

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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523

1 From whence this fear and unbelief?

Hast thou, O Father, put to grief

Thy spotless Son for me?

And will the righteous Judge of men

Condemn me for that debt of sin

Which, Lord, was charged on thee?

2 Complete atonement thou hast made,

And to the utmost farthing paid

Whate'er thy people owed;

How then can wrath on me take place,

If sheltered in thy righteousness,

And sprinkled with thy blood?

3 [If thou hast my discharge procured,

And freely in my room endured

The whole of wrath divine,

Payment God cannot twice demand,

First at my bleeding Surety's hand,

And then again at mine.]

4 Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest;

The merits of thy great High Priest

Speak peace and liberty;

Trust in his efficacious blood,

Nor fear thy banishment from God,

Since Jesus died for thee.

Augustus Toplady (1740-1778)

The Majesty of God's Justice

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

Psalm 89:14

The attributes of God are each essential and needful to have a complete idea of the person of God who possesses every possible excellence in composite as an infinite being. The One who is the majesty of heaven is never at cross-purposes with Himself, but there is homogeneous conformity within the sacred Godhead. Divine justice is never in conflict

with divine holiness. From our text “we have on our hand business of the greatest import, business with a king, a king on his throne, not a mortal king, but the King immortal, the King of the world ... God Himself” [T. Boston]. The business of the King in our text is His justice and judgment which are the underpinnings of His throne and His base of operations. The result of God’s exercise of His holiness is divine justice.

This is the majestic image of the governing God who is the King of all in all. Justice and judgment are the basis of His righteous rule. Remember God is a spirit and physical robes of royalty are not sufficient to portray Him in His majesty, but His divine robes are justice and judgment. The writer of this passage would have us behold our God in the splendor of His throne ruling in justice and judgment. This describes the One who is enthroned as the Sovereign of the universe of eternity and time. “God as a sovereign is never unjust or unwise. He is too holy to be unrighteous, too wise to be mistaken; this is constant matter for joy to the upright in heart” [Spurgeon].

The awesomeness of God’s inexorable rectitude is seen in His providing a sacrifice for the cross of Calvary, and thus the soul cry from the one on the middle cross “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” The redeemed of the Lord can rejoice because justice has been served, sin has been expiated, the just for the unjust. Justice demanded “that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). The chain of condemnation was broken for each of the redeemed and then the grand enunciation “Not guilty!” was a pronouncement of God the Father.

“But God’s justice stands forever against the sinner in utter severity. The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity while death draws every day nearer and the command to repent goes unregarded. As responsible moral beings we dare not so trifle with our eternal future” [Tozer].

Justice was the attribute that cast out and excluded the sinner, but grace provided a door opened through the blood of Christ. Christ’s satisfaction of justice for those the Father gave Him was that which cancelled the sin debt. As one has noted, “Infinite holiness has covered infinite sin!” Our text reminds us that “justice and judgment” is the environment of God’s throne wherein grace has been poured out to satisfy the thirst of every believer. Yes, “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Knowing the inflexible justice of God magnifies for the child of God the riches of His grace, the glories of His so great salvation, the pricelessness of the blood of God’s Son, the promise of no more curse. Oh, how we are reminded that “without shedding of blood is no remission.” God’s Son “appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.... So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”

“There has never been an offence yet remitted by the great Judge of heaven, until the law has received the fullest vindication. You are right, O convicted sinner, that such shall be the case even to the end. Every transgression shall have its just recompense of reward. For ever offence there shall be its stroke, and for every iniquity there shall be its doom. ‘Ah,’ now says the sinner, ‘then what can I do? Justice, like some dark angel, strides across the road of mercy, and with his sword drawn, athirst for blood and winged to slay, he strides across my path, and threatens to drive me backwards over the precipice of death into the ever-burning lake.’ Sinner, thou art right; it is even so.” And later Spurgeon proclaimed, “This is the great riddle of the law, and the grand discovery of the gospel. Wonder ye heavens! be astonished O earth! that very justice which stood in the sinner’s way and prevented his being pardoned, has been by the gospel of Christ appeased; by the rich atonement offered upon Calvary, justice is satisfied, has sheathed its sword, and has now not a word to say against the pardon of the penitent. Nay, more, that justice once so angry, whose brow was lightning, and whose voice was thunder, has now become the sinner’s advocate, and itself with its mighty voice pleads with God, that whosoever confesses his sin should be pardoned and be cleansed from all unrighteousness.”

Donald Grey Barnhouse declared, “If you believe that God is righteous, you condemn yourself to eternal separation from Him unless you also believe that His love and mercy also brought Him to the cross. When you acknowledge that a righteous God cannot overlook sin, you remove your own defense and are found guilty before God. If you refuse the Saviour who was punished by the Father for your sin, you must take the eternal punishment for that sin yourself. There are not three places in the universe where sin may be—there are only two. Your sin is either upon yourself or it is on the Saviour. There is no other place where the guilt may be placed. Your sin is on yourself or on the Saviour.”