

Psalms 90:7-9 (Henry H. McCarthy) 139475

Love Suffering in the Midst of Evil, LOVE SUFFERING IN THE MIDST OF EVIL; OR, the Garden and the Cross (90:7-9)

CONCERNING the sufferings of our blessed Lord, the writer owes all he has learned, irk rightly dividing the ward of truth about them, to a pamphlet entitled *The Sufferings of Christ*, which he begs most affectionately and fervently to commend to any who may be desirous of entering further into a subject so solemn, so sacred, and one which sends a plow-share through the conscience and controls the affections, so as to enable the saint to detect worldliness, levity, and selfishness in their most attenuated forms—a subject, too, which will ever be the theme of the Father's heart, and ours also, when, outside the reach of evil, we shall trace heaven's brightest glory, and our eternal blessedness to the sufferings of the Lamb of God. (Heb. 2:10.)

AS a Second Edition of this little pamphlet, written many years ago, has been called for, I take the opportunity of revising and enlarging it, showing from Scripture how the ways and qualities of God's nature, such holiness, righteousness, grace, come out in Man, and which we could only know in " God manifested in flesh "; i.e. in Jesus—the Truth, by which we learn who God is in His moral nature, and the Father in His deep, unfathomable love. No creature can conceive anything higher than knowing God. If you were to allow any so-called " special blessings " to come between your soul and the revelation of the Father in the Son, you would be leaving the true place of a Christian, in a world of sin and misery; for it would be thinking of yourself and your own blessings, instead of God's goodness as manifested in Christ.

When you are loving goodness in Jesus, Satan is worsted; but if you are seeking or loving goodness in yourself, you get occupied with your own beauty, and "fall into the crime of the devil." (1 Tim. 3:6, and Ezek. 28:17.) Just as another has said, " Increased light becomes increased darkness, when there is a condition of soul that boasts in it." There is therefore no glorying in special blessings when we are in God's fully revealed presence, but there is " taking pleasure in our weaknesses, that the power of Christ may pitch its tent over us." It is there we take pleasure in practicing a lowliness which loves goodness, not in us, but in Him, delighting to be nothing ourselves in the presence of such a God, having full knowledge of Him as revealed in Jesus, and a capacity for this knowledge in the possession of eternal life—" made partakers of divine nature." Such a revelation of God in Christ is the one He has given of Himself, according to counsel, by which alone He could be known.

Suppose Christ had only been God, I never could have known Him. A little bit of His glory would terrify me; and man would be found again hiding behind the trees from His unbearable presence. It is true my conscience would be awakened, but never perfected, and always miserable. Then suppose Christ had only been man; well, there would be a gulf between us that never could be bridged; for such perfection in this holy, lowly man could have nothing to say or to do with a degraded wretch • like me; and I should be always left without any revelation of God, and most miserable in Christ's presence, because I never could be like Him.

But the case is altogether different, since God Himself became a man, and did not cease to be God by such an act of humiliation. Nor did the eternal Son cease to be one person either; for Jesus was God and man in one. Or as another has said, " From the conception Deity was never severed from the humanity of Christ, not even when His soul was in paradise and His body in the tomb."

It is most important to remember that Jesus is always man; but if He were not God His humanity would be of no value to us; but being God as well as man, one indivisible person, not two, we get the "Daysman," who was needed in Job 9:33, or the " Mediator," both of which are—the same word in the original. He can thus come to our distance, and turn all our sins into an occasion to glorify God, by bearing all the judgment, and then take us into His own nearness, as the risen man from the dead, putting us into identity with the value of the sacrifice, in which God has been perfectly glorified and fully revealed. I thus know God by the way He has made Himself known in redeeming me, and making me fit for His presence; and now that my conscience is purged, every remembrance of Jesus, in His lowly ways and sorrows, entered into by grace, calls forth worship, which would be idolatry had He ceased to be God before men at any time, although always man, in His taken place before God, and when THERE claimed by God as His Fellow in His lowliest humiliation; e.g. "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man My Fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Zech. 13:7.)

This is the only distinction that Scripture makes as to the indivisible person of Christ, and when faith and Scripture go together, fallen reason is silenced, and faith is active; for " whatsoever is not of faith is sin," especially as to the deep mystery of the Lord's indivisible person. Does faith cease to worship when remembering how HE HIMSELF entered into our circumstances of weariness, etc.? Does faith cease to worship Him as the Holy Ghost brings to our remembrance in present power the past fact of how HE HIMSELF ate and drank with His disciples before or after His resurrection?

Fancy such a thing! What semi-Unitarianism it would be to allow fallen reason to take the place of faith here, worse tenfold than if uncovered, because more likely to deceive. Such teaching has departed from the line of faith, for faith worships at every remembrance of Him, knowing that it needed as much an exercise of divine power to enter into our circumstances as it did to create the heavens; indeed, in one sense more so, because it cost Him no sorrow, but only a word, to call worlds into existence out of nothing.

The teaching of the pamphlet commended in the preface would help us to understand this.

We first get, historically, Christ's inflicted sufferings at the hand of men, led on by Satan, when He, the Son, was the living manifestation of the Father to friend and foe, so that He had to say, " Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." This hatred of Gentile and religious flesh, measured by its own self-importance, culminated in the crucifixion.

Secondly, we get Christ's inflicted sufferings at the hand of God in judgment when He was made sin, and bare in the abandonment, according to the perfect opposition of God against sin, \\\what is really in " the second death," even before He gave up His life, which was " an exercise

of His power in its highest act of triumph, at least short of resurrection." There is a point in Scripture as to the Lord never exercising divine power by will for His own relief, which I must not pass over. In Luke 22:43 we read, " There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." This was in His deep agony, when " His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground "-the anticipated agony of the cross, which belongs to the third class of sufferings, not the inflicted judgment of God.

Now put together the service of the angel with the defeat of Satan's effort to get the Lord to put forth His Godhead power for His own relief, whether in the wilderness, in the garden, or on the cross. What do we learn in the wondrous ways of our Lord, in the angel's service, and Satan's defeat, as we read in a few verses farther on (v. 51), that the Lord did put forth His Godhead power to heal a poor smitten enemy, exposing at the same time the fleshly blunder of His failing disciple, and the grace of His own heart, who thus exercises His Godhead power for a Smitten enemy a short time after Satan had failed to get Him to exercise it for Himself I Now look at & certain analogy between this and the cross. During the time of the abandonment, when the Lord's punishment came up to the point of His having to endure what was in " the second death," so that we should not have to know it in the lake of fire, He did not put forth His Godhead power, either to meet need or to lessen claims; but when He is heard " from the horns," etc., and says " Father," then He puts forth power to complete atonement, by giving up His life, otherwise there could have been no atonement at all, according to John 10:17,18.

Thirdly, we come to another class of sufferings which are neither inflicted by man nor by God., but sufferings which others were in, and into which He entered voluntarily on His part, and in grace and love to us. We were subject to certain sufferings because of our sin: Christ entered into them in pure grace. Where sin brought us, grace brought Christ. He was not there by necessity of His position, such as we were, but He did enter into them in the purest possible grace; and it needed an exercise of divine power to enter into the circumstances of others, such as sorrows, feelings under pressure, and the anticipative agony of the terrible cup that awaited Him. Look at His own people giving up their Messiah. Look at their Messiah, instead of giving them up to judgment, entering into the circumstances of the broken-hearted, with a view to bear the judgment on the Cross which that sin of giving up their Messiah deserved.

I remember once saying to the author of the pamphlet referred to in the preface, that I believed the unfolding of this third class of (non-inflicted) sufferings of the Lord Jesus was quite new, and that the only record I knew of this was by a good man (Cardinal Bonaventura), about the seventh century, who discovered this third class of sufferings in the Psalms; but thinking they could not apply to Jesus, because He was God, he applied them to the Virgin Mary, on the ground of Luke 2:35. This was the substance of what I said, to which he answered, " Yes, I know all you say, and I believe that the bringing out of this third class of sufferings of our Lord is new; and what is more, I do not believe there is anything more new to come out, until the Lord Himself comes."

Alas! how many there are in our day who go with the Cardinal as far as refusing the application of this third class of sufferings to our Lord! It is because they think that Jesus was there necessarily by virtue of His position, and therefore they do not see that it needed divine power to enter into the non-inflicted sufferings on His way to the Cross, as it did to bear the inflicted sufferings in judgment when on the Cross. He, who never ceased to be God, entered into all the circumstances of heart-breaking sorrow, where sin had brought man, but where grace had brought Christ (sinlessly, of course), but by an act of His divine power, when on His way to suffer in a more wonderful way, by taking upon Himself the root of it all, and bearing God's judgment according to the perfect opposition of His nature against sin. But previous to this inflicted judgment of God, Jesus having entered into every circumstance of trial and sorrow of His people here, His heart now comes down into the sorrow of His poor, suffering saints; for He has practically learned the reality of such sorrow, yea, infinitely more; and it is thus we get the sense of Christ's sympathies (when flesh is judged), instead of the bitterness of a will of our own. This makes much of Christ, and little of us. To put us into Christ's place makes much of us; but for Christ's heart to come down, as our companion in deep, deep sorrows here, makes much of His grace. It makes little of us, but much of Jesus.

When sorrow leads to solitariness it is overpowering, because there are no springs, in the creature to meet it; but when it makes God our resource, He becomes a more abundant source of joy, for His heart never ceases to be faithful in meeting a broken heart. And Satan can never put us into a place where God does not meet faith, for this would be to make him more powerful than God, who always meets faith, which " sees Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor."

"To gaze upon Thyself, So faithful known, Long proved in secret help With Thee alone.

To see such love content On me flow forth, Forever Thy delight, Clothed with Thy worth.

O Lord, 't was sweet, the thought That Thou wast mine, But sweeter still the joy That I am Thine.

"Yea, Thine, O Lord, the fruit, The cherished fruit, Of thine all-perfect love. No passing root

Of evil e'er will dim Thy cloudless rays, But a full heart pour forth Thine endless praise.

Perfect in comeliness Before Thy face Thy eternal witness, all Of Thine own grace."

By submitting to the Word, our consciences being seized by it, and our hearts running in the same current as God's, through His lines of truth, it is marvelous the place our souls get into.

There are two lines which go straight through the Cross. One is the consequence of the cruelty and wickedness of man, actuated by Satan; the other, of the wrath of God.

The Jews reject their own Messiah, but He does not give them up because they do so; on the contrary, He takes in grace (voluntarily on His part, of course) the very place which they are in, in consequence of their rejection of Him.

And thus God's governmental wrath due to them is entered into and felt by Him. This is not substitutional, for others can be with Him in it, as Scripture declares. (Psa. 90:7-9; Isa. 63:9.) This governmental wrath of God goes on right through the Cross, even whilst atonement is being made; but atonement is another thing altogether, and in that, as we know, He must stand alone.

Before entering further into this most wonderful and most solemn of all subjects, I would remind my reader that if fallen reason takes the place of faith, God is left out; for reason never rose above man's power to reach God. Fifty thousand and seventy of the men of Bethshemesh, a city of the priests, were smitten because they had looked into the ark of the Lord—a type of Christ. The shoes must be off the feet, the will silenced, and faith active; otherwise it is reason, and not the Spirit of God, which is guiding, and if we yield to it we shall bring sorrow upon ourselves. Our shoes must be off when we come to the things of God, especially upon such a subject as this, where it is Himself and the full revelation of what He is when evil had come in that is in question.

In order to combat God's enemies successfully (as His own saved people) I must know myself; but mere natural honesty never teaches me what I am. Sincerity may be there, but neither natural honesty nor sincerity has ever discovered myself to myself. I must go outside of myself to get a revelation of myself. Therefore, a revelation from God and of God is the first need of a lost sinner, and necessary also, for a believer, who must never forget what produced first love; for the love that saves is the greatest of all. And this is just what God has done in. His own Eternal Son—become a Man, because we were so bad; yet even this did not remedy our badness. On the contrary, it was the means of its development into hatred of such displayed love, a hatred which went to every length in order to get rid of Jesus, who had to say, "But now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." Thus the revelation of the Father in the Son, seen and hated, mocked and spit upon, has discovered myself to myself. The deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there.

When I see myself thus by the revelation which God has given from and of Himself, it shows me that nothing but the cross could have wrought my deliverance, and teaches me never to trust any one but Christ when in the conflict, who, before sending me into the battle-field against His enemies, has first gotten the victory over all mine. He says to us in communicating His own peace, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." So that our wisdom is, instead of falling back on our own resources, to treat every obstacle as having been overcome by our Lord.

We see in Joshua that it requires the same holiness to fight the Lord's battles as was needed in the working out of redemption. He had to stand as much unshod before the Captain of the Lord's host as Moses had to do in the presence of the burning bush, where God was revealing Himself as a God of grace without setting aside His holiness in doing so; for grace never contradicts righteousness; and, as has been said, "God never belies His nature to carry out His purposes." It is the knowledge of what He is that gives us boldness in the presence of His enemies. May the Lord deliver us from every element that savors of insubjection to His blessed Word! For when this is sufficient wisdom for us, every wile of the enemy is unmasked, which constitutes his defeat. Moreover, he ever tries to make us forget that it needed as much an exercise of divine power for God to become a man, and to enter into our circumstances, as it did to create the worlds; indeed, in one sense more so, because it cost Him no more than a word to create light, but to exhibit love in the midst of misery, He had to become "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Heb. 2:18 and iv. 14 teach us that Christ acquired a capacity down here which enables Him, in a special way, to sympathize with His people now, and there is not a sorrow you may be called to pass through for His sake, which has not got an echo in His blessed heart. Moreover, the experiences into which He entered here will enable Him in a very special manner to sympathize with the suffering remnant of the Jews in their day of unparalleled trial. And it is as we now learn, by faith in the Word, to understand this, that we ourselves shall have capacity to enter into it with Him then.

It has been often noticed that wherever others are associated with Christ in His sufferings, that is not atonement. A child can understand it. In Psa. 69 we read, "They talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded." This makes it evident that atonement is not in question, for others never could have been associated with Him in that. He said to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterward," which means, when Christ had exhausted the waters of judgment, then Peter should follow Him dry-shod. Christ has but death as divine judgment, and the wrath of God behind Himself for us; therefore death as judgment, and the wrath of God, are as much behind us as they are behind Jesus.

But there is another kind of agony which, clearly, He had not entered into until His "hour" had come—an agony produced by His entering into a place where His people were, and by Satan's coming to press upon Him the cup with all its deep meaning. His people could be associated with Him here according to their measure—a measure, of course, which could not be compared with His. For instance, "Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

The thought in Heb. 5:7 synchronizes with this: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of death," etc. "From death" is not a correct translation. It is through, or out of, death. God could not save both Him and us from death. Indeed, personally, He needed no salvation from it, not being liable to it; but it was only by His going through it that we could be saved from it.

I know it has been said that others could not be associated with Him in the sorrows we are now contemplating. But I ask, Do not undelivered souls fear judgment? Will not the Jewish saints in a future day fear judgment, and escape it, because He did not? Are not saints said to be under the (governmental) wrath of God in Psa. 90:7,9? Are they making atonement? Why, the thought were monstrous.

But let us turn to the garden.

We are told in Luke 4:13, "When the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season." Satan had signally failed on that occasion to get Christ to exercise His Godhead power; i.e. to leave His taken place of dependence. But now he returns to renew his efforts.

"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." He presses the cup of death upon Him—the cup of death as the judgment of God, which he held in his power (Heb. 2:14) by God's original sentence; for if God had deprived Satan of the power of death, He would have annulled His own sentence. Does Christ exercise divine power for His own relief? He refused all Satan's proffers on the former occasion; and now He endures the terrors, still retaining His taken place of dependence. Christ's patient, unwearied dependence displayed a character far more profoundly divine, which had a spring of action in it far more morally glorious, than if He had hurled the serpent into the lake of fire, which He had power to do. A deeper thing lay in Christ's heart than any exercise of divine power against Satan for His own relief. The

question between God and Satan, with his ill-gotten gains of death in all its terrors over us, had to be settled, and nothing less than Christ Himself bearing what was in " the second death " could settle that question.

Moreover, Jesus will receive the terrible cup from no second cause. He rises up to His Father's purpose, and says, " O My Father, if this cup may not pass from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." His being put to the test only brings out His dependence more and more. He takes the cup from His Father's hand, and never gets under the power of Satan-no, not at any time-either throughout His life or on the cross. He was always superior to the enemy; the more he presses the cup upon Him, the more closely he presses Him to the bosom of His Father, which He had never left.

But shrink from it He did; His blessed heart quivered at the thought of the judgment of God. Not to fear it would have been insensibility. " He was heard in that He feared." He was "sore amazed," or "affrighted," as the word is translated elsewhere. (Mark 15:5.) He deprecated that awful cup. In Mark's gospel He does not qualify His request. He prays, "Take away this cup from Me." But then He adds, " Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." And the power that He only exercises in obedience to His Father is always there; for He touched the servant's ear, and healed him. Such acts of grace were not the fruit of committed power, but of personal goodness. But He will not use His power for His own relief, even when His enemies are prostrate on their faces before Him, but only to show His perfect subjection and obedience. This sorrow of His soul in the garden was not inflicted judgment. It was the place or governmental wrath into which His people had brought themselves through rejecting Jehovah—Messiah, and into which He, their King, entered with them, instead of giving them up.

We read in Zechariah, " Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The smiting of God, though exclusively confined to the cross as to the literal act, was felt by the Lord Jesus before He came to it. The actual smiting had not taken place, but the sense of it was present to Him; for Scripture language it was there. Well it might be prophesied of Him, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger."

A brave man amongst men feels no fear nor sorrow, as he snaps his fingers at the cannon's mouth. It is mere animal courage, want of capacity to appreciate results, no forethought. The blessed Lord Jesus knew all that He was going into, and " He feared"; He was affrighted. Think of Him prostrate on the ground, His sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. An angel was sent from heaven to strengthen Him, who never would use divine power by will for His own relief; for though He never ceased to be God at any time, yet Satan could never succeed in getting Him to leave His taken place of dependence. Now, whom am I learning, adoring, and trusting in that weak Man! The God upon whose love I repose! What grace of our God and Father to give us the pulsations of His own heart in the heart of His Son! Did He ever cease to feel for Him or to forget Him in whom He always saw His own reflex? Does Christ forget one of His own in whom, if He wants to see His own reflex, He has to produce it I Not one. " Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." Agony suited Him at the thought of the terrible cup; grace suited Him with His poor failing disciples. There is not a single thing that He can record in our favor that He will not do. Does He ever speak of our sins? Yes, He does, when He calls them His own on the cross. But think, when He talks of us to the Father, of His saying, " I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." Could He say anything better than that for such poor things I If you could only go behind your own back, so to speak, and listen to your blessed Savior speaking of you -even of a cup of cold water given in His name-your heart would be so broken that you would never say another word in your own favor. It was when Peter meant his best he found out what a wretched heart he had; and it was only when he did his worst he found what a blessed heart Christ had.

But it is not possible for me to judge sin as God judges it, until I see that done at the cross. If I take a less standard, it will be merely judging sin according to the natural conscience, and keeping God out. But there is something else necessary-I must be brought to God's standpoint, from which to look through His eyes at those whose sins and sin-fruit and root-have been judged, and who as fallen creatures are viewed by God as dead and risen with Christ, because it is only by the doctrine of our death with Christ, and of our being raised with Him, that we learn we were dead in sins. This stops us from any effort to better self, which is the way the mere natural man looks at the extent of sin. But being quickened with Christ (by having Christ, after passing through death, as our life) is when we were dead in sins.

Now, if ever I find an idle thought seeking to get in-a bit of self-importance, a thought of self-distinction by getting a place beyond another-my only resource is at Galgal (2 Cor. 4:10); i.e. God's judgment of sin, and by His judgment on it my freedom from it. How blessed it is thus to learn sin in communion with God Himself, which stops it from acting, instead of letting it come out, and having to learn it in company with the devil, as Peter had to do! Then, as to sorrow, which is not sin, unless we allow it to get between us and Him-for we are but poor things;-well, He will feel for us in the sorrow, and sympathize with us in the sorrowing circumstances; and the fact of our counting upon His sympathy will prevent the sorrow from getting between our hearts and Himself. But there is a danger of allowing the trials to come between us and God, by which we lose the sense of submission, and then we measure His heart by His ways in allowing the trials; and thus we put the trials between our hearts and Himself. If, however, we measure God's ways by His heart, we turn the trials into an occasion to reach deeper springs in God than we otherwise might have practically known; for there is neither a trial nor a sorrow that there is not something in Christ's heart which exactly meets that special trial, whatever it be.

Now turn to Psa. 102 The commentary which the Holy Ghost gives on this psalm lets us into a wonderful understanding of the sufferings of Him to whom it refers. Heb. 1 tells us that the speakers there are the Father and the Son. In verse 10 of this chapter the Father is said to speak to the Son, as well as in verse 8, which is quoted from Psa. 45

Let us look at the circumstances into which the Son had entered, and which gave occasion for the Father thus to answer, and we shall find this brings us to the garden again.

From the first to the eighth verse of this psalm we find the Lord in the circumstances of a peculiarly solitary man. In the eighth verse the enemies are alluded to; in the tenth verse we find that He who had been raised up as Messiah was now cast down-that is, He will take no casting down from any other hand than His Father's, although done by His enemies; and thus Satan failed to get any power over Him. In absolute self-surrender to the will of His Father, He gives up everything Himself.

If He had said, " You are Satan, and I am God " (which would have been quite true), and had cast him into the abyss, you and I were lost. If you put your foot upon a viper, or crush a wasp, that is no conflict. Instead of destroying the enemy on that occasion He allowed the whole

course of evil to come out against Himself, going down, down, down, until at last He offered Himself as the spotless Victim to the judgment of God, in order to bear all that the evil deserved, so that a victory over it all might be for us, according to the value of which God can come out in perfect love, and take us into the enjoyment of all that He is in perfect righteousness, according to the value of the sacrifice in which He has been perfectly glorified and fully revealed in full consonance with the eternal purpose of His blessed heart.

From the twelfth verse to the end of the twenty-second verse forms a parenthesis, a prophecy of events to take place because Jehovah abides forever, and because His promises cannot fail, although Messiah be cut off. He who was entitled to everything, even by birth as a man born King of the Jews—a nation that ought to have governed the world—has now to face the most shameful gibbet. He meets indignation and wrath: "Because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath." Lifted up as Messiah, He is now cast down. He prays; is in conflict; He deprecates the terrible cup; His only resource is prayer.

And now we get the answer: "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art Thyself" (or, the same), "and Thy years shall have no end." The Father says, "Thou art the Creator; Thou art Jehovah Thyself"—"Thy throne, O God."

There is the Father's answer to the Son. Is there any difficulty in that? None whatever. Faith receives it; faith believes it; just as faith receives atonement. It requires faith as much for the former as it does for the latter; and that is where people go astray, because they dream of an imaginary brain-competency to define what cannot be defined; for God is infinite.

Christ never adapts Himself to man's fallen reason. He could not do it, for it would be a denial of Himself; but He does adapt Himself to man's need. Now, the only way God is known is by the authority of Christ as His Word over the conscience. The difference between reason and conscience is, that reason leaves God out, and conscience always brings God in. Reason can think of one whom it supposes to be God, can occupy itself with Him, in which case it takes the lead, which the true and living God cannot submit to; for such would not be God at all. But conscience says, "I am a sinner," and God Himself is there to meet a sinner's need when convicted, and a saint's need when reason holds its tongue.

Christ was an infinite being, in a finite form revealing the infinite. And, oh! when the heart looks at this revelation, it is arrested; it listens; it is controlled; it worships without effort; and it adores Him now, not only for what He has done, but for what He ever was in Himself, what He is in Himself, and what He ever will be in Himself—`Brightness of His glory;" "Exact expression of His substance;" "When He had by Himself made purification of our sins;" "Image of the invisible God." So that if God ceased to be invisible, Christ would cease to be the Image of the invisible God.

Well may we sing—

"Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word, Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard. Tell how the angels in chorus, Worshipped, and welcomed His birth, Glory to God in the highest, Peace and good tidings on earth."

We now turn to the cross in Psa. 22 Let me, before entering into it, point out a characteristic of this psalm. Our blessed Lord there stands alone; He is neither heard nor answered during the time of the abandonment. It is not a question here of His entering into the circumstances of trials and sorrows, where others were; but of His bearing and exhausting for us the inflicted judgment of God, according to the perfect opposition of all that He is against sin, where none could be associated with Him, and from under which no one but the Man—God's Fellow—could ever come.

The first verse expresses the infinite suffering, and the infinite claim of Him who had never ceased to be the eternal Son, and for which suffering He had offered Himself. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

As we contemplate this, the most solemn sight that ever has or ever will be seen, let us never forget that it was you and I who brought the Son of God into that furnace of judgment, heated seventy times seven.

There was nothing evil that was not there—sin in its horrors, the judgment of God in its terrors, the hatred of devils, the malice and wickedness of man, and all our sins also, were all there; yes, all, all were there. There was nothing that man's brutality and Satan's malice could do that was not done. But what is all that creatures could do in comparison to the judgment of God, according to the perfect opposition of all that He is against sin? This was the terrible cup for Christ when "made sin." Did He not bear what was in "the second death" when drinking that cup in abandonment? If not, you and I will have to bear it forever. But, thank His blessed name forever, there was nothing that God could bring against sin that Jesus did not bear. Yes, there was nothing that God could do in judgment to express His wrath against sin that was not done. What a sight! Was it you and I that cost our blessed Master all that? Yes, it was; it was you and I. As a loved saint once said, "There is not a sin of mine which was not a nail in the Person, or a thorn in the brow, of the Son of God."

But what else was there? Everything that is good was there—mercy to sinners, love to the lost, perfect grace, the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of God for us over Satan, were all there. All that God is, His unfolded heart, without belying the holiness of His nature, were revealed in a Man whose perfect obedience when "made sin" rose higher than the righteous judgment of God against it. Can you form any adequate idea of God's estimate of that obedience? Indeed you cannot. Well, that is the measure of your acceptance by God, who treats us, not according to our poor meager value of what He gives, but according to His estimate of the Cross.

There is a beautiful contrast which the Word teaches between the finite sacrifices and the Infinite Sacrifice, which I must not pass over.

In the case of the finite sacrifices, the testing of the inwards, when they "were, cut in pieces" and submitted to the action of fire (emblem of divine judgment), took place after death (Lev. 1:5,6), and were consumed by the judgment. In the case of a rebel sinner dying as such, it is

written, "After death the judgment." But, in the case of the Infinite Sacrifice, the hidden springs, energies, motives, obedience, love, etc., were all tested by judgment before death in abandonment on the cross, where the wrath itself was consumed, thus leaving none for the believer. After the abandonment was over Christ's death was not a penal separation FROM GOD, but the exercise of His own power in laying down His life of Himself. (John 10:17,18.)

But further, when our blessed Lord was forsaken of God, did God cease to inhabit the praises of Israel Who was God's Israel on that occasion? The language of Scripture in giving the expression of Christ's feelings at that fearful moment is, "'O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.'" Now, the nation was in apostasy; the disciples had all forsaken Him, and fled. Who, then, was this Israel, the praises of whom God was inhabiting Isa. 49 tells us Who God's true Israel was. There we read of Christ, " Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

People think that such a one as Jesus, when forsaken of God, could not serve in subjection, suffer in subjection, and vindicate God in manifesting all that He is in the place of sin. That is just because the finite and fallen mind takes the place of faith and conscience. But it is the very thing which clearly proves who He was, for there is no place where Christ so conspicuously showed Himself to be a divine Person as on the cross. If He had been less He must have succumbed. A mere creature forsaken of God would be nothing but a demon.

But HE was abandoned by God, and who then sustained HIM? Any revelation of love in meeting my sins without judging them, or that could come down to my finite, fallen reason to fathom, would not be a revelation of God, nor sufficient for my eternal salvation. There is a beautiful scripture which always meets us here-"No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father." (Luke 10:22.) This the Lord Himself teaches us that the comprehension of His Person in His lowly humiliation cannot be brought down to finite reason. But the verse continues, "And who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him."

May He never have to say to us as He had to Philip, " Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

As saints of God we must be on a certain standpoint to get right views of the Cross, the like of which there is nothing elsewhere-not even in the glory, save the heart of Him who bled on it. Now, this standpoint is looking back in communion with such a Father about such a Son, in conscious identity with Christ as to acceptance. There we learn to adore Him, and to hate self, because it was self in us that cost Him agonies which ever will remain unfathomed by creatures. There is a hymn which says, " The half has not been told." If it means that we have not capacity to understand the half, well; but it has all been told us. Yes; all, ALL has been told.

What do you think of that little spot, Calvary 1 What of this little world, which, compared with the universe, is as a drop of water in the ocean' It was into this world that the Son came to manifest the Father, whom it is eternal life to know. It was in this world that Jesus offered Himself as a spotless Victim to answer the demands of the throne. It was in this world that He accomplished God's highest glory. It was in this world-not in heaven-that eternal life was revealed, and bestowed upon poor lost sinners. Yes, it is true; however much the good Pharisees may break their heads over it, if they have not eyes to see. It was on the cross that all the heart of God has been revealed, the triumph of good over evil has been established, and the whole strength of the enemy has been broken. The extent of what is merely material bears no comparison to the solution of these moral principles. The village of Waterloo was amongst the smallest on the continent of Europe; but at that village the fate of Europe was decided, and it became the most important of all. At the cross all that God Himself is morally has been revealed when evil had come in. All that Satan is has been unmasked, and all that rebel man is has been brought out and put away for the believer, so that he may look there at his judicial end as a fallen creature. Woe be to him that refuses it! for the Lord has said, " If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

One glance more at Psa. 22 The first part to verse 21 contains seven prominent features, viz.: (1) His feelings and faithfulness, vindicating God in the abandonment when drinking the cup (vv. 1-6); (2) The reproach of His people, and the expression of His dependence from His birth up to that time (vv. 7-11); (3) The highest ecclesiastical court having condemned Him, the Jews (i.e., the religious nation) beset Him, their special, boasted privileges measuring their departure from God (vv. 12, 13); (4) Words written by the Holy Ghost portraying the experience of the Lord, which would be suitable language for Him to express in His felt weakness. There was none ever felt weakness like the Son of God-"Poured out like water, all My bones are out of joint" (vv. 14, 15). I ask, What must it have been for Him, by whom the whole universe is upheld, to have to say, "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels" "7 "He was crucified through weakness." Do I understand it -God and Man in one indivisible Person? If the finite could reach the infinite, there would be neither the one nor the other; for what can be defined would not be God. Do I doubt it? No. And as for fathoming such a mystery it is our highest delight that it is beyond and above us; for a confiding, loving heart always delights to see in Him what we are not.

We also get in these verses, " Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death." He bears what is in " the second death," and will take nothing from any other hand than God's. I know nothing more simple, nothing more soul-absorbing, than that Christ will bear everything without a murmur, but receive nothing from any second cause. "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." (John 19:11.)

(5) Here we get the Gentile dogs, where you and I come in. Roman soldiers combine against Him. Now they are gambling: that is man. In the presence of the deepest agonies ever known they are gambling for His clothes. Will He move one finger for Himself 4 Not one. (vv. 16-20.) (6) In verse 21 we get the last two prominent features, viz., " the lion's mouth," that is, Satan himself-the adversary in all his hatred to God, and his permitted ability to express it against His beloved Son. Then (7) we get " the horns of the unicorns," a figurative expression of a place of torture, evidently in this case referring to the abandonment, about which I shall have something to say presently. The second part of the psalm is included in the last ten verses, where we get three waves of blessing which are to flow from the Cross, viz., the Church as the fruit of His grace, then Israel as the center of His government in peace, and, lastly, the millennial earth under His rule in blessing, and Satan bound.

If you read the quotation from this psalm in Heb. 2:12, with the connecting verses, you will see how, in declaring the Father's name, He brings us into identity with His own acceptance and relationship; and then comes, " In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." Now, the best return we can make is to enjoy the relationship into which He has brought us, and not to clash with the praises in which He leads us.

A few words on abandonment, as to the difference between verses 2 and 21 of this psalm, in one of which He is not heard, and says, " My God," etc. (an expression, not of enjoyed relationship, but of His sense of distance and agony); but in the other He is heard, and says, "Father"-an expression, as in all His life, of enjoyed communion. Mark the difference which the Word teaches us of those two things before He had left the cross. Science knows nothing of this, because it cannot occupy itself with more than the perceptive mind of fallen man is capable of taking in. It cannot penetrate into the solution of all moral principles, which is beyond the reach of man's reason, because his mind only works with the power of a creature, and the question of good and evil had to be settled according to God's estimate of what was necessary for His own glory, by which, instead of satisfying man's reason, He meets and satisfies the wants of his conscience, and thus makes him lowly, and a suited companion for Himself. Therefore the pretension of fallen reason to intrude upon such an awfully solemn subject exhibits pride, which leaves God out. But, by such a revelation from God, the conscience is awakened, and reason is silenced. Who but God, for instance, can fathom the mystery of mysteries in the perfection of Christ's faith, His love, His holiness, and His obedience when forsaken? The faith, the confidence, the motives, the unselfishness, the obedience, and the consecration of heart, are all perfect when there was no answer from God to His deep, infinite agony. Were not all these perfections of Jesus infinite, whilst suffering for God, outside the status of the Godhead without ever ceasing to be God, and whilst doing a work for poor, lost sinners which no one but He who was God could accomplish? It is this that lays the basis for God to perfect our consciences, so that they find their home in His own holy presence without a quiver. Does not such love, suffering in the midst of evil, create kindlings in our tiny little hearts, which turn out the reasonings as intruders? For reason would peep into depths beyond the reach of a finite mind, to fathom the infinite, and thus deny both the one and the other.

Moreover, it was there that Satan's last wiles to get Christ to leave His taken place of dependence were thoroughly defeated, when his aim was to get the Lord to exercise His divine power for His own relief. Never did the Lord use power to lessen His own agonies, or the claims of judgment, when bearing what was in "the second death." But when the time came for Him to say "Father," the expression of conscious enjoyment in communion, instead of the sense of abandonment, then, if He had not exercised power, there never would have been any atonement for us, because no one could take His life from Him-He says so in John 10:18-and therefore He puts forth power in obedience and in triumph, pouring out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12), and giving up His life into the merited reception of infinite favor.

I give a few extracts from the author, of the pamphlet referred to in the preface (page 118): " Our life, as life in our souls, never ceases, much less Christ's. But life in its status, living condition down here we do not take up again, nor did Christ, i. e. . . . life in its status of flesh and blood."

"Death was the exercise of Christ's power in its highest act of triumph; at least, short of resurrection.... The laying down of His life does not mean that His eternal life was annihilated, for as to His soul He had never given up life at all.... When the Lord had given up this status of life of flesh and blood, even then as to His soul (psukee) the life (zoe) was still there, one with His soul when in Paradise with the thief."

How these divine facts which we have been considering speak to our consciences and hearts! It is not man who is speaking to us in these facts, but God Himself, as seen in the birth of Jesus-a miracle; in the death of Jesus-another miracle; and in the resurrection of Jesus-a third miracle, which is contrary to every law of science; for there is neither a cause nor a consequence in resurrection out of death. Thus Jesus reveals God in all His moral nature where sin is; and if He were not God Himself He could not reveal Him; so that those who go outside of Jesus for a revelation of God get an idol of their own imagination.

In His living ministry we see Him doing the will of the Father in lowly humiliation, reproducing on earth all that He knew was in His Father's heart in heaven. As the dying Victim we see Him meeting the claims of the throne in abandonment, when His obedience rose above the inflicted wrath of God, whose righteous and holy character was then responded to in agonies which no mere creature could have endured, and remained faithful. But darkness being past, and distance gone, then came the happiest moment of the Lord's course, when He said, " Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" Thus atonement is made for us, and the Lord has the thief with Him in Paradise that day, even before the third miracle of His resurrection had been accomplished, after which it was expedient for us that He should ascend as the glorified Man, in order that the " other Comforter " should be found on earth dwelling in believers, so as to interpret Jesus to us in a way He could not have interpreted Himself when here; for He was not then the glorified Man, wearing in heaven the proofs of accomplished redemption. Jesus was incarnate, and an Object, and spoke personally; but now He speaks to us from heaven by the Holy Ghost on earth, who is not incarnate, nor an Object, but He makes Jesus our Object. We know that He has come as testimony to the unveiled glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; so that as He glorifies Christ by taking of His things, and showing them to us, we learn that our relationship is founded, and our state is formed, by the revelation of that into which Christ has entered. Then what is our business 1 To " declare... that He hath done this." (Psa. 22:31.) It was a sweet testimony given (John 10:41) of one who " did no miracle," but performed wonders in testifying to the sufficiency and power of Christ's grace for others. Let you and me be found, in company with the Holy Ghost, doing the same thing, instead of seeking to do exploits to gain distinction for ourselves, which would be self and sin.

But, as led by the Holy Ghost, we make everything of Jesus, who has met our own deep, deep need, and has brought us, who were once distant and enemies, into His own redemption place, and fitness for the dazzling purities of God's presence, taking our consciences and our affections to the height of His own love, His own holiness, and His own nature. And being "made partakers of divine nature," we understand it is not so much the amount of work we do which answers to God's heart, as the amount of Christ we present to others in a poor world- full of sin and misery, where God is not known in a love that saves-a love that is greater in saving than in conferring subsequent blessings, and of which the Cross is the highest, deepest, richest expression that God could, or ever can, give. If one were to ask for another proof of love, God could not give a greater one than the Cross of His own Son.

'T is in redeeming goodness Goodness beyond all thought-We know Him in His fullness, For thus it is we're brought To God Himself, in perfect grace, Revealed to us in Jesus' face.

Our goodness comes from loving Goodness that saves the lost Beyond all future giving, Because at such a cost.Nothing can e'er come up to this, Not e'en the gift of heavenly bliss.

Such goodness, loved in Jesus,Protects us from the snareOf loving goodness in us,Since we have got it there.To reproduce without alloyThe goodness which we now enjoy.

O blessed Master, keep us Faithful and true to Thee, Until we see Thy glory, And be for ever free From loving goodness anywhere, Save in the love that brought us there.

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