

The Holy Bargain

- 1 No mortal tongue can e'er describe
 The freedom of the soul,
 When passed beyond all earthly bribe
 To God's complete control.
 All things are his, yes, life, and death,
 Things present or to come;
 In Christ he draws in peace each breath,
 In Christ he finds his home.
- 2 When such as we the King can choose,
 To share with Him His throne,
 'Tis passing strange that we refuse
 To be our Lord's alone.
 O never speak of sacrifice!
 A privilege untold
 Is to be His at any price,
 In Calv'ry's hosts enrolled.
- 3 Arise! the holy bargain strike—
 The fragment for the whole—
 All men and all events alike
 Must serve the ransomed soul.
 All things are yours when you are His,
 And He and you are one;
 A boundless life in Him there is,
 Whence doubt and fear are gone. (*Hymns*, #473)

When she authored the above hymn, Catherine Booth-Clibborn, the oldest daughter of William and Catherine Booth, the founders of The Salvation Army, captured the deep and abiding source of peace and freedom that is available only to a true believer in Christ. Freedom is the condition of not being held in captivity or in slavery to man, country, money, passion, and ultimately to the deepest and most subtle form of captivity—the unquestioning servitude of a person to his own inward doubts, fears, fixed illusions, and deceptive fantasies. Hence, freedom is the condition of not being bound by any established conventions or rules (outward or inward). It is both a precious treasure sought by all and, at the same time, misunderstood, neglected, or abused by most. The paradox of unique freedom for humanity is that it can be experienced only by submitting to the complete control of God. Any authentic freedom must ultimately come from God through His Incarnated Son. The only genuine freedom is the liberty that comes through an enjoyment of Christ, breathing Him in as our very life

supply and abiding in Him as our secure and delightful home, the refuge from all storms, unrest, and anxiety: “In Christ he draws in peace each breath, / In Christ he finds his home.” Freedom in Christ is freely offered through the divine revelation of the Bible to “whosoever will,” yet multitudes of unbelievers choose to remain tormented within their enslaved souls while casually rejecting Christ, dismissing Him as an inconsequential religious doctrine.

“No Mortal Tongue Can E'er Describe the Freedom of the Soul”

Because humanity is conscious of the vanity of its disturbing, disconcerting condition, the opening stanza of this hymn heralds the experience of peace that passes all understanding: “No mortal tongue can e'er describe / The freedom of the soul, / When passed beyond all earthly bribe / To God's complete control.” This freedom defies description. There are no words that can adequately express the liberation of the soul that allows itself to open to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him into its deepest parts. The unbridled joy that emanates from moments of the sweet enjoyment of the reality of Christ *in us* genuinely sets us free (cf. Col. 1:27). Words can paint pictures, make comparisons, and point the way, but words can never fully elucidate the genuine freedom of the soul that enters into an intimate relationship with the living and true God who now indwells us.

“All Things Are His, Yes, Life, and Death, Things Present or to Come”

Here the hymn paraphrases Paul's startling proclamation to the bickering Corinthian believers: “So then let no one boast in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all are yours, but you are Christ's, and Christ is God's” (1 Cor. 3:21-23). Mrs. Booth-Clibborn affirmed that a person who has passed beyond the attracting temptations of this world and has consecrated himself absolutely to God thereby possesses all things, including life and death and things present and to come. The words of Paul are the living words inspired by the Spirit of God, not the hyperbolic utterance of a spiritual guru nor the embellished rhetoric of a polished political candidate: “All things are yours.” We should meditate

over these words, not in terms of human aggrandizement but in sober consideration of the working out of God's interests on the earth in and through us. We can never neglect the final words of Paul's admonition: "But you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

"When Such as We the King Can Choose"

The opening line of the second stanza directs our attention to an amazing prospect that is linked to the extraordinary freedom experienced by a person who chooses to be fully under God's ruling grace. Although human rights occupy an important place in the realm of human living, this level of freedom is inconsequential and irrelevant when compared with the freedom of a person who comprehends and apprehends in his daily living the mysterious freedom of a human being completely under God. Such a person is called into an exceptional oneness with Christ, even to the point that Christ would share His ruling authority with His disciple.

"To Share with Him His Throne"

Sharing the throne is related to the kingdom, and the kingdom life involves regeneration (John 3:3, 5), growing to maturity into His kingdom by His life, and becoming joint partakers with Him in His purpose and expression; by growing in the divine life unto full maturity, we become qualified to sit with Christ on His throne. Ephesians 2:6 says that today we are already seated together with Christ in the heavenlies by His overcoming resurrection. Our being born into the kingdom makes it possible for us to live, by and because of Christ in us as the indwelling Spirit, in the reality of the kingdom today. Through daily, intimate contact with the Lord, we spontaneously rule over circumstances and situations by means of prayer, bringing His ruling presence into our practical church life and daily living. This is our overcoming, and it is the reality of the kingdom today. In the manifestation of the kingdom, the kingdom will be a prize to those who overcome. In the coming millennial kingdom, as participants with the Lord in His God-bestowed authority, the overcomers will rule together with Him over the whole earth (Rev. 3:21).

"'Tis Passing Strange That We Refuse to Be Our Lord's Alone"

It is heartbreaking that traditional Christian dogma has steered the Christian public far away from the eternal purpose of God. God created humanity to express Him and to rule over the creation as His representative. Although humanity fell into complete degradation and ruin, not having any possibility to be one with God, grace and reality came into the world through Jesus Christ (John 1:17) to restore a people for God's interests and

expression in this earthly realm. The Lord taught us to pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. This shows clearly that His kingdom is unchallenged in the heavens. It is on the earth that there is a rebellious and incalcitrant opposition to the divine will, especially related to being unwilling to be our Lord's alone.

Today's Christianity focuses almost exclusively on what God can do for the believer in regard to real or imagined daily physical, social, psychological, and philosophical needs and desires. To join Christ in the fulfillment of His Father's will, every individual believer must be encouraged, admonished, and helped to seek a personal and intimate contact with the Lord, with a view to seeing and carrying out God's intention and goal. In this regard, the condition and the action of many Christians is more than disappointing; it is deplorable. It is "passing strange."

Because of a refusal to be our Lord's alone, not all the believers in Christ will join Him in His kingdom during the millennium. Just as today not every believer is willing to experience the power and effectiveness of the new creation in the reality of the kingdom, so in that day not all the believers will enter into the manifestation of the kingdom. God has gained a people for Himself in the all-effective sacrifice of Christ on the cross; still, our participation in the effectiveness of His redemption and His resurrection power requires that we present our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. If we have such a vision, we will be motivated and energized to "be our Lord's alone." We will never speak of sacrifice—no price is too extreme, no burden too heavy, and no suffering too intense for those whose eyes have been anointed to see the ineffable grace ceaselessly streaming to us from God.

"Arise! The Holy Bargain Strike—the Fragment for the Whole"

To strike the holy bargain involves an appreciation of the love and grace of the Triune God in His new covenant, which He enacted in the blood of the Son. Our action of arising to strike the holy bargain is an action of the free will of a person who has been loved by God and who commits himself in love to absolute obedience to God and to His will without fear or doubt. Humanity in its fallen state naturally fears and doubts God. This fallen attitude focuses on God and humanity as being absolutely apart from one another, each having rights, powers, and possessions. Such a view ignores the clear revelation of the Scriptures that God, who is love, made humanity in His own image and likeness. He made humanity, thus, with a free will and free intelligence to choose what he will do and how he will live. Furthermore, even after humanity chose to rebel against God in Adam, our God, in His love, has come in the Son not only to freely pardon, cleanse, and reconcile humanity to God and God to

humanity but even more to join as one His Spirit with the human spirit of redeemed and regenerated humanity. In this manner, grace has been given to these created beings to discover who they really are meant to be—sons of God, mingled with God to express and live out God in perfect harmony and oneness with Him. We may often imagine that God is angry with us for some real or imagined sin, but we need to discover that our real sin is found in unbelief, independence, fear, and pride.

Because Christ now indwells us as the Spirit and with the Father, and we dwell in Him with the Father and by the Spirit, we share in the organic oneness of the Divine Trinity. This constitutes the “holy bargain” set before us. “Arise! the holy bargain strike!”

“All Things Are Yours When You Are His, and He and You Are One”

The one who entrusts and delivers himself to be one with God becomes increasingly cognizant that all things and all events alike are now under his feet. But he is also fully sensitive to the fact that his experience is not in his own power or authority; it is of Christ, whose image he bears and whose dominion he shares, not manifestly but in the unseen inner living of a God-man who reigns in life in a hidden way today and who will reign in life openly in that day. Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life (Rom. 5:17). This is a present reality. God’s full salvation in Christ takes us well beyond the mere forgiveness of sin and the reconciliation to God into a realm in which the redeemed sinner

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becomes joined to God in life to such a degree that he not only displays the gift of righteousness but even more, in the divine life, reigns over all things. As those who are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, we are given the authority to rule over all things and situations.

“A Boundless Life in Him There Is, Whence Doubt and Fear Are Gone”

Our responsibility today is to grow in the divine life by cultivating a daily, even moment-by-moment, oneness with Christ in the mysterious realm of the oneness of the Triune God. Regeneration is the initial entrance into the reality of the kingdom (John 3:5). But our rich entrance into the manifestation of the eternal kingdom depends on our growth by diligently adding the virtues of Christ into our normal daily living (2 Pet. 1:5-11). Our experience of regeneration is designed by God to be boundlessly dynamic—we should be growing, adding the rich attributes of God into our created human virtues day by day. This process takes place through the abundant grace received by us as we daily contact the Lord in prayer and in the Word of God. Growth in life also depends on our being built together with all the saints (cf. Eph. 2:21-22; 3:18-19; 4:15-16) in the fellowship of life (1 John 1:3,6-7). In such a fellowship of life, the doubts and fears inherent in all humanity disappear. Surely we need to arise and strike the holy bargain.

by Gary Kaiser

Works Cited

Hymns. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. Print.

The Holy Bargain for Paul and Us

In Philippians 3:7 [Paul] said, “But what things were gains to me, these I have counted loss on account of Christ”... He counted all things that were gains to him now as loss because all those things which were gains to him result in the loss of Christ...When God revealed Christ in him (Gal. 1:15-16), he saw a preciousness, an excellency, an unparalleled worth, and an extraordinary value that far transcended the law. Because of such a knowledge of Christ, he was able to count it a matter of excellency to have the knowledge of Christ...

Working brothers and sisters...are standing at the edge of a cliff. On the one side is Christ, and on the other side is the world. You can step over to the side of the world and fall, or you can step to the side of Christ and be lifted up...You must not make the wrong choice...On the afternoon I was saved in 1925, I made a right choice. I chose to have Christ and to reject the world! I have not regretted even until today. I believe I will never regret this choice.

From *Messages Given to Working Saints* by Witness Lee, pp. 74-75