empty in ourselves; the more shall we be led to throw ourselves wholly upon Christ, so that our iniquities may be all borne by Him, and none left for ourselves to bear. Let us beware of resting upon our grace instead of resting upon our Savior. Grace is indeed a most precious treasure, an inestimable gift—and in the conscious possession of such a treasure, you may with all safety take up the apostle's rapturous song, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope" (1Pe 1:3). But still, remember that it is not and cannot be our savior! It cannot bear the burden of our sins; it cannot purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. It cannot be our Advocate; it cannot be our Mediator; it cannot form the real ground of our hope and peace and confidence toward God. Christ has borne our sins in His own body on the tree—and that is our hope, that is our peace, that is our confidence and joy.

While thus there is nothing that can give us peace but the sight of Jesus bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, there is nothing that can humble us but this. An unforgiven soul is always self-righteous and proud. It is the free, the

complete forgiveness of the Cross that humbles the soul and melts the heart. A partial forgiveness that would keep us in suspense, would only harden and irritate the soul. But a complete forgiveness prostrates at once the rebellious spirit, disarms its suspicions, dissolves it in penitence and love! “They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn!” So long as we conceive of the forgiveness as partial, so long as we are afraid to search into the depths of iniquity within, we are afraid to know the worst. Till the conscience is thoroughly purged by the blood of sprinkling, we shrink from the full and unreserved scrutiny of our hearts. But when once the conscience is made clean, then we dread no longer even the fullest exposure in the clearest light, for we already know the worst of ourselves, that we are the chief of sinners; and we know the best, that we are completely forgiven! In these circumstances, we are delivered from all temptation to palliate the guilt or lessen the number of our sins; we feel now under no necessity to vindicate ourselves, or to take any other ground of defense but just that we *are* the chief of sinners. It is this that humbles us, and it is this that gives us simplicity and guilelessness of heart—that delivers us from every deceitful, sinister, selfish purpose and motive. And it is to this that David alludes in the thirty-second Psalm, when, after speaking of the blessedness of man when transgression is forgiven, etc., he thus finishes the character, and sums up the privileges of a forgiven soul—“in whose spirit there is no guile.” Being freely and completely forgiven—all his former temptations to deceit and guile have fled away—his soul becomes as a weaned child.

Behold, then, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world! See how He bare the mighty load of your transgressions, and how He bare it alone! His body was the point upon which all was concentrated—upon which the mighty mass of sin was laid entire! In His death upon the Cross, behold the mighty sacrifice, the ransom for the sins of many! See there the sum of all His obedience and sufferings! Behold the finished work!—the work finished and completed in all its parts eighteen hundred years ago—a work to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken—a work of stupendous magnitude which He alone could have undertaken and accomplished! Behold our sacrifice, our finished sacrifice, our perfected redemption, the sole foundation of our peace and hope and joy. “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” It is not said that our duties, or our prayers, or our fastings, or our convictions of sin, or our repentance, or our honest life, or our alms-deeds, or our faith, or our grace—it is not said that these bare our sins—it was Jesus Who bare it; Jesus Himself, Jesus alone, Jesus, and none but Jesus, “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

2. Sin Put Away by Christ

“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”—Hebrews 9:26

This verse states the end for which the Savior of the world appeared. It was “to put away sin.” This end He has accomplished. It is no longer a mere purpose, something future, but already finished. He has done that which He came into the world to do. He *hath* put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That sacrifice was offered and accepted eighteen hundred years ago. And by that sacrifice sin was put away. If sin was not put away then, it certainly has not been put away since, nor can ever be. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; there is no other putting away of it. The offering up of that sacrifice, and the putting away of sin, are things now past. And both of these were finished together upon the Cross. We have therefore glad tidings to proclaim to every sinner; glad tidings for thee, whosoever thou art, who readest these lines. Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself!

But in what sense has He put away sin? Not in the sense of putting it out of existence. He has not put it away so that it has ceased to be. It still exists, as you know, and perhaps lament. It exists in your heart, and exists in your life. It mingles in every thought of the one, and in every act of the other. To such an extent does it exist, that in God’s pure all-seeing eye, there seems to be nothing in either but sin. The whole is nothing but one vast mass of sin. In this sense, sin is *not* put away from any in the world that now is—so far from it that it overspreads the whole race of man, as widely as the waters of Noah’s deluge overspread the earth. To that eye which takes in the whole of it at one glance, and sees the guilt of each man minutely and fully, so hateful a sight does this guilty world present, that the wonder is, that God does not put sin away by the destruction of every being on whom it appears. So awful a doom could only be stayed, even for a moment, by that sacrifice of Himself, which Christ has offered up. This sacrifice is the only barrier between a guilty world and the wrath of an angry God. It is the only thing that prevents the vengeance of eternal fire being poured out for the instant destruction of this sinful earth.

Neither has Christ put away sin in such a sense that it cannot and will not be punished. Notwithstanding what He has done, it may be punished, and it is punished in the case of thousands and tens of thousands in the world of woe. Christ’s death has not blotted hell out of being. It has not quenched the

everlasting burnings, so as to make it an impossible thing that any sinner should ever feel them. He has done everything that is necessary to keep you, or any, even the guiltiest sinner upon earth, from going to hell. But hell still exists, and the work of Christ has not made it impossible that you should fall into it. And not withstanding that work, the penalty of sin—of all your sin—may yet be inflicted on your soul there, even as at this very moment it is inflicted upon countless myriad of souls, once within the reach of mercy. Just read these two plain passages (and there are thousands of such): Ephesians 5:3-6; Colossians 3:5-6; and beware of flattering yourselves that because Christ hath put away sin, you shall not be punished. On the contrary, while that precious fact proclaims that forgiveness is free to all—free to you just now, and as you are; nothing in the universe proclaims so loudly that escape from punishment is impossible, and condemnation inevitable, if you refuse what has thus been so generously provided. Even Christ Himself, Who was God clothed with our nature, behooved[2] to die, because standing in the room of the guilty. And while this fact proclaims to us that none need to die for their own sins, since this Mighty One has died for sin already, it also declares that none can possibly escape from death on whom any sin shall at last be found. For if it was punished when found upon the Son of God, though not His own, is there any being, even the highest in creation, that can escape, if even so much as one sin be found in him?

Christ then hath not put away sin, so that it does not exist or cannot be punished. But He hath already put away sin, in such a sense that it no more stands as an obstacle in the way of your going to God. He has so put it away that you may go to God just now and as you are, with all your filth and sin, even as a child goes to the bosom of its own father. He has so put it away, that you may go to Him with everything you fear, to spread it out before Him, with everything you want, to obtain it from Him. He has so put it away, that you may go to him now with all boldness, nothing doubting. That which gives you access at all, gives you access with boldness, and assures you of a welcome. That which gives you any hope at all, gives you every hope, nay, takes away all ground for unbelief or fear. Where is there room for doubt, or suspicion, or want of assured confidence, if Christ has really done all that this passage (Heb 9:26) declares He has? Once your sin was such a barrier that there was no access to God, the Fountain of life, for a guilty creature like you. It made a gulf between you and that blessed fountain, which, but for the work of Christ, none could ever have crossed. It barred His throne—it shut His presence against you. It made you, for anything you could do, an eternal exile from that presence which is the paradise of the soul, and where there are rivers of pleasure forever. And but for the work of Christ putting away your sin, this exclusion must have continued forever.

But blessed be His precious name, He hath now put away sin, so that there is no more exclusion of you, or any poor sinner upon earth. The sentence of banishment is repealed. The throne of God now stands open to you. There is not an obstacle, not a single stone or straw in your way to it. It is open and free to all. God is now calling His banished ones home. He is inviting you to Himself just now—inviting you once more to share in all the fullness that is in Himself. And on this invitation, and because the Lamb of God has put away sin, you may go to Him at this moment as freely and confidingly as if you had never sinned at all. You may go to Him with as confident a heart as any of the unfallen angels round His throne. Nay, more so, for they approach on the ground of a creature's innocence—you are invited near on the righteousness of Him, Who is God over all. And coming on this ground you may freely ask for everything, in the full assurance that all shall be given till you happen to ask for something better and dearer to God, than what He has given you already unasked—His own Son. Poor wanders! Why not on such a ground return to such a home? Why stand afar off in poverty, rags, and wretchedness, when through the sacrifice of his own Son, the way to your Father's house, your Father's arms, the fullness of your Father's love, is entirely open (Luk 15)?

Christ hath also put away sin, insofar as it was an obstacle in the way of God's love flowing forth most freely towards us, towards any sinner upon earth, towards the poor guilty sinner who may now be reading these lines. In consequence of the sacrifice of Himself, none of our past or present sins are any reason why that love should not fix on you, and enrich you with all its boundless treasures. Notwithstanding them all, God can, honorably to Himself, and safely in respect to His government, make you its blessed object, and pour out upon you its immeasurable, inexhaustible riches. And what He can do He is most willing to do. You have the assurance of this in the numberless invitations by which He is inviting you to come to Himself for everything (Isa 55:1; Mat 11:28; Rev 22:17). For each one of these is as much addressed to you personally and specially, as if it had been inscribed with your own name, or sent to you expressly down from heaven. And all of them not only imply that He is ready, but even longing to bless you with the free forgiveness, the overflowing love of a father's heart. These are just the calls of His love to you, now that all obstacles are taken out of the way of its freest and most unlimited exercise. They are the voice of love sounding upon earth in the ears of every poor wanderer, a welcome to all the treasures of a father's grace, a welcome to the place of a son in a father's heart.

And of this blessed fact you have likewise the assurance in the past doings of that same love. What has it already done to take every obstacle away that once

withstood your enjoying it? What has it already given? It has given His own Son. This is the measure, the manifestation of the Father's love! Think of it. Try and take its dimensions. That gift proves it infinite. And dare you not trust an infinite love—that love being also free? Dare you not cast yourself without reserve or fear upon a love that is perfectly free and perfectly infinite? And now that it is as free to flow out upon you, as the very light or air of heaven, can you not leave yourself at its disposal? Can you not expect everything great and blessed at its hands? If there is nothing in the way of that free and infinite love, why may not you enjoy it, as much as any guilty sinner that has ever gone before you?

And from that love which has already given the Son, and thus made a free course for every other, may you not hope to receive even "all things"? If it gave even the Son, when every obstacle stood in the way, what will it not give now that every obstacle has been taken out of the way by the propitiation for sin which that Son has made? Before that sacrifice was offered, it might be said to be pent up and confined in the Father's bosom, waiting till the hindrance should be removed. Now it is no longer pent up. It has a righteous opening out of which it may issue forth, and a righteous channel along which to pour itself. Now it is streaming over on every side. It is flowing on in full tide towards sinners. It is seeking to flow into each of you. And it would enter if you would not close your hearts against it. It would come in and fill your soul with its blessed peace, just as the light pours in when the eye is opened upon the sun. As there is no more obstacle in the way of the poor prodigal's return to his father, so is there no more any obstacle in the way of the Father's most gracious welcome to the poor prodigal. The one is free to return, the other to receive; the one may come without fear, the other may welcome without dishonor. Christ has made way for both at once, and by the same act—the sacrifice of Himself. Now that the way is open, and a Father's arm stretched wide to welcome thee, poor prodigal, wilt thou not return?

In a word, Christ hath put away sin, so that now it is no more a necessary and unavoidable cause of punishment to those who have personally committed it. But for His sacrifice, it would and must have been so in every case whatever. The honor of God's character, and the safety of His holy moral government, would have made this indispensable. But the one is now so entirely vindicated, and the other so inviolably protected by the great sacrifice of the Cross, that no necessity now compels the moral Governor of the universe to punish sin in the person of those who commit it. In consequence of that one great event, and on the ground of it, God can now most honorably dispense forgiveness and eternal life to every guilty rebel upon earth, and that most freely—without any

restriction or term whatever—even without money and without price. That great sacrifice did more to vindicate His character and uphold the rectitude of His government, than the eternal death of all would have done. Insofar as these are concerned, that one event, once for all, has therefore rendered this unnecessary; and God is accordingly, in consideration of that alone, with which He is entirely and forever satisfied, now offering to pass from the sentence of death in the case of every sinner whatever, who is wishing it at his hands. And should any necessity henceforth arise for executing that sentence of eternal death, it must be created by the sinner himself—by his obstinate refusal to accept deliverance, so generously procured, so freely offered—put thus freely and entirely at his own disposal.

Poor soul! Just look to the sacrifice of the Cross, and tell me after this why you should die? That was the sacrifice of Himself, God in your flesh! Think of Him Who was the Lawgiver, rising up from His throne, and in the nature of a creature rendering obedience to its utmost demands. Was not this doing higher homage to the majesty of God's holy law, than could have been done by the entire and eternal obedience of all mere creatures? After this, what can be needed to assert its dignity, and maintain its honor? Think of Him Who was God over all, the source of all life and being, and, therefore, by infinite degrees better than all—think of Him in our flesh, dying in the room of the guilty! It is in consequence of this, and this alone, that God is now proclaiming free forgiveness to all. He can give you pardon and eternal life, free as He gives you the light of His sun; and in consequence of the sacrifice of Himself, no stain is thereby cast on His character, no danger accrues to His holy government. This is the righteous and honorable way in which the holy Governor of the universe is now offering life to all of our fallen race. Go, poor sinner, take it at His hand. Go to Him and be pardoned. Go to Him and be freely loved. Go to Him and live forever. All has been done that is necessary for this. All you need now waits your mere acceptance. Sin, the only obstacle, has, in the sense just stated, been taken away. All sacrifice has now ceased. Why? Because that has been offered which answers all. Look to that sacrifice, and to that alone—and if the Spirit sheds His light upon it, it will also satisfy you. It will satisfy your conscience, and take from it the conviction that sin must also be punished in you. That is your life, your light, your peace, your joy, your all. That and that alone will fill you with a sense of forgiveness—will assure you of everything, by assuring you that God is pacified, that God is your friend.

There is no room for any soul to deprive himself of all this comfort by saying—"But is it my sin? No doubt He hath put away some sin, but can I be sure it is mine?" There is no room for such a question, if the sense above stated

be given to the words. In that sense, it is all sin that is put away. Mark the very language, “to put away sin”—sin in general—not some person’s merely, but sin. Think of the sense above given to the words, and ask yourselves if it be not the burden of the whole Gospel, the sum and substance of the good news proclaimed therein to every sinner without exception; that insofar as it was a necessary cause of eternal death to the guilty, or as any barrier in the way of coming to God, and of God’s full tide of love coming to him, sin hath been put away from every poor soul, still in this world and on this side of hell. Besides, if this were not true of all, how could it be true of any? Where could even the Apostle Paul, or any of the apostles or primitive Christians, obtain the assurance of their sins being put away, if it was not in the simple declaration respecting Christ’s infinitely precious offering? They had no revelation of this blessed fact, special and peculiar to themselves. If they found it at all, they found it just in such an universal declaration as that before us. If they found it there, why may not you—why may not any? Their names are no more there than yours. And if that sacrifice has done all that was needful for the putting away of your sins, how can you think of having them put away by something done in or by yourself? In that case, yours would be put away, not by the sacrifice of Himself, but by something in you? If by that sacrifice, the thing is done eighteen hundred years ago; if not then, should it ever be done, it must be owing, not to Christ’s sacrifice, but to something else, which is future and yet to be done.

Oh! That men but knew the completeness, perfection, infinite efficacy of this one sacrifice, and the absolute freeness with which, on the ground of it, and of it alone, all the blessings of salvation are offered to every sinner without exception. The knowledge of this would ease their hearts at once, would assure them at once of everything—of safety, of free forgiveness, yea, even of life everlasting. This grand atonement is the ground of all assurance. Look to the subsequent context, and say if it be not so (Heb10:19-22). What is the blessed doctrine of this context? Is it not that Christ hath done by the one offering of Himself, once for all, what all the offerings under the law could not do, and which their very repetition proved they could not do? All offering has ceased, just because there is remission now free to all (Heb 10:18). And what is the result of the whole in respect to us? Why just that we may come with consciences entirely disburdened, by this one offering, of all dread and apprehension, even in the full assurance of faith, that in His Son, God is now well pleased. In this blessed and childlike assurance we may now go to God as our Father for everything we need or wish for, in this world and in the world to come?

Oh, yes, this sacrifice is the ground of all assurance. It is the mere sight of

this sacrifice in all its glorious sufficiency, that heals our whole spiritual case—that sets us right at once with God, and makes us safe for eternity. It is not the sight of this sacrifice and something else—something of our own added thereto, our own faith in it for instance, that assures the soul before God, and forms the ground of everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Our faith is just our seeing that this sacrifice is complete and perfect by itself alone, neither needing nor admitting the addition of anything else whatever, as a ground of confidence, a ground of childlike approach to God. For this, it is the sacrifice alone that needs to be seen, and not our faith along with it. It is because we think that the latter must be seen along with the former, and because we are always going in quest of the latter as the more important of the two, that our souls see no light, or the mere twilight, the mingling of light and darkness. In seeking the latter, we lose sight of the former, and therefore of all our light and comfort, for it is the former which is the source of all.

Oh, that you would look to the sacrifice alone, and by itself. Nothing else but that sacrifice seen in all its solitary naked glory, is necessary to make a heaven within your hearts even now, and make you sure of heaven hereafter. I want nothing as my ground of confidence before God, as the means of assuring me of everything, nothing between me and hell—but the simple sacrifice of Christ. Let me see just that sacrifice, and I see the everlasting proof that there is a love in the heart of God, which is absolutely infinite, and which is now free to me and to every human being whatever. Can more be needed? Can more be desired? Can more be obtained? This is all. “None but Christ; none but Christ.”

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”—John 1:29.

From The Kelso Tracts*; available with three others from Chapel Library in a booklet entitled “The Sin Bearer.”*

3. God’s Unspeakable Gift

The Sinner’s Pledge and Plea for Every Blessing

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”—Romans 8:32

The apostle here first states a fact; and then he tells us what that fact warrants us to expect from God. He reminds us of what God has done, and then infers from this what God will do. “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all”; therefore there is nothing that He will deny us; “how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Now God had every reason to spare His Son, and none to induce Him to deliver Him up. For, first, He was the object of the Father’s infinite and unutterable love. “The Father loveth the Son” (Joh 3:35). “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Mat 3:17). And whom does an earthly father spare most, but his best beloved child (Mal 3:17)? Whom is he most unwilling to deliver up to pain or infamy, but the son of his affections? And is not this unwillingness in proportion to the love he bears him? The more that he delights in him, the more does he desire to spare him. If such then be the feeling in the narrow frozen selfish soul of man, what must it be in the infinite bosom of the infinite God? Which of all the beings in the universe would He have most wished to spare; which of them all would He be most reluctant to deliver up? The Son of His love! That Son in Whom His “soul delighted” (Isa 42:1)—that Son Whom He loved infinitely more than all the angels of heaven.

Second, He was infinitely worthy of all that infinite love. He was worthy of the love of all creatures, worthy of the love of all angels, worthy of the love of God! Of no other being can it be said that it is worthy of the love of God, far less that it is infinitely worthy of it. Yet so it was with the Son; for in Him there was infinite glory, infinite excellence, infinite beauty, infinite perfection. In Him there was an infinitely worthy object for the whole infinite love of the eternal Father.

Third, He loved the Father with an infinite love; and what more painful or bitter to a father than to part with a child that loves him tenderly, and clings to him fondly, and cannot bear the thought of separation? Here was another reason why the Father might have spared the Son.

Fourth, we had no claim upon God for such a gift as this. In truth we had no claim upon Him for any gift at all. Even unfallen creatures cannot properly be said to have a claim upon God for His blessings, for what He gives to them even, He bestows of His free bounty. Much less then can fallen beings have any claims upon Him. Even for His commonest mercies we have none. Even for a morsel of food or a drop of cold water we have none—no claim at all! Our only claim is for wrath, for punishment, for hell! This is our only claim, as sinners; what possible claim then could we have for the gift of His own Son! Yet it was for those who had no claim upon Him for anything but an eternal hell, that He delivered up His Son! Had it been for angels who had never sinned, it would not have been so marvelous (Heb 2:16). But for us—for sinners, for enemies, for those who hated Him—how passing wonderful! We might conceive some reasons why He should give Him for angels, but what reason can be imagined why He should part with Him for us! The richest gift for the unworthiest of all! And then not only undeserved by us; but unsought, undesired, uncared for; nay, hated and spurned (Rom 5:6-8; Eph 2:2-5)!

Truly, the Father had every conceivable reason to spare His Son, and none that we could have imagined for delivering Him up. Yet all this did not move Him to withhold the gift. “He spared him not.”

And why does the apostle use the word “spare” in speaking of His gift? To show us it was an infinite sacrifice that He was consenting to make—to teach us that it was no light, no trivial thing; the occasion of emotion in the Father’s bosom—to imply that (to speak after the manner of men) it cost Him an infinite struggle to part with such a Son! As if He would say that, had it been possible, He would far rather have spared Him; far rather have allowed the cup to pass from Him, or never put that cup into His hands at all. And to bring out this idea more strongly, the apostle adds, “delivered him up,” that is, He delivered Him up as the judge does the criminal; handed Him over as a victim to His relentless foes. He took Him out of His bosom, where He had dwelt from eternity, and gave Him over to the disposal of cruel enemies. How amazing! He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all! He freely consented to the mighty, the Infinite sacrifice (Isa 53:10)!

And why was it that these weighty reasons availed nothing to stay His purpose? Why was it that the Father spared not His Son? That Son Himself answers the question, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Joh 3:16). This was the one reason which prevailed against all those manifold and infinitely weighty reasons for sparing the Son. Though He was infinitely beloved of the Father—though He was infinitely worthy of all the

Father's love—though He infinitely loved Him in return, and had done nothing to deserve anything but love—though we had no claim upon God for such a gift; yet God so loved the world that He gave His Son! He spared not Him that He might spare us. He delivered up Him that He might not deliver up us. He parted with Him that He might not part with us. He gave Him up to the curse, that He might obtain for us the blessing. He poured on Him the vials of His infinite wrath, that He might pour out on us the full measure of His infinite love.

Yes, it was for us that He delivered Him up! It was that He might take our place and bear our sins, that the Father sent the Son! And we know that the Son of God has come and stood in our place. "He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree…" (1Pe 2:24). He has finished transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:24). He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He took not merely our nature, becoming bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, but our place, our room, our state, our legal responsibilities. He is not simply a savior; but a savior as being a sacrifice, a substitute, a surety. Hence in the salvation of a soul, there is a complete exchange between the sinner and the Savior.

He takes all that belongs to us as sinners, and gives us in exchange all that belongs to Himself as the Father's holy and well-beloved Son. He takes from us all our sin, all our guilt, all our unworthiness, and gives us in exchange all his infinite righteousness, and innocence, and worthiness in the Father's eyes. He transfers to us what belongs to Himself. Thus "God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption…" (1Co 1:30); and thus we are "made…accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6). "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous" (Rom 5:19).

It was for this very end that the Father spared Him not. It was to bring about this transference, this complete exchange, that He delivered Him up for us all. He placed Him in our room, that He might place us in His. He treated Him as we deserved to be treated, in order that He might treat us as He deserved to be treated. He dealt with Him as a sinner, in order that He might deal with us as righteous—perfectly, yea infinitely righteous. He inflicted on Him all that should have been inflicted on us, in order that He might bestow upon us all that should be bestowed on Him. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Co 5:21).

And this exchange is free to all! It is infinitely glorious, yet it is entirely free—free to every man as a sinner, just as He is, just as He stands! It is without

money and without price. It takes nothing for granted, but that we need it. It requireth neither price nor preparation, nor prerequisite on our part. It is absolutely and altogether free. And herein are the glad tidings of great joy comprised. God addresses each of us, and asks us to consent to this exchange. This is all. He does not ask us to pay for it, or to endeavor to deserve it, or to qualify ourselves for receiving it; but just that we should consent to it—that we should "submit ourselves to the righteousness of God." All He asks is to allow Him to clothe us with the righteousness of His Son: to take away our filthy raiment and clothe us with the fine linen, clean and white!

Reader! Are not these "good tidings of great joy"? Could anything be more fitted to gladden the heart of a sinner who knows that ere long he must stand before God in judgment, and has nothing about him but unrighteousness and desert of hell? And these tidings are as true as they are glad. If then you are not comforted or gladdened by them, it must be because you receive them not—because you will not consent to this blessed exchange. It is not because your sins are too many or too great to be forgiven; it is not because your heart is too hard to be softened, or your nature too corrupt to be renewed—it is just because you put away from you the message of peace, and are too proud to consent to be freely forgiven. I would "have gathered" you, says Christ, weeping over Jerusalem, but "ye would not" (Mat 23:37). And so it is still. "I would; but ye would not," is the perdition of those who neglect the great salvation.

Reader! The most high God, the God of heaven and earth, this day renews His entreaties to you. He proposes to you the exchange of which I speak. He comes to you and says, "Wilt thou consent to have my Son for thy substitute? Wilt thou consent to part with all that is thine own, and take in exchange all that is His? Will thou part with thine own fancied claims, and take as a substitute for these the claims of Jesus? In approaching me in prayer, wilt thou take His claims instead of thine own (Psa 84:9)? In looking forward to the judgment seat, wilt thou take His claims instead of thine own? In all thy transactions with me wilt thou consent to be treated upon the ground of His merits and not thine own? Art thou willing, that in dealing with thee I should remember what He has done, and not what thou hast done, or can do? I am willing that this should be the footing on which we are henceforward to stand, and that this should be the manner of our dealings together; art thou willing? If thou art willing, then all is well. Henceforth we meet on holy ground; henceforth I deal with thee as I deal with Christ; I count thee righteous as He is righteous, and I treat thee, love thee, listen to thee, delight over thee as such. But if thou wilt not consent to this exchange; if thou clingest to thine own claims either in part or in whole; if thou wilt not be wholly represented by Christ, and looked upon by Me in Him, and not in thyself;

then thou must reap as thou art sowing; thou must be judged according to thine own standard, and take thy stand at the judgment seat in thine own name and not in His, and be dealt with to the uttermost according to thine own deservings, and receive the eternal wrath to which alone thou hast any claim" (Heb 2:1-3; 10:28-29; 12:25).

Reader! Is not a proposal like this a most gracious and blessed one for you, as a child of wrath? Could any exchange be fairer or more profitable? Why do you hesitate, as if you stood in doubt as to its fairness? Why delay, as if you thought it unnecessary? Ah! If such a proposal were made in heaven to the unfallen spirits above, would not the highest archangel round the throne rejoice to embrace it? Is there an angel there that would not welcome such an exchange? They are sinless and righteous, no doubt, and live under God's perpetual smile; yet their righteousness is but that of a creature at the best. How gladly then would they put off their own created righteousness, that they might be clothed with the uncreated righteousness of God! How eagerly would they part with their own creature beauty, however glorious and dazzling, that they might shine in the infinite uncreated beauty of God's eternal Son? And shall a sinner be loath to part with his polluted raiment, his vile unrighteousness, that he may receive in return such an infinitely perfect righteousness, such an infinitely glorious garment, as that on which the Father gazes with delight unutterable?

But is the exchange really so free? It is. And is it free to me as I am? Yes, just as thou art. All things are ready, come then to the feast. "But my sins, my sins, so aggravated, so innumerable; are these no hindrance?" None. If thy sins were not great, thou wouldst not need such a righteousness; and the greater thy sins are, the greater thy need for parting with them without delay. "But my hardness of heart, my want of love, my imperfect convictions of sin, my dreadful insensibility, are these not reasons for doubting, and must I not get these in some measure removed before I can venture to welcome the proposed exchange?" What! Must you have a soft heart, a holy nature, and deep repentance before coming to the Savior (Act 5:31-32)? Is the Holy Spirit to give you these in order that you may have some right or warrant to go to Him? Are you not desiring these in order that you may go to Him as something better than a wretched, hard-hearted, wrath-deserving sinner? Are you not wishing for some claims of your own to add to those of Christ, or to be your own plea in asking God to confer Christ's claims upon you? If you are utterly destitute of such feelings as you desire, then all you can say is, just that you are utterly destitute of any claim of your own at all. And is not that the point to which God wishes you to come? Is not that the very state of soul which makes the claims of Jesus appear infinitely desirable (Rev 7:16-17)?

Reader! Listen to God's loving proposals and entreaties. Oh! Defer not to make so glorious an exchange. It is freely set before you. If you have it not, it is because you reject it. It is not because God would not consent, but because you would not. God says, "Whosoever will" (Rev 22:17); and could any proposal be more freely, more graciously made; or could any proposal be more exactly suitable to you? "Whosoever will," is enough to answer all your objections, and to remove all your fears!

Such, reader, is the fact which the apostle states; now, let us observe how he reasons from it. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Such is the inference which the apostle draws from the simple fact to which he had alluded! And can any reasoning be more forcible or conclusive? He that has already given the greater gift, will He deny the less? He that has already given us the whole ocean, will He refuse us a single drop? He that has given us unfathomable mines of gold, will He deny us a single particle? He that has given us the full sun in the firmament, will He deny us a solitary beam? Will the God that has already parted with His richest and most precious gifts, refuse us His lesser ones? Will He Who has given His own Son, deny us anything? Is such a thing possible? Is it conceivable? Would it not be the greatest of all imaginable contradictions? The simple fact then, that God has given His Son, is of itself, and by itself, perfectly sufficient to warrant our absolute and unlimited confidence in God; so that it seems a thing impossible and incredible, that a sinner understanding and believing that simple fact, could have anything less than the apostle's confidence.

1. The infinitely weighty reasons mentioned at the beginning, why God must have been expected to spare His Son, do not exist in this latter case. These reasons stood in the way of God's giving His Son; but they do not stand in the way of His giving us anything else. Now, if He gave His Son, His unspeakable gift, when there were so many reasons against it, will He withhold His lesser gifts, when there are none of these reasons at all in the way? Impossible. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

2. It cost Him much to part with His Son; it costs Him nothing to give every other blessing. He grudges not, but delights to bestow them. He is weary of withholding, but never weary of giving. Now, if He freely parted with what cost Him such an infinite sacrifice, will He refuse us what costs Him nothing but the delight of giving? He delights to give us His Holy Spirit. He delights to quicken us, to renew us, to sanctify us, to fulfill in us all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power. It costs Him nothing to do all that. Will He then refuse us His Spirit? Will He refuse to make us holy? Will He need

many arguments to persuade Him to do so? Impossible! For He has already given His Son! And "how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

3. He gave His Son unasked and undesired by us. We did not ask Him to give His Son. Nay, we cared nothing about such a gift. We cared nothing about God or His favor at all. He might justly have said, "They do not want to be saved. Why should I save them? They do not want eternal life; they do not want pardon, or reconciliation, or deliverance from sin. Why should I be at such a cost to obtain these blessings for them? Why should I part with My well-beloved Son for the sake of sinners who hate Me and My gifts, who have never asked, never desired any such blessings; nay, who hate and scorn them?" God might well have said so; but His thoughts were not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways; and therefore, though we desired nothing of Him, He gave His Son, His unspeakable gift! And having given us such a gift unsought, undesired, will He deny us anything when we apply for it? In this light, how brightly does that glorious promise beam which came from the lips of the Son Himself. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find!" (Luk 11:9-13). And was it not in this very way that He taught us to reason, when He said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (Joh 4:10; Rom 5:10).

4. When He gave His Son, there was no intercessor to plead for us; no name that could have been used to prevail with Him to do so; yet He sparred not His Son! What, then, will He not give us, now that we can go to Him and plead the beloved name of the beloved Son? What is there that He can refuse, when we have that Son for an intercessor at His right hand above?

5. When He gave His Son for us, He saw nothing in us but sin; yet, He did not refuse His unspeakable gift. Is it possible, then, that we can be denied anything when we appear before Him in the righteousness of His Son? If our unrighteousness did not prevent Him delivering up His Son, what is there that we may not expect when He looks upon us as altogether righteous in Him?

6. The fact of our being sinners did not hinder Him from freely giving His own Son; it is possible, then, that the fact of our being sinners now will lead him to refuse His other blessings? Our sinfulness was no barrier in the one case, can it be so in the other? If our guilt was a sufficient reason for refusing us any gift, then surely it should have hindered Him from giving us His richest and most glorious gift; but if it was for us, when we were ungodly, that Christ was given—if it was when we were enemies and rebels that the Father delivered up His Son for us—if all our ungodliness, and enmity, and rebellion, did not keep back "the unspeakable gift," is it conceivable that any or all of these together can keep

back His lesser gifts?

God's gift of His Son is thus the pledge, the sure and infinite pledge of every other gift; a pledge so sure and so infinite as to make it the greatest of all impossibilities that He should bestow the one and deny the other; a pledge thrown down freely to sinners, and which therefore, everyone who hears of it may take up and go at once with it to God just as He is, in the assured confidence, that He Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely give us all things. This simple fact, that God has not spared His own Son, is of itself sufficient to assure us of everything. What more do we need to call forth the most unbounded confidence towards God? What greater or surer pledge could God give us; and if this is not enough, of itself, to awaken the sinner's confidence, what is there in heaven or earth that can do it? Is there not in that simple, but infinitely glorious fact, a foundation laid, broad enough, and deep enough, to sustain the full confidence of the chief of sinners? Can anything be added to it so as to make it more secure or suitable for the guiltiest of the human race to build upon? (1Co 3:11; 1Ti 1:15). Can anything in us, or done by us, or felt by us, or wrought in us, make it more sufficient or suitable?

If, then, we can hear of it, and yet feel no confidence or assurance, is it not plain that we do not fully understand its meaning, or appreciate its glorious sufficiency? There must be some mistake in our minds about the matter, if we can admit the fact here stated, and yet not draw the apostle's conclusion. That fact, of itself, is sufficient to dispel every doubt and banish every fear. That God, Who spared not His Son, is surely a being Whose thoughts are not as our thoughts and Whose ways are not as our ways, and to Whom, therefore, however guilty, however worthless, we may come "boldly," nothing doubting. Nay, to come with less than boldness must be sin, for it is just telling Him that His gift of His Son is not sufficient to give you confidence, without some addition, which you hope in due time He will confer on you, or which you may work out for yourself (Phi 3:3-4).

But you will say, it was an inspired apostle that reasoned in this way, and his example is not exactly suited to your case. This might do for him, but you do not think it is enough for you. But, let me ask, does he speak here as an apostle, or simply as a sinner? Does he say, I am an apostle, therefore God will deny me nothing? No. Though he was the chief among the apostles, he reasons as the chief of sinners—as one who knew nothing in himself, nothing in the whole world to give him confidence, but just the fact that God spared not His own Son. He reasons from a fact which is as open to you as it was to him. He rested his confidence on a truth which is the same to you or any sinner, as it was to him.

Why not then draw the same conclusion, and with the triumphant confidence he did?

But you will say, This way of reasoning may be right for advanced Christians, but it does not suit my case, who cannot venture to call myself a Christian yet, who am nothing but a sinner. Well, but was it as a saint or as a sinner that Paul reasoned thus? Did he say, because I am an advanced saint, therefore God will freely give me all things? No; he did not rest his confidence on the fact of his being a saint, but simply on the fact that God did not spare his Son! Go thou and do likewise.

But you will say, Oh!, if I were but conscious of the Holy Spirit's work in me, I would have no hesitation in reasoning thus; but till then it would be presumption in me to do so. Now I know, that it is the Holy Spirit that alone can teach and enlighten you, and that, if He do not show you the things of Christ, my showing will be vain. But remember that the Spirit works, not by giving something new in yourself as a ground of confidence, but by showing you the fullness and excellence of the Father's gift, as an infinitely sufficient ground of confidence for the chief of sinners. The Holy Spirit does not show you something good in yourself to rest on or take peace from, but He leads your eye to the divine resting-place for weary souls. And remember Paul did not say, "He who has given me His Holy Spirit will not refuse me anything"; but "he who spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" It was the Father's gift of Christ, and not His gift of the Holy Spirit that the apostle built upon; and why should not you go, and, just as you are, do the same?

But you will say, Oh! I have no evidences of grace, no deep convictions of sin, no true repentance, nothing but a hard heart, a blind understanding, a seared conscience, a stupid and insensible soul. Well, but was it because he had got all these evidences that you desire, that the apostle exclaimed so boldly, "How shall he not freely give us all things"? No, he did not get his confidence from these, but from the simple fact, that God spared not His own Son. Go then with all your hardness, and deadness, and coldness; go just as you are, and take refuge in the same cleft of the rock in which the apostle found shelter for himself. It is as free to you as to him; it is as free to you this moment, as it ever will or can be.

But you will say, It may be so, but the state of my soul is so bad, my heart so hard and insensible. I am altogether so carnal, sold under sin, that I often despond, and think it impossible that even God can do such a mighty work in me, or effect such a glorious change. Ah! And is it thus you reason, with regard either to the power or the willingness of that God Who has already given His own Son? Has He given His Son, and do you think, after that, it is too much to

hope that He will change your heart? Is the renewing of a single soul a greater work or wonder than the gift of His Son? Give up such dishonoring doubts. Is anything too hard for the God that has parted with Christ? Is anything too much for the love of Him Who spared not His Son? Has He given His Son, and will He refuse His Holy Spirit? Has He given His Son, and will He refuse to renew you in the spirit of your mind?

Oh! Think of this! Ponder the apostle's glorious and resistless argument. Remember that the fact of your being lost, worthless, ungodly, hard-hearted, an enemy, a rebel, did not hinder Him from giving His Son. And if they did not hinder that, will they hinder anything? Nay, so far from these being reasons against God's sending Christ, they were the very reasons that led Him to send Him to save us. How perverse then, how unkind, to suppose that He will take advantage of your guilt or enmity now, to turn you away from the mercy-seat, and put your confidence to shame! Can any amount or any kind of unworthiness in you, make it less true that God spared not His own Son? So long, then, as that simple fact remains the same, you are not merely warranted, but bound to come to God with confidence, whatever may be the extent of your guilt, or the depravity of your heart.

Two things then are plain from the apostle's words, first, that we cannot ask too confidently; and, secondly, that we cannot ask too much.

First, We cannot ask too confidently, for our boldness comes from our knowledge of a fact, of whose certainty there can be no doubt. That fact properly understood, is enough to assure us of everything. This simple fact, if it be sufficient to assure you of anything, is sufficient to assure you of everything. Nothing less than this could have given you the shadow of a hope, and nothing more than this is needed to give you the most perfect confidence. To have less than this full confidence, is just to say, that God has given us the greater gift, but grudges us the lesser. To have less is to dishonor God, and to slight His gift. It is just saying, that this pledge is not enough for you: that the love implied in this gift is not sufficient for you to rest on, without some inward pledge for which you are waiting! Less than this confidence, then, must be presumption on your part; it must be self-righteousness and pride. This is the only way in which your doubts and suspicions can be accounted for. For are you not reversing the apostle's argument, and saying, that though God has not spared His Son, but delivered Him up, yet you are not sure whether He will, notwithstanding this, give you anything?

Secondly, We cannot ask too much. It is not possible to expect too much from One Who has already freely bestowed such a glorious gift. The whole universe is nothing in comparison with this. Nay, all spiritual blessings are as

nothing when compared with this infinite gift; so that it is not possible for us to desire too much, or to ask too much so long as we know that the God of Whom we are asking, is He Who spared not His own Son. Is anything too hard for Him? Is anything too much for Him? Is anything, therefore, too great or too glorious for you to ask and to expect at His hands? The conclusion, then, to which we are brought in regard to this whole matter, is just that in which the apostle in another place sums up his argument, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:19-22).

Here, then, is the sinner’s hope, the sinner’s welcome, and the sinner’s peace! Come, sinner, come! Come, wanderer, come! There is room enough for you in the heart of Him Who spared not His own Son. It is an infinite heart, a heart whose dimensions are altogether boundless, and can take in millions such as you! It is to the embrace of the everlasting arms that we invite you to hasten, and their infinite circle is wide enough to compass myriads such as you! The bosom on which we ask you to recline, is that bosom of love out of which the eternal Son came forth, as the Father’s gift to man, and could there be any pillow softer or safer on which to lay your weary head? Return then, thou banished one —thou “captive exile” (Isa 51:14), to thy Father’s house! Come, lost one, come! Come now; come just as you are; come without price or preparation. For Father, Son, and Spirit unite in proclaiming, “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Joh 6:37).

From The Kelso Tracts*; available with three others from Chapel Library in a booklet entitled “The Sin Bearer.”*

4. The Chosen One

"Mine elect [Chosen One], in whom my soul delighteth."—Isaiah 42:1
"My servant whom I have chosen."—Isaiah 43:10
"The Christ, the chosen of God."—Luke 23:35

It is Jesus Who is the *Chosen One*. He is, by preeminence, the object of the Father's choice. Above all other beings in heaven and on earth, and in a way infinitely distinct from every one of them, He is the eternally chosen of the Father—the chosen of Him Whose divine wisdom knew well the value of that which it was choosing, and, therefore, could not choose amiss.

He alone was chosen for what was good in Him. God may have reasons for choosing objects, apart from what He finds in themselves; but in the case of the only begotten Son, it was the matchless excellence and glory found in Him that made Him the object of the Father's everlasting choice. It was thus that He was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, being…daily his delight" (Pro 8:23, 30). Other objects might be chosen for something good in them, and God, in looking upon these objects of His choice, might pronounce them "very good" (Gen 1:31). But still even these had only something that was good in them, Jesus had all. They were destitute of many things in which God delighted, Jesus was wanting in none. He had everything that the Father's heart could desire. Every unsinning creature is good according to its kind, and may to that extent be the object of choice. But every creature is lacking—lacking in many things, and, therefore, cannot be the object of full and satisfied choice to Him Who can be completely satisfied with nothing but what is absolutely perfect, not only without a sin, but without an imperfection or flaw. This perfection was found in Jesus alone; and because of this He was the Father's Chosen One. Jehovah's whole soul was satisfied in Him (Isa 42:1); and it must have been boundless excellence on which the Father's soul could thus entirely rest.

The saints are doubtless the objects of the Father's choice. Hence they are said to be "called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28; 2Ti 1:9). They are said to be "chosen…before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). They are said to be "from the beginning chosen…to salvation" (2Th 2:13). But still they are not chosen as Jesus was. It cannot be that they should be the objects of Jehovah's choice as Jesus was. In their case, it is an object altogether unworthy that is fixed upon; in His case it is the opposite. In their case, it is not the good that is found

or foreknown in them that causes them to be chosen; in Him it was.[3]

He could not *but* be chosen, for in Him there centered all created and all uncreated excellence. His claims to be the Chosen One are without a rival; for all was perfection in Him; divine perfection, without a defect, or blemish, or stain. He was the chief among ten thousand, as much in the Father's eyes as He is in the eyes of His saints. In this, as in all other things, He has had from eternity the preeminence; a preeminence which shall remain undisputed and unrivaled throughout all the eternity that is to come. Blessed preeminence for us, for He is our Head! None can ever claim to be the Father's Chosen One, as He can do. Angels may stand exalted in power and unfallen excellence, but they come immeasurably short of His matchless claims. The Church, the Bride, shall be presented "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing"; she shall be placed beside Him on His throne; but still His claims remain undivided and unapproached. In regard to these there can be no rivalry, no equality, no, not the most distant conceivable approach by any other. Oh, what an infinite and ineffable perfection of "glory and of beauty" must be in Him to render Him thus above all other beings, the supreme object of Jehovah's satisfaction—the Father's Chosen One! (Song 5:9-16; Psa 45:2-7; Isa 28:16; 49:1-7; Mat 12:18; 1Pe 2:4).

Doubtless, the Church is the eternally chosen of the Father—given by Him to Christ before all ages. This is her glory and her joy. This is her dignity above all other creatures; and well would it be for her if she would keep in mind this her peculiar preeminence, and live like Jehovah's "called, chosen, faithful" one (Joh 17:2, 6, 11, 24; Rev 17:14). But still she is not and cannot be the chosen one as Jesus is. He has everything about Him to render Him altogether worthy of this honor; she has nothing but what makes her utterly unworthy of it. It is not for what is good in her, either known or foreknown, that she is chosen, for what is there in her but evil? What has she to boast of as her heritage but sin? What has she to tell of in reference to herself but sin—sin all over, sin within and without, the whole head sick, the whole heart faint; a body of death, corruption, pollution, and loathsome deformity. Her birth and her nativity is of the land of Canaan; her father was an Amorite, her mother an Hittite; in the day that she was born she was cast out into the open field, to the loathing of her person, "polluted in her blood" (Eze 16:1-6). What claim had she? Yet she was chosen! Notwithstanding all her unworthiness, she was chosen! Oh, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God—how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Oh, the exceeding riches of His grace! For it is through grace alone that she is chosen. Had it not been for this there could have been no hope for her. It was according to the eternal purpose of grace that she was

chosen. It is grace that has made her to differ from the world in which she still abides. It is through grace that she is thus “known of God” (Gal 4:9), and “apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phi 3:12). It was by “the grace of God that Christ tasted death” for her (Heb 2:9). It is through grace that she believes (Act 18:27). It is through grace that she is saved, and has “good hope” (2Th 2:16); for it is the God of grace Who hath called her to His kingdom and glory (1Pe 5:1), and it is to the praise of the glory of His grace that she is predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph 1:5-6).

Yet, though it is of grace, it is as sure and real as if it had been all of merit. She is as certainly and as unchangeably the object of the Father’s choice as Jesus is. No two beings could be chosen for more opposite reasons, yet still the certainty of the choice remains the same. Blessed thought! We are as sure of the Father’s love as Jesus is. “As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you…I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (Joh 15:9; 17:26). In His case, this love, this choice, cannot be altered, neither can it be in ours. Both are sure and unchangeable. Both are from eternity to eternity. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1Jo 3:2).

But how is it possible that the Father’s choice can fix upon objects so entirely different from each other? How can the same Being choose the holy and the unholy, fixing upon both in the same eternal purpose, and embracing both in the same paternal arms? How is it that He can choose one object which possesses all excellence, and at the same time fix upon another which possesses none? To this we can give but a poor imperfect answer. We know not aright how all this can be: and we may well stand amazed to think that so it really is! What shall we say, but “even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” The mind of God is beyond all measurement or comprehension of ours. The heart of God is a depth too deep for us to fathom. Its streams of love flow down freely to us, and we drink and are refreshed. But its hidden springs of affection and choice are altogether inaccessible to us. The how and the why we cannot reason out or comprehend. We shall know something of those secrets of love hereafter, but here we only see through a glass darkly. Yet the fact itself is plainly revealed. God has set His heart at once upon the most worthy and the most unworthy beings in the universe, embracing both extremities in His mysterious choice. Of this we are assured; and it is a thought as blessed as it is true. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1Jo 4:10).

But how is God righteous in so doing? Is there not something here like

inconsistency? Does it not seem as if He were indifferent to the character of the objects chosen, caring little whether they were holy or unholy, since He thus fixes upon the best and the worst at the same time? By no means. His choosing Christ shows that He is not indifferent to the objects chosen. In choosing Him He shows how He prizes perfection, and how He delights in it. Having given this proof of His infinite love of goodness and holiness, no one can mistake His doings in reference to others. Whatever may be His reason, it cannot be indifference to sin or a want of regard to righteousness. He has put this matter beyond a doubt, by making The Righteous One the object of His supreme and everlasting choice. And having done this, who shall charge Him with inconsistency in choosing whom He will? Is He not at liberty to fix upon the most unholy without being charged with indifference to sin?

Having found an object infinitely worthy of His choice, and set His heart on Him, may He not make His choice of others depend upon reasons best known to Himself, without the imputation of unrighteousness? Were He indeed to choose them, and allow them to remain unholy, this charge would be well-founded. But though He finds them unholy, He does not leave them so. He chooses them that they may be holy (Eph 1:4; Col 1:22; 3:12; 2Ti 1:9). In their sanctification He displays His love of holiness. His object is that they may be delivered from their sinfulness, and conformed to the image of His Chosen One. And thus it is seen that it is still holiness that He is seeking, and on which He has set His heart. In all things He manifests that His is a holy choice, even though fixed upon the unholy. What a motive for us to seek holiness! It is to this that we are called. It is this that is enjoined upon us, “be ye holy, for I am holy” (1Pe 1:16).

The choice is said to be in Christ Jesus. Let us mark this expression, in Christ Jesus. The saints are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Had He not been chosen, they would never have been so. It is because He is chosen that they are chosen in Him from eternity. It is the Father’s choice of the worthiest that enables Him to choose the unworthiest. It is this that makes it a righteous thing for Him to do so. In Him they are chosen, as if forming part of Himself, so that they are, if we may say so, lost in Him—so identified with Him that they appear as one with Him. They seem never to be known of the Father, nor to know themselves, save in connection with Him. If they go back to eternity, they see themselves in connection with Him. If they look at their history here, they see their connection with Him—dying, buried, rising, ascending, with Him. If they gaze forward into eternity, then also they see themselves still in connection with Him. One with Him in the Father’s purpose; one with Him in His death and resurrection; one with Him in His kingdom hereafter, when He comes again in His glory to make all things new.

This is our security and joy. Jesus is the Father's Chosen One! Let us rejoice and be glad in this. The Father has found an object worthy of His choice. This is the foundation on which we build, a foundation broad enough for us to build upon here, and to rest upon forever. Let us sing the new song, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev 5:12). This Chosen of the Father is our Chosen too! Chosen in Him from eternity, we have been brought to choose Him, by that Holy Spirit Who quickeneth the dead and changes enmity into love. Whom have we in heaven but Him? "His love is better than wine" (Song 1:2). "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is our beloved among the sons" (Song 2:3). We have ravished His heart, and He hath ravished ours (Song 4:9). "His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven...his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars" (Song 5:11, 15). And weary with His long absence from us, and unable any longer to brook delay, we take up the Church's longing supplication, "Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices" (Song 8:14).

It is because there is such a Chosen One that there is hope for the undeserving and ungodly. Sinners! There is hope for you. The Father hath found a Chosen One, in Whom His soul delighteth, and because of this He is willing to take you in, and make you partakers of His love. Because this Chosen One has deserved everything, therefore it is a righteous thing in God to give eternal life to you who have deserved nothing. Because this Chosen One has glorified the Father, therefore His love can flow freely out to you, even though the chief of sinners. Did you but see Christ as the Father's Chosen One, you would see what full provision this makes for your forgiveness and peace. Had there been no Chosen One in Whom the Father's soul could rest, there would have been no hope of rest for you. Had there been no Chosen One there could have been no accepted sacrifice, no precious blood, no magnified law, no justifying righteousness—no hope at all for any sinner. But now there is hope, certain hope, for such as you, even though the guiltiest on this side of hell, because there is such a Chosen One as Jesus, the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. The more you realize of the infinite excellence of Jesus, the more you will understand the true foundation of a sinner's peace. The more you see in Jesus what the Father sees in Him, the more will you comprehend the glad tidings of great joy concerning Him, and learn to rejoice and sing "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa 9:6). Oh, come and share this joy. You are welcome. Tarry not a moment, lest the open door be closed forever. Strange that the Chosen of the Father should not be your chosen too! Strange that the Chosen of

God should be the rejected of men! Yet so it is! Oh, sinner, is it always so to be? Are you to stumble upon this stumbling-stone laid in Zion, till you stumble into hell?

> *"Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious, but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed."—1 Peter 2:6-8*

> *"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—Matthew 21:44*

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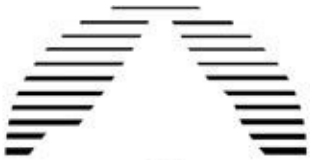
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[1] **mediatorship** – intervention between two hostile parties to bring reconciliation.

[2] **behooved** – was necessary for.

[3] There are some who deny this choosing. They are so zealous for man's free will that they will not admit of free will in God. All the choosing they will allow God to exercise is the choosing of those whom He foreknows will turn to Him—that is, choosing those who first chose Him. They quote in defense 1 Peter 1:2, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"; and they ask, is this not choosing according to foreknowledge? Yes, beyond all doubt it is. But of what is it the *foreknowledge?* Is it of the evil or the good? Certainly of the *evil;* for what else was there to foreknow? God, foreknowing all the circumstances of the case, the evil of the whole race of Adam, that there was nothing but evil about any, no desire even to turn or believe, nothing but absolute corruption, enmity, helplessness, and death—God foreseeing all this, chose some out of this mass of wickedness. And thus they are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God."