

## The Forsaken One

*Handfuls of Pasture – C. Mackintosh*

There is an utterance in Psalm 22 of deep and marvelous import – a sentence to which there is no parallel in the volume of God. It is this: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Never, we may safely say, was there such a question asked before; never has there such a one been asked since; nor shall its like ever be asked again. It stands alone in the annals of eternity.

Reader, let us dwell upon it for a few moments. Who was it that asked this wondrous question? It was the eternal Son of God, the One who had lain in the bosom of the Father before the foundation of the world, the Object of the Father’s infinite delight. Moreover, He was Himself God over all, blessed forever, the Creator of all things, the Almighty Sustainer of the wide universe. Finally, He was a Man – a spotless, holy, perfect Man – One who had never sinned, nor could sin, because He knew no sin. And yet, withal, a Man, a real Man, born of a woman, like unto us in every possible respect with one solitary exception – sin. *“He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”* He did ever those things that pleased God. From the manger of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, His whole life was in perfect accordance with the will of God. He lived but to glorify God. His every thought, His every word, His every look, His every moment, emitted an odor of ineffable sweetness which ascended to the throne and refreshed the heart of God. Again and Again the heavens were opened upon this blessed One; and the voice of the eternal Father bore witness to Him in such ascents as these: *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

This, then, was the One who asked the question. He it was who said: *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* And is it really true that One was forsaken of God? Did God, in very deed, forsake His only-begotten, well-beloved Son? Did He actually hide His face from the only sinless, spotless, perfect Man that ever lived in this sinful world? Did He close His ear to the cry of One who had lived but to do His will and glorify His name? Yes; marvelous to declare, God did this. God, who withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous, whose ear is ever open to the cry of the needy, whose hand is ever stretched forth for the defense of the weak and the helpless, He, even He, turned away His face from His own beloved Son and refused for the moment to hear His cry. Here we have a profound mystery on which we cannot dwell too deeply. It contains in it the very marrow and substance of the gospel, the grand basis-truth of Christianity. The more we ponder the glories of the One who asked the question – who He was, what He was, what He was in Himself, and what He was to God – the more we see the marvelous depths of the question. And further, the more we consider the One to whom the question was put, the more we know of His character and ways, the more we see the force and value of the answer.

Why, then, did God forsake His Son? Oh reader, dost THOU know why? Dost *thou* know it in its bearing upon *thyself personally*? Canst thou say from thine inmost soul, “*I know why God forsook that blessed One*. It was because He had taken *my* place, stood in my stead, and taken all my guilt upon Himself. He was made sin for me; all that I was, all that I had done, all that was *due to me* as a sinner was laid on Him. God dealt with *me* in the person of my *Substitute*. All the sin of my nature and all the sins of my life, all that I am and all that I have ever done, was imputed to Him. He represented *me* and was treated accordingly.”

Say, beloved reader, has God’s Spirit taught you this? Have you received this in simple faith on the authority of God’s Word? If so, you must have solid peace, a peace which no power on earth or in hell, men or devils, can ever disturb. This is the true and only foundation of the soul’s peace. It is utterly impossible for any soul to have real peace with God until he knows that God Himself has settled the whole question of sin and sins in the cross of His son. God knew what was needed and He provided it. He laid on Christ the full weight of our iniquities. God and sin met at the cross. There the whole question was divinely gone into and settled once and forever. Sin was judged and abolished. The Sin-Bearer went down under the billows and waves of divine wrath. God brought Him into the dust of death. Sin was dealt with accordingly to the infinite claims of the nature, the character, and the throne of God; and now the One who was made sin for us and judged in our stead is at the right hand of God exalted, crowned with glory and honor; and the very crown which adorns His blessed brow is the proof that sin is forever put away; so that ere ever a single sin can be laid to the believer’s charge that crown must be torn from the risen Savior’s head.

But there is another element of ineffable preciousness and sweetness that enters into the answer to the mysterious “Why?” of the forsaken One. It is this: the amazing love of God toward us poor sinners, a love which led Him not only to give His Son from His bosom, but to bruise and forsake Him on the cross. Why did He do this? Because there was no other way possible in which we could escape. It was either a question of an eternal hell for us, or of infinite wrath for the Sin-Bearer. God be praised! He chose the latter; and hence the place which Christ now occupies is the place of all who simply believe in Him.