

140. Christ Suffered and Died as Our Substitute.

He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5,21.

He who was Innocence itself was "made to be sin." This expression makes Christ and sin one thing. Because He was made sin, He had to bear it and to suffer the punishments of sin. To the Galatians, St. Paul writes: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." So completely was sin accounted unto Him as to make Him a curse. So truly was sin upon Him that it caused the shedding of His blood. So fully were our sins made His own that they stung Him to death.

He stepped into our place, becoming the sinner's Substitute. The sins of all mankind were laid upon His shoulders; they were imputed to Him as though they had been His own sins. Faultless, perfect, and holy though He was, He offered Himself to be punished for all the transgressions of the world. He bore our guilt; He paid the incalculable debt which we had contracted; He suffered all the anguish and pain which eternal Justice had threatened to mete out to us as the wages of sin. For our sakes He submitted to the disgrace of being condemned as a criminal. He "was wounded for *our* transgressions. He was bruised for *our* iniquities," and eternal Justice entitles the world to the plea, "Not guilty!" The *world* is redeemed. Christ acquired a *universal* justification. "As by the offense of one, judgment came unto *all men* to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." Rom. 5, 18.

But this universal justification must be appropriated by the individual sinner. In order to be justified, acquitted, found not guilty, it is necessary that we interchange places with Jesus Christ. By love He took our place and died; by faith we take His place and live. Our sins were imputed to Him; His righteousness is imputed to us through faith.

Prayer.

My dear Lord Jesus, Thou spotless Lamb of God, who wast falsely accused, beaten with many stripes, condemned to death, nailed to the cross, Thy hands and Thy feet cruelly pierced; yea, every member of Thy holy body wounded, - when I behold all this, I see in it nothing but my sin, guilt, and iniquity, which has driven Thee to this, and on account of which Thou didst subject Thyself to all this anguish, suffering, and pain. The Innocent paid for the guilty, the Godly atoned for the guilt of the ungodly. Let me never forget this Thy great love. Amen.

I lay in fetters groaning,
Thou com'st to set me free;
I stood, my shame bemoaning,
Thou com'st to honor me;
A glory Thou dost give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail nor leave me
As earthly riches fly.

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