

# THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

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**2 Corinthians 5:21**

**A. W. Pink**

# **The Glorious Gospel**

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The Gospel evidences itself to be Divine because it enunciates that which the mind of man could not possibly have originated. The grand truths which it proclaims are without any parallel or rival among all the schemes of human wisdom. Pre-eminently is this the case with the full-orbed Gospel of God. Alas, with scarcely an exception it is at best an attenuated Gospel which is being preached today, preaching that leaves out some of the most striking, unique and blessed features. Let the glorious tidings of redemption be told out in all their simplicity and yet profundity, their Scriptural perspicuity and perspective, and those who truly receive these glad tidings into their hearts unitedly acknowledge that it is neither exaggeration nor extravagance to designate them the Glorious Gospel. Nothing so honours and magnifies God; nothing so rejoices and satisfies believers.

Now here and there throughout the Scriptures the Spirit has graciously furnished us with brief compendiums of evangelical truth, comprising within the scope of a single verse the essential elements of the whole plan and way of salvation. Luther was wont to call these compendiums “miniature Gospels:” such an one we have in “For 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). This verse sets forth in most decisive language the vicarious sufferings of Christ as the satisfaction offered by Him to Divine justice for the sins of His people; the imputation of His perfect obedience unto believers as their title to eternal life; and the real Deity of Him whose righteousness becomes theirs for justification by virtue of their union with Him. These grand truths could not be expressed more clearly and tersely.

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” This is one of the most profound and most comprehensive statements to be found in all the Scriptures concerning the Atonement. Into it is

compressed a whole treatise of theology, and therefore each clause, yea every *word* in it, calls for separate and close consideration. As we examine this most solemn and yet blessed declaration we find there are three things said therein respecting God the Father, three things predicated of God the Son in His mediatorial capacity, and three things concerning His people. So we propose to take up the contents of our passage in this order: may the heart of writer and reader alike be Divinely prepared to ponder the same, for something superior to intellectual acumen is needed when contemplating spiritual things.

The three things here mentioned of God the Father are His high sovereignty, His inflexible justice, and His amazing grace. His sovereignty is affirmed in the words, “He hath made Him to be sin for us,” and therein His supremacy appears at three points. First, in *the Person* He selected for this extraordinary transaction, namely, the Son. None but the Father possessed the right and authority to assign the Son for this awful undertaking: He alone could appoint Him to that work. As the God-man, Christ was the Servant of the Father, and in ordaining Him to the task of making expiation for sin, He demonstrated His high and absolute sovereignty over all persons and creatures. No man, no angel, no cherub or seraph—only the Son Himself, was singled out.

The sovereignty of God the Father appears, second, in the unique *legal arrangement* or constitution here alluded to: that He who was without sin should be dealt with as a sinner, and that those who were sinners should be allowed to go free of suffering their just deserts. None but He who is absolute sovereign above all can dispense the Law according to His own imperial good pleasure. Third, the sovereignty of the Father appears in *the ones selected* to be the beneficiaries of this unparalleled arrangement. Christ was not made sin for all of Adam’s race, for all mankind are not made the righteousness of God in Him. It was the sovereignty of God which *elected* the persons who were to be everlastingly indebted to Christ’s atoning work. Thus the whole

foundation of this amazing transaction lay in the absolute sovereignty of God the Father over all persons and things, and before that sovereignty we should humbly and thankfully bow.

Next we behold here the inflexible *justice* of the Father. Scripture nowhere affirms that God was under any compulsion or moral necessity of saving His people as He did: it was solely by His mere sovereign good pleasure that He devised the method and means revealed in the Gospel. But having ordained that His Son should be “made under the law,” then it *was* imperative that the demands of the law should be fully met. It was to this end that God sent forth His Son to be a propitiation for sin, to “declare His righteousness” (Rom. 3:25). Thus, in a special manner His justice has been magnified by the death of Christ. True, God cannot act contrary to His own perfections, but the *exercise* of His justice, mercy, or any of His attributes, is regulated solely by His will: We must adhere strictly to the exact terms of Holy Writ: it is *not*, “that *can* by no means clear the guilty, but “that *will* by no means clear” them (Exo. 34:7).

The amazing *grace* of the Father manifested itself in the aim or design of this transaction, namely, that His people might be freed from sin and constituted righteous before Him. Note carefully it is not said merely that Christ was “made sin for us,” but “*He* made Him to be sin for us.” Thus the grace of the Victim is no more conspicuous than that of Him who furnished the altar of redemption with the foreordained Lamb. Though Christ was the Father’s well-beloved, the One in whom His soul delighted (Isa. 42:1), nevertheless out of unspeakable love for His people He ordained Him to be made a curse for them. O what stupendous grace that God, knowing our wretched condition, pitied us and resolved to reconcile us to Himself, by such a Priest and Sacrifice as became Him and was suited to us. O what gratitude and praise are due Him from us!

“For 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). This verse contains a brief epitome of the whole plan of

salvation. It states what God has done for the justification of His people, and therefore it is of special interest as presenting in concise form the testimony of the Spirit on that all-important subject. Every word in it calls for separate consideration, prayerful and most careful consideration, for an erroneous understanding of any of its clauses will involve us in fundamental and vile error. On the other hand, if the Lord be pleased to open up this verse to our spiritual perceptions, we cannot but be filled with wonderment and praise—with awe and fervent thanksgiving.

We have observed that our passage presents to us three things regarding God the Father, and now we are to notice the three things which it contains concerning the Son: these are His purity, His sufferings, and His merits. First, His ineffable innocence: He “knew no sin.” The immaculate purity of Christ is a most delightful subject of meditation, living as we are in an evil world and harassed by the sink of iniquity which still indwells us. Three inspired declarations need to be particularly weighed in this connection: “in Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5), “who did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22), “who knew no sin.” Christ was the Lamb of God “without blemish and without spot:” as such He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26).

By His miraculous conception the Lord Christ was exempted from the contagion of original sin which defiles every fallen descendant of Adam. To Mary it was said, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: *therefore* also that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). The purity of Christ was immaculate, impeccable, immutable. He was free from any actual transgression: though the hottest of Satan’s fiery darts were shot at Him, yet there was not the slightest defect in His holiness: “The prince of this world cometh, and hath *nothing* in Me” (John 14:30). Though subjected to the greatest indignities, and the strongest provocations, yet, “He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.” To the worst of His enemies He

issued this challenge: “Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John 8:46).

But this expression “who *knew* no sin” goes even further than those we have glanced at above, for it conveys far more than the bare assertion that Christ was sinless: it places Him at the greatest possible distance from sin. This emphatic assertion that He “knew no sin” can only be rightly understood as we balance it against the opposing clause—“that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Now we “know” righteousness only as something which is entirely foreign to our nature as fallen creatures, and have no subjective apprehension of it until we are justified by faith: in like manner Christ “knew” sin only as something which was absolutely foreign to His nature, as something entirely apart from Himself, as something which as the Holy One He utterly abhorred, and of which He had no subjective consciousness until our sins were laid upon Him.

The incalculable *sufferings* of Christ are here summarized in the words, “made to be sin for us,” which is a comprehensive expression including the whole of what the Saviour was called upon to endure while making atonement for His people. But before examining this unspeakably solemn word let it first be pointed out that, to be without sin was an indispensable qualification of Christ’s becoming our sin-bearer—dimly foreshadowed under the ceremonial law where only animals that were, “without blemish” could be used for sacrificial purposes. Our High Priest had to be entirely without any personal sin in order to offer an unspotted sacrifice to satisfy God’s justice and merit His favour. Second, it must also be most clearly understood that in being “made sin for us” the immaculate nature of the Redeemer underwent no change, nor was the holiness of His Person sullied to the slightest degree. He took upon Him neither the taint nor pollution of sin: His peerless perfections and glory remained unspotted throughout.

“He hath made Him (to be) sin for us.” What an amazing statement is this, and how unspeakably solemn. Who with the

fear of God in his heart would ever have dared to make such a predication were he not first assured of its verity from Holy Writ: that the Holy One should be “made sin.” This does not mean that Christ was made sin experimentally, but rather judicially; not by impartation but by imputation. The Greek word which is here rendered “made” (*poieo*) is the one found in, “I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19)—something which they were not formerly and naturally. In Mark 3:14 the same word is translated “and He *ordained* twelve that they should be with Him.” It occurs again in connection with the Saviour in “God hath *made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), which refers not to His nature and condition, but to His status and position.

The usage of “*poieo*” in the above passages helps us to gather the force of it in “He hath made Him to be sin.” God ordained and ordered that His Son should be made sin—He *appointed* that Christ should be legally *constituted* such. But what is meant by God’s having constituted Christ “sin?” To be a sin-offering say some, to bear its penalty say others. But neither of these explanations go back far enough: nothing could be made an expiatory sacrifice unless and until sin had been imputed to it; and punishment necessarily presupposes guilt, for the innocent cannot be justly penalized. The key which unlocks this mystery is found in the words “the Lord hath laid on Him (the Mediator) the iniquity (not of “all” but) of *us* all” (Isa. 53:6). The *guilt* of all the sins of God’s people was charged to the account of the Redeemer, and the Law dealt with Him accordingly.

“For 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). Gladly would we tarry and seek to extract from this remarkable verse something of its inexpressible sweetness, that we may be more firmly established in the Faith and that our souls may be nourished thereby. But as God’s people of old were required to eat the paschal lamb with “bitter herbs,” so we are called upon to take to heart the fearful price which had to be paid

for our salvation. “The redemption of their souls is precious” or “costly” (Psa. 49:8): so infinitely costly that the Holy One was “made sin” for us. This was a Divine transaction, a profoundly mysterious one, yet one which is presented for faith to receive. It lies at the very core of the Gospel, and our peace depends very largely upon a right understanding thereof.

It is only by diligently comparing passage with passage and allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture that we shall be preserved from serious error at this vital point. First, then, we turn to the great type of this unique transaction. On the annual day of atonement, we are told that, “Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat *shall bear upon him* all their iniquities into a land not inhabited” (Lev. 16:21, 22). Thus there was in figure an actual transference of all the iniquities of God’s people unto the head of the victim. In like manner, we are informed, “the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all” (Isa. 53:6), and therefore does the Apostle declare of Christ, “Who His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

To say that Christ’s being “made sin for us” means that God appointed Him to be a *sin-offering* in our stead, does not go back far enough: nothing could be offered as an expiatory sacrifice unless and until sin had been imputed to it—note the laying of the offerer’s hands upon the head of the animal *before* slaying it in Leviticus 1:4, 5 and 4:4. Christ not only endured the full penalty which our sins deserved, but the very guilt and breach of the Law was charged to Him. How definitely our sins *were* made (legally constituted) His, appears from His actually confessing them as His own: “For innumerable evils have compassed Me about: *Mine iniquities* have taken hold upon Me” (Psa. 40:12). He owned—see verses 7 and 8 for the identification of the Speaker. So again He declared, “O God, Thou knowest My



foolishness, and My sins are not hid from Thee” (Psa. 69:5)

To say that Christ’s being “made sin” signifies that He was *paid its wages* or caused to suffer the penalty of His people’s transgressions is also an inadequate and faulty definition, for it confounds an effect with its cause. Christ could not have been punished for sin unless He had stood guilty in the sight of the Law: punishment always supposes guilt, personal or imputed. Christ was culpable in the eyes of the Law because He took the place of and acted as the Sponsor for His sinful people; the awful load of the accumulated guilt of all their iniquities being laid upon Him. The Lord Jesus was “made sin *for us*,” that is, in our place, for the idea of substitution is necessarily involved in the very nature of this transaction. The spotless Victim occupied the room of the foul violators of the Law, and therefore He must die. Because He was “made sin” He was also “made a curse *for us*” (Gal. 3:13): the latter being the consequence of the former.

But though legally identified with us, the Sponsor and Surety must not be personally confounded with ourselves. Whether we regard Christ personally as Immanuel or officially as Substitute, He always occupied a place which pertained to Him alone. The fact of His bearing His people’s sins never brought Him down morally to their personal condition. When the fearful guilt of our transgressions lay upon Him, His own personal place of holy separateness (Heb. 7:6) was still retained by Him, and recognized by God as retained by Him. Heaven was opened at the Cross, and if on the one hand wrath burning as fire descended on the sacred Person of our Substitute, on the other hand it must be remembered that from the Cross there returned to Heaven, ascending like a cloud, acceptable fragrance which filled the Sanctuary. Beautifully was this brought out in the types: even the fat of the *sin* offering was burned upon the altar for “a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Lev. 4:31), while “sweet incense” was employed on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:12, 13).

The utmost care must be used by us when meditating upon this

solemn and sacred mystery. Though it pleased God to make the Sinless One to be sin for us, yet so far from the glory of Christ being tarnished thereby, it was enhanced. Though bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, nevertheless it was the Holy One who bore them: His personal purity unsullied, His immaculate nature uncontaminated. This is made manifest in another, one of the most beautiful of all the types, namely, *the veil*. The veil, which in the tabernacle separated the holy place from the holiest of all, was the appointed emblem of our Saviour's humanity—of "His flesh" (Heb. 10:20). It was prominently associated with His death, for it was then rent by God "from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51). How blessed, then, to see that the very basis of that veil was *pure white linen*, and that on that basis was displayed (by Christ in life and death alike) the heavenly "blue" as well as the purple and scarlet (Exo. 26:31).

It remains for us now to add a brief word upon *the merits* of Christ. Not only was the Lord Jesus, negatively, exempt from the taint of original sin and free from all personal transgression, but He was perfectly conformed to the whole will of God both in heart and life, rendering complete and perpetual obedience to His Law in thought, word, and deed. And that God-glorifying obedience of His was entitled to reward. Now that perfect obedience which Christ rendered unto the Law was a vicarious one, being performed in the place and on behalf of His people: consequently, as death became the portion of the Substitute, eternal life becomes the certain portion of all whom He represented. Christ was made sin for us that we might be made "the righteousness of God in Him."

"For 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). It remains for us now to notice the three things here said about God's people: these are their guilt, their deliverance, their righteousness. First, our *criminality*. It was because we lay under the curse of the Law that the Holy One of God was made sin for

us. Therein we may perceive the awful demerits of our case: such a drastic and costly remedy makes unmistakably evident the desperateness of our condition by nature. We best learn God's estimate of sin by the wages He pays it: nowhere is its exceeding sinfulness so apparent as at the Cross. Faulty views of the Atonement necessarily result in low estimates of sin. Contrariwise, nothing is so calculated to humble us because of our vileness as faith's contemplation of Christ being made a curse for us.

Second, our *deliverance*. This was something which lay wholly beyond our own powers. Impossible that we could undo the past, equally impossible that we could offer unto God any satisfaction for our countless transgressions. We could no more change our fallen natures than the Ethiopian can change the colour of his skin. To create a world would be no less impracticable than for a depraved creature to produce the fruits of holiness. So far as we were concerned, our case was utterly hopeless: unless Divine mercy took pity upon us, we must inevitably perish. That mercy took the form not of an arbitrary command nor simply of invincible power, but by ordering that none other than the Son of God should become man, take our place, assume our responsibilities and discharge our debts. It was by the sufferings of Christ we were eternally freed from condemnation.

Third, our *righteousness*. Here is the blessedness and glory of the Gospel of God's grace: that we who are totally devoid of righteousness, who are positively unrighteous, guilty, yea, whose best performances are "filthy rags" in the sight of Heaven, become the very "righteousness of God in Him." Note well those words "in Him," and not in ourselves, for the reference is not to sanctification, but to our *justification*; not to our state, but to our *standing* before the Divine Throne. "Righteousness" is here to be taken in its forensic sense, and not as referring to any moral change; to the ground of our acceptance, and not to any disposition of mind or heart wrought in us by the Spirit. The

abstract is used for the purpose of emphasis: it is not merely that we are accepted as righteous, but the very ground on which that rests is stated—we become “righteousness” itself.

It is of vital importance that we should have a clear Scriptural conception of this fundamental truth. The believer becomes righteousness solely by *imputation*, just as Christ was “made sin” solely by imputation. True, there are inseparable consequences in each instance: for just as Christ’s being made sin led to His being dealt with accordingly, so our becoming righteousness judicially entails the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us experimentally. But our text is not treating of the effects in either case, but goes right back to bed-rock causes. In precisely the same way that Christ was made sin for us—namely, by God’s imputing to Him the entire guilt of our iniquities; so we become the righteousness of God in Him—namely, by God’s imputing to us the whole merits of Christ’s Law magnifying obedience.

The antithesis is exact and minute: as our guilt was charged to Christ, so His righteousness is reckoned to our account. As the transference of our guilt to the Surety entailed His suffering the penalty thereof, so the imputation of Christ’s obedience unto us entitles us to its reward. As it was for no criminal acts of His own that Christ was made sin—so it is not by any pious conduct of ours that we become righteousness before the Divine tribunal. As it was not on account of any infection of nature or any personal acts of sin that Christ was treated by Divine justice as an offender, so it is not in view of any holiness wrought in us that we are accepted of God and pronounced just by His Law. It is “by the obedience of One,” and not by the works of each believer, that the many are “made (legally constituted) righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

Let us call attention to a parallel passage: “but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). Thus once more we see how helpfully Scripture explains Scripture, for by carefully

weighing the terms of this prophecy we are supplied with a sure interpretation of our text. First, the fact of our Saviour's vicarious suffering is stated, those sufferings being inflicted upon Him for our iniquities. Second, the explanation of this solemn transaction is given: punishment was visited upon the Redeemer because the guilt of His people's sins had been laid upon Him. Third, the blessed outcome of this is declared: His being wounded ensures our healing. The "stripes" were all due to us, and they were due to us because of our transgressions; but because our iniquities were imputed to Christ, the stripes were laid upon Him, and therefore healing comes to be ours.

The grand truth affirmed in our text is *the exchange of places*. It is the twofold exchange of places in respect of sin and righteousness severally, and the counter imputations thereof. This is set forth by an antithesis, which fully drawn out would read: "He hath made Him that knew no sin to be sin for us: that we (who knew no righteousness) might be made the righteousness of God in Him." But there is one word where the parallel is departed from, though this is hidden in our English translation. God "made (constituted) Christ to be sin for us," but it is not said in the balancing clause, "that we might be made the righteousness of God:" an entirely different Greek word is used, and would be better rendered, "that we might *become* the righteousness of God in Him." And why? Because this righteousness is only "upon all them that *believe*" (Rom. 3:22). The price was paid when Christ died; our actual possession thereof is when we are planted into Him by faith.

"For 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). We sincerely trust our readers do not feel that we are running out our meditations on this verse to a wearisome length. Its contents are so full, so marvellous, so blessed, that they might well engage our attention profitably for several more papers thereon. Especially so in view of the fact that there is so very little real doctrinal preaching in this day of superficiality. And

even where the people of God have been instructed in the fundamentals of the Gospel, it cannot but refresh and rejoice their hearts to be reminded anew of that which is the wonderment of angels. On this occasion we propose to dwell upon the most important expression in our text.

What is connoted by “the righteousness of God” which we are here said to be made or “become” in Christ? To this a threefold answer may be returned. First, it is a righteousness *provided by God*, for those who have none of their own. Having lost our original righteousness (when Adam sinned) and thereby fallen under condemnation, God, out of the fullness of His grace, provided a righteousness which met every requirement of His Law and secured our salvation, and which upon our believing is placed to our account—in consequence of which we are acquitted from all guilt and given title to the reward of eternal life. This righteousness is one which differs from all other righteousness that ever was or can be performed. It differs entirely from the righteousness of men and angels, for it is the righteousness not of creatures, but of the Creator: “I the LORD have created it” (Isa. 45:8). It is therefore a Divine and infinitely excellent one.

Second, it is a righteousness *effected by God*. The Father created it through the Son, in the same way as by the Son He created the universe (Col. 1:16), and this because the Son is one with Himself; and therefore do we read of “the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1). Of old God declared, “I bring near My righteousness, it shall not be far off, and My salvation shall not tarry” (Isa. 46:13). It was during His life on earth that this righteousness was wrought out by the incarnate Son. It consisted of that perfect obedience to the Law, both to its precepts and to its penalty, which was yielded to it by our Lord Jesus, who is “the mighty God.” This is the “everlasting righteousness” which has been “brought in” (Dan. 9:24) by Him. The obedience of Immanuel confers more honour upon the Law than the obedience of all intelligent creatures (Isa.

42:21). It was a vicarious obedience which the incarnate Son rendered to the Law, and therefore is He “the Lord our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6).

Thus it is the righteousness of God not only because it was planned by Him, but also because it was actually performed by the God-man Mediator. At the very moment when He publicly dedicated Himself unto that work for which He came here, He declared, “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). Though this flawless conformity to the Law was accomplished by the Son of Man, yet He disclaimed all separate praise for the same: “the Father which dwelleth in Me, *He* doeth the works” (John 14:10). That blessed avowal not only expressed the perfections of His human nature as the *obedient* Glorifier of His Maker and Father, but also intimates that all which *He did* was the work also of *God*, for that Man had been taken into personal union with God, and therefore did He affirm, “I and Father are one” (John 10:30).

Third, it is a righteousness *accepted by God*. God is satisfied with the obedience which Christ performed in the place of His people, and signified His approval thereof by bringing from the dead our Surety and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavens. He has received that righteousness as a perfect ransom for us, for it is the price Christ paid to deliver His people from going down to the pit of everlasting destruction, and by which He obtained for them heavenly and eternal glory. And this perfect obedience of Christ is reckoned to the account of all who are joined to Him by *faith*: it is legally transferred to them by Divine imputation; as it is written: “even the righteousness of God . . . upon all them that *believe*” (Rom. 3:22). Faith is no part of that righteousness, but it is through faith it is received and becomes available for salvation. Faith is the belief of the Divine testimony concerning that righteousness and trust in Him who is the Author of it. Faith perceives and acknowledges the suitability and excellence of Christ’s righteousness and cordially embraces it.

“That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” But before we can have a right to anything in Christ, we must be one with Him, we must be joined to Him as our Head, being dead to the Law and married to Him. That union is accomplished through faith, and therefore His righteousness, which becomes ours in this way, is called “the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13) and “the righteousness which is of God through faith” (Phil. 3:9). It is called the righteousness of “faith” because faith is the only instrument which God is pleased to make use of in applying His righteousness. These grand truths are presented *to faith*, for it is the very nature of faith to seek from its glorious Object what it has not in itself. The doctrine of vicarious imputation is something which is entirely foreign to human experience, originating with Him whose thoughts are not as our thoughts and whose ways are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth.

This righteousness is “upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22). It is not put into them as their sanctification is wrought in the soul by the Spirit, but is placed upon them as a robe: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isa. 61:10). It is the spotless garment which is given by the Lord Jesus to those who hear His voice, that they may be clothed and that the shame of their (soul’s) nakedness may not appear (Rev. 3:17). It is the “fine linen,” clean and white, with which the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, is arrayed, for the fine linen is “the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:8). Thus Jesus Christ is of God made unto His people “righteousness” (1 Cor. 1:30)—His righteousness becomes theirs. As our sins were laid upon Him, so His obedience is put upon us. It is not a righteousness wrought *by* us, but *given to* and *put upon* us.

Here, then, is the great glad tidings, the glorious Gospel: that we are made righteousness in Christ. Carnal wisdom cannot apprehend it, but faith closes with and rejoices in it. However



contrary it may be to human reason that guilt should be transferred from the unjust to the Just, and that the surety righteousness of Christ should be imputed to worthless sinners, yet faith submissively accepts the truth and thereby do we learn to know the love of Him with whom we have to do. “To the righteousness of Christ is the eye of the believer forever to be directed. On that righteousness must he rest, on that righteousness must he live, on that righteousness must he die, in that righteousness must he appear before the judgment-seat, in that righteousness must he stand forever in the presence of a righteous God” (Robert Haldane). Well then may we exclaim with the Psalmist, “My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness, Thy salvation all the day . . . I will go in the strength of the LORD God, I will make mention of Thy righteousness, of *Thine only*” (Psa. 71:15, 16).

