



The
Sufferings
of
Christ

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Preface

This booklet comprises four articles published in "Signs of the Times" weekly, August 7, 14, 21 and 28, 1879.

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross." *Desire of Ages*, 83.

This is the purpose, the goal of this booklet, to dwell upon the incomprehensible sacrifice of our Lord and God, and His Christ. As we contemplate the scenes portrayed in these few pages, read slowly, deeply, carefully. In your mind, live out each scene. As we grasp the reality of each scene, our minds bow in awe before the portrayal of love, the love of the Father, and the love of Jesus, His only begotten Son, in behalf of fallen man.

“When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the love of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen, and say, ‘No, it cannot be described.’ We can only do as did the beloved disciple, say, ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as an infant lisping its first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, he might also exalt those who believe in him, to a seat with him upon his throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.” *Review and Herald*, November 17, 1891.

May it be the blessed state of all that read this booklet, that each “shall be made whole.”

The publishers.

The Sufferings of Christ

Signs of the Times

August 7, 1879

“God is love.” And his matchless love manifested toward fallen man, in the gift of his beloved Son, amazed the holy angels. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He was the Father’s “appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” He was the “brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” And he upheld “all things by the word of his power.” He possessed divine excellence and greatness. It pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. And Christ “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Yet he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

The Son of God consented to die in the sinner's stead, that man might, by a life of obedience, escape the penalty of the law of God. His death did not slay the law, lessen its holy claims, nor detract from its sacred dignity. The death of Christ proclaimed the justice of his Father's law in punishing the transgressor, in that he consented to suffer the penalty in order to save fallen man from its curse. The death of God's beloved Son on the cross shows the immutability of God's law. His death magnifies the law and makes it honorable, and gives evidence of its changeless character. From his own lips is heard, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The death of the divine Son justified the claims of the divine law. In order to more fully realize the value of redemption, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited views of the sufferings of the divine Son of God, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement.

The plan of redemption, embracing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, was first preached to Adam. It was to him

the star of hope, lighting up the dark and dreaded future. Adam saw that Christ was the only door of hope through which he could enter and have life. The plan of saving sinners through Christ alone was the same in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and every successive generation of those who lived before the advent of Christ, as it is in our day. The patriarchs, prophets, and all the holy martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, in whom they showed their faith by sacrificial offerings. At the crucifixion the typical system of sacrifices was done away by the great antitypical offering. The sacrifice of beasts shadowed forth the sinless offering of God's dear Son, and pointed forward to his death upon the cross. But at the crucifixion type met antitype, and the typical system there ceased; but not one jot or tittle of the moral code was abrogated at the death of Christ.

The Son of God is the center of the great plan of redemption, which unit plan covers all dispensations. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He is the Redeemer of the fallen sons and daughters

of Adam in all the ages of human probation. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Christ is the substance or body which cast its shadow back into former dispensations. And when Christ died the shadow ceased. The transgression of the moral code made the shadowy system necessary. And at the death of Christ, which event had been shadowed forth by the blood of beasts from the time of Adam, these offerings, and not the law of God, the violation of which had made them necessary, was abolished.

The gospel preached to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses was to them good news; for their faith embraced a coming Saviour. A more clear and glorious light now shines upon the Christian world; for in the Jewish age the cross cast its shadow away back to the time when Adam left his Eden home. That which was faith to the ancients, who lived before Christ, is assurance to us, as we see that Christ has come, as foretold by the prophets. It is as essential, no more so, and no less, that we have faith in a Redeemer who has come and

died our sacrifice, as it was for the ancients to believe in a Redeemer to come, whom they represented by their typical sacrifices.

The Son of God, in becoming man's substitute, and bearing the curse which should fall upon man, has pledged himself in behalf of the race to maintain the sacred claims and exalted honor of his Father's law. His work and mission was to convince men of sin, which is the transgression of that law, and through the divine mediation, bring them back to obedience to his perfect law. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through his mediatorial work he may completely vindicate the binding claims and the holiness of every principle of his law.

After Christ was baptized of John in Jordan, he came up out of the water, and bowing upon the banks of the river, he prayed with fervency to his Heavenly Father for strength to endure the conflict with the prince of darkness in which he was about to engage. The heavens were opened to his prayer and the light of God's glory, brighter than the sun at noonday, came from the throne of

the Eternal, and, assuming the form of a dove with the appearance of burnished gold, encircled the Son of God, while the clear voice from the excellent glory was heard in terrible majesty, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Here was the assurance to the Son of God that his Father accepted the fallen race through their representative, and that he had granted them a second trial. The communication between Heaven and earth, between God and man, which had been broken by the fall of Adam, was resumed. He who knew no sin, became sin for the race, that his righteousness might be imputed to man. Through the perfection of Christ's character, man was elevated in the scale of moral value with God; and through the merits of Christ, finite man was linked to the Infinite. Thus the gulf which sin had made was bridged by the world's Redeemer.

But few have a true sense of the great privileges which Christ gained for man by thus opening Heaven before him. The Son of God was then the representative of our race; and

the special power and glory which the Majesty of Heaven conferred upon him, and his words of approval, are the surest pledge of his love and good will to man. As Christ's intercessions in our behalf were heard, the evidence was given to man that God will accept our prayers in our own behalf through the name of Jesus. The continued, earnest prayer of faith will bring us light and strength to withstand the fiercest assaults of Satan.

The light and strength of one day to the Christian will not be sufficient for the trials and conflicts of the next. Satan is now constantly changing his temptations, as he did with Christ. Every day we may be placed in new positions, and may have new and unexpected temptations. We may as consistently expect to be sustained on the morrow by food eaten today, as to depend upon present light and present blessings for future strength. Weak and sinful man cannot be safe unless God shall daily manifest his light and impart to him his strength.

It is of the highest importance that God manifest his will to us in the daily concerns of

life; for the most important results frequently depend upon small occurrences. The more we become acquainted with God through his divine light, the more sensible shall we become of our weaknesses, and that we cannot live without him. We should ever feel that we need a sure guide to direct our faltering steps.

The life of a living Christian is a life of living prayer. The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The Christian's life is one of progression. He goes forward from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, receiving from Heaven the light which Christ, at infinite cost to himself, made it possible for man to obtain. The Christian cannot let his light shine properly unless he receives an increase of the divine illumination, corresponding with his growth in the knowledge of Bible truths. The strength and glory from the accessible Heavens will qualify him to meet the new temptations and bear the heavier responsibilities which are ever before him. Untried scenes await the Christian. New dangers surround him. And unexpected temptations constantly assail him.

Our great Leader points us to the open Heavens as the only source of light and strength.

After his baptism, the Son of God entered the dreary wilderness, there to be tempted by the devil. For nearly six weeks he endured the agonies of hunger. For forty days he ate and drank nothing. This made his suffering greater than anything which man would ever be called to endure. Christ was bearing the guilt of the transgressor. He realized the power of appetite upon man; and in behalf of sinful man, he bore the closest test possible upon that point. Here a victory was gained which few can appreciate. The controlling power of depraved appetite, and the grievous sin of indulging it, can only be understood by length of the fast which our Saviour endured that he might break its power.

Satan had gained the victory over man in almost every temptation on the point of appetite. The Son of God saw that man could not of himself overcome this powerful temptation and he had such infinite love for the race that he left the royal courts of Heaven, and clothed his divinity with humanity, that

with his long human arm he might reach to the very depths of human woe, while with his divine arm he grasps the Infinite. He came to earth to unite his divine power with our human efforts, that through the strength and moral power which he imparts, we may overcome in our own behalf. Oh! what matchless condescension for the King of glory to come down to this world to endure the pangs of hunger and the fierce temptations of a wily foe, that he might gain an infinite victory for man. Here is love without a parallel. Yet this great condescension is but dimly comprehended by those for whom it was made.

It was not the gnawing pangs of hunger alone which made the sufferings of our Redeemer so inexpressibly severe. It was the sense of guilt which had resulted from the indulgence of appetite that had brought such terrible woe into the world, which pressed so heavily upon his divine soul. "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."

With man's nature, and the terrible weight of his sins pressing upon him, our Redeemer

withstood the power of Satan upon this great leading temptation, which imperils the souls of men. If man should overcome this temptation, he could conquer on every other point.

Intemperance lies at the foundation of all the moral evils known to man. Christ began the work of redemption just where the ruin began. The fall of our first parents was caused by the indulgence of appetite. In redemption, the denial of appetite is the first work of Christ. What amazing love has Christ manifested in coming into the world to bear our sins and infirmities, and to tread the path of suffering, that he might show us by his life of spotless merit how we should walk, and overcome as he had overcome, and that we might become reconciled to God.

As the human was upon Christ, he felt his need of strength from his Father. He had select places of prayer. He loved the solitude of the mountain in which to hold communion with his Father in Heaven. In this exercise he was strengthened for the duties and trials of the day. Our Saviour identifies himself with our needs and weaknesses, in

that he becomes a suppliant, a nightly petitioner, seeking from his Father fresh supplies of strength, to come forth invigorated and refreshed, braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not possessing like passions. As the sinless One, his nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul, in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He required all the divine support and comfort which his Father was ready to impart to his Son, who had left the joys of Heaven and chosen his home, for the benefit of man, in a cold and thankless world. Christ found joy and comfort in communion with his Father. Here he could unburden his sorrows that were crushing him. He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.

Through the day he labored earnestly to save men from destruction. He healed the sick, he comforted the mourning, and brought cheerfulness and hope to the despairing. He brought the dead to life. After his work was finished for the day, he went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the

city, and his form was bowed in some retired place, in supplication to his Father. At times the bright beams of the moon shone upon his bowed form. And then again the clouds and darkness shut away all light. The dew and frost of night rested upon his head and beard while in the attitude of a suppliant. He frequently continued his petitions through the entire night. If the Saviour of men, with his divine strength, felt the need of prayer in our behalf, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of prayer—fervent, constant prayer on their own account! When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, he ate nothing. He committed himself to God, and through earnest prayer, and perfect submission to the will of his Father, came off conqueror.

“It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord.” Our tables are frequently spread with luxuries not healthful nor necessary, because we love these things more than we love freedom from disease and a sound mind. Jesus sought earnestly for strength from his Father. This the divine Son of God considered of more value even

for himself than to sit at the most luxurious table. He has given us evidence that prayer is essential to us in order to receive strength to contend with the powers of darkness, and to do the work allotted us to perform. Our own strength is weakness, but that which God gives will make every one who obtains it more than conqueror.

(To be Continued)

Questions for Study

1. What divine reality is stated in the first three words from the article of August 7, 1879? p 7
2. For what purpose did the “Son of God” consent to die? p 8
3. What system ceased when Jesus died upon the cross? p 9

(The word “typical” as used here refers to the earthly sanctuary and its services)

4. What was Jesus’ work and mission? Find at least two points. p 11
5. What does the continued, earnest prayer of faith bring to us? p 13
6. Why is it “of the highest importance that God manifest His will to us in the daily concerns of life”? p 13, 14
7. If man overcomes the power of appetite, what promise is given regarding every other point of temptation? p 17

8. Complete the following sentence. “If the Saviour of men, with his divine strength, felt the need of prayer in our behalf, ...”
p 19
9. What did Christ eat when He “was the most fiercely beset by temptation”? p 19
10. God “has given us evidence that prayer is essential to us in order to receive” what two things? p 20

The Sufferings of Christ

Signs of the Times

August 14, 1879

(Continued)

Jesus had often resorted to Gethsemane with his disciples for meditation and prayer. They were all well acquainted with this sacred retreat. Even Judas knew where to lead the murderous throng, that he might betray Jesus into their hands. Never before had the Saviour visited the spot with his heart so full of sorrow. It was not bodily suffering from which the Son of God shrank, and which wrung from his lips in the presence of his disciples these mournful words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "Tarry ye here," said he, "and watch with me." He was bowed to the earth with mental anguish, and in an agony he prayed to his Heavenly Father. He felt the iniquity of sin, and the wrath of God against the violators of his holy law.

Christ was amazed with the horror of darkness which enclosed him. The temptations of Satan were almost overpowering. These words,

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” were borne upon the sympathizing air, to his disciples, in tones of startling agony. The sins of a lost world were upon him, and a sense of his Father’s anger in consequence of sin was crushing him. He arose from his prostrate position, and, yearning for the sympathy of his disciples, he came to them and found them sleeping. He roused Peter and said to him, “Simon, sleepest thou?” What, couldst not thou, who so recently was willing to go with me to prison and to death, watch with thy suffering Master one hour? “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” At the most important time, the disciples were found sleeping. It was the very time when Jesus had made a special request for them to watch with him. He knew that terrible temptations were before his disciples. He took them with him, that they might be a strength to him, and that the events they should witness that night, and the lessons of instruction they should receive, might be indelibly printed upon their memories. This was necessary that they might be strengthened for the test just before them.

But instead of watching with Christ, they were burdened with sorrow, and fell asleep. Even the ardent Peter was asleep, who, only a few hours before, had declared that he would suffer, and, if need be, die for his Lord. At the most critical moment, when the Son of God was in need of their sympathy and heartfelt prayers, they were found asleep. They lost much by thus sleeping. Our Saviour designed to fortify them for the severe test of their faith to which they would soon be subjected. If they had spent that mournful period in watching with the dear Saviour and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to his own feeble strength, to deny his Lord. We can have but faint conception of the inexpressible anguish of God's dear Son in Gethsemane, as he realized the separation from his Father in consequence of bearing man's sin. The divine Son of God was fainting, dying. The Father sent an angel from his presence to strengthen the divine sufferer. Could mortals view the amazement and sorrow of the angels as they watched in silent grief the Father separating his beams of light, love, and glory, from his Son, they would better understand how

offensive is sin in his sight. As the Son of God in the garden of Gethsemane bowed in the attitude of prayer, the agony of his spirit forced from his pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded him. The sins of the world were upon him. He was suffering in man's stead, as a transgressor of his Father's law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from his vision, and he was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In the agony of his soul he lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing his Father's frown. The cup of suffering Christ had taken from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it himself, and, in its place, give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man, was now falling upon Christ.

The disciples roused from their slumber to find their Master standing over them in a state of mental and bodily anguish such as they never before had witnessed. They saw the grief and agony of his pale face, and the bloody sweat upon his brow, for "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his

form more than the sons of men." The disciples were grieved that they had fallen asleep, so that they could not pray and sympathize with their suffering Lord. They were speechless with sorrow and surprise.

The suffering Son of God leaves his disciples, for the power of darkness rushes upon him with an irresistible force which bows him to the earth. He prays as before, and pours out the burden of his soul with stronger crying and tears. His soul was pressed with such agony as no human being could endure and live. The sins of the world were upon him. He felt that he was separated from his Father's love; for upon him rested the curse because of sin. Christ knew that it would be difficult for man to feel the grievousness of sin, and that close contact and familiarity with sin would so blunt his moral sensibility, that sin would not appear so dangerous to him, and so exceedingly offensive in the sight of God. He knew that but few would take pleasure in righteousness, and accept of that salvation which, at infinite cost, he made it possible for them to obtain. While this load of sin was upon Christ, unrealized, and unrepented of

by man, doubts rent his soul in regard to his oneness with his Father.

In this fearful hour of trial Christ's human nature longed even for the sympathy of his disciples. A second time he rose from the earth and went to them and found them sleeping. This was not a deep sleep. They were in a drowse. They had a limited sense of their Lord's suffering and anguish. In tenderness Jesus stood for a moment bending over them, and regarding them with mingled feelings of love and pity. In these sleeping disciples he sees a representation of a sleeping church. When they should be watching, they are asleep.

“Watch ye, therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.” The church of God is required to fulfill her night-watch, however perilous, and whether long or short. Sorrow is no excuse for her to be less watchful. Tribulation should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by his

own example, to the source of their strength in times of need, distress and peril. The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God's people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world, and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.

How cruel it was for the disciples to permit sleep to close their eyes, and slumber to chain their senses, while their divine Lord was enduring such inexpressible mental anguish. If they had remained watching, they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This important night-watch should have been signalized by noble mental struggles and prayers which would have brought them strength to witness the terrible agony of the Son of God. It would have prepared them, as they should behold his sufferings upon the cross, to understand something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which he endured in the garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to recall the words he had spoken to them in reference to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; and amid the

gloom of that trying hour some rays of hope would have lighted up the darkness, and sustained their faith.

Christ had told them before that these things would take place; but they did not understand him. The scene of his sufferings was to be a fiery ordeal to his disciples, hence the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. Their faith needed to be sustained by an unseen strength, as they should experience the triumph of the powers of darkness. He knew the power which the prince of darkness used to paralyze the senses of his disciples at this time when they should be watching. At this crisis, when they would meet with a great loss, they are found asleep. Again the powers of darkness press upon him with renewed force, bowing him to the earth. He leaves his disciples with a determination to conquer the prince of darkness, that man may not be held in chains of hopeless despair. Giving his disciples one look of the tenderest compassion he left them and bowed a third time in prayer, using the same words as before. The divine sufferer shuddered with amazement at this mysterious and terrible conflict.

Human minds cannot conceive of the insupportable anguish which tortured the soul of our Redeemer. The holy Son of God had no sins or griefs of his own to bear. He was bearing the griefs of others, for on him was laid the iniquities of us all. Through divine sympathy he connects himself to man, and submits as the representative of the race to be treated as a transgressor. He looks into the abyss of woe opened for us by our sins, and proposes to bridge the gulf with his own person. Those who cannot see the force of the sacred claims of God's law cannot have a clear and definite understanding of the atonement.

It was soul-anguish that wrenched from the lips of God's dear Son these mournful words: "Now is my soul troubled,—my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Christ's soul was bearing a weight of anguish because of the transgression of God's law. He was overwhelmed with horror and consternation at the fearful work sin had wrought. His burden of guilt was so great because of man's transgression of his Father's law, that human nature was inadequate to bear it. His inexpressible anguish forced from his pores large

drops of blood, which fell upon the ground and moistened the sods of Gethsemane.

The sufferings of martyrs can bear no comparison with the sufferings of Christ. The divine presence was with them, in their physical sufferings. There was the hiding of the Father's face from his dear Son. Humanity staggered and trembled in that trying hour. It was anguish of soul beyond the endurance of finite nature. It was woe condensed that brought from the trembling lips of the noble sufferer these words: "Now is my soul troubled." "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again from his pale lips are heard these words: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." The awful moment had come which was to decide the destiny of the world. Angels are waiting and watching with intense interest.

The fate of the world is trembling in the balance. The Son of God may even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. He may wipe the blood sweat from his brow, and leave the world to perish in their iniquity.

Will the Son of the infinite God drink the cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the curse of God to save the guilty? It was here the mysterious cup trembled in his hand, and the destiny of a ruined world was balanced. The world's Redeemer sees that the transgressors of his Father's law must perish under his displeasure. He sees the power of sin and the utter helplessness of man to save himself.

The woes and lamentations of a doomed world come up before him, and his decision is made. He will save man at any cost of himself. He has accepted his baptism of blood, that perishing millions through him might gain everlasting life. He left the heavenly courts where all was purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world which had fallen by transgression. He will not leave man in his sins. He will reach to the very depths of misery to rescue him. The sleeping disciples see not that their beloved Teacher is fainting. He falls to the earth, and is dying. Where are his disciples to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their suffering Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed

more than the sons of men? Our Saviour trod the wine-press alone and of all the people there was none with him.

Christ suffered not alone. Saith he, "I and my Father are one." God suffered with his Son. The sacrifice that an infinite God has made in giving up his Son to reproach and agony, cannot be comprehended by man. In giving his Son for the sins of the world, God has evidenced his boundless love to man. The angels who had learned to do Christ's will in Heaven, were anxious to comfort him. But what can they do? Such sorrow, such agony, is beyond their power to alleviate. They have never felt the sins of a ruined world, and with astonishment they behold the object of their adoration subject to grief. Although the Father does not remove the cup from the trembling hand and pale lips of his Son, he sends an angel to give him strength to drink it. The angel raises the Son of God from the cold ground, and brings him messages of love from his Father. He is strengthened and fortified. He has the assurance that he is gaining eternal joy for all who will accept redemption.

(To be Continued)

Questions for Study

1. What was it that bowed Jesus down “to the earth with mental anguish”? p 23
2. In that dreadful scene of temptation, what was falling upon Christ that should have fallen upon guilty man? p 26
3. What did Christ purpose to give to man in place of the cup of suffering that man deserved? p 26
4. What was it that caused Christ to feel “that he was separated from his Father’s love”? p 27
5. As Christ was “pressed with such agony as no human being could endure and live,” what realization did He have concerning man and sin? p 27
6. As Jesus bent over the sleeping disciples in tenderness, with love and pity, what representation did He see? p 28
7. “Tribulation should not lead to carelessness” but to what? p 28

8. List what the disciples would have gained, if they had remained watching instead of sleeping. p 29, 30
9. “Christ had told them before that these things would take place.” Had the disciples understood His words? p 30
10. Describe the cause of “the insupportable anguish which tortured the soul of our Redeemer” as He bowed yet a third time to the ground. p 31
11. What was it that “brought from the trembling lips of the noble sufferer these words: ‘Now is my soul troubled.’ ‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt’”? p 32
12. What rose up before Jesus that caused Him to accept “His baptism of blood”? p 33
13. Though the Father does not “remove the cup from the trembling hand and pale lips of his Son,” what does He do instead? p 34

The Sufferings of Christ

Signs of the Times

August 21, 1879

(Continued)

The fearful hour in Gethsemane is passed. Our divine Saviour has accepted the cup to drain it to the dregs. In behalf of man he has conquered in the hour of temptation. Serenity and calmness are now seen in the pale and blood-stained face. And the third time he comes to his disciples and finds them overcome with sleep. Sorrowfully and pityingly he looked upon them, and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Even while these words were upon his lips, he heard the footsteps of the mob that was in search of him. Judas took the lead, and was closely followed by the high priest. Jesus aroused his disciples with these words. "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." The countenance of Christ wore an expression of calm dignity. The traces of his recent agony were not visible as he walked forth to meet his betrayer.

Jesus steps out in front of his disciples, and inquires, "Whom seek ye?" They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replies, "I am he." At these words the mob stagger backward; and the priest, the elders, the hardened soldiers, and even Judas, fall powerless to the ground, giving ample opportunity for Christ to release himself if he chose. But he stands as one glorified amid that coarse and hardened band. As Jesus said, "I am he," the angel which had ministered to him in his anguish, moved between him and the murderous mob. They see a divine light glorifying the Saviour's face, and a dove-like form overshadowing him. Their sinful hearts are filled with terror. They cannot stand for a moment in the presence of divine glory, but fall as dead men to the ground.

The angel withdrew, and left Jesus standing calm and self-possessed, with the bright beams of the moon upon his pale face, and still surrounded by prostrate, helpless men, while the disciples were too much amazed to utter a word. As the angel removes, the hardened Roman soldiers start to their feet, and, with the priests and Judas, they gather about

Christ as though ashamed of their weakness, and fearful that he would yet escape out of their hands. Again the question is asked by the world's Redeemer. "Whom seek ye?" Again they answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way." In this hour of humiliation Christ's thoughts are not for himself, but for his beloved disciples. He wishes to save them from any further trial of their strength.

Judas, the betrayer of our Saviour, does not forget his part, but comes close to Jesus, and takes his hand as a familiar friend, and bestows the traitor's kiss. Jesus says to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" His voice trembled with sorrow as he addressed deluded Judas. "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" This most touching appeal should have aroused the conscience of Judas, and touched his stubborn heart; but honor, fidelity, and even human tenderness seemed to have left him. He stood bold and defiant, showing no disposition to relent. He had given himself up to the control of Satan, to work wickedness, and he had no will to resist. Jesus did

not resist the traitor's kiss. In this he gives us an example of forbearance, love, and pity, that is without a parallel.

Though the murderous throng are surprised and awed by what they have seen and felt, their assurance and hardihood returns as they see the boldness of Judas in touching the person of Christ, whom so recently they had seen glorified. They lay violent hands upon Jesus, and are about to bind those precious hands that had ever been employed in doing good.

As the disciples saw that band of hardened men lie prostrate and helpless on the ground, they thought surely their Master would not suffer himself to be taken. The same power that prostrated that hireling mob could have kept them there, and Jesus could have passed on his way unharmed. They are disappointed and indignant as they see the cords brought forward to bind the hands of him whom they love. Peter in his vehement anger strikes rashly, and cuts off an ear of the servant of the high priest.

When Jesus saw what Peter had done, he released his hands, already held by the Roman soldiers, and, saying, "Suffer ye thus far," he touched the ear of the wounded man, and instantly it is made whole. Even to his enemies, who are bound to take his life, he here gives unmistakable evidence of his divine power. Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Jesus said unto the chief priest, and captains of the temple, who helped compose that murderous throng, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and with staves to take me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

When the disciples saw that Jesus did not deliver himself from his enemies, but permitted himself to be taken, they forsook

him and fled, leaving their Master alone. Christ had foreseen this desertion, and had told them in the upper chamber before it took place, of what they would do: "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

The Saviour of the world was hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided and condemned to death, by sinful men. There the glorious Son of God was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until his "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

Who can comprehend the love here displayed? The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief Him who had been the majesty of Heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, who were fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient sufferer! Upon

his head is the thorny crown! His life blood flows from every lacerated vein! All this was in consequence of sin! Nothing could have induced Christ to leave his honor and majesty in Heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected, by those he came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery.

Wonder, O Heavens, and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed! A vast multitude inclose the Saviour of the world. Mockings and jeerings are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy.

His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and the vulgar jest and insulting derision are passed from lip to lip. Satan was having full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he commences with the chief priests and elders, and imbues them with religious frenzy. They are actuated by the same satanic spirit which moves the most vile and hardened wretches.

There is a corrupt harmony in the feelings of all, from the hypocritical priests and the elders down to the most debased. Christ, the precious Son of God, was led forth, and the cross was laid upon his shoulders. At every step was left blood which flowed from his wounds. Thronged by an immense crowd of bitter enemies and unfeeling spectators, he is led away to the crucifixion. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

His sorrowing disciples follow him at a distance, behind the murderous throng. He is nailed to the cross, and hangs suspended between the heavens and the earth. Their hearts are bursting with anguish as their beloved Teacher is suffering as a criminal. Close to the cross are the blind, bigoted, faithless priests and elders, taunting, mocking, and jeering: "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him with the scribes

and elders, said, he saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said I am the Son of God.”

Not one word did Jesus answer to all this. Even while the nails were being driven through his hands and the sweat-drops of agony were forced from his pores, from the pale quivering lips of the innocent sufferer a prayer of pardoning love was breathed for his murderers: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” All Heaven was gazing with profound interest upon the scene. The glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man’s transgression of the Father’s law. He was about to ransom his people with his own blood. He was paying the just claims of God’s holy law. This was the means through which an end was to be finally made of sin and Satan, and his vile host to be vanquished.

Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the

sense of his Father's displeasure which made his cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of his Father's wrath that broke his heart. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon him, and forced from his pale and quivering lips the anguished cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus had united with the Father in making the world. Amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God, blind and deluded men alone remain unfeeling. The chief priests and elders revile God's dear Son while in his expiring agonies. Yet inanimate nature groans in sympathy with her bleeding, dying Author. The earth trembles. The sun refuses to behold the scene. The heavens gather blackness. Angels have witnessed the scene of suffering, until they can look on no longer, and hide their faces from the horrid sight. Christ is in despair! He is dying! His Father's approving smile is removed, and angels are not permitted to lighten the gloom of the

terrible hour. They could only behold in amazement their loved Commander suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law.

Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb. Bright hope did not present to him his coming forth from the tomb a conqueror, and his Father's acceptance of his sacrifice. The sin of the world with all its terribleness was felt to the utmost by the Son of God. The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty which was death, were all that he could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of his Father that he could not be reconciled to his Son. The fierce temptation that his own Father had forever left him, caused that piercing cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(To be Continued)

Questions for Study

1. In whose behalf did Christ conquer in the hour of temptation? p 37
2. Why did Jesus step out in front of his disciples as the mob approached? p 38, 39
3. As Jesus tells the mob “I am He”—the one they seek— what is seen in Jesus’ face and overshadowing Him? p 38
4. Because Judas “had given himself up to the control of Satan, to work wickedness,” did he have any power to resist? p 39
5. How did Jesus address Judas as he stepped forward to bestow the traitor’s kiss? p 39
6. Did Jesus refuse the traitor’s kiss? p 39, 40
7. “Though the murderous throng are surprised and awed by what they have seen and felt,” what did they do? p 40
8. How do the disciples respond “as they see the cords brought forward to bind the hands of him whom they love”? p 40

9. When Peter, at seeing His Master's hands bound, drew his sword and cut off the servant's ear, Jesus responded by saying, "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Of what event in the "unfolding" of the Plan of Redemption is Jesus speaking? p 41

Note: The Plan of Redemption, prior to the death of Christ, had been just a promise. But, by His death, Christ ratified (that is secured) this mighty plan, and following His resurrection, by "His own blood" (Hebrews 9:12) entered the "true tabernacle" (Hebrews 8:2) in heaven to complete the work there began.

10. From pp 42, 43 and 44, list what took place "in consequence of sin."
11. With whom did Satan commence in order to have "full control of the minds of his servants"? p 43
12. What prayer came forth "from the pale quivering lips of the innocent sufferer" as He was being nailed to the cross? p 45

13. What was the glorious Redeemer of a lost world doing as He suffered in His dying agonies upon the cross? p 45
14. What was it that “so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross”? p 46
15. “Amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God” who and or what sympathized with Jesus? p 46
16. Was anyone/anything “permitted to lighten the gloom of the terrible hour” for our Saviour? p 46, 47
17. Was Jesus able to “see through the portals of the tomb”? p 47
18. What was “all that he [Jesus] could realize through this amazing darkness”? p 47
19. What was it that caused the “piercing cry from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” p 47

The Sufferings of Christ

Signs of the Times

August 28, 1879

(Continued)

Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like a pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever, separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory, for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt even by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the near future, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are heard by the amazed spectators the dying words of the Man of Calvary, "It is finished."

Nature sympathized with the sufferings of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, and the terrific darkness, proclaimed that it was the Son of God that died. There was a mighty earthquake. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they beheld the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of the rocks. The mocking and jeering of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way in the darkness to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God?"

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished!" Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is

finished.” The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had thus far been carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! What amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. And oh! what is man that such a price should be paid for his redemption?

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man’s stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian’s heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man’s redemption.

All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to redeem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.

Christ has shown that his love was stronger than death. Even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness, his love for perishing sinners increased. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul-struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and appear as if frozen in the cause of God. But here is a theme, poor formalist, which is

of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotions. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully reach, so that we can comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless love of the Saviour, should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And we may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the portion of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of

those who profess to be followers of Christ, yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ!

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, the evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright hope. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the history of the humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not stir the soul and affect the life any more, nor awaken deeper interest, than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures. Others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true

he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others for his dear sake have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs.

But bodily pain was only a small part of the agony of God's dear Son. The sins of the world were upon him, and also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffered the penalty of the law. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And he was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that Christ was in his hands, and that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son,

and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God, why need he die? God could save him from death.

Christ yielded not in the least degree to the torturing foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the worth of everlasting life everything else sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been

despised by many. The heart's devotions have been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice, and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels awaiting to execute his commands. Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful men. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is love that no language can express. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love, preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Questions for Study

1. How did Christ feel as He hung there upon the cross, bearing “the displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty which was death”? pp 47, 51
2. What will be the result for those who “refuse the heavenly benefit,” who “choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin”? p 51
3. Upon what did the Redeemer of the world rely “because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance”? p 52
4. With what characteristics of His Father was Jesus acquainted, and to which He submitted and then died? p 52
5. How did the angels of heaven respond, and why, when Jesus “had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, ‘It is finished!’”? p 53, 54

6. What will take place “when men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man’s stead”? p 54
7. What was growing in the heart of Christ “even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness”? p 55
8. What subject “should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character”? p 56
9. In what lay “Christ’s keenest anguish”? p 57
10. Why “was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake”? p 58
11. What will take place when “the life, sufferings, and death of God’s dear Son are viewed correctly”? p 59
12. What has “so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room”? p 60



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For information on the New Covenant (Plan of Redemption), in which the sufferings of Christ are central, please contact:

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