

It is a Tried Forgiveness

Thousands and tens of thousands have sought for pardon at the mercy-seat of Christ, and not one has ever returned to say that he sought in vain. Sinners of every name and nation, sinners of every sort and description, have knocked at the door of the fold, and none have ever been refused admission: Zacchaeus the extortioner, Magdalene the harlot, Saul the persecutor, Peter the denier of his Lord, the idolatrous Athenians, the adulterous Corinthians . . . all have ventured their souls on Christ's promises of pardon, and none have ever found them to fail. If the way I set before you were a new and untravelled way, you might well feel faint-hearted! But it is not so. It is an old path. It is a path worn by the feet of many pilgrims, and a path in which the footsteps are all one way. The treasury of Christ's mercies has never been found empty. The well of living waters has never proved dry.

It is a Present Forgiveness

All that believe in Jesus are at once justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38). The very day the younger son returned to his father's house he was clothed with the best robe, had the ring put on his hand, and shoes on his feet (Luke xv). The very day Zacchaeus received Jesus he heard these comfortable words, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke xix. 9). The very day that David said, "I have sinned against the Lord," he was told by Nathan, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin" (2 Sam. xii. 13).

The very day you first flee to Christ, your sins are all removed. Your pardon is not a thing far away, to be obtained only after many years. It is nigh at hand. It is close to you, within your reach, all ready to be bestowed. Believe, and that very moment it is your own. "He that believeth hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). It is not said, "he shall have," or "will have" it is "*hath*."

This is the nature of the forgiveness offered to you. The greatness of it is far more than any report. But it is worth seeking, and I can wish you nothing better than that you may seek to make it your own.

JOHN CHARLES RYLE

The late Lord Bishop
of Liverpool

FEELING GUILTY ?

HERE IS THE NEXT STEP FOR YOU

Feeling Guilty?

HERE IS THE NEXT STEP FOR YOU

THERE is forgiveness in Jesus Christ for every one that is willing to receive it. The forgiveness set before you is

A Great and Broad Forgiveness

Hear what the Prince of Peace Himself declares: "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme" (Mark iii. 28); "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah i. 18). Yes! though your trespasses be more in number than the hairs of your head, the stars in heaven, the leaves of the forest, the blades of grass, the grains of sand on the sea shore, still they can all be pardoned. Paul names a long list of abominations which the Corinthians had committed, and then says, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed" (I Cor. vi. 11).

It is a Full and Complete Forgiveness

It is not like David's pardon to Absalom, a permission to return home, but not a full restoration to favour (2 Sam. xiv. 24). It is not, as some fancy, a mere letting off, and letting alone. It is a pardon so complete, that he who has it is reckoned as righteous

as if he had never sinned at all. His iniquities are blotted out. They are removed from him as far as the east from the west (Psalm ciii. 12). The Father sees him joined to Christ, and is well pleased. Praised be God that in the matter of our pardon there is nothing left for man to do. Jesus does all, and man has only to hold out an empty hand and to receive.

It is a Free and Unconditional Forgiveness

It is not burdened with an "if," like Solomon's pardon to Adonijah: "If he will show himself a worthy man" (I Kings i. 52). Nor yet are you obliged to carry a price in your hand, or bring a character with you to prove yourself deserving of mercy. Jesus requires but one character and that is that you should feel yourself a sinful, bad man. He invites you to "buy wine and milk without money and without price," and declares, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Isaiah lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17). Like David in the cave of Adullam, He receives everyone that feels in distress and a debtor, and rejects none (I Sam. xxii. 2). Are you a sinner? Do you want a Saviour? Then come to Jesus just as you are, and your soul shall live.

It is an Offered Forgiveness

I have read of earthly kings who knew not how to show mercy, of Henry the Eighth of England, who spared neither man nor woman; of James the Fifth

of Scotland, who would never show favour to a Douglas. The King of kings is not like them. He calls on man to come to Him and be pardoned. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 4). "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah lv. 1). "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John vii. 37). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). It ought to be a great comfort to you and me to hear of any pardon at all; but to hear Jesus Himself inviting us, to see Jesus Himself holding out His hand to us, the Saviour seeking the sinner before the sinner seeks the Saviour, this is encouragement, this is strong consolation indeed!

It is a Willing Forgiveness

I have heard of pardons granted in reply to long entreaty, and wrung out by much importunity. King Edward the Third of England would not spare the citizens of Calais till they came to him with halters round their necks, and his own Queen interceded for them on her knees. But Jesus is "good and ready to forgive" (Psalm lxxxvi. 5). He delighteth in mercy (Micah vii. 18). Judgment is His strange work. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter iii. 9). He would fain have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. ii. 4). You and I may well come boldly to the throne of grace! He who sits there is far more willing and ready to give mercy than you and I are to receive it.