

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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In devil's dungeon chained I lay
The pangs of death swept o'er me.
My sin devoured me night and day
In which my mother bore me.
My anguish ever grew more rife,
I took no pleasure in my life
And sin had made me crazy.

Then was the Father troubled sore
To see me ever languish.
The Everlasting Pity swore
To save me from my anguish.
He turned to me his father heart
And chose himself a bitter part,
His Dearest did it cost him.

Thus spoke the Son, "Hold thou to me,
From now on thou wilt make it.
I gave my very life for thee
And for thee I will stake it.
For I am thine and thou art mine,
And where I am our lives entwine,
The Old Fiend cannot shake it."

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

The Great Acquittal

"Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Romans 5:9

There is a hymn that says, "The blood that cleanses from all sin shall never lose its power." Our verse reminds us that the blood of Jesus Christ acquits us from all sin. What is meant by being acquitted? It means "Released; absolved; purged of an accusation; judicially discharged from accusation; released from debt, etc." [*Black's Law Dictionary*]. In one sense it means to be set free. Actually, to be acquitted or justified is the very opposite of being condemned.

How can one be acquitted or justified by blood? The only blood that one can be justified by is the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son. Why is that true? God the Father must be satisfied with the transaction. Scripture records that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. *Who is acquitted or justified?* "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Only those who are 'justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (5:1). *Can the acquitted or justified perish?* "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (5:8-9). Those acquitted are "now justified" and "shall be saved from wrath" through Christ satisfying the debt. The blood of Christ was not shed in vain! The death of Christ redeems from all sin, and He eternally lives so that we "shall be saved from wrath through Him." We were not made savable but were saved by His substitutionary sacrifice! The believers' guilt had to be expiated, and God's wrath had to be propitiated. Yea, God had to be both just and the justifier (3:26). Sin had to be justly punished, and the acquittal of sin had to have a justifier. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. "Christ died for (or in the place of) us" (5:8).

Richard Reynolds (1735-1816) of Bristol, England was asked by a friend to sit for his portrait. Finally, after much urging, he acquiesced. The friend asked, "How would you like to be painted?" "Sitting among books," he replied. "Any book in particular?" "Yes," he said, "The Bible." "Open at any part?" He replied, "At the fifth chapter of Romans, the first verse being legible: 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'" A few days before the death of Reynolds he said to a friend, "My faith and hope are, as they have long been, on the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, who was the propitiation for my sins." How wonderful it is to be justified or acquitted of the guilt of sin.

How can a sinner be just with God? Is an acquittal of guilt possible? Thanks be to God there is *a judicial sense* wherein the Judge pronounces an acquittal from all judicial charges. "The sentence of a human judge is merely *declarative* ... whereas in justifying a sinner, God does what no human judge can do, He *first* constitutes him righteous, who was not righteous before, and *then* declares him to be righteous in His infallible judgment, which is ever according to truth" [James Buchanan]. We were condemned already but the free gift came unto *justification of life* (v. 18).

And then there is *a theological sense* for it is *God that justifieth or acquits*. Yes, the very holy God who was greatly offended has provided imputed righteousness through the sacrifice of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Actually, all the persons of the Godhead participate in this acquittal. God the Father provided the way by giving His Son as an atonement for sin; God the Son took upon Himself the curse and made a full atonement providing even His imputed righteousness for our acquittal; and God the Holy Spirit

reveals the Saviour through the new birth enabling us to receive Christ as our substitute for our acquittal. Thus, the Most High God has provided for our legal and theological acquittal. Have you believed in *Him that justifieth the ungodly* (4:5)? We are *justified freely by His grace* (3:24). An acquittal is through free grace!

“What was the spark that lit the flame of evangelical passion? It was, by the grace of God, the discovery on the part of Luther, stricken with a sense of his estrangement from God and feeling in his inmost soul the strings of his wrath and the remorse of a terrified conscience, of the true and only way whereby a man can be just with God. To him the truth of justification by free grace through faith lifted him from the depths of the forebodings of hell to the ecstasy of peace with God and the hope of glory” [John Murray].

The Puritan divine William Lyford (1598-1658) a few days previous to his death was asked by some friends to give them some account of his eternal hope. He remarked, “I will let you know how it is with me, and on what ground I stand. Here is the great punishment of sin on the one hand; and here am I, a poor sinful creature, on the other; but this is my comfort, the covenant of grace, established upon so many sure promises, hath satisfied all. The act of oblivion passed in heaven is, ‘I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more, saith the Lord.’ This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, of whom I am one.... I know my interest in Christ.... Therefore, my sins, being laid on Him, *shall never be charged on me.*” “Who shall lay any thing to charge on God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33)! OH, THE GREAT ACQUITTAL!