

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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1 No more, my God! I boast no more,
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.

2 Now for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain, I count but loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross.

3 Yes,—and I must, and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake;
Oh, may my soul be found in him,
And of his righteousness partake.

4 The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne;
But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

The Faith of Jesus Christ

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

Galatians 3:22

Remember Peter's remark to our Lord after launching his boat into the deep. He said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake” (Luke 5:5-6). This was successful fishing. But what we need to note here is the word “inclosed” which means the net captured the fish so that they could not escape even though the net ruptured. In our verse “hath concluded” is the same word in the Greek (*sunekleisen*) and means that all men are equally trapped completely within the net of sin as it were. This is the declaration of “the Scripture” or the holy Word of God. Paul explained it this way, “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are *all under sin*” (Rom. 3:9). In Adam all are equally fallen.

God's law was given to be a mirror to reflect to man that he is completely encapsulated by sin and has no innate ability to rescue himself. Thus, before God “all have sinned and come short

of the glory of God.” The law was given “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom 3:19). Luther said the point of the law was not to make men better but worse so that they would be driven to seek grace. Unregenerate men are imprisoned and enslaved under the cruel taskmaster called All-Under-Sin. Men need to be set free and unshackled from their father the devil whose works they do. God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all who believe. “By the law, God, as it were, hedges up the way of fallen man, and leaves him no other possibility of escape, excepting by faith in Jesus Christ, for whose appearing the law was a preparation” [James A. Haldane].

Before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law without the possibility of escape, yea completely enclosed as fish in the net (Gal. 3:23). The Scripture “hath concluded (shut up completely) all under sin.” Why did the Lord use His Scripture this way? He answers, “that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” “That” introduces a purpose clause showing that because men are completely shut in bondage to sin without a human mode of escape and can only be brought by the Holy Spirit to realize their helplessness so they will look to Christ for help. The only real help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Yes, the purpose is to show the promise by faith of Jesus Christ. It is the faith which come “of” or “out of” Jesus Christ. Paul calls faith the gift of God. Here the faith “of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Paul also wrote by Holy Spirit direction, “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22). Saving faith has the proper object which is only found in Christ alone. Sadly, some have faith in their faith, trusting that they are trusting, which is not saving because it is trusting one’s own faith which will not save for it is not saving faith. Only faith of Christ is unto salvation. Faith unto salvation is divinely bestowed in regeneration which is an act of the Holy Spirit. “Paul says the promise is made not to everyone that believes according to any faith of his own, but to them that are true believers by the faith of Christ. Therefore, every man shall not be saved in his own faith and religion, but only they that are of the faith of Christ” [William Perkins].

“The term ‘promise,’ as used here, must be interpreted in its fullest, richest sense, for the wretched ones not only receive a verbal promise, cheering tidings—‘Be not afraid,’ ‘Only believe and all will be well’—but also the *fulfilment* of this promise; hence, justification by faith, salvation full and free, as a gift to all those who embrace Jesus Christ by means of simple trust apart from the works of the law” [Wm. Hendriksen].

C. H. Spurgeon proclaimed, “If you want to get rid of the guilt of sin, you must believe in Jesus; but equally, if you would be rid of the chains of sin, the tyranny of your passions, the domination of your lusts, you must believe in Him; for from His side there flows not merely blood but water—blood to take away your criminality, and water to take away your tendencies to sin—so that henceforth you shall not serve sin, or live any longer therein. It is all there in that pierced heart, it is all there in that crimson fount, opened on Calvary’s blood tree. Look to Jesus, and ye shall be saved....

‘There is life in a look at the crucified One.’

I may never have an opportunity of preaching this gospel to some of you again: it may be the first time you have heard it, and perhaps the last. O sirs, I charge you receive it.... If any man preach

any other gospel, let him be accursed. Intolerant! Content am I to be as intolerant as my Master, and He bade me say, 'He that believeth ... shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.' 'But may I not be saved some other way?' No, sir, 'But may I not reject with impunity this which you have preached?' No, sir; at your peril is it and before God, I will put it right plainly before you. You must believe in Jesus, and if you reject Him your blood be upon your own head, for other way of salvation there is none. The Lord grant you may receive it, for Jesus's sake. Amen."