

# Memorials of Calvary

BY

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*"Behold the Man!" The Road  
to Happiness, The Seven  
Epistles of Christ*



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## SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS VOLUME

For many years Taylor G. Bunch has led the members of his varied large pastorates to glimpse new meanings and spiritual heights in the communion services of his churches. It was my happy privilege to share in the blessings of his ministry for the half-dozen years of his Washington, D.C., pastorate. Quarter after quarter my fellow worshipers and I were moved to deeper devotional moods as we united around the communion table in the holy and solemn ordinances of the Lord's house.

In *Memorials of Calvary* Elder Bunch has captured the deeper spiritual significance of that memorable supper in the upper room when Jesus washed His disciples' feet, distributed to them the symbolic emblems of His sacrifice, prayed that they might have the unity He had with His Father, and before departing for His hour of bitter struggle under the paschal moon, led them in singing the joyful notes of the Passover Hallel.

This book will bring to all church members and their spiritual leaders new viewpoints for study and discussion, all the while putting appropriate emphasis upon the truths most surely believed by those who make up the membership of the remnant church.

T. H. JEMISON, PH.D.  
*Andrews University*

Here in this spiritually provocative volume are new veins of thought that every seeker after truth will find joy in exploring. Here are pointed out blessings that often lie untapped because we do not grasp the meaning of the service. Here is inspiration and new food for spiritual growth for every believer in the Second Advent.

From his lifelong ministry of the Word, and an unremitting study of its import to the church in this last generation, Elder Bunch in this praiseworthy volume gives new impetus to faith and stirs a deeper dedication to God in those who at the communion table "do shew the Lord's death till he come."

H. M. TIPPETT  
*Associate Book Editor  
Review and Herald*

## *Purpose of the Ordinances*

THE only purpose of the ordinances of the church, both ancient and modern, typical and memorial, is to reveal Christ and His atoning sacrifice. In the Concordant Version of the New Testament the last book is called "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ," and this also expresses the purpose of the ordinances. If they fail in this respect they are of no value whatsoever. In fact, this is the purpose of all Scripture. Jesus reproved the two men on their way to Emmaus for being "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" concerning His advent and death, and "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). To obtain this knowledge should be the aim and goal of every Christian.

Sin separated man from God with an alienation so complete that since the Fall "no man hath seen," nor can see, his Maker. When Moses made the request of the Lord, "Shew me thy glory," he was given a word picture of the character of God, but was refused permission to see His face. Not until they are in the redeemed state will human beings have the privilege of seeing His face; "and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:4). This will be the evidence that the alienation is at an end and the reconciliation between God and man is complete and final.

Even though the great gulf made by sin has been bridged by the atoning death of the Son of God, direct and personal contacts are not possible under the reign of sin; therefore the Lord has had to reveal Himself to man through other means. The diversity of methods used is indicated by the words, "God, who at sundry times

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and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). "By various methods" is the rendering by Weymouth, third edition. The many different types, signs, and symbols employed include the ordinances, both typical and memorial. The methods employed have been adapted to the capacity of man to understand, so that humble and discerning souls can obtain a vision of the Redeemer, even though His character and glory can be but faintly comprehended.

In Isaiah 45:15 we read: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." It is only by veiling or hiding

### **Divinity was veiled in human flesh**

His glory that God can reveal to man His character. This text doubtless has special reference to the incarnation of Christ, by which

means He veiled His divinity in human flesh and thus "emptied himself" of His glory in order to reveal to man the character and glory of God (Phil. 2:7, margin). We are told that "God was manifest in the flesh" through the incarnation of Christ and that this is "the mystery of godliness," or the secret of a godly life (1 Tim. 3:16).

In fact, the hiding or veiling of God in human flesh was so complete that He appeared to man "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground"; He had "no form nor comeliness" and "no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2). Since His physical appearance was so vastly different from what was anticipated, is it any wonder that so many were unable to look beyond the unadorned veil, and because of a lack of spiritual vision they not only failed to recognize Him but rejected and crucified their own Messiah? Thus He "came unto his own, and his own received him not." They saw only the veil, and by analogy how sad it is that so many of those who partake of the emblems of Christ's atoning death fail to discern "the Lord's body." To all such the ordinances are really meaningless.

The failure of ancient Israel to grasp the true meaning of their types and symbols and ordinances is graphically described in the following quotations: "As they departed from God, the Jews in a great degree lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service. That service had been instituted by Christ Himself. In every part it was a

## PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCES

symbol of Him; and it had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty. But the Jews lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms. They trusted to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of resting upon Him to whom they pointed." "There was virtue in the symbolic service only as it directed the worshipers to Christ as their personal Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 29, 82.

"Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour's death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they pointed for ages was consummated. Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it had no value apart from Him. When the Jews sealed their rejection of Christ by delivering Him to death, they rejected all that gave significance to the temple and its services."—*Ibid.*, p. 165.

### **Plan of redemption foreshadowed in type**

"From the promise given to Adam, down through the patriarchal line and the legal economy, heaven's glorious light made plain the footsteps of the Redeemer. Seers beheld the star of Bethlehem, the Shiloh to come, as future things swept before them in mysterious procession. In every sacrifice Christ's death was shown. In every cloud of incense His righteousness ascended. By every jubilee trumpet His name was sounded. In the awful mystery of the holy of holies His glory dwelt."—*Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212.

"Priests and scribes and rulers were fixed in a rut of ceremonies and traditions. . . . They clung to dead forms, and turned away from the living truth and the power of God. It was this that proved the ruin of the Jews, and it will prove the ruin of many souls in our own day."—*Ibid.*, pp. 278-280.

We therefore face the same danger of being unable to discern in the memorial ordinances that which they were instituted to reveal. The ordinance of baptism is meaningless unless it is to the participant a sign of death to sin through a crucifixion with Christ, an outward sign of an inward cleansing from all unrighteousness,

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the evidence of a new birth and adoption into the heavenly family, and an experience in justification and salvation through faith.

Christ told Nicodemus that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This was a new revelation to the Jewish leader, and to emphasize its vital importance Christ continued, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5). Nicodemus,

**Spiritual new birth necessary for baptism** a good man who was honored for his wisdom and good works, was amazed at the idea of a kingdom so pure that he could not grasp its meaning unless he was further enlightened. He understood that it was not enough to have his sins washed away, but that there must be a new birth into the kingdom by the power of the Spirit.

Without this experience, baptism becomes a lifeless form. Baptism is really the initiation ceremony that symbolizes our union with Christ, and for this reason it is celebrated but once, whereas the Lord's Supper represents the continuation of that union until it becomes complete and permanent at His return. It indicates that the new life must be continually sustained through Him who made it new, for He only who has begun a good work in us is able to finish it. Baptism has also been likened to the wedding ceremony, which is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of our union with Christ, and which therefore does not have to be repeated as do the other ordinances.

By His incarnation, Christ united divinity with humanity. Hence as we partake of the emblems of His broken body and spilled blood there should take place in us that mysterious exchange by which He takes upon Him all that is ours and gives to us all that is His. He took our weaknesses in order that we might partake of His strength; He became poor that we might become rich; He became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God; He descended from heaven that we might ascend to heaven. He came to restore all that was lost through sin. With the invitation, "Take, eat," Jesus intimates that as His children we have a right to partake, and in doing so He becomes one with us, so that He lives in us and we in Him.

In saying, "This is my body," and "my blood," Jesus did not mean His actual body and blood, but was using symbols in a figura-

## PURPOSE OF THE ORDINANCES

tive and sacramental sense, as in the typical system. There is no more reason for a literal interpretation here than when He said, "I am the door," and, "I am the vine." There were many emblems that pointed forward to His death, which we know were only symbols. In fact, when Christ instituted the ordinances He had not yet died, and therefore the bread and wine could not possibly be His literal flesh and blood.

By partaking of the emblems the disciples simply showed their faith in the atoning death of Christ as the only means of salvation. We must ever remember that they were in the presence of, and were being served by, a living Christ, and the same has been true ever since in the celebration of the communion service. As we partake of these memorial emblems we know that the One whose death they commemorate is now alive and in heaven, where He serves as our priest and mediator. He cannot therefore be personally in heaven and on earth at the same time, nor can He be dead and alive at the same time.

To partake of the bread and wine believing it is the actual flesh and blood of Christ is not only the most terrible form of cannibalism and therefore repulsive in the extreme, but it is a virtual denial of His atoning death on the cross, making the participants worshipers of a dead rather than of a living Christ. If we see in this symbolic service what it is intended to portray, we will celebrate the ordinance "in remembrance" of Him, and will "shew the Lord's death till he come." We shall not then be partaking "unworthily" and thus be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," but will be fulfilling its purpose in "discerning the Lord's body," as has been the purpose of all the symbols and ordinances since the entrance of sin into the world.

So as we take part in this important service may our eyes be opened to a vision of the Crucified One as vividly portrayed as if the scene were being reenacted before our eyes, and may we be assured that by beholding we may be "transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another," as we are promised in 2 Corinthians 3:18, in the Weymouth translation, third edition.

Neglecting to take part in services of such vital importance in the plan of redemption cannot but imperil the soul. It is the vision of the crucified Redeemer that produces a life of holiness and makes possible comprehension of the meaning and magnitude of the sacrifice made in our behalf. Thoughts of Calvary awaken in the heart sacred emotions, which result in praise and thanksgiving to God for His matchless love. In the contrite heart pride and selfishness cannot flourish, and such a vision and experience elevates the thoughts, purifies the soul, and completely transforms the character into the image of Him who is "altogether lovely" and "the chiefest among ten thousand." A reverent contemplation of this wonderful theme will enlarge our vision and deepen our appreciation so that the communion service can fulfill its divinely appointed mission in the church.

## *The Preparatory Service*

THE memorial ordinance that precedes that of the Lord's Supper is given no name in the Scriptures, but in the Spirit of Prophecy writings it is called "the ordinance of foot washing," "an ordinance of service," "the preparatory service," and "the ordinance of humility." See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 651, 659; also Manuscript 43, 1897; Letter 210, 1899 (cited in *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1138, 1139).

"The ordinance of service" is an appropriate title, since the spirit of service is a basic Christian principle. As we celebrate this ordinance we need to remember the words spoken by Paul, "Serve one another." On one occasion Jesus declared that He came into the world "not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28, R.S.V.), and "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45). "The ordinance of humility" is another good name, since it so beautifully commemorates the meekness and humility of the One who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant," and "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Paul said of Christ that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Humility is a natural virtue in genuine Christianity, and is beautifully symbolized in this ordinance.

"The ordinance of equality" would be another appropriate title. Jesus said to His disciples, "All ye are brethren," and among genuine Christians there are no lords or servants, and no distinctions—social, economic, or racial. Jesus said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends." Another name that could properly be

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used is "the ordinance of reconciliation," for one of its most important purposes is to bring unity in preparation for the service to follow. There was no unity among the disciples when they entered the upper room. They were controlled by bitter feelings and jealousy over who was the greatest, and were wholly unprepared to take part in the service to follow. The service accomplished its mission, washed away the alienation, and brought love and unity, so that "they were all with one accord in one place," and prepared for the visitation of the Holy Spirit.

However, "the preparatory service" is the most descriptive title. It is one of the names given under inspiration, and it more completely conveys the meaning and purpose of the ordinance as a preparation for the memorial service instituted immediately afterward. This is clearly stated in the following quotation: "This ordinance is Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 650. This name really embraces the significance of all the other names we have mentioned.

Both of these ordinances were instituted the same evening in the upper room in connection with the celebration of the last Passover supper that had any significance, because the lamb slain and eaten on that occasion was a type of the Lamb of God, who was to die on the following day for the sins of the world. At the moment Jesus died the veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy Place in the Temple "was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" by an unseen hand, an indication that the whole typical system had fulfilled its divinely appointed purpose and had come to an end. It was therefore appropriate that these two ordinances should be established at the same time and on the same occasion.

The institution of "the preparatory service" as a prelude to the communion service is recorded in John 13:1-17. Here we are told that Jesus was fully conscious of His relationship with God, His previous high position in heaven, His mission to the earth, and His future exalted state in the kingdom of glory. He also realized that He was entering the deepening shadow of the cross, and the pain was already torturing His heart. He longed to reveal to His disciples the tragic events before Him, but He knew that because of

## THE PREPARATORY SERVICE

their false ideas concerning the advent of the Messiah they would not be able to comprehend. He had often tried to tell them of His coming sufferings and death, but His words to them were as idle tales. They were looking for a temporal kingdom and they could not imagine that the One in whom their hopes centered could suffer such a shameful death. They were therefore wholly unprepared for what happened.

But the visible sorrow of Jesus made His disciples ill at ease, and so filled them with premonitions of an impending crisis that the atmosphere in the upper room was tense. How sad that under these circumstances a situation existed that added to the sorrow of the Master. The record is that "there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." The language indicates that they expected Jesus on this occasion to bestow special honors. Cherishing bitter feelings of envy, jealousy, prejudice, and unholy ambition, they were wholly unprepared to take part in either the Passover service or the memorial ordinance He was about to introduce to take its place.

Since there was no servant present to perform the customary courtesy of foot washing, one of the disciples should have volunteered, but each of them was too proud to perform such a menial task. Doubtless each looked to the others with a gaze of expectancy and perhaps made gestures for them to act, but they were all too dominated with feelings of arrogance to perform the duties of a servant. It seems that Jesus went ahead with the Passover service, hoping that one of them would find himself and do his duty even during the typical supper, for this courtesy was sometimes performed during a meal. Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair while He was reclining on a couch at the table during the banquet given Him by Simon the Pharisee and former leper. Jesus reminded him that he had neglected to perform that courtesy.

But in the upper room no one moved to break the period of painful silence and tension. "Supper being ended," Jesus "riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began

*Disciples unprepared  
for the Lord's Supper*

*Dramatic end of the  
typical ceremonies*

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to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel where-with he was girded" (John 13:4, 5). The disciples were shocked and ashamed, but even then none made a move to perform the task. In other translations we read that this happened "at supper," "during supper," "during the meal," and "while supper was in progress." It is believed by some that this took place during the early part of the paschal meal.

Concerning the meekness and nobility of the character of Christ as here demonstrated, Dr. E. Stanley Jones wrote: "He was so conscious of His greatness that He dared to be humble. Into the cup has gone that majesty of soul linked with lowly service. And we, who dare not be humble lest we show our real smallness, drink of the life of Him who was so great that He dared to stoop, and begin to learn what kingliness really is—the power to bend and serve."—*The Christ of the Round Table*, p. 229.

Jesus served Judas first, not only because the disciple considered himself the greatest, and according to custom the greatest was always thus honored, but chiefly because, by making him the honored guest, Jesus hoped to touch his heart and turn him from his purpose, even though He knew that he had already bargained with the priests to betray Him. This act of unparalleled love almost accomplished its purpose, but the traitor resisted this love appeal, and a little later he completed the sale of his Lord for the price of a Roman slave.

When Jesus approached Peter to serve him, the impetuous disciple protested with the positive assertion, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," and then shocked him with the declaration, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." With his characteristic impetuosity, Peter swung to the opposite extreme and said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." If washing the feet meant union and fellowship with his Lord, he wanted a complete bath. The answer of Jesus was another surprise: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit," or "Any one who has lately bathed, does not need to wash more than his feet, but is clean all over" (Weymouth).

**Humility more than  
an outward symbol**

## THE PREPARATORY SERVICE

"Jesus here probably refers to the custom of bathing before attending a feast. When the guests arrived they needed only to have their feet washed. From this the spiritual lesson is evident. The disciples had received spiritual cleansing in the 'fountain opened to the house of David . . . for sin and for uncleanness' (Zech. 13:1). They had not lapsed into apostasy so as to be in need of a complete recleansing. . . . Baptism symbolizes the soul's original cleansing from sin. The cleansing from the defilements that have subsequently accrued are symbolized by the ordinance of foot washing. As in the case of baptism, the ordinance has no significance whatever unless the participant by repentance and thorough conversion has expelled sin from the life."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 13:10, 15.

**Ordinances meaning-  
less without cleansing**

John's record continues: "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

How can anyone read this account without coming to the conclusion that Jesus, who was in the upper room with His disciples for the purpose of celebrating the last Passover supper, and to institute the memorial ordinance that was to supersede it, turned the foot-washing custom into an ordinance symbolizing the washing away of their sins in preparation for the communion service? The language of Jesus is unmistakably clear that what He did on this occasion was symbolic of spiritual cleansing, and He asked them to follow His example and continue the service in commemoration of the marvelous change that took place in their hearts in preparation for the sacramental service. He would not have had to instruct them to continue a mere courtesy custom that was well established but had no spiritual significance.

It is an interesting fact that several of the Protestant denominations in their earlier history considered this an ordinance of divine

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origin and celebrated it as a preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Among them was the large Baptist denomination of which the writer's grandparents, who for years had taken part in this memorial service, were members. One writer declares that "this ordinance was a part of the observance of the early Christian Church," that "traces of the practice abounds in ecclesiastical history," and that "the Church of England at first carried out the letter of the command."—JOHN KITTO, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, vol. 3, p. 616. It is an interesting fact that once a year the Pope ceremonially washes the feet of twelve men, usually vagabonds.

While this ordinance contains many spiritual lessons, it is chiefly an outward sign of an inward cleansing from sin, and is therefore akin to, and a complement of, the ordinance of baptism. It is in reality a partial or miniature baptism to symbolize the washing away of the sins committed since baptism or since the last partaking of the preparatory service. Because baptism represents the cleansing from all the sins of the past life in preparation for admission to the church, it needs to be celebrated but once, except on special occasions when the candidate has completely backslidden, but the ordinance now under consideration must be repeated from time to time. Even the best of saints possess sinful flesh and are subject to sins

**How baptism differs from foot washing** and mistakes. This service symbolizes the cleansing provided for all the contaminating influences of evil as Christians travel toward the kingdom. All need continual cleansing, especially from the sins of ignorance and omission, which are so universal. It is evident that Jesus in His statement to Peter gave the relationship between baptism and feet washing to show the connection between the two.

The theme of this study is beautifully embraced in the chapter in *The Desire of Ages*, entitled "A Servant of Servants," pages 642-651, which all are urged to read carefully. Leaders of experience have witnessed many scenes of reconciliation between alienated members during the celebration of this ordinance, which serves to prepare the believer to enjoy to the full the memorial ordinance that follows. Being conscious of cleansing from all the sins that "so easily beset us," we can "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

## THE PREPARATORY SERVICE

In emphasis let us note that baptism is also a preparatory service to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, because it symbolizes death to and the washing away of sin and a resurrection to a new life. (See Rom. 6:1-12.) Bible students recognize that all the memorial ordinances are closely related and represent different phases of Christ's redemptive mission. Peter Taylor Forsyth, Congregationalist Church leader, declared a few years ago that baptism, like the Lord's Supper, portrays the whole gospel, and Neville Clark, Baptist Biblical scholar, wrote: "Baptism is not in the last resort baptism into the death of Christ but baptism into Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Lord, so that what was once done representatively for him may now be done in actuality in him; he is incorporated in order that he may be crucified."—*An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments* (1956), p. 31. We are baptized into the name, or character, of Christ.

**Baptized into the character of Christ**

But baptism must not be confined to this meaning and purpose. Jesus also applied it to His sufferings and death on the cross. When James and John asked for positions of honor in the kingdom, Jesus asked them whether they could qualify by being ready and willing to experience the baptism of sufferings and death awaiting Him. On another occasion He said: "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50; see Matt. 20:22). Neville Clark tied the two baptisms together in the following statement: "Jesus received His calling as the Servant of the Lord, accepted His vocation of redemption through suffering, acknowledged His baptism in the terms of the cross."—*Ibid.*, p. 18.

Water baptism therefore implies faith in the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and is also predictive of the baptism of sufferings and persecution experienced by Christ, whose experience is the destined fate of all of His true followers. Paul declared that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," and Jesus made it clear that those who develop the beautiful character described in the Beatitudes would be persecuted for His sake (2 Tim. 3:12; see Matt. 5:10-12). Bible prophecy clearly predicts a baptism of suffering for all genuine Christians just before His

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return. They will come out of "great tribulation" and will have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

Water baptism is also a prerequisite to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as in the experience of Cornelius and his family recorded in Acts 10:45-47. With Christ, the anointing and baptism of the Spirit immediately followed His baptism in the river Jordan. (See also Acts 19:1-6.) Baptism into the name or character of Christ indicates a new birth, a regeneration of character by the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter used the experience of the eight souls saved from the Flood "by water" as symbolic of baptism, not for the purpose of physical cleansing, as in bathing, "but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," so that we can be armed "with the same mind" and cease "from sin" and do "the will of God" (1 Peter 3:20, 21; 4:1, 2; see Col. 2:12-15).

Therefore both baptism and the partial baptism, represented by foot washing, serve a preparatory function for participation in the communion service.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Parables of Calvary*

THE feast of the Passover had its origin in connection with the deliverance of ancient Israel from the bondage of Egypt. The word *passover* means, "A passing over, sparing, or protection." In the last of the ten plagues of Egypt, when all the first-born in the land were slain, the angel of death passed over the land of Egypt and spared and protected the families of the Israelites who had obeyed the Lord's instructions to place the blood of a lamb on the lintel and the two side posts of their houses. The Passover commemorated their deliverance from the plagues and bondage of Egypt through faith in the blood of the lamb as a type of their final deliverance from the bondage of sin through faith in the Lamb of God, who "taketh away the sin of the world."

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which Christ instituted in its place, also has a twofold significance. It is commemorative of the atoning death of Christ, the true paschal Lamb, and typical of the final deliverance from the curse of sin when God's original and eternal purpose will be carried out as completely and permanently as if man had never fallen, and will be celebrated by the marriage and wedding banquet of the Lamb as pictured in Revelation 19:1-9. We are told that the redeemed will come to the kingdom of glory "out of great tribulation," with their character robes "washed" and made "white in the blood of the Lamb," and that they overcame the enemy "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (See Rev. 7:13, 14; 12:11.)

That cleansing from sin and victory over our relentless foe are attained through faith in "the blood of the Lamb" is the teaching of

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the Scriptures from Genesis to the Revelation. The book of beginnings tells of the entrance of sin, the fall of man, and the first announcement of the plan of salvation through the incarnation and atoning death of the Seed of the woman, who was both the Son of

*“Christ calling yet—  
shall I not hear?”* God and the Lamb of God. It tells of the guilty parents of the human race hiding from the presence of God, and as He seeks them we hear His appealing voice calling unto Adam, “Where art thou?” This pathetic cry in the seeking of lost humanity in the first Adam, was answered four millenniums later on the banks of the Jordan in the voice from heaven addressed to the second Adam, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The only hope of Adam and his family was in the sacrificial and atoning death of the second Adam, who redeemed his failure by coming into the world “to seek and to save that which was lost,” which included not only man but also his inheritance. All that was lost through sin is to be redeemed and restored through the antitypical Lamb, not “with corruptible things, as silver and gold,” but “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

When Adam and Eve sinned, their beautiful coverings bestowed by the Creator departed from them and they were ashamed because of their nakedness. In an attempt to remedy their embarrassment, they made for themselves aprons or girdles of fig leaves, which they found were not sufficient to hide their nakedness when in the presence of God; so they hid themselves among the trees of the Garden. Clothing the guilty pair in “coats of skins” (Gen. 3:21) the Lord thereby provided a covering through the death of an innocent animal, which was symbolic of the Lamb of God, through whose death the beautiful robe of His righteousness is made available to the sinner. In this moving parable the Lord revealed the plan of redemption, which centers in the atoning blood of Christ.

The symbolic meaning of this experience is beautifully stated in the following quotation: “No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in

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God’s presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. . . . This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. . . . When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 311, 312.

Adam and Eve and their descendants were instructed to show their faith in the atoning death of Christ by offering typical sacrifices. We are told that “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Heb. 11:4). In the first place, it was more excellent because it was typical of the death of the Lamb of God, whose blood alone can cleanse from sin, and in the second place, because it was motivated by genuine faith, which always leads to obedience to the word of God. His act therefore witnessed to the imputed righteousness of his Redeemer, and was the second acted parable of the plan of redemption.

On the other hand, Cain’s bloodless sacrifice “of the fruit of the ground” was the product of his own labor and therefore was attempted righteousness and salvation through human effort. His offering was a denial of the provided atonement in that there was no recognition of sin or need of cleansing. Therefore it was unacceptable, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” The divine instruction is, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:11). Cain’s offering was, in fact, an insult to God.

Another acted parable of the plan of redemption was the experience of Abraham when he “offered up Isaac . . . his only begot-

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ten son" on Mount Moriah, the place where Solomon's Temple was built more than eight hundred years later. Jesus said of this experience and its purpose: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Of this experience we read: "Abraham's great act of faith stands like a pillar of light, illuminating the pathway of God's servants in all succeeding ages. . . . It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial, was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. . . . All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unflinching obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. . . . Light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 153-155.

Thus every sacrifice that was offered in faith back to the gates of Eden was a symbol, promise, and prophecy of the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary to atone for the sins of the world. It is for this reason that in Revelation 13:8, Jesus is spoken of as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." We read: "All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God."—*Education*, p. 263.

Another important parable of Calvary was revealed in the wilderness experience of ancient Israel when they were bitten by serpents. The detour around Edom brought discouragement to the weary pilgrims, and they murmured and became critical of Moses. We are told that "the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." This led to repentance and a plea for Moses to pray for them. The Lord's answer came in the instruction that Moses make a brazen serpent and place it on a pole in the midst of the camp. Then throughout the camp rang the good news that anyone who had been bitten by a

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serpent would be healed if his eyes were lifted in faith to the brazen serpent. Jesus declared that the uplifted serpent was symbolic of Himself on the cross of Calvary (John 3:14-16).

Here the Israelites saw in shadow the reality of Calvary, where the Saviour accepted death for every man, that all who in faith look to Him may have life eternal. As they raised their eyes to look at the brazen serpent they knew and felt healing virtue diffused through their bodies to counteract the serpent's venom. So may every child of God find healing from the sting of sin infected by Satan, who is called "that old serpent." This typical vision of the cross was the beginning of a victorious march of the children of Israel to the Promised Land, and a similar vision will bring the final triumph of modern Israel.

Also the tabernacle and the Temple that afterward took its place were parables and object lessons in which scores of parabolic services were enacted daily for fifteen centuries, all of which were typical of the atoning death and priestly ministry of Christ. Each year's round of services pictured to the millions of Israel the entire plan of salvation. Object lessons or parables especially appealed to the peoples of the East, and doubtless for this reason the Lord chose this method of revealing to them the gospel.

The psalmist said, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary," and Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Ps. 77:13; John 14:6). The purpose of the sanctuary and its furniture and services was to reveal Him as the only way of truth and life and righteousness and salvation. "The rites of the Jewish economy were instituted by Christ Himself. He was the foundation of their system of sacrificial offerings, the great antitype of all their religious service. The blood shed as the sacrifices were offered pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. All the typical offerings were fulfilled in Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 126.

Of the many different types of offering employed, blood was the most important. More than three millenniums ago the Lord declared that "the life of the flesh is in the blood." In Ecclesiastes 12:6, 7, we perceive by inference that the blood circulates through the body from a central "fountain" or "cistern," and when that

*Healing is assured  
for every child of God*

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"golden bowl" is broken and the blood stream ceases to flow, death is the result. Modern medical science did not make this discovery until A.D. 1628, when William Harvey announced his findings that the blood circulates through the body as the result of the pumping action of the heart.

We now know that the heart pumps this life-giving fluid through thousands of miles of canals—arteries, veins, and capillaries—to carry the needed supplies to every part of the system, and also to bring back the waste materials to the fountain for the repurifying process. Health and life itself are dependent on this marvelous circulatory system and on the number and function of the red and the white blood corpuscles. Through the operation of the heart and lungs the blood is constantly regenerated, and what a beautiful illustration it affords of the spiritual regeneration through the blood of Christ the Life-giver.

The remedial agency of blood transfusions is saving the lives of millions and is a striking illustration of the transforming power of the blood of Christ. In many diseases the only possible remedy is a transfusion of the blood of another of the proper type, which is pure and free from disease. At times deficient blood is removed, and pure blood replaces it, with amazing results. The person is literally saved by the blood of another.

Speaking of the effects of this remedy, Dr. Arnold Tzang, in his book, *Theoretical and Practical Problems of Blood Transfusion*, says: "When the operation of transfusion is skillful and the quantity sufficient, the results for healing are immediate, continuous, and irreplaceable by other methods." Another physician said of the blood transfusion on a little child after all other remedies failed: "The child was well at once. There was no convalescence. I never before saw such a recovery."

In his recent book, *Health Shall Spring Forth*, Paul E. Adolph, M.D., makes the following statements:

"Many, like Cain, would like to offer something else than a blood sacrifice in the hope that God will be thus placated. . . . Actually, medically speaking, there is little justification for the sentiment that blood sacrifice is repulsive to our natures. We live

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in an era when many lives are being saved by the timely administration of blood transfusion. From Leviticus 17:11 we understand that 'the life of the flesh is in the blood.' Modern medical science has demonstrated this over and over again. . . . One who has as a physician seen the tragedy of death from diphtheria where diphtheria antitoxin derived from animal blood serum was not used, and then on the other hand has seen the immediate and spectacular result of the injection of the antitoxin into another patient in just as serious condition, can to some degree at least, realize the spiritual tragedy of the eternal death which is the lot of those who have never had the blood of Christ applied to the heart by faith. . . .

"This serves as an analogy, illustrating the mode in which the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the infinite Son of God, is effectual in combating the vilest of all disease, SIN. He, the Lamb of God without imperfection, was exposed to all kinds of sin in its germ form, as it were, and in that He did not sin, a power became available to overcome the power of sin. 'For in that He Himself suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted' (Heb. 2:18). Since Jesus was the infinite Son of God and 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Heb. 4:15), His blood, which was poured forth on Calvary, has, as it were, antitoxic power to save us from all sin and from all of its power, when applied to the heart by faith."—Pages 40-42.

The illustration is both striking and appropriate. We are saved by the blood of another, that of the Son of God, and its application by faith brings instant and permanent results in counteracting the terrible disease of sin. Justification is the work of a moment and takes care of the sins of the past as completely as if they had never been committed, and this remedy is available to all through faith in "the blood of the Lamb."

## *The Heart of the Gospel*

THE communion service is the central act of Christian worship. It takes the priority previously accorded the Passover, and while they both symbolize the same event, one was typical and the other is a memorial. These services are moving parables of the gospel, spiritual dramas of the plan of redemption, and tableaux of the atoning death of the Redeemer. Calvin called the latter "The Word made visible."

The Lord's Supper is the gospel dramatized so that in it we can act out our faith. Goethe said that "the highest cannot be spoken: it can only be acted." How true that is of love, which human language cannot describe. It can only be demonstrated. This is illustrated by the statement that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" in order to give evidence of an affection that is indescribable and whose height and depth and breadth cannot be measured. Someone has said, "God's love is so great that it takes the universe to hold it, and an eternity to unfold it."

Jesus did much of His teaching in parables, most of which were spoken, but some of which were acted and were therefore moving parables. A parable is a comparison, or that which is placed alongside truths in order to illustrate them. It is an earthly story with a spiritual or heavenly meaning. As we have previously stated, baptism is an acted or moving parable of death to, and cleansing from, sin by faith in the blood of Christ, as well as a resurrection to a new life and the pledge of a resurrection from death when Christ returns. The preparatory service as a partial baptism is also an outward sign of an inner experience.

Paul set forth the very center and core of the plan of salvation when he wrote: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which ye also are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Here the apostle declares that we can be saved only if we "keep in memory" the most basic fundamentals of the Christian religion, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and that if we fail in this respect we "have believed in vain," and there is therefore no hope of eternal life. In the light of this scripture our message is not the gospel at all unless the atoning death of Christ on the cross occupies the central place. If we become forgetful or otherwise negligent in this respect, there is little or no virtue in anything we believe or teach or practice, and all religious services become useless because meaningless.

Therefore the purpose of the ordinances is to fix our attention on the very heart of Christianity. The cross is the meeting place of the two eternities, as well as the converging point of human history, the place where types met their antitypes and shadows their substance. Dr. Adam Clarke declares that "Christ's cross is the touchstone of Christianity." There mercy and justice met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other, and Sinai and Calvary embraced each other.

*The cross the heart  
of Christianity*

"Human history has no other centre of convergence and divergence than the CROSS on Calvary."—DR. HENRY SMITH.

The bread and wine are symbolic of the bruised and broken body and the spilled blood of our Lord. As bread and wine through the process of digestion and assimilation become a part of us and therefore flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones, so in this service the character and personality of Christ should be ours as by faith we partake of His life and nature. This service cannot fulfill its divinely appointed mission unless in receiving the bread and wine we

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receive Him whom they symbolize, and if we receive the literal bread without receiving "the bread of life," the service has failed as far as we are concerned, and the same is true of the wine if its symbolism of the blood atonement is lost on us.

Besides "the Lord's supper," other Biblical names for this ordinance are, "the Lord's table," "the communion," "the communion of the blood of Christ," and "the communion of the body of Christ." The early Church Fathers also called it "A Public Action," "A Thanksgiving," and "A Banquet of Love," and in later times it has been designated "Holy Communion," "The Holy Oblation," "The Heavenly Banquet," "The Memorial," "the Sacrament," and "the Eucharist," all of which are appropriate titles to describe its spiritual significance.

The institution of this memorial ordinance was the last parable given by Jesus before type met antitype on the cross of Calvary. It commemorates the supreme act of God's love and grace. The backward look in memory of the cross must be followed by the forward vision of the marriage supper of the Lamb in the redeemed state when the parabolical feast will be enacted for the last time. Jesus said, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God"; "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Luke 22:15, 16; Matt. 26:29).

We must ever be on guard lest through repetition of this ordinance there takes place a deadening familiarity with the sublime, which results in a dimming of our sense of the presence of the One typified, and we become so absorbed in the written words that we forget the living Word. All who are sincere and spiritually sensitive will be conscious of the Divine Presence. To them the emblems will point away from themselves to the One whom they signify. Though rich in symbolism, yet how meaningful is this parabolical service, even though it transcends all efforts to comprehend or explain its full significance. The hidden meaning of parables is revealed to the spiritual-minded who search for truth "as for hid treasures."

## THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

While the mystery of redemption exceeds the ability of the finite mind to fully comprehend it, those who have passed from death to life know for a certainty that it is a reality, and that its results will be seen through all eternity. John Milton wrote a poem on the birth of Christ, and later attempted to produce one on His death. Underneath his unfinished poem he wrote of his failure: "This subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished." Neither author nor artist can picture that which can be known only by experience.

Being symbolic, the bread and wine can only be representative of the body and blood of Christ, and must therefore ever remain literal bread and literal wine, and no reasoning or logic or magic can change their substance and nature. To think of eating the actual flesh and drinking the real blood of our Lord and dearest friend is revolting beyond expression.

The sacramental service involves a vow or covenant of loyalty, and a covenant is a two-sided agreement. The service is therefore a pledge of oneness and loyalty by both Christ and those who partake of the emblems. It is a very democratic service, indicating the end of alienation, isolation, narrow individualism, and self-interests. It is also the assurance of pardon and justification, bringing release from all guilt and condemnation. It recalls us from our waywardness and wanderings, gives us true repentance, deepens and quickens our love, and vitalizes our consecration.

The service is in reality a summary of all spiritual worship in one symbolic act, representing Creation, redemption, justification, and sanctification. It represents a complete regeneration of character in the restoration of the image of God which was lost through sin. The proper attitude of the believer during the communion service is effectively expressed by the apostle Paul in speaking of the proper reaction to the ordinance of baptism: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:11, 12).

*Partakers reckoned  
dead unto sin*

On these occasions we may be sure of the presence of the One whose death is signified, because it is His supper and He is the Giver and the Gift and the Host, and we are the invited guests, and we can be sure that He always keeps His appointments. Let us never forget that the service is not only a memorial, a supper of remembrance, but also to us an occasion of hope and joyful expectation of being guests at the marriage banquet of the Lamb. Our participation offers proof that we have accepted the invitation.

Nehemiah wrote: "For I was the king's cupbearer" (Neh. 1: 11). For a captive alien this was a position of honor. It is a fitting parable of those who pass the communion cup to the kings and priests of the new covenant. Nehemiah requested the privilege of returning to his homeland, and as we partake of the cup we are assured that our sojourn as pilgrims and strangers in this rebel world is about to end in a journey to the heavenly Canaan and a victory celebration in the New Jerusalem. In the upper room Jesus acted the part of a cupbearer and at the marriage supper of the Lamb He will again serve His people, who are members of the royal family.

Spurgeon expressed the purpose of this memorial thus:

"Amidst us our Beloved stands  
And bids us view His pierced hands;  
Points to His wounded feet and side,  
Blest emblem of the Crucified.

"What food luxurious loads the board  
When, at the table, sits the Lord!  
The wine, how rich, the bread how sweet,  
When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!

"If now, with eyes defiled and dim,  
We see the sign, but see not Him;  
O, may His love the scales displace,  
And bid us see Him face to face!

"Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts,  
Thy present smile a heaven imparts!  
O, lift the veil, if veil there be,  
Let every saint Thy glory see!"

## The Atonement

**B**IBLE students throughout the Christian Era have recognized the atoning death of Christ as the heart of the gospel, and in this chapter we will hear the testimony of a few of them.

The word *atone* is a combination of the two words *at one*, and *atonement* carries the meaning of "at one ment." It implies agreement, togetherness, and reconciliation. It suggests harmony and accord. It also means to cover, cancel, and pacify; to appease and make satisfaction. The word *atonement* is used more than seventy times in the Old Testament, chiefly in connection with the typical sacrificial services, and strange as it may seem, it is used but once in the Authorized Version of the New Testament. The text is Romans 5:10, 11: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

In this text "reconciliation" is the marginal reading for "atonement," and the word *reconcile*, in some one of its forms, is used twelve times in the New Testament. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19) is the whole gospel in one simple sentence. The completeness and far-reaching significance of this reconciliation is beautifully stated in Colossians 1:20: "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Another appropriate term is *propitiation*. Paul declared that Christ was "set forth to be a pro-

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pietation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25), and the apostle John wrote that Christ "is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

The word *atonement* not only embraces the various meanings of the sacramental service, but also the entire plan of redemption, of which it is the center and substance. This is well stated in the following quotation: "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 315.

Many writers have made similar statements. Dr. James Denney, the noted Biblical scholar of Glasgow, Scotland, declared that the atonement is "Christianity in brief." (See *The Atonement and the Modern Mind* [1903], p. 2). In his book *The Death of Christ* he declared that Christ's death is "the center and consummation of His work," and "is our Lord's sublimest action—an action so potent that all His other actions are sublated to it," and that the atonement is "wrapt up in every truth of the Christian" (see pp. 9, 109, 310). Emil Brunner, a well-known writer of today, says that "he who understands the cross aright . . . understands the Bible, he understands Jesus Christ."—*The Mediator*, p. 435.

Indicating the far-reaching significance of the sacramental service, Thomas Aquinas wrote a beautiful hymn, of which the following free translation appears in the *Congregational Hymnal* of 1859:

"Low in adoration bending,  
Now our hearts our God revere;  
Faith her aid to sight is lending:  
Though unseen the Lord is near;  
Ancient types and shadows ending,  
Christ our Paschal Lamb is here."

We will now pass over the period of the Church Fathers and the Middle Ages and notice some striking statements on the atonement made by leading Bible students from the Reformation to the pres-

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ent time. In his *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, Martin Luther, commenting on Galatians 3:13, wrote: "Whatsoever sins I, thou, and we all have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins as verily as if he himself had done them." He said that the prophets had foreseen that "Christ should become the greatest transgressor that ever was or could be in all the world," not because He had committed them Himself, but in order "that He might make satisfaction for them with His own blood," in order that "grace, life and salvation" could be ours by faith.

Speaking of the necessity of Christ's being both God and man, John Calvin wrote: "It was his to swallow up death: who but Life could do so? It was his to conquer sin: who could do so save Righteousness itself? It was his to put to flight the powers of the air and the world: who could do so but the mighty power superior to both? But who possesses life and righteousness, and the dominion and government of heaven, but God alone? Therefore God, in his infinite mercy, having determined to redeem us, became himself our Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son." He further said that in His incarnation, Christ "united the human nature with the divine, that he might subject the weakness of the one to death as an expiation of sin, and by the power of the other, maintaining a struggle with death, might gain us the victory."—*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. 2, chap. 12, secs. 2, 3.

The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 declares that Christ was ordained "to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption; and our only High Priest, who by one sacrifice of his body has redeemed us." This catechism also states that our Lord, "with his precious blood, . . . has redeemed and purchased us, body and soul, from sin and from all the power of the devil, to be his own," and "that by his [Christ's] power our old man is with him crucified, slain, and buried; that so the evil lusts of the flesh may no more reign in us, but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving."—PHILIP SCHAFF, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, pp. 317-321.

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The Westminster Confession of 1647 declares that Christ "endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body," and that "by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." It is also stated that Christ fulfills His office of priest to us "in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us."—*Ibid.*, pp. 620, 621, 681.

A Congregationalist leader of the seventeenth century, John Owen, wrote two of his twenty-four volumes on the subject of the atonement. He declared that "it is evident that the sufferings of Christ in relation to the law were the very same that were threatened sinners, and which we should have undergone had not our Surety undertaken the work for us."—*Works*, XII, p. 455.

Jonathan Edwards placed the atonement in its proper relation to the law of God when he said that "all that was required in order to satisfy the threatenings of the law, and all that was necessary in order to satisfy divine justice; then the most that vindictive justice demanded, even the whole debt was paid." He declared that "now was accomplished the main thing that had been pointed at by the various institutions of the ceremonial law" and "by all the sacrifices from the beginning of the world."—*A History of the Work of Redemption*, in *Works*, vol. 1, pp. 416, 422.

In order to counteract the "once in grace always in grace" predestination theory of Calvinism, Charles Wesley, considering it a victory of Satan, put in one of his hymns these words:

"Which feigns Thee to pass by  
The most of Adam's race,  
And leave them in their blood to die  
Shut out from saving grace."

Horace Bushnell, considered one of the greatest Christian writers of the nineteenth century, wrote: "And the justice of God—what is not so visible, as that the cross itself is God's mightiest deed of

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judgment? for here goes down, as by a thunderstroke, the prince of this world—all the organically dominated powers of evil; its fashions, its pride, its pomp of condition, its tremendous codes of false opinions, all its lies, all its usurpations."—*The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 338. In another book he wrote concerning the false theory that the law was abolished by the atoning death of Christ: "Plainly enough the law of God never can be taken away from any world or creature. . . . A thousand crosses, ransoms, atonements, would leave it exactly where it was. The taking away of sin was possible, but no taking away of the law. The sacrifice of Calvary itself, set against the law, would have had as little effect on it as upon the principles of Euclid."—*Forgiveness and Law*, p. 230.

Concerning the relation between Calvary and Pentecost, R. C. Moberly of Oxford wrote: "An exposition of the atonement which leaves out Pentecost, leaves the atonement unintelligible—in relation to us. For what is the real consummation of the atonement to be? It is to be—the very Spirit of the Crucified become our spirit—ourselves translated into the Spirit of the Crucified."—*Atonement and Personality* (1911 ed.), p. 151.

Robert W. Dale, English Congregational minister, in his *The Atonement*, emphasized Christ's cry of dereliction from the cross, but made it clear that His sufferings were not so much physical and that His death was not a mere martyrdom. He made it clear that He was for the moment actually forsaken by His Father, and that if this was not true, we must conclude that for the time being He lost His faith. (See pp. 58-63.)

*Christ's death more  
than martyrdom*

In the following statement Dr. James Denney connects the atonement with the resurrection of Christ: "To preach the atonement means not only to preach One who bore our sins in death, but One who by rising again from the dead demonstrated the final defeat of sin, and One who comes in the power of His risen life—which means, in the power of the Atonement accepted by God—to make all who commit themselves to Him in faith partakers of His victory."—*The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, p. 112.

While most of the earlier writers place the chief emphasis on the atoning death of Christ, there were some who put much stress

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on His incarnation. Bishop B. F. Westcott, in *The Incarnation: A Revelation of Human Duties* (1892), declared that the Incarnation is "the central point of our faith" and "the central event in the life of the world, the central truth in the experience of men." Another writer, Archdeacon J. M. Wilson, made the statement that the doctrine of redemption is embodied in the birth of Christ and that in fact "the Incarnation is itself the Atonement." (See *The Gospel of the Atonement*, pp. 87, 88.)

This teaching brought considerable controversy, but of course both events are closely related and are in fact inseparable. This is well stated by P. T. Forsyth: "The cross was not simply a fate awaiting Christ in the future: it pervaded subliminally His holy Person. He was born for the Cross. It was His genius, His destiny."—*The Work of Christ* (1952 ed.), p. 108. He, however, placed the greater emphasis on the crucifixion.

During the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century many books were written on the atonement. In fact, it has been stated that they averaged one each year. The subject has therefore been discussed from every viewpoint. It is such a large subject that no Bible student, nor in fact all together, can possibly comprehend its full meaning. One writer declared that thus far we have seen "only the gleamings" of the glory of Christ and the plan of redemption. Meekness and humility should therefore characterize us all.

The Methodist theologian Vincent Taylor declared that to take part in the sacramental service "is to participate in the surrendered life and to appropriate its consecrating power. The elements are both symbols and media and derive this significance from the word of Jesus Himself."—*Jesus and His Sacrifice* (1937), p. 267. Vincent Taylor is also the author of *The Atonement and the New Testament Teaching* (1940), *Forgiveness and Reconciliation* (1941), and *The Cross of Christ* (1957). He declared that the best word in the New Testament to describe the atonement is "reconciliation."

A recent writer makes it clear that the atonement embraces the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary: "Almost all the recent writers emphasize that the Atonement is not limited to the

## THE ATONEMENT

crucifixion but is caught up into the Resurrection and Ascension and is effectively at the heart of Christ's life on earth and of our Lord's intercession at God's Right Hand."—DR. ROBERT S. PAUL, *The Atonement and the Sacraments* (1960), p. 276. He declares that the atonement also includes the proclamation of the gospel to all men in order to bring to them the benefits of the atoning sacrifice of Christ (*ibid.*, pp. 280, 281).

In one of his hymns Isaac Watts describes both the atoning sacrifice and the priestly intercessions of our Lord:

"O Thou eternal Victim slain  
A sacrifice for guilty man,  
By the eternal Spirit made  
An offering in the sinner's stead,  
Our everlasting Priest art thou,  
And plead'st Thy death for sinners now."  
—*Epworth Press*, 1948, p. 196.

This subject is concisely summed up in the following statements: "From the blood of Abel shed at the foundation of the world, through the sacrifice of Abraham on Mt. Moriah to the Holy Nativity of Jesus Christ Immanuel, His coming again in power and great glory—the whole drama of Redemption is, as it were, present together before our eyes as visibly occurrent, and the promise of our inheritance is sealed by the Lord Himself upon our wondering hearts."—NATHANIEL MICKLEM in *Christian Worship*, p. 225.

"Nothing less than the death of Christ could make His love efficacious for us. It is only because of His death that we can look with joy to His second coming. His sacrifice is the center of our hope. Upon this we must fix our faith." "Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 660, 753.

## Self-examination

WHEREFORE whosoever shall eat of this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

These statements are almost frightening and have therefore caused many to hesitate to partake of the emblems of Christ's broken body and spilled blood. A sense of unworthiness is natural to humble and sincere Christians who are always conscious of their weaknesses. Feeling unfit to approach the table of the Lord, they naturally do not want to bring judgment and condemnation upon themselves. It is clearly explained, however, that the basis of guilt and unworthiness is not in feelings of contrition but in "not discerning the Lord's body." "For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself," is the rendering in the Revised Standard Version. All are unworthy therefore who celebrate the ordinance as a mere form and fail to grasp its significance and enjoy the experience it was instituted to convey.

This ordinance therefore brings those who participate to the judgment seat of God, and if it is meaningless because of our failure to discern its divinely given purpose, we pass judgment upon ourselves. In fact, we deny our Lord as verily as did Peter, a thing he declared could never happen. We all need the warning, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." In her play, *The King's Supper*, Dorothy Sayers has Peter whisper to

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John, "John, why does he say that we are not all clean?" John answers, "I don't know, Peter, but when I look into my heart, I find it full of unswept, dusty corners." To make such discoveries is the purpose of the self-examination, and only those who recognize their own need are worthy to participate.

Here are some other translations of the call for a self-examination: "Let men look into their own hearts" (1 Cor. 11:28, *The Twentieth Century New Testament*). "But let a person have a self-examination and in that spirit eat of the bread and drink from the cup" (Berkeley). "A man should thoroughly examine himself, and only then should he eat the bread or drink of the cup" (Phillips). The language here makes it clear that this examination is a *must*, an absolute necessity. Negligence in this respect is depriving many of the rich spiritual blessings provided in the ordinance.

This period of self-examination should embrace, not a few minutes only, but hours and even days of meditation, heart searching, and earnest prayer, especially in the light of the serious consequences to those who are unworthy because they do not discern its import. The chief part, or at least the final phase of this self-examination, should of course take place during the preparatory service, which was instituted for that purpose.

The last verse in the scripture quoted comes as a surprise. It is seldom mentioned, for it seems to be but little understood: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." "That is why many among you are sickly and out of health, and why not a few die," is the Weymouth translation. The Phillips version reads: "It is this careless participation which is the reason for the many feeble and sickly Christians in your Church, and the explanation of the fact that many of you are spiritually asleep."

Does this mean that both physical and spiritual ill-health are involved in the celebration of this ordinance? The language is too plain to be misunderstood. If a failure to properly discern the true meaning of these symbols produced physical and spiritual sickness in apostolic times, it will certainly do the same today. It doubtless brings a shock to many to know that health principles are involved in the comprehension of the meaning and purpose of the sacramen-

**Danger of careless participation**

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tal service. Whether we can understand this or not, we must take it by faith, which is taking God at His word, with no other evidence in sight.

Those of us who have spent years as instructors in the classroom know what it means to conduct examinations and put others to the test. We also know that the students who make the most thorough preparation through self-examination obtain the best grades and most successfully meet the scholarship tests. We are all naturally inclined to critically examine others instead of ourselves, but the latter is far more profitable, and in the scripture divinely enjoined.

Let us read another text giving additional reasons for self-examination, not only in preparation for the sacramental service, but at other times also: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5). "Give yourselves an examination," is the rendering by Berkeley, and, "It is yourselves you must test," by Goodspeed. We know ourselves far better than does anyone else, and can therefore conduct the most thorough examination. The purpose of this, says Paul, is to discover whether Christ abides in the heart and rules the life, and it is so vitally important that if He is not enthroned, we are declared to be "reprobates." Reprobate is defined as "one rejected or foreordained to condemnation by God; one not of the elect; a depraved, vicious, or unprincipled person."

No wonder such a person is not prepared to partake of the ordinances and is therefore ordered to conduct a self-examination that will bring about a reformation. Our eternal destinies are at stake. "You ought to know by this time that Christ is in you, unless you are not real Christians at all," is the rendering by Phillips, and, "Otherwise you must be failures," by James Moffatt. Unless Christ dominates the life from within we are declared to be "reprobates," "failures," and "are not real Christians at all." What a powerful argument for self-examination!

Examinations are usually conducted by asking a series of questions, of students in a classroom, or of ourselves in a self-examination such as is called for in preparation for the memorial service.

## SELF-EXAMINATION

What is involved in this inquest to determine whether we are ready to participate? So much that it would be difficult to confine it to a certain number of questions. It is, of course, impossible fully to evaluate the cost of our redemption, and although the gospel centers in a vision of the cross of Calvary, we neglect our best efforts to comprehend its significance at the peril of our souls.

In this self-examination we must have divine aid. It is the mission of the Holy Spirit to convict of sin and to show us our shortcomings. Only members of the Godhead can read our minds and know our hearts and therefore know our needs. We are told that the Lord tries "the reins and the heart," and that "the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (Jer. 11:20; 1 Chron. 28:9). This examination of self should therefore begin with the prayer of the psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24).

Those only are ready to partake of the symbolic bread and wine who are "poor in spirit," or who recognize their spiritual poverty and feel their need of the cleansing blood of Christ. The nearer we come to Christ the more we realize our unworthiness and needs, because we see His perfection in contrast to our own insufficiency. In Isaiah 57:15 we are told that the Lord dwells in two different places, "in the high and holy place" as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." The publican rather than the boastful Pharisee in the Temple was worthy, and was therefore instantly justified when he cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." On the other hand the Pharisee boasted of his holiness and worthiness, but received no divine approval. Of course, none are worthy who harbor known and unconfessed sins, for even their prayers are declared to be "abomination" to God. Therefore an important question to ask in this self-examination is "Am I cleansed from all sin?"

Another vital question is "Does Christ abide in my heart?" This is what He longs to do. He is ever standing at the door of the heart, knocking and pleading to be invited to enter, so that He may

*Those most worthy  
"poor in spirit"*

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

sup with the repentant one in evidence of complete reconciliation (see Rev. 3:20, 21). "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the gospel in substance. As an incentive to open the door of the heart and invite Him in, Christ offers the overcomer a place with Him on His throne in the kingdom of the redeemed, and what a reward!

"Am I in unity and fellowship with Christ?" is another timely question. When Jesus approached Peter to wash his feet, the impetuous disciple answered in a tone of finality, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus shocked him with the reply, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Union and fellowship with Christ are involved, not only in the preparatory service, but also in the Lord's Supper. Taking part in the ordinances should indicate that we are in complete unity with Him whom they reveal. A lack of oneness with Christ makes the service meaningless, a mere form, a mockery.

"Am I in unity and fellowship with my brethren?" is another test question that should be asked in the self-examination. To accomplish this is the chief purpose of the preparatory service, and unless it has taken place, we are unprepared to take part in the communion service. For this reason one who has been disfellowshipped for good reasons and is still outside the church and antagonistic to it and its work, should not participate, especially in the preparatory service, which indicates oneness and Christian fellowship. Of course, if such a person is truly repentant and confesses his errors, he should be welcomed and the past forgiven and forgotten.

Another question is, "Am I clean spiritually, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb?" Jesus declared that those to whom the foot washing has accomplished its purpose are "clean every whit," or "clean all over," for like baptism this service is an

**Worthiness before  
God is defined**

outward sign of an inward cleansing from sin. All who enjoy this spiritual experience partake of the emblems worthily and are assured of the presence and blessings of the One whose atoning blood they represent, and such will never be negligent in meeting the communion appointments with their Lord in His holy sanctuary.

Many other questions in this self-examination could be asked and discussed, several of which are enumerated in the following

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quotation from the chapter entitled "Examine Yourselves" in *Selected Messages*, volume 1, pages 89-93. The opening statements read: "'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves' (2 Cor. 13:5). Closely criticize the temper, the disposition, the thoughts, words, inclinations, purposes, and deeds. How can we ask intelligently for the things we need unless we prove by the Scriptures the condition of our spiritual health?"

There are other considerations in self-examination that could be discussed if time and space permitted. But to the memory of those who are sincere in their desire to be right with God and their fellow men, the Holy Spirit will bring the questions needed in the preparation for the important memorial service under consideration, for that is His divinely appointed mission in the plan of redemption.

## *“In Remembrance of Me”*

WHEN Jesus instituted the communion service, He gave to His disciples the bread and wine with the instruction to eat and drink, and then added, “This do in remembrance of me.” What a clear, direct statement and command that this ordinance must be celebrated as an act of faith to keep fresh in memory the atoning death of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary. It is a demonstration of our belief in the efficacy of His blood as the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. We are offered complete restoration in Him.

Paul told the Corinthians that he had declared to them the gospel, which they had received and in which they were established and by which they should be saved, if they would “keep in memory” the death and resurrection of Christ; otherwise they had “believed in vain.” In fact, he told them that if Christ “be not risen, then is our preaching vain,” and our “faith is also vain,” “and we are found false witnesses of God,” and without this “hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” (See 1 Cor. 15:1, 2, 14-19.) None can read this fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians without coming to the conclusion that the death and resurrection of Christ are the very heart of the gospel and must therefore ever be remembered, and for this purpose the ordinance was instituted.

We live in an age of unbelief and skepticism, in which many church leaders and theological instructors and students question the virgin birth and deity of Christ, as well as His resurrection and ascension. They say that He was a good man and therefore a good example, but that His death was not only unnecessary but a mistake.

## “IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

A few years ago a prominent religious leader said: “The religion of the cross is a failure. I believe the Christian world is tired of it. The cross was a great mistake, a woeful tragedy.” It is therefore very important that those who believe in these great fundamentals of the gospel should take advantage of every opportunity to demonstrate their faith by the means which Christ Himself designated, the celebration of the communion service.

Salvation is an individual matter. We are not saved en masse, or by families, or churches. With the gospel message it is “whosoever will.” This leaves the decision with the individual. It is not enough to know and believe the doctrines, or to be a member of the church, or to faithfully attend its services. While these are all commendable, they have no saving virtue in themselves. We are saved only by a Person, and the purpose of the ordinances is to show our faith in Him and His atoning sacrifice.

*Personal decision  
is required*

Since the bread of the communion service represents the sinless character of the great Sin Bearer, who is “the bread of life,” it must be unleavened, as was the bread used in the Passover service, which was called “the feast of unleavened bread” (Luke 22:1). Also the wine must be unfermented, because fermentation is also the symbol of sin and a sign of decay, and cannot therefore be a proper symbol of the blood of Christ, which is uncontaminated with the virus of sin and spiritual corruption.

In an official Jewish book, *Service for the First Nights of the Passover*, by Joseph Schlesinger, published in Vienna and translated from the Hebrew by Dr. Joseph Loewy, appears the following under the heading, “Some Regulations Concerning the Day Before the Feast of the Passover”: “The Thora (Law) does not only forbid to use Chametz (leaven) during the days of Passover for any usage whatsoever, but also to have it in possession during this time. As Chametz is understood, everything fermented from any kind of grain, be it in compact or liquid form. Also every substance in compact or liquid form containing even a very small particle of fermented matter is to be considered Chametz. . . . Everything fermented or containing in part fermented matter must, according to the rules of the Thora, not remain in Jewish possession.”

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Also in the article on the Passover in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (8th ed.), page 333, is the statement: "The Rabbins would seem to have interpreted the command respecting ferment as extending to the wine as well as the bread of the Passover. The modern Jews generally use raisin wine after the injunction of the Rabbins."

In the typical ceremonies the spiritual-minded participants showed their faith in the promised Messiah, who was to come and not only heal them of the disease of sin but also restore them to "the first dominion," which had been lost through disobedience. This was their only hope of salvation.

In Amos 5:21-24, we read that the ritual services of ancient Israel had become to most of them so formal and legalistic that the Lord actually despised their feast days, refused to smell the sweet incense in their solemn assemblies, listen to the noise of their songs, or hear the melody of their viols. A similar picture is given in Isaiah 1:11-15. The Lord then appeals to them to return to Him in a spiritual experience, so that they could perform their typical services with a vision of Him whose atoning blood would wash away their sins.

The Lord's plea to ancient Israel applies with equal force to modern Israel. Hear His appeal: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:16-18). May this be our experience as in humble faith we fulfill the ordained privilege of the Lord's Supper. Let us beware lest merely enacted ritual render our worship as meaningless and unacceptable as was that of ancient Israel.

The cross is the greatest of all revelations of God's concern for fallen man. It alone can measure "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of a love "which passeth knowledge." In it we see "the mystery of God" and "the mystery of godliness." It is the price of redemption, the pledge of eternal life, the secret of true

## "IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

wisdom, and a revelation of the love and character of God such as even Adam and Eve in their sinless state never knew.

The death of Christ was the event that unmasked Satan before the universe and dissolved the doubts and questions in the minds of angels and unfallen beings and thus completed their reconciliation with God. This is beautifully stated by Paul: "For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him [Christ]. And God purposed through Him to reconcile the universe to Himself, making peace through His blood, which was shed upon the Cross—to reconcile to Himself through Him, I say, things on earth and things in Heaven" (Col. 1:19, 20, Weymouth). "Through him God planned to reconcile in his own person, as it were, everything on earth and everything in Heaven by virtue of the sacrifice of the cross," is the rendering by Phillips.

It is such a vision that gives us a correct view of ourselves. We can never truly see ourselves as we are, and as God sees us, except in the light of the cross. The entrance, existence, and meaning of sin cannot be fully explained, but can be best comprehended through a vision of the atoning death of Christ. Nor can we know what God is like until we get a vision of ourselves in the light of Calvary. Such a view leads to humble contrition, repentance, and self-abnegation. Then God can reveal Himself as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

It is such a vision that makes our transgressions appear "exceeding sinful," so that we abhor them as did Christ, who "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." This is well stated in the following quotation: "One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 29. To obtain such a vision is the purpose of the ordinances.

**Formal religion is  
offensive to God**

Lord actually despised their feast days, refused to smell the sweet incense in their solemn assemblies, listen to the noise of their

**Divine love revealed  
in Calvary's cross**

A vision of the cross makes it possible to say with Paul: "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" (Gal. 6:14). Ours is a selfish and boastful age, when men glory in their own wisdom and attainments. They are "lovers of their own selves," says Paul, and he then names eighteen other sins that grow out of selfishness and make the last days "perilous times" (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5). But pride and boasting and self-esteem cannot dwell in the hearts of those who ever remember the cross of Calvary.

A vision of the cross has marvelous power in the transformation of character. We are told that Christ became a partaker "of flesh and blood" so that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). We are then told that "he took on him the seed of Abraham" rather than "the nature of angels," so "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (verses 17, 18).

It was at the gate of Damascus that the great persecutor of Christians, Saul of Tarsus, got a vision of the crucified Lamb of God and it changed his whole life and turned him into the great apostle. Thus any repentant sinner who prostrates himself at the foot of the cross experiences a new creation in which "all things . . . become new." He meets the full requirements of the plan of redemption in character development.

How vital and reasonable it is therefore that we make the cross the center and science of all our study, teaching, and education, so that we can sing with heartfelt devotion, "In the cross of Christ I glory." And let us never forget that the words of Jesus, "in remembrance of me," not only carry the meaning of remembering an important event of the past, but also brings that event up to the present by re-enacting it in the drama of the Lord's Supper in such a manner that it can never be forgotten.

## *"The Lamb That Was Slain"*

THE book of Revelation is the grand finale that closes the canon of Scripture. As no other book of the Bible it embodies the entire story of the conflict between good and evil, between righteousness and sin, between the dragon and the Lamb, revealing the glorious triumph of the "Lamb that was slain" to take away "the sin of the world."

Since the purpose of all the Scriptures is to reveal Christ and His atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, it is very appropriate that the closing book, which is the epilogue of divine revelation, should carry the God-given title "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," or, "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ," as rendered in another version. It is the final revealing or unveiling of the great I AM of all time, "the first and the last" of all that is to be desired, and the "Alpha and Omega" of divine revelation. It is not strange therefore that the name of Christ or its equivalent is found 137 times in the first three chapters, and that in this book He is called "the Lamb" and "the Lamb of God" more than twenty-five times.

Christ not only was "the Lamb of God" from the entrance of sin and the institution of the plan of redemption to His atoning death on the cross of Calvary, but He will be worshiped as "the Lamb that was slain," by both the redeemed and unfallen beings of the universe through all eternity. This is made clear in the vision of the fifth chapter, which pictures a scene in the throne room of the Ruler of the universe. In His right hand was a book or scroll sealed with seven seals. A challenge was issued to all the creatures of the universe, asking if there was anyone able and worthy to break the seals and reveal the contents of the book, but no one re-

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sponded. The prophet wept in frustration and disappointment until he was informed that "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," had prevailed and was able to open the book. John's attention was then called to "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." One writer said: "These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejectors of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 589.

When this Lamb that had been offered in sacrifice took the book and broke its seven seals, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10, R.S.V.). Then they were joined by the innumerable angelic host surrounding the throne, who sang, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (verse 12, R.S.V.). The prophet then heard "every creature" in the universe saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!" (verse 13, R.S.V.). What a theme for a memorial! Triumphant love, as revealed in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, will ever call forth the loftiest praise and thanksgiving throughout eternal ages. In such contemplation and realization of the cost of redemption "affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9).

Another scene is portrayed in chapter seven of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" standing "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," saying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The question is then asked, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" and the answer is given, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made

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them white in the blood of the Lamb." The promise is then made that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." All honor is here given to Christ, revealed as "the Lamb," the symbol of innocence, meekness, and love, the love that sacrificed all for our redemption and for which He will be praised through all eternity.

The twelfth chapter of the Revelation portrays a great celebration that took place in heaven among the unfallen beings as the result of the triumphant death of Christ, which spelled the doom of Satan's revolt and kingdom. The apostle heard them saying: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (verses 10-12). Here is pictured another result of the crucifixion of Christ. Satan for the first time knew for a certainty that his rebellion had failed and that in time he and his followers would be destroyed. In desperation he launches his last attack against the church of Christ, the followers of the Lamb.

In Revelation 13:8 it is declared that "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Here is further evidence that the death of Christ was as effectual in promise, before the cross, as in reality, after types had met their Antitype in the death of the Lamb of God.

In another vision the prophet said: "Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. . . . And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand

*Satan discovers his plans must fail*

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who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless" (Rev. 14:1-5, R.S.V.). The company here described as the first fruits of the final gospel harvest have the character of the One who redeemed them by His atoning death, and their close fellowship with Him on earth will continue in the redeemed state through all eternity. What a privilege it will be to be numbered among this special company of the redeemed out of the last generation!

A preview of the overcomers in the last great crisis is set forth by the seer of Patmos in the fifteenth chapter. Here he beholds them standing on the "sea of glass," which is the pavement of the throne room of the Eternal, "having the harps of God," and "they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Here again all praise for their victory and redemption is ascribed to the Lamb of God for His atoning sacrifice.

In Revelation 19 is pictured the great celebration of the redeemed of all ages when they reach the kingdom of glory and are forever united with their Redeemer. With a united voice they sing, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

The last two chapters of the Revelation portray the redeemed in the earth restored to its original beauty and glory, and here Christ is spoken of as "the Lamb" several times. We discover that the names of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" are inscribed on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, which is described as the bride, "the Lamb's wife." The prophet says: "And I saw

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no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. . . . The Lamb is the light thereof. . . . And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." He also states that the river of the water of life proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," and that "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him."

The terms "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" and "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" show clearly that the atoning death of Christ provided salvation for all believers from the entrance of sin till the close of probation. Jesus' death on the cross is therefore "the great truth around which all other truths cluster." In order to be understood, all the truths in the Bible from Genesis to the Revelation must be studied in "the light which streams from the cross of Calvary."

The texts referred to in the book of Revelation give meaning to the statement that "the cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 651. He is the Lamb of God not only during the reign of sin but also through the eternal ages.

"The whole creation joins in one,  
To bless the sacred name  
Of Him who sits upon the throne,  
And to adore the Lamb."

To reveal Christ to us as the Lamb of God is the purpose of the memorial ordinance of the sacrament, and may its celebration ever enlarge our vision and increase our appreciation of His unspeakable love, for which He will be honored and worshiped through the eternal ages as "the Lamb that was slain."

## *Crucified With Christ*

WHEN we go to the communion table we should do so not only to get a vision of Christ and Him crucified but also in recognition of the fact that we have been crucified with Him. Then we can say with the apostle Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:20, 21).

This statement was made to explain more fully what the apostle had just said: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." He then tells what it means to "live unto God" while being dead through crucifixion at the same time. In another Epistle he declared that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and again, "For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (See Rom. 3:20; 7:8, 9.) We are told that "sin is the transgression of the law," and that "the wages of sin is death." Therefore every sinner is under the penalty and condemnation of eternal death. He is dead spiritually, or "dead in trespasses and sins," even while he is alive physically. On the other hand, a person can be "dead to sin" and at the same time alive both physically and spiritually.

To be living while dead is a paradox and therefore a contradiction to one class, but to the Christian it is a living and glad reality, known only by experience. A well-known Bible commentator calls this "one of Paul's greatest mystical sayings." Paul declared that "a

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pleasure-loving widow is dead even while still alive" (1 Tim. 5:6, Weymouth). In the text under consideration the apostle indicated that he not only had been crucified with Christ but was still on the cross with Him who is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He expressed the same thought when he said, "I die daily."

In his complete surrender to Christ, Paul accepted the Saviour's death for his sins and also grasped the glorious truth that he had died to sin in his Lord's death. This truth he sets forth in Hebrews 2:9 and 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, showing that Christ tasted "death for every man," and that "one died for all," and "if one died for all, then were all dead." Christ died for the whole human family, because he met the full penalty of the law and satisfied the justice of God. In a secondary sense Paul died through crucifixion at his conversion, at which time the death of Christ became efficacious in his behalf. Crucifixion with Christ must include the death of the old life or man of sin, which makes possible the new birth, in which we "walk in newness of life." Paul's statement indicates his acceptance of something already accomplished. Through His incarnation in human flesh, Christ became the Son of man, **God incarnate in human flesh**, or the God-man, or Emmanuel, which means "God with us." When He was crucified, the sinful nature of the human race was crucified with Him, making atonement available to all through faith.

The two thieves were crucified with Christ, but on different crosses. He died for both of them, but only the one accepted the provision made for him and was therefore "crucified with Christ" in the sense indicated by Paul. Convicted and repentant, he surrendered himself to Christ and was assured a place with his Master in Paradise. The other thief continued in defiance, and for him Christ died "in vain," as He did for the majority of the human race. There is no road back to Paradise except by way of the cross. This is the great fundamental of the gospel message, without which there is no Christianity worthy of the name. Any religion that denies or destroys the efficacy of the cross is a delusion.

Crucifixion with Christ involves a threefold death. In the first place, the person becomes "dead to the law," which means to its

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curse, penalty, and condemnation, so that it no longer terrifies him. He can then say with confidence, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4).

In 1 Timothy 1:9 we find that "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." Its purpose is to point out and reveal sin in the life, and if the person has been cleansed "from all unrighteousness," the law is not needed unless, or until, he sins again. Paul declared that the person dominated by love has "satisfied the demands of Law" because love is "complete obedience to Law" (Rom. 13:8, 10, Weymouth). When sin entered the universe the law had to be put in

### **Law transferred to tables of stone**

written form to meet the conditions of sin. Before that the creatures of heaven were not conscious of the existence of the law, because it was written in their minds and hearts and they obeyed on the motivation of love, which makes obedience and service a delight. Those who love God supremely and their fellow creatures as they love themselves "do by nature the things contained in the law" (see *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 109).

In the clear light of the Scriptures it is indeed strange that anyone could believe and teach that conversion releases him from all future obligation to obey the law that played such an important part in his conversion. Such reasoning is refuted in the Scriptures, and this is well stated in the following quotation: "Future obedience is simply obligatory on its own account: it cannot atone for past negligence. . . . We cannot renew our own nature by anything we do, seeing that we only work outwards from our nature. While the heart is corrupt the conduct cannot be justified. . . . There is *no life in Law* to infuse power for holier service. Law restrains and represses: it cannot renew and inspire. Only love and grace can do

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that. . . . Nevertheless, *obedience to the principles of the Law is not superseded* by any other method of justification. It is the justified through faith and they only, who truly obey the Law, delighting to do the will of God." "Though grace does lead us to conformity with Law, it can only do so in its own way by changing the heart and planting principles of righteousness."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Gal. 2:16, 21.

In the second place, being crucified with Christ makes a person dead to the world, so that he can say with Paul: "But 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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:14, 15).

In other words, he said, "I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me." Would that all professed Christians could say this on the basis of experience. Dead people are not influenced by the things of the world. To them sin has lost its appeal.

### **Sin no lure to the Christian**

Martin Luther commented thus on this text: "The world and I are well agreed. The world cares not a pin for me, and I, to cry quittance with it, care as little for the world." Another writer says, "The world with its passing interests, its narrowly limited aims, its sordid gains, its perishable treasure, its hollow show, its mockery of satisfaction—is to me like yon felon slave, nailed to the cross dying by a certain and shameful, if lingering death. And I too am so regarded by the world."—*The Cambridge Bible*, on Gal. 6:14 (page 79). The world considered Paul a dead man because of his union with Christ, made effective through the cross. It therefore hated and persecuted him. But while the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, and an offense to the world, it was the reason for glory and boasting with the apostle.

In recalling his former pride of position, learning, and worldly honor, Paul recognized the folly of placing these as the supreme values of life. In the joy and richness of the new life he found in Christ, he reckoned his former achievements as "mere refuse" in comparison with the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. He declared that boasting was "forever excluded." Where

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once he had been proud of his own importance and accomplishments, he now realized that these things were not worth bragging about. There are those who even glory in their own tribulations, crosses, and sufferings so that they can pose as martyrs, but it isn't "for righteousness' sake." May we all learn the wondrous joy of the apostle who could say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). He rejoiced in what Christ had done for him, rather than in what he had done for Christ. To him the emblem of shame and ignominy had become the object of glory and the instrument of salvation. "No one can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time. No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is all-sufficient at the same time," declared James Denney, the Scottish theologian.

This experience cannot be comprehended by the unspiritual. We are told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). "But the unspiritual man simply cannot accept the matters which the Spirit deals with—they just don't make sense to him, for, after all, you must be spiritual to see spiritual things. The spiritual man, on the other hand, has an insight into the meaning of everything, though his insight may baffle the man of the world," is the Phillips translation. Such a vision is possible only through the new birth. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The "all things" is all-inclusive.

The person who has been crucified with Christ is also dead to sin. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? . . . Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. . . . Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof"

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(Rom. 6:1-12). In other words, a person with this experience says, when tempted, "I cannot do that because I am a Christian," just as Joseph said to his tempter, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In commenting on verse 12, Dr. A. T. Robertson says, "Self-indulgence is inconsistent with trust in the vicarious atonement."—*Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

Only the person who is dead to sin by being crucified with Christ can say with Paul "nevertheless I live," not in the future perfect state, but "in the flesh" and "in the present evil world." So complete was the apostle's identification with Christ that his character and conduct were merged with His, so that they were one, which was what Christ prayed for as recorded in John 17:21-23. Then we may also say, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). It is an experience received by faith, but it is "the faith of the Son of God," rather than our own faith. Those who are ready for translation when Christ returns will have "the faith of Jesus." See Revelation 14:12. He only deserves the glory.

*The Cambridge Bible* says: "This verse [Gal. 2:20] strikes the keynote of the Epistle, and is a summary of the whole Christian revelation subjectively considered. St. Paul here discloses to our view the secret of his life as a Christian and as an apostle, the mainspring of his wonderful activity, the source and the object of the enthusiasm by which he was inspired. We know something of his life and labors. Here he tells how that life was lived, and why those labors were undergone. A full record of his teaching has been preserved to us. Here is the summary of it all."

How inadequate is human language to set forth the wonders and importance of Calvary! How dimly do we comprehend its significance as revealed in the memorial service instituted to bring it to our remembrance! No event in human history from the beginning of time is worthy of mention in the light of Calvary. Viewed from this mountaintop all prophecies and all history may be read in their true meaning. Here is a theme for meditation that excites the imagination and excels the grandest human ideals. May the memorial service fill each of us with inspiration and enthusiasm and lift us up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

## *A Table in the Wilderness*

THE children of Israel, during their journey from Egypt to Canaan, asked the question, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" and thus "spake against God" (Ps. 78:19). The Lord did furnish them a table during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness by sending them manna, or "angels' food," from heaven and water out of the rock. During His earthly visit Christ miraculously fed more than five thousand men, women, and children in the wilderness on one occasion, and four thousand on another, and we are told that "they did eat, and were all filled" (Luke 9:17). These miracles made a great impression on the people, and the first is the only one of Christ's miracles that was recorded by all four of the writers of the Gospels.

The Jews were well acquainted with their ancestral history, and these miracles should have convinced them that Jesus was their promised Messiah, who had accompanied their fathers in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night and had so abundantly provided them "a table in the wilderness." Why, then, did they deny and reject their Messiah? Because they gloried in the forms of their ceremonies and traditions and failed to enter into the spiritual experience, which alone makes it possible for sinners to see and know their Saviour. Modern Israel faces the same danger.

Paul declared that the recorded events in the history of ancient Israel in their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land were typical of those of spiritual Israel in their journey through the wilderness of sin to the heavenly Canaan, and were written for the special benefit of those "upon whom the ends of the world are come." He also said: "I want you to know, brethren, that our

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fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, . . . and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1-4, R.S.V.).

He here speaks of their being enveloped in the pillar of cloud and immersed in the waters of the Red Sea as a baptism, and of the food or manna from heaven and the water from the rock, which were miraculously given, as representing the supernatural bread and drink that sustained their spiritual lives, and which were therefore symbolic of Christ. Jesus declared Himself to be "the living bread which came down from heaven." "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." His standard of righteousness and His atoning death and priestly ministry were also revealed to Israel in the giving of the law and the typical sanctuary, with its sacrificial services, while they were camped at Mount Sinai.

The apostle then connects the miraculous provision of food and drink for His ancient people with the communion service in the words: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16). In the next chapter is described the institution of the sacramental service in the upper room (verses 23-30). Thus "the church in the wilderness" is described as being typical of the Christian church, with the assurance that the Lord is still able to "furnish a table in the wilderness." Their food and drink were typical of the bread and wine of the communion service.

This table of the Lord is spread for every sinner who accepts the gracious invitation of the divine Host. We are called out of the wilderness of doubt, fear, unbelief, sorrow, suffering, and sin, to return as prodigals to our Father's house and to the table of faith, hope, love, and happiness. To the hungry, weary, and discouraged Elijah in the wilderness came the message: "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee." This table in the wilderness gave him the needed strength and courage for the journey of forty days and nights to "Horeb the mount of God," which was the place of

*Manna from heaven  
symbolic of Christ*

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vision where he heard the "still small voice" saying, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He was then given instruction in regard to his Heaven-appointed mission.

Every sinner is cordially invited to the table of the Lord, to partake of the emblems of Christ's broken body and spilled blood to show his faith in Christ's atoning death. The close relationship between the provision of food for our physical bodies and provision for the nourishment of our spiritual beings as symbolized by the Lord's Supper is indicated by the fact that the apostle John immediately followed his narrative of the feeding of the five thousand with the important discourse on "the bread of life," recorded in the sixth chapter. He makes it clear that upon the partaking of this "bread from heaven" depends our eternal destiny.

Bible students agree that the contents of this chapter six shed further light upon the meaning and purpose of the sacramental service. Jesus here declares Himself to be "the true bread from heaven," and adds, "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Here are some of the other statements in this chapter: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (verse 35). "I am the bread which came down from heaven" (verse 41). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world" (verse 51). "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (verses 53, 54).

In the light of these symbolic, figurative, and perplexing statements, is it any wonder that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (verse 66)? Even the twelve were for a time puzzled over the meaning, and, in fact, did not comprehend until after the resurrection of Christ, when everything was seen in a new light, including the communion service. How can anyone today question the relation between these statements and those with which He instituted the memorial service?

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In Bernard of Clairvaux's beautiful hymn we sing:

"Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts!  
Thou fount of life! Thou light of men!  
From the best bliss that earth imparts,  
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

"We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,  
And long to feast upon Thee still;  
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,  
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill!"

With the psalmist we can say: "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8).

We must ever remember that at the communion table we are the guests of God and that He is our host. When Levi Matthew gave a feast in honor of Jesus, to celebrate his becoming a disciple, and invited his publican friends, the Pharisees accused Jesus of eating "with publicans and sinners." This is what He really does at every communion service, for only sinners are invited and are eligible to participate. Those who feel that they are sinless and perfect have no right to attend, for to such the service is meaningless. Jesus reminded the criticizing Pharisees that those who are well physically do not need a physician. On the occasion of the conversion of Zacchaeus, He declared, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." All should accept the invitation to attend Communion and should take part with the assurance,

"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come."

How wonderful the privilege of being the guests of the King of kings and Lord of lords at a banquet held in our honor. It has always been considered a great privilege to sit at a royal table and eat with the king or ruler. David said of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, "He shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons" (2 Sam. 9:11). We must remember that this honored guest was a member of the family of Saul, who had for years been the avowed

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enemy of David and had made every attempt to kill him. Mephibosheth was physically a hopeless cripple and a pitiful sight, as are all of us as sinners in the sight of God, who tells us that we are spiritually "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Nevertheless in eating at the Lord's table as invited guests we are in His estimation "as one of the king's sons." This symbol contains a promise for us of a permanent place in the royal family of heaven.

The experience of the grandson of King Saul is therefore a beautiful parable of our sitting at the communion table of "the Son of David," "the King of kings," an honor to which we can claim no right, for we "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," and "there is none righteous, no, not one." Because of his relationship to Saul, Mephibosheth expected nothing but death and trembled in the presence of the king, and what a happy surprise was the invitation to sit at the royal table, with all the honors and privileges of "one of the king's sons." As sinners, we are all under the sentence of eternal death and have no reason to expect mercy and divine favor, but instead there comes to us the glad tidings that we have been pardoned and adopted into the royal family, for "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

This glorious privilege is thus described by the apostle Paul: "For those who are led by God's Spirit are, all of them, God's sons. You have not for the second time acquired the consciousness of being slaves—a consciousness that fills you with terror. But you have acquired a deep inward conviction of having been adopted as sons—a conviction that prompts us to cry aloud, 'Abba! our Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness, along with our own spirits, to the fact that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs too—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:14-17, Weymouth).

As Jesus ministers the emblems of His flesh and blood He virtually asks each of us the threefold question He asked Simon Peter after His resurrection: "'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?'" (John 21:15, Weymouth). How

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different would have been the answer of the impetuous disciple before the crucifixion, when he would have declared with a tone of finality, "Of course I love you. I will go to prison and to death for you, and even though the others all forsake you, you can depend on my love and loyalty to the very end." But he is now a different man. Conversion has made him humble and contrite, and in the light of his previous failure he hesitates to express his love, and says, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." To each of us at every communion service such a question of the Master is implied, and we say with William Cowper:

"Lord, it is my chief complaint  
That my love's so weak and faint;  
Yet I love Thee and adore;  
O for grace to love Thee more!"

Now Peter is ready to receive the second great gospel commission, which comes to all who express their love by partaking of the emblems of the atonement: "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep." Christ commissions them not only to feed His sheep already within the fold but to proclaim the gospel "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," and bring all who respond to the invitation into His fold.

Our preparation to fulfill these two gospel commissions is beautifully summarized in Romans 12:1, 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

## “And He Took the Cup”

AND he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom” (Matt. 26:27-29). The wine in the cup of the Lord is symbolic of the product of the True Vine, and the blood of the fruit of this Vine has been produced in the wine press of His sufferings. Let us notice some of the meanings involved in the cup of wine that Jesus blessed and gave to His disciples.

In an article in *The Christian Century* of March 18, 1959, by C. U. Wolf, entitled “Qumran and the Last Supper,” and based on the Manual or Commentaries from the Dead Sea scrolls, it is stated that the Essenes expressed their Messianic expectations in their Passover supper by providing a vacant chair and an extra cup of wine for the Messiah if He should suddenly appear. The writer declares that in the upper room “Jesus dramatically acted out the anticipated appearance. ‘He took the cup’—not any old cup, not even the cup set up by his disciples for the Nazarene, but the extra cup prepared for the Messiah. In so doing he indicated ‘I am he.’ The bridegroom had come. The feast was begun. The triumph of the Kingdom was at hand. The full revelation to all the world might be delayed, but the disciples now knew. Jesus no longer kept a messianic secret. . . . This is the first victory celebration of the triumphant children of light as the messianic kingdom dawns upon them.” This custom gives added significance to the statement, “And he took *the* cup.”

## “AND HE TOOK THE CUP”

It is also the cup of remembrance, for Jesus said, “This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” The atoning death of Christ is the event that must never be forgotten. Paul declared that the gospel is effectual only if we “keep in memory” the fact that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:2-4). Jesus declared that by means of this ordinance we “do shew the Lord's death till he come.”

It is also the cup of pardon. It is the death of Christ in place of the guilty sinner that makes pardon from the sentence of eternal death possible, with the assurance of justification or imputed righteousness. The cup is the evidence that the redemption price has been fully paid. It is likewise the cup of cleansing. A fountain has been opened “for sin and for uncleanness,” and we can therefore sing from the heart:

“There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.”

The divine promise is that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:18). As the evidence of victory over sin, “he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” (Rev. 3:5). “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14).

It is also the cup of salvation. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord” (Ps. 116:12, 13). The writer is doubtless thinking of the cup used at the Passover supper, and it applies with equal force to the cup used in the Lord's Supper, of which the former was typical. It is an important way to offer thanks for the plan of salvation. Again we read: “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; thou holdest my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Ps. 16:5, 6, R.S.V.). The Lord is therefore “the cup of my salvation,” and in

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

Him "my thirst is quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in Him."

It is also the cup of unity and reconciliation. Christ prayed that His followers may all "be one," even as He and the Father are one; that "they may be made perfect . . . ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21-23). Paul declared, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." He again states that this reconciliation was effected "by the cross," because God had "slain the enmity thereby." It is the blood or death of Christ that destroys all alienation with God and hostility with man. It is therefore the cup of unity with both God and man—of atonement, or at-one-ment. All alienation caused by sin is at an end.

It is also the cup of peace. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). This means peace for the individual sinner, peace for the unfallen beings in the universe, and eventually peace for this world, which for six thousand years has known no peace, "for there is no peace saith my God, to the wicked." If we are not at peace with

**All bitterness to be rooted out**

God and our fellow men, we have no right to partake of the cup, which is the emblem of peace. Hard feelings and peace cannot dwell together in the same heart, and if there is any "root of bitterness" it should be rooted out during the preparatory service, if not before, for that is the purpose for which it was instituted.

It is also the cup of fellowship. Supping together has always been a sign or evidence of friendship and fellowship. For this reason Jesus represents Himself as standing at the door of the heart and knocking and pleading to be admitted, so that He and the inmate can sup together as an evidence of complete reconciliation (see Rev. 3:20). During the communion service, Christians sup together at the table of the Lord, and the act is meaningless unless they are on good terms with both Christ and their fellow disciples. The cup should be the outward evidence that all are enjoying "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

## "AND HE TOOK THE CUP"

It is also the cup of blessing, which indicates that we are being enriched with the blessings of salvation. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Prov. 10:22), is an observation of Solomon, who knew sorrow and the meaning of true riches. As we drink of the cup of the Lord, He says to each of us, "I will bless you, and you shall be a blessing." All who receive the blessings of salvation will be eager to share them with others.

It is also the cup of thanksgiving. A sense of the significance of the communion cup should fill our hearts with the spirit of thanksgiving because of what Christ has done for us in paying the enormous price of our redemption. While the service should be one of reverence and solemnity, at the same time it should be characterized by feelings of peace and joy and happiness. A minister visited a very poor Christian family and was urged to stay for dinner. There was but little food on the table, and that was of the most simple variety. As they bowed their heads the father prayed, "Lord, we thank Thee that we have Thee and all this besides." This is true gratitude, because the Bread of Life is given first importance.

It is also the cup of promise. Jesus said, as He passed the cup to His disciples in the first communion service: "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20), or this is "the blood which ratifies the Covenant" (Matt. 26:28, Weymouth). " 'Drink this, all of you, for it is my blood, the blood of the new agreement shed to set many free from their sins,' " is Phillips' translation (Matt. 26:28). " 'This cup,' He said, 'is the new Covenant of which my blood is the pledge,' " is the rendering by Weymouth of 1 Corinthians 11:25. The new covenant is called "the covenant of promise." The symbolic wine is therefore the assurance that all "the exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word will be fulfilled.

The communion cup should also indicate that we worship the Lord "in the beauty of holiness," and not as a mere "form of godliness" without "the power thereof," and that we do not make ritual the object of our services of worship, since this would make them lifeless and worthless. Jesus declared that the "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Then we can sing from the heart:

"Not the labors of my hands,  
 Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
 Could my zeal no respite know,  
 Could my tears forever flow,  
 All for sin could not atone;  
 Thou must save, and Thou alone."

The cup is also a pledge by Jesus that He will come again. "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," or "until He returns" (Weymouth). Then how can anyone get the full benefit from this service who does not believe in and look forward to the second advent of Christ? Jesus then made a strange pledge. He said that He would refrain from partaking of the fruit of the vine until He could drink it with the redeemed in the kingdom of glory. This doubtless will take place in connection with "the marriage supper of the Lamb." Are you anticipating and preparing for that joyous occasion? Partaking of the cup is really the acceptance of the invitation to attend the wedding feast of the Bridegroom and His bride. "'Blessed are those who have been called to the marriage-banquet of the Lamb,'" is the rendering of Revelation 19:9 by James Moffatt.

As we raise the cup to our lips in this memorial service, may it be with the promise that we accept all the bountiful gifts and blessings involved and may we ever in mind and heart give our Lord the pledge that we will drink "of the fruit of the vine" with him in our Father's kingdom, and will not disappoint Him by being absent on that happy occasion.

## *The Cleansing Fountain*

IN THAT day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). That this is the fountain of cleansing blood represented by the wine of the communion service there can be no question. Jesus declared that the cup was symbolic of the blood that ratified and made effectual the new covenant because it was "shed for many for the remission of sins." Remission has the meaning of pardon, forgiveness, or release from guilt and condemnation, as by the pardon of a governor or the President of the United States the merited punishment of a criminal is remitted or canceled.

This wonderful provision for the sinner is made "for many," which of course includes all who have sinned, and becomes effectual for all who repent and ask for pardon. The apostle John made it clear that none are excluded from the provisions of salvation when he wrote: "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2). "He is an atoning sacrifice for our sins," is the rendering by Weymouth. This is not an indulgence to sin, but a provision in case we do, and "all have sinned," including the greatest of saints. Lifeboats and life belts on an ocean liner do not indicate a plan for a shipwreck but are provisions in case of an emergency, and the same is true of fire escapes in a hotel. Sin is an accident instead of a planned act in the life of a Christian, and he should be profoundly grateful that full provision has been made for the

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emergency through Christ's atoning victory and mediatorial ministry, available to every repentant offender.

But the opportunity for salvation is unlimited, and this is made clear in the best-known text of Scripture: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The word "whosoever" is all-inclusive and shows that Christ "is able . . . to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." He never has restricted nor ever will restrict the number to be saved, for that would be contrary to His nature. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." One writer declared that he was glad for the term "whosoever" instead of his own personal name, because there might be others with the same name, but even though there were, the term "whosoever" would include him as well as the others.

In Hebrews 9:22 we are adjured that "without shedding of blood is no remission," which is a quotation from Leviticus 17:11. The blood represents the life of any creature, because through the circulatory system the food elements that sustain life are carried to all parts of the body and the waste matter is carried back to the heart and lungs to be rejuvenated. The blood of Christ is therefore an appropriate symbol of His power to save. In Romans 5:9, 10 we are assured that we are "justified by his blood" and "saved by his life." Through justification our sins of the past are instantly canceled as completely as if we had never sinned, and through sanctification Christ lives out His own life in us, and through a lifetime of spiritual growth He develops in us His own character.

The guilt of sin is the greatest tragedy of life, because it separates us from the Life-giver and places the sinner under the sentence of eternal death. Therefore the greatest need of the sinner is pardon and reconciliation, and this is possible only through the atoning blood of Christ. "Where God grants remission of sin there can be no question of making further atonement," is the Phillips translation of Hebrews 10:18. In fact, we are told that *if* this provision is not accepted, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." There is no other way of escape for the guilty sinner. Pardon and

## THE CLEANSING FOUNTAIN

victory are possible only because Christ met the full penalty of the broken law in our stead and imputes and imparts His own righteousness to us, not on the basis of human merit, but by faith in His atoning blood and priestly ministry.

Notice the following logical conclusions of the apostle Paul: "No distinction is made; for all alike have sinned, and all consciously come short of the glory of God, gaining acquittal from guilt by His free unpurchased grace through the deliverance which is found in Christ Jesus. He it is whom God put forth as a Mercy-Seat, rendered efficacious through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness—because of the passing over, in God's forbearance, of the sins previously committed—with a view to demonstrating, at the present time, His righteousness, that He may be shown to be righteous Himself, and the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus. Where then is there room for your boasting? It is forever shut out. On what principle? On the ground of merit? No, but on the ground of faith. For we maintain that it is as the result of faith that a man is held to be righteous, apart from actions done in obedience to Law" (Rom. 3:23-28, Weymouth). The apostle is here speaking of justification, which deals only with "sins that are past," or "the sins previously committed," and which is the work of a moment.

This provision for sin was recognized by the unfallen beings of the universe in their celebration when Jesus died in triumph on the cross, as is described in Revelation 12:10-12. These heavenly beings declare that "now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ," because Satan had met a crushing defeat and the saints of earth "overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Recognizing his defeat and the doom of his revolt, the devil had to give up his plans to conquer other worlds and confine his activities to this earth, and so he comes down, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." He is then pictured as turning his wrath and attacks against the church.

Our part in this contest is described in 1 John 1:7-9. The promise that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,"

**No limitation to  
Christ's power**

**No merit ascribed to  
self-righteousness**

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or "all unrighteousness," indicates a continuous cleansing process through justification. This process includes cleansing from the sins of ignorance and omission. As long as we are justified and have our title to heaven and are daily experiencing the process of sanctification through spiritual growth, the blood of Christ does its continuous cleansing work and we are ready at all times for whatever may happen that would close our probation.

This divine provision for sin embraces the whole history of the reign of sin back to the gates of Eden. It applied to Adam and his descendants who showed their faith in offering typical sacrifices which prefigured the death of Christ, who was therefore "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and not only from His death on the cross of Calvary. During the four millenniums before the advent of the Messiah, repentant sinners demonstrated their faith in His atoning death by shedding the blood of animals, because "without shedding of blood is no remission." Those who refused or neglected to partake in these symbolic services were, like Cain, rejected and "cut off from among" God's people. The blood of these animals did not cleanse from sin, but faith in what it prefigured did. They were cleansed in the fountain with its unfailing supply of blood flowing from the cross of Calvary.

In Leviticus 5:11-13, we read of an exception made for the person who could not afford an offering that required the "shedding of blood." He could bring an offering "of fine flour," which is called "a sin offering," and the promise is that his sins "shall be forgiven him." This probably explains the statement in Hebrews 9:22 that "almost all things are by the law purged with blood," and then we must remember that blood offerings were made from time to time in behalf of all the people, as was done by the high priest on the Day of Atonement when he offered "the goat of the sin offering" for the sins of the people.

It is believed by some that the bloodless offering of "fine flour" was in type for the special benefit of the many who will be saved who had never heard of the crucifixion of Christ or even of the plan of redemption. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 638; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 376, 377.) In the chapter "Hope for the Heathen," in

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*Prophets and Kings*, it is stated that "heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world." Some will come up to Christ in the kingdom and ask, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" (Zech. 13:6). This question can be asked only by those who had never heard of the crucifixion. Indeed, Christ is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and all who walk in what light they have will be saved, even though it was received through the book of nature (see Rom. 1:18-20). They are, of course, saved by the "name" or character of Christ, and therefore "do by nature the things contained in the law," which is the transcript of the character of God.

Since Calvary, where types met their Antitype in the true Paschal Lamb, we are asked to demonstrate our faith in the atoning death of Christ by taking part in the communion service and drinking of the blood or wine of grapes, which is symbolic of the atoning blood of Christ. What would happen if one refused to take part in this divinely instituted memorial ordinance? It is hard to even imagine a genuine Christian running such a risk and showing such a lack of love. Although baptism does not in reality wash away one sin, it is the divinely given symbol by which we show our faith in a cleansing that has already taken place. What would be the result if a person who knew of the ordinance of baptism, with its proper mode and purpose, refused to participate? To those who, like the thief on the cross, never had the opportunity, and to the millions who were ignorant of its proper mode and significance, Christ will impute His own baptism. This is the reason He was Himself baptized or immersed.

Partaking of the communion service is a testimony to the world that we know that our sins have been pardoned and by faith we have been cleansed from all unrighteousness in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and that we are now enjoying the indescribable blessings of the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ, which are ours by faith. It is an outward witness of our inward peace.

The following quotation brings this study to an appropriate conclusion: "As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the

*For those who have  
never heard*

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mercy seat while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so, while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are to remember that there is One who can take away sin, and who is willing and anxious to save the sinner. With His own blood He paid the penalty for all wrong-doers. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove."  
—ELLEN G. WHITE in *Review and Herald*, Sept. 29, 1896.

## CHAPTER 13

### *The Sign of the Cross*

IN ANCIENT times the cross was the emblem of ignominy, shame, and defeat; it was the instrument of torture and death for the vilest of criminals. It was akin to the gallows, the gas chamber, or the electric chair in our day. However, the public spectacle and prolonged torture were indescribably more terrible. During the early centuries of the Christian dispensation the image or likeness of the cross of Christ was made the symbol of victory and triumph, and, in fact, of Christianity itself, and to this day it is thus reckoned by Christendom in general.

The knights of the Crusades placed the likeness of the cross on their shields as a sign of loyalty and victory. In the Middle Ages a carpenter's guild, or union, made the cross the sign of their profession and organization, and ever since the panels on many cupboard and house doors have been made in the form of a cross. Churches and cathedrals have been erected in the shape of a cross, or a cross has been placed on the façade or on the steeple, and this custom has not been confined to any one denomination.

The image of the cross is also carried as a charm by millions of people to protect them from accidents and other dangers. Men and women carry about and virtually worship bits of wood and nails supposed to have come from the cross on which Christ was crucified. The writer heard a prominent speaker say that there is enough of such wood to build a cathedral and nails to build a battleship. It is estimated that the likeness of the cross is used in at least four hundred forms.

Did these many customs have their origin in the cross of Calvary? By no means, but rather in ancient pagan times beginning in

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Babylon, which was founded by Nimrod soon after the Flood. Death by crucifixion is believed to have originated with Queen Semiramis of ancient Babylonia. Criminals were first fastened to a tree and left to die of hunger and exposure, or to be devoured by wild animals. The tree thus used was called "the accursed," and later "the cross." Five New Testament texts use the term "tree" instead of "the cross." They declare that Jesus was "hanged on a tree."

### **The ignominy of the cross**

In ancient times criminals and prisoners of war were nailed to the cross as an offering to the sun-god, and therefore the cross took on a religious significance with the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans. Christ was therefore offered on the altar of the pagan sun-god, under the influence of Satan, who claims to be the god of this world. This gives force to the scripture declaring that Jesus "made himself of no reputation," and "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even* the death of the cross." "He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross," is the rendering by Weymouth. "*And the death he died was the death of a common criminal,*" is Phillips' translation.

Note the following significant statements by Alexander Hislop:

"The same sign of the cross that Rome now worships was used in the Babylonian Mysteries, was applied by Paganism to the same magic purposes, was honoured with the same honours. That which is now called the Christian cross was originally no Christian emblem at all, but was the mystic Tau of the Chaldeans and Egyptians—the true original form of the letter T—the initial of the name of Tammuz—which in Hebrew, radically the same as ancient Chaldee, as found on coins, was formed [the same as the present cross]. . . . That mystic Tau was marked in baptism on the foreheads of those initiated in the Mysteries, and was used in every variety of way as a most sacred symbol. . . . The mystic Tau, as the symbol of the great divinity, was called 'the sign of life;' it was used as an amulet over the heart; it was marked on the official garments of the priests, as on the official garments of the priests of Rome; it was borne by kings in their hand, as a token of their dignity on divinely-conferred authority. The Vestal virgins of Pagan Rome wore it suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns do now. . . .

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

"The cross was worshipped by Pagan Celts long before the incarnation and death of Christ. . . . It was worshipped in Mexico for ages before the Roman Catholic missionaries set foot there. . . . The cross thus widely worshipped, or regarded as a sacred emblem, was the unequivocal symbol of Bacchus, the Babylonian Messiah, for he was represented with a head-band covered with crosses. . . . This symbol of the Babylonian god is revered at this day in all the wide wastes of Tartary, where Buddhism prevails."—*The Two Babylons*, pp. 197-199.

Archeologists have uncovered an abundance of evidence of the universal use of the image of the cross among all ancient nations back almost to the Flood. Pagan temples were marked with crosses. A cross may be seen painted on the breast of an Egyptian mummy in the London Museum. Ancient pagan priests used cakes stamped with crosses, on the order of the modern cross buns commonly eaten during the Easter season. A cross with an orb or circle was a symbol of divinity in Egypt. Engravings of priests with crosses hanging from their necks have been discovered. In India may be seen the cross in connection with Brahma and Vishnu, and on the sacred water jars. Crosses are also painted on the walls of Chinese pagodas, and found on some statues of Buddha.

### **The cross an ancient pagan symbol**

The use of the cross as a religious symbol did not enter the Christian church for two or three centuries after the days of Christ and the apostles. A study of the inscriptions on the tombs of the Christian martyrs in the Roman catacombs reveals not one likeness of a cross. Minucius Felix, one of the Christian writers of the third century, quoted the pagans as saying to the Christians: "See the crosses, you are no longer to adore, but to be hanged upon." To which Felix replied: "As for adoration of crosses, I must tell you that we neither adore crosses nor desire them. You it is ye pagans, who worship wooden gods, who are the most likely people to adore wooden crosses as being a part of the same substance with your deities. For what else are your ensigns, flags and standards, but crosses, gilt and beautiful? Your victorious trophies not only represent a cross, but a cross with a man upon it."—*Apology*, sec. 12 (Reeves ed.).

What is the sign or symbol of the cross of Christ? Jesus gave the answer when He instituted the memorial ordinance of the sacrificial service recorded in Matthew 26:26-28. He declared that the symbolic bread and wine represented His death on the cross, and not even once did He or His apostles ever state or even hint that an image of the cross would become the symbol of His death. This is a part of the counterfeit system of religion which was brought into the church from paganism as the result of the great apostasy, or "falling away," foretold through Paul and other apostolic writers, as well as by Old Testament prophets, which paganized the church until it became what J. A. Wylie called "Baptised Paganism." There was a departure from Christ-centered faith and doctrines to man-made ceremonies and practices, and the church relapsed into paganism and legalism.

An image, or likeness, of the cross as the symbol of the death of Christ is as useless and meaningless as was the substitute offering of Cain, which God rejected because there was no shedding of blood, which alone could typify the death of the Lamb of God. Likewise a wooden or metal cross cannot possibly commemorate the broken body and spilled blood of the Saviour of men. It is His death rather than the cold, lifeless, and bloodless instrument of death that is to be commemorated in the communion service. Surely the Lord would not choose as the emblem of Christianity an object with such a heathen and unchristian background.

The use of the likeness, or image, of the cross for this purpose is, in fact, a species of idolatry and is condemned in the second commandment of the Decalogue, which forbids the making of "any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." The making of images, or likenesses, "of any thing" in heaven or earth as an object of veneration or worship is here clearly forbidden, and certainly includes the making and use of images of the cross. Christians should have nothing to do with this form of idolatry. The claim that the image of the cross is not really worshiped releases no one from the condemnation of the second commandment.

## *The Sacrament and a Living Saviour*

ALTHOUGH the Lord's Supper is chiefly a memorial of the death of the Son of God, it embraces much more than that tragic event, for we must not worship a dead Christ, ever hanging on the cross, or lying in the tomb, but rather the One who broke the bands of death and came forth a conqueror over death and the grave and ascended to the right hand of God, where He ministers as our priest and mediator.

As we partake of the emblems of the broken body and spilled blood of our Lord, our vision must embrace that of the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos that Sabbath morning when he heard a voice behind him, and turning saw Jesus arrayed in priestly garments ministering among the seven golden candlesticks, which symbolize the churches. The vision of the glorified Christ caused the prophet in reverence to fall on his face to the ground. Placing His right hand upon John, the Saviour said to him: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18), or "of death and the grave" (Phillips). The sacramental service is a memorial of a past event, having to do with the One who "was dead" but is now "alive for evermore."

We are assured that because Christ "continueth ever" and "hath an unchangeable priesthood," He "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:24, 25). Although by His death He purchased our redemption, "we are saved by his life." Whereas the communion service memorializes His death, we must never forget that we are saved by a living and interceding Saviour.

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One of the chief characteristics and weaknesses of Roman Catholicism is the overemphasis placed on the dead and crucified Christ as indicated by the prominent use of the crucifix, the intercessory ministry of Mary and the saints in Christ's stead, and the belief that the bread and wine are the actual flesh and blood of our Lord. Those who share in this belief are in reality worshipping a dead rather than a living Christ, for only the flesh of a dead body can be eaten, and if the bread is actually His flesh He cannot at the same time be a living Saviour. These emblems He gave as symbols to ever remind us that He is our bread and wine, our life, the living Christ.

Bread and wine, or the juice of the grape, were chief articles of diet in the time of Christ and therefore beautifully typified Him as "the bread of life" and "the true vine," which nourish the soul. To consider the bread and wine of the sacramental service as the actual body and blood of Christ is to deify them and make them virtually gods and objects of worship. Since Christ instituted the sacramental service before His death on the cross, how could the bread and wine used be other than symbols?

### **Emblems not to be worshiped**

Nor must we make the mistake of the disciples, who for some time refused to believe that their Lord had escaped from the tomb and was a living Saviour. Even the testimony of Mary Magdalene and the other woman, as well as that of Peter and John, did not convince them. It is still possible for professed Christians to visit Calvary without finding Christ, and to partake of the emblems of His death without obtaining a vision of and an acquaintance with the everliving and interceding Saviour at the right hand of God. The road to Emmaus still has many travelers who are sad and lonesome and disappointed because they fail to see and recognize their living and ever-present Lord.

The two travelers had known and loved Jesus and believed in His teachings, which had changed their lives, but now the little faith they had left was sustained only by the memories of the past, and they failed to recognize a present and living Messiah. If Jesus is only a person of yesterday, His life a mere historical event, He is powerless to save us today. He was very close to the two men, but

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they did not know Him, because they thought He was still in the tomb. Their eyes were blinded by their unbelief, and the same is true of millions today. How can they recognize a present and living Saviour when their religion centers their attention on One who is still hanging on the cross?

As we gather at the communion table let us remember that it is the place of vision. May our eyes be opened to recognize the One at the head of the table as the living Christ, who is present to minister the emblems of His broken body and spilled blood as verily as if we could see Him in person with our naked eyes. Then only can the memorial service fulfill its divinely appointed mission of revealing to us Him whom to know is life eternal.

### **Communion table a place of vision**

We, too, may act as if Christ is still dead and hanging on the cross or lying in the tomb, when He is with us "even unto the end of the world," and is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." The two men had said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21), intimating that their hopes had been blasted. To them it was all over, with only a memory of the past, of what had happened at Calvary. They did not possess a living faith to sustain them in the present, or to give them a vision of an everliving Saviour. They felt that Jesus had failed them, and when He revealed Himself to them, they were so blinded by unbelief that they did not recognize Him.

The severe rebuke Jesus gave these two men applies with equal force to many in Christendom today. He said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). He had come into the world at the very time His advent had been predicted, and He fulfilled to the letter the scores of prophetic forecasts concerning His mission and atoning death. There was no excuse for not recognizing Him as the predicted and expected Messiah.

The two men, however, did finally recognize their Lord, but not until they sat with Him at the supper table, which became to

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them the place of vision. As He took the bread and lifted His nail-pierced hands in blessing, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him." This vision should come to all who take part in the sacramental service, for that is the purpose of the ordinance. It is but a routine form, a meaningless ritual, unless those who participate get a vision of the crucified, living, and interceding Saviour. As soon as the two men received this vision of their Lord, He immediately

vanished, doubtless in order that they need not tarry at the place of vision and revelation, but return to Jerusalem to bear witness to those who were still troubled with doubt and unbelief; and this they did without delay. Being moved to bear witness to others in these contemporary times should also be the fruitage of the vision received at the table of the Lord.

The sacramental service is not only a memorial of the atoning death of Christ; it is also typical of a future event of transcendent importance not only to the redeemed of earth but also to the whole universe of unfallen beings. Paul says of this predicted and anticipated event: "In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in him" (Rom. 8:18-23, Phillips).

Let us notice the following inspiring comments in regard to the purpose of the sacramental ordinance:

"Every disciple is called upon to participate publicly, and thus bear witness that he accepts Christ as a personal Saviour. It is at

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these, His own appointments, that Christ meets His people, and energizes them by His presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to His children. All who come with their faith fixed upon Him will be greatly blessed. All who neglect these seasons of divine privilege will suffer loss. Of them it may appropriately be said, 'Ye are not all clean.' . . .

"But the Communion service was not to be a season of sorrowing. This was not its purpose. As the Lord's disciples gather about His table, they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings. They are not to dwell upon their past religious experience, whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are not to recall the differences between them and their brethren. The preparatory service has embraced all this. The self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences has all been done. Now they come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light. They are to open the soul to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. With hearts cleansed by Christ's most precious blood, in full consciousness of His presence, although unseen, they are to hear His words, 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 656-659.

## *The Lord's Supper and the New Covenant*

AT THE communion table Jesus said to His disciples: "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:25). "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," is another translation. The words *testament* and *covenant* mean the same. A testament, or covenant, is an agreement or compact between two or more persons to perform a certain service of mutual interest, the contract being nullified by the failure of either party to fulfill his part of the agreement.

The relationship between Christ and Christians is represented in the Scriptures by a marriage covenant. At the altar the officiating minister reminds the couple of their solemn covenant obligations to each other, and then asks them to confirm the covenant and seal their promises by joining their right hands. Likewise the partaking of the cup at the communion service represents an oath of allegiance to Christ and thus confirms the new covenant relationship between the participants and their Lord.

A word similar to *covenant* is *sacrament*, which comes from the Latin and means an oath of allegiance, and since it is one of the terms used to describe the Lord's Supper, the ordinance represents the confirmation of our covenant relationship to Him. The ordinance of baptism is sometimes spoken of as the marriage ceremony that unites us with Christ, and in preparation for which the Christian by faith puts on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and also enters into the new covenant compact, which is confirmed anew at every communion service. Jesus told His disciples that these symbols constituted the confirmation of His last will and testament to them, and of their allegiance to Him.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE NEW COVENANT

Jesus could only have meant that the wine was His blood in a figurative or symbolic sense, as when He said, "I am the bread of life," "I am the door of the sheep," and "I am the true vine." We have no more reason for taking one literally than the others. They are all parables in which the literal is used to represent the spiritual, and Jesus did much of His teachings in parables. He could not possibly have meant for them to drink His literal blood, because, in the first place, it had not yet been shed, and, in the second place, He had strictly forbidden His people to drink blood. Later the Jerusalem Council, acting under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, commanded Christians everywhere to abstain from certain things, including the drinking of blood.

These restrictions were made for the special benefit of the Gentile converts from heathenism, for the Jewish people had strictly observed them for centuries and abhorred the tasting of blood. The disciples of Christ would have been shocked if they had thought for a moment that Jesus meant that they should drink of His blood, and would have reacted as did Peter when in vision he saw the sheet let down from heaven, wherein were all kinds of unclean creatures, and was divinely commanded to "kill, and eat." Three times the command was given, and three times he refused, knowing that it could only be given in a parabolic sense, to teach him a lesson, for God could never contradict His own instruction not to eat unclean flesh foods. He was soon given the meaning of the vision through the divinely directed visit to the home of the centurion and the conversion of this Gentile family and their friends. As a result the apostle, who had been so prejudiced against Gentiles, declared that through this means "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." The substantiation of the literal bread and wine for the body and blood of Christ found its way into the church during the great apostasy, when Christianity and paganism were amalgamated. For generations the heathen had been eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their animal and human sacrifices.

***The heresy of  
transubstantiation***

No contract or covenant is legal and therefore binding unless it is confirmed by a sacrifice on the part of each party. Otherwise

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it could not be enforced. This requirement of law is interesting in the light of the following scripture describing the second advent of Christ: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth,

**We promise to forsake the world** that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:3-5). On God's part He promised to sacrifice His own Son, and on our part we promise to sacrifice this world and its allurements and surrender our own will and way of life, and thus the covenant is made binding.

The old covenant, made at Mount Sinai, was sealed and ratified by the blood sacrifice of animals, which pointed to the death of Christ, the Lamb of God (see Ex. 24:5-8). The relationship of the old covenant to the new, which was ratified by the blood of Christ, is effectively explained in Hebrews 9:11-23. The conclusion is that "without shedding of blood is no remission." Paul declared that "though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3:15). A last will and testament can be ratified only by the death of the testator. Thus it is only by "the blood of Jesus Christ" that we can be cleansed "from all sin" and can enjoy the fulfillment of the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God under the new covenant. One writer said: "The ratification of a covenant was commonly associated with the shedding of blood, and what was written in blood was believed to be indelible" (Plummer). This is especially true of the "new covenant" or "everlasting covenant."

In the confirmation of the new covenant, Christ is both the priest and the victim, the mediator and the sacrifice. Before the new covenant can be made effectual, the old must become obsolete in our lives, and righteousness and salvation by faith must supplant the efforts to obtain them on the basis of human works and merit. The partaking of the symbolic blood of Christ in the wine of the cup is useless and meaningless unless it indicates to the receiver a complete dedication of life and a promise to be faithful even unto death.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE NEW COVENANT

The memorial sacrificial service is in vain to all who do not experience its significance as set forth in the following scriptures: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Eze. 36:25-27).

In referring to this promise, a New Testament writer said: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:10-12).

Paul makes it clear that this new covenant experience is made a reality through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, by whose power man may become "the epistle of Christ" to be "known and read of all men" because it is "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:2, 3). It was the Decalogue that was written on tables of stone, as it has also been, together with the entire Bible, written with ink. But such writings are of no value to human beings until through the power of the Holy Spirit they are transferred to the mind and heart and lived out in the daily life, and the communion service was instituted to be a memorial of that experience, without which the law is useless and the Bible a dead book.

**We are to be living epistles of Christ**

The relationship between the sacramental service and the new covenant is concisely stated in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 656, 659: "In partaking with His disciples of the bread and wine, Christ pledged Himself to them as their Redeemer. He committed to them the new covenant, by which all who receive Him become

children of God, and joint heirs with Christ. By this covenant every blessing that heaven could bestow for this life and the life to come was theirs. This covenant deed was to be ratified with the blood of Christ. And the administration of the sacrament was to keep before the disciples the infinite sacrifice made for each of them individually as a part of the great whole of fallen humanity."

The following comments are also clarifying: "When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride."—ELLEN G. WHITE in *The Youth's Instructor*, Sept. 26, 1901.

As we partake of the Lord's Supper may the everlasting covenant of grace, as expressed in the following beautiful hymn, be reconfirmed and experienced in each of our lives:

"My life must be Christ's broken bread,  
 My love His outpoured wine,  
 A cup o'erfilled, a table spread  
 Beneath His name and sign,  
 That other souls, refreshed and fed,  
 May share His life through mine."

—GEN. ALBERT E. OSBORN, of the  
 Salvation Army

## *The Cross and Righteousness by Faith*

THE atoning death of Christ and righteousness by faith in Him are inseparable and together constitute the center, the very core, of the gospel. This is made clear in many scriptures, including Romans 3:23-28. Here the apostle is dealing chiefly with justification by faith, or imputed righteousness, which is the only means of taking care of the past sins instantly and as completely as if they had never been committed. It is stated that we are "justified freely by his grace," because Christ paid the price of redemption with "his blood" and thus became the "propitiation" for our sins. And so God can "declare his righteousness" to cover the "sins that are past."

"Propitiation" is translated "expiation," "Mercy-Seat" and "sacrifice of reconciliation" in other translations. The mercy seat in the Holy of Holies in the sanctuary covered the ark of the covenant, which contained the law of God. The mercy seat was between the sinner and the broken law, and was therefore symbolic of Christ, our Priest and Mediator. It is stated that Christ's death was necessary in order to declare, make known, or demonstrate "his righteousness" and to show that He is not only righteous Himself, but "the giver of righteousness to those who believe in Jesus." In other words, the death of Christ "as a sacrifice of reconciliation" was necessary in order that "his own justice" (Goodspeed) might be vindicated.

Christ had to satisfy both the righteousness and justice of the law on man's behalf by perfect obedience and by meeting the full penalty of transgression. God could not declare man guiltless through justification without making full provision for his sins.

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All the sins committed through the millenniums of the past back to the gates of Eden were remitted "through the forbearance of God" on condition that they would be atoned for by the blood of Christ. "Through Jesus, God's mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. . . . The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. . . . By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

To pronounce the unrighteous to be righteous and the guilty to be guiltless would actually be an act of injustice had Christ not met the penalty of the broken law in man's behalf. His righteousness is available only on the basis of faith. Just as a judge is duty bound to uphold the honor and dignity of the law by enforcing its demands, so God can be consistent as far as justice is concerned and at the same time pardon the repentant sinner only in the light of the atoning sacrifice of His Son. *The Cambridge Bible* declares that "the cross reconciled two seeming incompatibilities—jealousy for the law, and judicial acquittal of the guilty" (comment on Rom. 3:26). Westcott declared that Christ "is not an advocate who wishes to set aside the law, but to carry it out and apply it."—*The Epistles of St. John*.

Paul's sound and logical conclusion is that there is absolutely no room for boasting of righteousness on the basis of human works or credit: "Where then is there room for your boasting? It is forever shut out. On what principle? On the ground of merit? No, but on the ground of faith. For we maintain that it is as the result of faith that a man is held to be righteous, apart from actions done in obedience to Law" (Rom. 3:27, 28, Weymouth).

Justification, or imputed righteousness, is thus described in *The Pulpit Commentary*: "Justification is the immediate result of

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forgiveness. God cannot think a man to be other than he is; but He can act towards him better than he deserves, can treat a sinner as only a righteous man deserves to be treated. This is justification."—On Gal. 2:16. "Justification includes more than pardon. . . . *The very terms imply a difference.* To pardon is to waive the execution of the penal sanction of the Law. To justify is to declare that the demands of the Law are satisfied, not waived. Pardon is a sovereign act; justification, a judicial act. . . . *Pardon is remission of penalty,* in the absence of a satisfaction. It is not an act of justice. But justification proceeds on the ground of a satisfaction. One is the remission of punishment; the other is a declaration that there is no ground for the infliction of punishment."—On Gal. 2:15, 16.

Justification implies, and should be followed by, sanctification, imparted righteousness, or spiritual growth, which is the work of a lifetime, in contrast to justification, which is the work of a moment. Paul shows the uselessness of works without faith, and James the uselessness of faith without works, and in this there is no contradiction. Profession without possession, or practice, is worthless. We can maintain our title to heaven through justification while we are being fitted for heaven through sanctification, so that at all times we can "be ready," even while we are getting ready.

*One thing to profess,  
another to possess*

Paul wrote of this experience: "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" (2 Cor. 5:21). That is, God upholding His righteous law, treated Christ as a sinner deserves to be treated so that, the penalty of the law being fully met, He might in mercy and love treat the sinner as Christ the righteous deserves to be treated. "The Lord visited upon him what the Law awarded to us, and by that substitution our redemption was secured."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Gal. 3:13, 14.

Sanctification means being made sacred, saintly, or holy, and being set apart for a holy use. This is accomplished through spiritual growth or the transformation of character into the likeness of Christ. It follows justification, or the new birth, and continues through life. Peter declared that we are "born again" by "the word of God" and then "as newborn babes" we are to "desire the sincere milk of the

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word," that we "may grow thereby" (1 Peter 1:23; 2:2). In prayer Jesus said to His Father: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Therefore we can be sanctified no faster than we know and obey the truth. "Sanctification is the work of a lifetime."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 65. There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification.

The apostle Paul declared that this spiritual growth must continue "till we all of us arrive at oneness in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and at mature manhood and the stature of full-grown men in Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13, Weymouth). Paul declared that this growth is necessary so that we "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

In regard to the relation between justification and sanctification, the following quotation is to the point: "There is some danger of confusing justification with sanctification. The distinction between the two may be simply expressed if we say that a man must be *set right* before he can *go right*. Regeneration is the setting of our will right with God. Justification is the setting us in the right standing with God. These stand at the very threshold of the holy life, and there is no entrance to it by any other way. . . . The beginning is a frail and feeble thing. Good as far as it goes, and full of hopefulness; but needing growth, culture, perfecting. In New Testament Scriptures the word 'perfect' stands for 'whole,' 'entire.' . . . The Christian has to win *holiness* in thought, expression of thought in word, in conduct, in relations. . . . It is being free of the old image, but it is also being changed into *his* image. . . . Enough for us to

**Holiness is a lifelong pursuit**

know that it is a lifelong pursuit, the cry of the soul as long as the soul can cry, the endeavour of the life as long as life endures.

Only when passed through shall we know that we are holy; and then 'he that is holy may be holy still.' . . . The fear of offending God and the desire to please God, are necessary elements in the process of sanctification."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on 2 Cor. 7:1.

Note the following statement concerning spiritual growth: "As

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in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 65, 66.

Normal spiritual growth is perfection that we obtain through justification and may enjoy all the time we are growing into the perfection of the character of Christ through sanctification. With this experience we can always be ready. Paul tells us that it is by "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord" that we "are changed into the same image," and that this is accomplished "by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). We "are being transformed into the same likeness, from one degree of radiant holiness to another," is the Weymouth translation. This regeneration is made possible by a vision of Christ, and Him crucified, through the ministration of the Holy Spirit.

**Regeneration means transformation**

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart and we can say with Christ, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 175, 176.

That the victory over Satan and sin comes through a vision of the atoning death of Christ is also made clear in Hebrews 2:14, 15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he

might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The apostle then states that the Incarnation was necessary in order that Christ might be qualified to be "a merciful and faithful high priest" so that He might make reconciliation for the sins of the people," and that He had to suffer temptation in order to be "able to succour them that are tempted" (see Heb. 4:16-18). When Paul met Christ at the gate of Damascus, his entire life was changed, and a vision of the Crucified One will do the same for us.

How limited is our comprehension of the price paid for our redemption! How dim our vision and how meager our understanding of the magnitude of Heaven's great sacrifice! A Father's love so great that He was willing to give His only Son! Christ's willingness to come into this dark world to live and die that we might be redeemed from death and restored to His likeness! May Heaven grant us the capacity and the wisdom to lay hold of so great a salvation. To remind us of this wonderful transformation of character into the righteousness of Christ is the purpose of the communion service.

## *The Lord's Supper and the Second Advent*

FOR as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). "You are proclaiming the Lord's death—until He returns," is the rendering by Weymouth, and, "You are proclaiming that the Lord has died for you, and you will do that until he comes again," by J. B. Phillips. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is fulfilled only when those partaking of the emblems thus declare that the death of Christ atoned for their sins and also believe in and are looking forward to His return to complete the work of redemption.

It is a sad thought that the celebration of the first communion service in the upper room was virtually meaningless to those who participated, because none of them believed in the event it was instituted to commemorate. Their minds were clouded by the false Messianic hope of the Jews, and they were so sure that Jesus would not die, that they refused later to believe the most positive and reliable testimony concerning the fact of His resurrection. Because they were blinded by their own opinions they refused to believe that He would leave them and ascend to heaven. Therefore they denied themselves the knowledge and hope of His return to reign as King of kings.

Also the ordinance is meaningless and its purpose nullified by those who refuse to believe in the virgin birth, divinity, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Christ, and this includes a multitude of professed Christians, as well as many religious leaders. If consistent, they would eliminate the sacramental ordinance from their religious calendar, because their unbelief destroys its significance.

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We have no record of the first communion service celebrated by the disciples of Christ after His ascension. It was probably held in the upper room where the ordinances were instituted and where they so often met for worship and where they had received their spiritual preparation for the early rain of Pentecostal power. Even though it is not mentioned in the scriptural record, it must have been a wonderful service and a notable occasion, so meaningful and significant, and so different from the first, on which occasion they did not comprehend its depth of revelation and promises. At every such service they must have recalled their faithless attitude on that previous occasion, and especially their failure to grasp the significance of Christ's promise to return at the close of the gospel dispensation, and their lack of understanding regarding their joyful reunion with Him in the kingdom of glory.

We must ever remember that all the memorial ordinances serve only a temporary purpose and will end when they will have fulfilled their purpose at the Second Advent, and that they are in reality a promise and prophecy of that glad event. This has largely been lost sight of by the Christian world. The service should mean much to those who believe in and are preparing and longing for Christ's appearing to translate into reality "the blessed hope."

Another reason why the celebration of these ordinances should increase our anticipation of our Lord's return is the promise made in connection with their institution in the upper room. After serving the disciples the symbol of His spilled blood, Jesus said: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). Because of our faith in His word we know that Christ has faithfully kept that pledge during the almost two millenniums of time since He made it. Another precious promise is recorded in Luke 12:37: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Do these texts indicate that there will be a final celebration of the ordinances in connection with the marriage banquet of the

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Lamb when the redeemed shall reach the celestial city? Do they mean that on this reunion occasion Christ will serve His people and with them drink of the cup for the first time since He made the promise? It would seem that the One who conducted the first communion service in the upper room with His disciples will celebrate it again in the New Jerusalem with the innumerable host who have been redeemed by His atoning sacrifice, many of whom had never had the privilege before.

Therefore this important service is typical as well as memorial, and should fill the participants with the joyful anticipation of a part in that happy reunion celebration that will take place when the gospel has fulfilled its divinely appointed mission. It should inspire a reconsecration to the speedy finishing of the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, so that the glorious event may be hastened and the pledge made by our Lord fulfilled and His long fast in regard to the fruitage of the vine brought to an end. Should we keep Him waiting indefinitely? He, too, is waiting and longing for that glad day, as is expressed in His prayer just before His crucifixion: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

The relation between the memorial ordinances and the second advent of Christ is close and decided. The first advent would have been useless without the second, and the second impossible without the first. In fact, without the Second Advent, His death would have been to no purpose. Chancellor Henry P. Liddon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, put it this way: "If Christ is not coming again we might as well lock the doors of this cathedral and throw the keys in the river." Yes, without the hope of the second advent of our Lord the celebration of the ordinances, as well as all other religious services, can serve no purpose.

The cross not only fulfilled the purpose of the first advent of Christ, but also makes possible the Second Advent. In 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 we are told that our belief in the death and resurrection of Christ is the basis of our hope of His return to complete

*The surety of the  
Second Advent*

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the work of redemption, and in Hebrews 9:28 we read: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

In this rite we celebrate both events, one in memory and the other in promise and anticipation. It is the privilege of those who participate to receive clearer understanding of God's plan of redemption. This enhances the final triumph over sin in the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. To deny or ignore the doctrine of the return of Christ at least partly nullifies the purpose of His atoning death and therefore the sacramental service. That a belief in the return of Christ has a character-transforming power is evident from the following scriptures: Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:9-14.

In the wilderness of temptation Satan offered Christ the dominion and sovereignty of this world in exchange for a single act of worship. The very fact that the offer was a "temptation" indicates that the tempter, as "the prince of this world," had the right to make the proposition and could have fulfilled his promise. But Jesus spurned the offer and continued His journey on the agonizing road to Gethsemane and Calvary to win back the lost dominion by sacrifice rather than by compromise. The results of His decision are pictured in John 12:31-33.

The great victory celebration over the final defeat of the prince and ruler of this rebel world, of which the communion service is typical, is again described in Revelation 11:15, where it is said that following the sounding of the seventh trumpet "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Commenting on this text, Dr. A. T. Robertson said: "This is the certain and glorious outcome of the age-long struggle against Satan, who wields the kingdom of the world which he offered to Christ on the mountain for one act of worship. But Jesus scorned partnership with Satan in the rule of the world, and chose war, war up to the hilt and to the end. Now the climax has come with

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE SECOND ADVENT

Christ as Conqueror of the kingdom of this world for his Father. This is the crowning lesson of the Apocalypse."—*Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

From the time of his victory over Adam in the Garden of Eden and the usurpation of his dominion, Satan was determined to make his sovereignty of the world permanent, but the members of the Godhead devised a plan to thwart his purpose. Although man had laid his homage at the feet of a demon who had become the ruling power in the world, in the divine plan Michael would through His incarnation become the Son of man and erect His cross in place of the throne of the enemy, cast him out of his position as the prince and ruler of the world, and bring it back to the principles ordained by God for His rule and government. Through this plan, Christ, the second Adam, would be lifted up to become the center of the redeemed world.

**God thwarts all of Satan's plans**

This is all embraced in the significance of the sacramental service, which points forward to the return of the conquering Son of God and the celebration of His triumph in the royal city in connection with the marriage and wedding banquet of the Lamb. Then the promise of 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25 will meet its complete fulfillment: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

The expression, "Till he come," indicates that the purpose of the ordinance is not only to help us to look back to the death of Christ but also forward to His return to reign in glory. A few years ago a well-known writer declared that in the sacramental service "the church perpetually reconstitutes the crises in which the Kingdom of God came into history. . . . At each Eucharist we are there—we are in the night in which he was betrayed, at Golgotha, before the empty tomb on Easter day, and in the upper room where he appeared; and we are at the moment of his coming, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump."—C. H. DODD, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (2d ed., 1944), p. 94.

## “He Shewed Unto Them His Hands”

THEN the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord” (John 20:19, 20). Another translation says that the doors “were locked.”

Because the disciples feared the same fate that had befallen their Master, the doors were not only shut, but locked, or barricaded. They had already been given much evidence that Jesus had risen from the dead. Peter and John had told them of the empty tomb and the message of the angels. Mary Magdalene had told them of her visit with Him, and He had “appeared to Simon,” and also to Cleopas and his companion on their trip to Emmaus, and yet they were skeptical. Even His sudden appearance in their midst failed to convince them, nor did the familiar salutation, “Peace be unto you.”

The final argument that silenced all questioning and dissipated all doubts as to His identity as the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, was given in a demonstration, or “exhibit,” as it is spoken of in court. “He shewed unto them his hands and his side” (John 20:20). Luke, in his record of the event, wrote: “But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet” (Luke 24:37-40).

## “HE SHEWED UNTO THEM HIS HANDS”

This was the final and conclusive argument and proof that the disciples could not deny. John mentioned the wound in His side, which was made after His death and which he had witnessed and recorded. It was the spear thrust of the soldier to make sure that He was dead, that resulted in the flow of “blood and water.” The disciples did not recognize Him by His voice, although it had not changed, nor by His garments, which were doubtless similar to those He had worn before, nor by His physical appearance, which had never been striking. In Isaiah 53:2 we read that “he had no beauty to attract our eyes, no charm to make us choose him” (Moffatt). His great attraction was His beautiful character rather than His physical appearance. He doubtless had not changed in this respect because of His resurrection. Neither was He recognized by any identifying halo around His head with which He is represented in many pictures. He wore no royal robe, and no angel announced His arrival. He simply showed them His hands and His feet, and that was sufficient. All doubts vanished when they saw the marks of the nails and spear.

*The marks of  
Christ's humiliation*

The nailprints in His hands were convincing evidence to the two disciples at the table in their home at Emmaus. The record is that “it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight” (Luke 24:30, 31). Of this experience we read: “Now He puts forth His hands to bless the food. The disciples start back in astonishment. Their companion spreads forth His hands in exactly the same way as their Master used to do. They look again, and lo, they see in His hands the print of nails. Both exclaim at once, It is the Lord Jesus! He has risen from the dead! They rise to cast themselves at His feet and worship Him, but He has vanished out of their sight.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 800. The nail-pierced hands spread out in blessing dispel all thought of doubt and gloom. Joy and hope flood their hearts, and they hasten to Jerusalem to add their testimony to a risen Saviour.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* we read of Christian's being attacked and tortured by an antagonist whom he could not resist. He cried

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out for help. He then said that "One came by and bid him forbear. I did not know Him at first: but as He went by, I perceived the holes in His hands and His side: then I concluded that it was our Lord." It was to him, as to the disciples, the crowning evidence.

At the funeral service of David Livingstone in Westminster Abbey, some questioned the identity of the body thus being honored as that of Livingstone. Could they depend on the testimony of the Africans who brought the body from the heart of Africa? A friend of Livingstone, a physician who had known him well, made an examination and declared, "Yes, this is his body: here is the hand that was crushed by the lion which attacked him." All doubts of his identity vanished when they saw the scarred hand.

The touching story is told of a group of little girls extolling the virtues of their mothers. One remarked, "My mother has the most beautiful hands in all the world." The others, recalling the terribly scarred hands of her mother, showed their amazement. In gentle tones the little girl said, "You see, when I was a baby our house burned and I would have been burned up too, but my mother saved me. That's how her hands were so badly burned. When I look at her hands they are to me the most beautiful hands in all the world."

**Self-sacrifice the mark  
of true love**

During World War II a member of the British Air Force visited London. He had been terribly burned in an airplane crash the year before. One night he took a taxi, and when he got out the driver demanded four shillings, which was almost twice as much as it should have been. They argued for some time. In relating the incident the soldier said, "I turned on the torch and showed him my hands." He habitually kept his hands in his pockets or wore gloves to hide the horrible burns he had sustained when he tried to put out the fire in the navigator's station on the plane. His hands were pitifully distorted and fiery red, even after six operations to restore the injured tendons and extensive skin grafting by skilled surgeons. The taxi driver was shocked, and refused to take any fare from a man who had made such a sacrifice for his country. A look at his hands settled the argument and changed the situation.

The nail-pierced hands of the Saviour will be the proof of His identity at His second advent. Before He appears there will be

## "HE SHEWED UNTO THEM HIS HANDS"

many false christs who will deceive many, and the masterpiece of deception will be the attempt of Satan to counterfeit Christ in His second advent. He will imitate His voice, match His miracles, and impersonate His appearance and deceive many, even calling fire down from heaven to prove his claim. But there is one thing he cannot imitate, and this is described in the following scripture: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; and he had horns coming out of his hands ["bright beams out of his side," margin]: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting" (Hab. 3:3-6). "Rays flashed from his hands," is the R.S.V. That this is a picture of the second advent of Christ there can be no question. When He appears His true followers will say, "This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). On this occasion He will again show them His hands.

According to Zechariah 13:6, our Lord will evidently show His scarred hands to some of the redeemed who had never heard of His atoning death on the cross. "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." The only person who will ask such a question is one who had never heard of the crucifixion and is yet numbered with the redeemed. In *The Desire of Ages*, page 638, we are told that many will be saved from among the heathen who "worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish," because "they are honest in heart, and desire to learn a better way. Although in the depths of heathenism, with no knowledge of the written law of God nor of His Son Jesus, they have revealed in manifold ways the working of a divine power on mind and character. . . . The 'Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' . . . if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God. . . .

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Heaven's plan of salvation is broad enough to embrace the whole world."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 376, 377.

Through all eternity the nailprints in His hands and feet and the scar in His side will be proof of the unchanging love of Christ and the greatest reminder of His atoning sacrifice, and therefore "affliction shall not rise up the second time." The purpose of the sacrificial service is to commemorate Christ's Calvary victory. May we in spiritual vision see Him at the head of the communion table with His nail-pierced hands outstretched in blessing the bread and the wine to their intended purpose of revealing to us "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And may we have the privilege of joining in the triumphant chorus in the kingdom of glory: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:12, 13).

## CHAPTER 19

### *When Jesus Sang*

WE NEED not labor to prove that Jesus was a normal man in the expression of those human emotions common to all of us. Because His was a solemn mission to the world and He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," many overlook the many inferences in the gospel story of His kind, loving, and cheerful disposition. His tender sympathy for the poor and His gentle dealing with children drew people of all classes in confidence about Him. His very life and character were a fountain of joy and gladness to His generation.

In *Steps to Christ* we read: "There are many who have an erroneous idea of the life and character of Christ. They think that He was devoid of warmth and sunniness, that He was stern, severe, and joyless. In many cases the whole religious experience is colored by these gloomy views. It is often said that Jesus wept, but that He was never known to smile. . . . His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining, but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a wellspring of life; and wherever He went, He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness. Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. . . . The religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness, nor cloud the sunny, smiling face."—Pages 120, 121.

There are two Scripture references that tell of Jesus' weeping. One was at the grave of His friend Lazarus, at which time "Jesus wept." This is recorded, not because it was so common, but because it was so unusual, especially in public. The second occasion was in connection with His Gethsemane struggle: "For Jesus during His

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earthly life offered up prayers and entreaties, crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank" (Heb. 5:7, Weymouth). The language here indicates that He wept on other occasions "during His earthly life," but chiefly in His private devotions. He was every inch a man and therefore not a weeping and emotional preacher.

There is but one record of Jesus' ever singing, although we know that He sang psalms on many occasions, in His home, in the carpenter shop, in the synagogue, and as He traveled with others to the annual festivals at Jerusalem, for that was the general custom. As these travelers came in sight of Jerusalem and the Temple, they all together sang the 122d psalm. Jesus must have been well acquainted with the psalms, which composed the Hebrew hymnal, and doubtless He could sing many of them.

Note the following quotations: "The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. With the voice of singing He welcomed the morning light. With songs of thanksgiving He cheered the hours of labor, and brought heaven's gladness to the toilworn and disheartened."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 52. "Often He expressed the gladness of His heart by singing psalms and heavenly songs. Often the dwellers in Nazareth heard His voice raised in praise and thanksgiving to God. He held communion with heaven in song; and as His companions complained of weariness from labor, they were cheered by the sweet melody from His lips. His praise seemed to banish the evil angels, and, like incense, fill the place with fragrance. The minds of His hearers were carried away from their earthly exile, to the heavenly home."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 73. One cannot read these statements without concluding that Jesus had a melodious voice.

The only scriptural record of His singing is in connection with the last Passover supper and the institution of the memorial ordinances in the upper room. We read: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30). The word "psalm" is used instead of "hymn" in the marginal read-

## WHEN JESUS SANG

ing. "After singing the hymn" is the rendering by Goodspeed, which doubtless refers to one of the regular Passover psalms always sung on such occasions. It is believed that Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the Passover meal, and Psalms 115 to 118 at the close. These are known as the Hallel, meaning "praise."

Although Jesus was "a man of sorrows" who was well "acquainted with grief," there was in Him a joy that was deeper and more dominant than sorrow, and even though He knew of the indescribable agony ahead of Him, He left the upper room on His way to Gethsemane and Calvary singing. "With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction, distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer. On that last sad night of the Passover supper, as He was about to go forth to betrayal and to death, His voice was lifted in the psalm [parts of Psalms 113 and 116 are quoted]."—*Education*, p. 166.

In all history and in all literature there can be found no greater example of quiet courage and deep consecration in facing a seemingly impossible ordeal. The upper room had been a place of sadness and tragedy. As the eleven united with their Master in singing, their courage was renewed and their spirits lifted. It helped Jesus to face the coming crisis. Few Christians realize the power of sacred music in their lives. If they did they would more often follow the admonition recorded in Ephesians 5:19 and speak to themselves "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Music forms an important and vital place in services of worship. How lacking they would be without instrumental and vocal music!

It is always considered a special privilege to hear the author of a hymn or song sing his own composition, and what a pleasure it would have been to hear Jesus lead His disciples in singing the psalms of which He was the author, and which described His sufferings and death. How meaningful they must have been to Him that night as He was facing the crisis, and what hope and comfort and courage they brought to Him for the terrible ordeal just ahead.

Imagine His melodious voice singing the songs of the triumph of the suffering Messiah. Here are sentences from some of them:

"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications." "The snares of death encompassed me, and the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me: I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called upon the name of the Lord. O Lord, I beseech thee, save my life." "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling." "I kept my faith, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted'; I said in my consternation, 'Men are all a vain hope.' What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. . . . O Lord, I am thy servant; I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds." "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" "They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them." "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."

Could we have sung under these circumstances? Jesus sang with a full knowledge of the approaching anguish that would break His heart. We, too, should learn to sing even through our blinding tears. As we celebrate the ordinances that commemorate the sufferings and death of our Lord, and sing the hymns that were composed for the occasion, let us remember that Jesus entered upon the bloodstained road to Calvary singing and that the message and melody of the Passover psalms carried Him to a glorious triumph. Let us ever remember that the enemy of our souls cannot defeat a singing saint.

As we commemorate our Saviour's sacrifice and recall His love and courage when He led His disciples in the singing of the paschal hymns of praise in old Jerusalem, may our voices be raised in heart-felt praise and thanksgiving. May our faith and consecration be renewed in anticipation of the promised triumphant occasion when we will blend our voices with His and with the voices of all the redeemed in the New Jerusalem in singing the "new song" of redeeming love.

## *The Power of the Cross*

**B**UT we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23, 24). In John 1:41 we learn that the term "the Christ" means "the Messiah," or "the Anointed," as rendered in the margin of the Authorized Version. "The Messiah, which translated is the Christ, the Anointed One," is the rendering in *The Amplified New Testament*. The Messianic hope of the Jews demanded a temporal Prince, a Messiah on the throne rather than on the cross, a King triumphant over all His foes. They were expecting a militant rather than a martyred Messiah; therefore when He came and died on the cross He was to them "a stone of stumbling and . . . a rock of offence" (Isa. 8:14).

The cross was utter "foolishness" to the philosophical and argumentative Greeks who were the scholastics of the time. All references to Christ and Christianity by Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and other Roman writers of the first and second centuries indicate their utter contempt for them. They spoke of the Christian religion as being "execrable," "malific," "depraved," "damnable," and an "excessive superstition." This is also the attitude of many of the so-called philosophers of our day, and the reason is given in the following statement: "The plan of redemption is so far-reaching that philosophy cannot explain it. It will ever remain a mystery that the most profound reasoning cannot fathom. The science of salvation cannot be explained; but it can be known by experience."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 494, 495. The most vital truths of salvation can be known only by experience.

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The Jews were ambitious for power, and the Greeks for wisdom, and both were the reward of the Jews and Greeks who accepted Christ. To them He was "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." What the Jews and Greeks thought were evidences of great weakness, shame, and reproach, was in reality the evidence of power, and what they considered foolishness was the revelation of wisdom. Christ declared that "all power" both "in heaven and in earth" had been given to Him for the benefit of His people, and Paul declared that in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Love is the greatest power in the universe, and the greatest exhibition of God's love was in the atoning death of His Son, who "hath loved us, and hath given himself for us." On the cross He met the penalty of death in our stead, because justice demanded that the penalty of the broken law must be fully met. The cross is therefore the greatest monument to the perpetuity of the eternal

**The law a transcript  
of God's character**

law, which is the transcript of the character of the Lawgiver. Justice had to be administered, even though the sentence was executed against such an innocent Victim. Therefore Calvary is the greatest exhibition not only of God's love and mercy and justice but also of the eternal nature and perpetuity of the law. Robert Frank defined sin as the rejection of divine love, and a failure to trust and obey God.

The purpose of the communion service is to help us to fix our gaze on the Lamb of God, who "was wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities" and by whose "stripes we are healed." The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all" and He was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb," so He opened "not his mouth" in retaliation or self-defense. Through all the ages of the past men and women have been saved by faith in the atoning blood of Christ. As they witnessed the dying agonies of the typical sacrifice they beheld in the distance the Lamb of God, who would die to atone for the sins of the world.

Paul, in reflecting on his visit to Athens and his scholastic appeal to the philosophers and Stoics on Mars' Hill and his apparent

## THE POWER OF THE CROSS

failure to reach most of them with the gospel of Christ, wrote a most eloquent and earnest appeal to the Corinthians, in which he said: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Paul was determined to make the power of the cross the center and substance of his preaching; he was determined that he would not depend on eloquence or human knowledge, although he possessed much wisdom and scholarship, which he used to advantage. He would make Christ, and Him crucified, the central theme of all his preaching, the "all, and in all" and the alpha and omega

**Central theme of  
Paul's preaching**

of his wisdom. It was this that made him the greatest apostle and missionary and soul winner of all time. The same emphasis is needed in modern preaching. One writer says: "There are some who would dispense with the doctrine of the cross; but a crossless Christianity will be a mutilated, impotent gospel, robbed of all efficacy, shorn of all glory."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Gal. 6:14.

The apostle John recognized the pre-eminence of the cross in the plan of redemption by devoting two fifths of his entire gospel narrative to the sufferings of Jesus during the Passion Week, which ended in His atoning death.

Today, amid hustle, activity, and multiplying interests that bid for attention, witnesses for Christ will find that success in soul winning still centers in the simple, majestic story of the cross. "These are our themes—Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ our intercessor before God; and closely connected with these is the office work of the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ, sent forth with divine power and gifts for men. . . . Bear with a certain voice an affirmative message. Lift Him up, the Man of Calvary, higher and still higher. There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ. . . . Gather up the strongest

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affirmative statements regarding the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world. . . . Gather all the affirmatives and proofs that make the gospel the glad tidings of salvation to all who receive and believe on Christ as a personal Saviour. . . . Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 187, 188.

“Christ’s death proves God’s great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. . . . Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour’s love; and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fulness of joy; for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 209, 210.

Concerning the pre-eminence of Christ and His atoning death, Paul wrote: “Christ is the visible representation of the invisible God, the Firstborn and Lord of all creation. For in Him was created the universe of things in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers—all were created, and exist, through and for Him. And HE IS before all things, and in and through Him the universe is a harmonious whole. Moreover He is the Head of His Body, the Church. He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, in order that He Himself may in all things occupy the foremost place. For it was the

### **Divine perfection dwells in Christ**

Father’s gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him. And God purposed through Him to reconcile the universe to Himself, making peace through His blood, which was shed upon the Cross—to reconcile to Himself through Him, I say, things on earth and things in Heaven” (Col. 1:15-20, Weymouth).

It is for this reason that “both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20. The cross, that ancient symbol of shame and disgrace, has become the very emblem of purity and honor. To the Christian it is the sign and pledge of victory and

## THE POWER OF THE CROSS

redemption to eternal life. That which Christ touches He lifts and glorifies. So, as the cross today tokens the best and loftiest ideals, may we find reassurance that He will touch our sinful lives to recreate and restore us into His own glorious likeness.

“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 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. . . . Beholding the beauty of His character, we shall be ‘changed into the same image from glory to glory.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 83.

To accomplish this is the purpose of the communion service, and as we partake of the emblems of His death may our vision continually enlarge until through the power of the cross we shall be transformed into His likeness and be prepared for His return. The transforming power of a vision of the cross is beautifully expressed in one of Isaac Watts’s Passion hymns:

“But in the grace that rescues man  
His brightest form of glory shines;  
Here on the cross ’tis fairest drawn  
In precious blood and crimson lines.

“Here His whole name appears complete;  
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,  
Which of the letters best to write,  
The power, the wisdom, or the love.”

## The Gethsemane Struggle

EVERY war has its decisive battle, which turns the tide in favor of the final victor. In the long struggle between Christ and Satan, throughout the millenniums of time and the many battles, the encounter of greatest finality was waged in the Garden of Gethsemane, for it was in the Garden that the final decision was made by Christ to pay the price of redemption by drinking the cup of sufferings to its bitter dregs.

In contemplating the sufferings of the Son of God we must ever remember that finite minds will never be able to fully comprehend this incomparable sacrifice even through the ages of eternity. We are told that "all heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity," and that "the cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God" (*Education*, p. 263). In these brief studies we can only deal with the climax of Christ's sufferings from Gethsemane to the cross.

Jesus longed to reveal to His disciples His approaching sufferings and death and several times attempted to do so, but because of their false conceptions of the mission of the Messiah, they could not comprehend. Leaving eight of them near the entrance of the Garden, He said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." He then took Peter, James, and John with Him farther into the Garden, and after saying to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me," He went on about "a stone's cast" and "fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

## THE GETHSEMANE STRUGGLE

Jesus yearned for the comfort of human companionship, the fellowship of His closest friends as He passed through the crisis hour, even though He knew that He must face the issue and make the decision alone. This is also true in our own experience as is so aptly expressed in the following poem:

"Our crosses are hewn from different trees,  
But we all must have our Calvaries;  
We may climb the height from a different side,  
But we each go up to be crucified;  
As we scale the steep, another may share  
The dreadful load that our shoulders bear,  
But the costliest sorrow is all our own—  
For on the summit we bleed alone."

—FREDERICK LAWRENCE KNOWLES

The Garden of Gethsemane was on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. "The olive trees found there are extremely old, but they do not go back to the time of Jesus' ministry, for Titus had all the trees around Jerusalem cut down during the siege of that city in A.D. 70 (*Jos. War* v. 12. 4)." —*SDA Bible Dictionary*, art. "Gethsemane," p. 396.

Although language is inadequate to describe the agony of Jesus on this occasion, the three accounts convince us that it was terrible beyond human understanding (see Matt. 26:37-39; Mark 14:33-35; Luke 22:41-44). The expressions "sorrowful and very heavy," "exceeding sorrowful unto death," and "sore amazed" are meaningful. In order to partially comprehend we must remember that on this occasion the Saviour was forsaken of men and that Heaven was withdrawn from the Sin Bearer as He was entering the horror of great darkness in order to take the place of the lost and abandoned sinner and bear the weight of the sins of a lost world.

In Psalm 18:4-7 it is predicted that in this experience "the sorrows of death" and "of hell" would compass Him about, and that "the earth" would shake and tremble. The prophecy recorded in Isaiah 53:3-7 was also literally fulfilled, and in Hebrews 5:7-9 is a description of the experience of Jesus, especially in His Gethsemane struggle, in which He "offered up prayers and entreaties,

*Jesus forsaken by  
His followers*

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank." It is then stated that "He learned obedience from the sufferings which He endured; and so, having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the source and giver of eternal salvation" (Weymouth).

It was not physical death from which He shrank in terror and prayed in agony of soul to be delivered. From this viewpoint His sufferings could not have been worse than that of millions of martyrs. He was suffering the agonies and terrors of the second and

### **Christ suffered the second death**

eternal death of the finally lost. In this experience He entered the "outer darkness," where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth," because there is no hope of escape. He went through all the terrors of meeting the full penalty of the broken law and drank to its last drop the cup of the wrath of God against sin and sinners.

What a scene! The Son of God, the Creator of the universe, bowed in fervent prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, enduring agony so great that it forced from the pores of His skin sweat composed of great drops of blood. He was suffering in our stead the penalty of the broken law, and under the weight of the sins of the world He was passing under the control of the powers of evil and experiencing the horror of great darkness that will come to the lost sinner. Our Lord had taken the cup of anguish from the guilty sinner in order to drink it to its dregs so as to provide for him in its stead the cup of blessing. As Jesus endured the divine wrath that is the fate of the lost, His mental anguish was so great that He scarcely felt the physical sufferings.

His pitiful appeal to the Father to release Him from the ordeal, if it could be consistent with His will, was carried on the still night air to the drowsy disciples. Because of their false Messianic expectations they could not comprehend His anguish of mind. Three times He fell prostrate under the weight of the sins of humanity. It was the awful moment that decided the fate of the sinful world. But it was not yet too late to give up the struggle and let guilty man meet the consequences of his own transgressions. How happy we should all be for His final and irrevocable decision, "O my

## THE GETHSEMANE STRUGGLE

Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Setting His face like a flint, He went on to His ordeal on the cross.

It was the vision of the future that influenced Jesus to make His final decision to pay the price of redemption regardless of the cost. He had left the courts of heaven in order to save the one lost sheep and He must not fail to accomplish His mission. His prayer of submission represents His final decision, and He fell to the ground and would have died then and there had not the angel Gabriel arrived to strengthen Him for the ordeal of Calvary.

The physician Luke wrote: "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Some critics have said that "as it were" referred to the blood rather than the sweat. The blood came out of the pores of His skin in the likeness of sweat. Had it been ordinary sweat the words "drops of blood"

### **Jesus died in an agony of blood**

would have been meaningless. Luke is the only one who recorded this incident. He was a physician, and such an unusual experience could not escape his attention. Another might have been mistaken, but not an experienced physician.

In Hebrews 12:3, 4, it is implied that Jesus "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," and in the prophecy of this experience recorded in Isaiah 63:1-3, it is foretold that Jesus would emerge from this ordeal "with dyed garments" that were stained red, like the garments of "him that treadeth in the winefat." This prediction was literally fulfilled by the bloody sweat.

History and medical science have recorded a number of cases in which persons as the result of great mental anguish have actually perspired blood. This experience is known as diapedesis, which is defined as "the passage of the corpuscular elements of the blood from the blood vessels into the surrounding tissues" (Webster).

The angel Gabriel "came not to take the cup from Christ's hand, but to strengthen Him to drink it, with the assurance of the Father's love" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 693). Jesus was given strength to go through the trials before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate again, and then on to the cross, where the re-

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

newed mental anguish led to death from a broken heart. As we take part in the communion service let us pray for an illumination of mind and heart, that we may more fully comprehend the price of our redemption, and also for a greater capacity to understand His inexhaustible love. Then the memorial service will be a festival of gratitude and praise, a holy solemnity, and a pledge of participation in the final jubilee when He shall serve His people in the Celestial City.

## CHAPTER 22

### *Christ or Barabbas?*

CHRIST, a manacled prisoner, stood in the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate. And who was Pontius Pilate? He was the Roman governor of Judea and therefore the judge. As such he must have been familiar with the Roman rule of law, which is valid even in our modern courts, "The idle clamor of the populace is not to be regarded, when they call for a guilty man to be acquitted, or an innocent one to be condemned."

In his treatment of Christ, Pilate stood at the crossroads in his personal and political experience. His own conviction that this man called Christ was innocent, and should therefore be acquitted, struggled with his selfish desire to gain favor with the clamoring mob by yielding to their demands for conviction, and it placed him in an embarrassing dilemma. Study the scene and events of cowardly subterfuge that placed him in the role of "the unjust judge."

Read the record in Matthew 27:15-25. It is here stated, "Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would." "But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover," is the reading in John 18:39, and, "Of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast," in Luke 23:17. The custom was so well established that it had virtually become a law. The origin of this custom is unknown. Josephus mentions it, and history tells us that it was practiced at Athens and Rome. Some believe that it was brought from Rome into Judea by Herod the Great, and others that it was of Hebrew origin to commemorate the deliverance from Egyptian bondage and it took place in connection with the Passover. The statement of Pilate indicates that it had become a well-established Jewish custom.

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For months before the Passover festival, relatives and friends of prisoners carried on much propaganda and even circulated petitions in their behalf. The release took place at the beginning of the Passover. Other prisoners were executed at the same time the fortunate criminal was liberated. Therefore all in custody looked forward to this occasion with mingled feelings of anticipation and dread. At this juncture in the trial of Jesus the groups had begun to gather to make their requests, and their arrival may have reminded Pilate of the custom and his duty. It was to him a happy thought, since he was in an embarrassing situation and was looking for a way of escape. He had publicly declared Jesus to be innocent of all charges made against Him. He had sent Him to Herod in an attempt to get rid of the case. Herod had refused to condemn Him, and Pilate declared this to be the equivalent of an acquittal. And for the second time Pilate declared that he could find no fault in Him.

At that time the most notorious and dangerous criminal in custody in Jerusalem was a man called Barabbas, and the governor in his desperation decided to try an expediency. He would give the Jews their choice between Jesus and Barabbas, and his plan would doubtless have succeeded if it had not been for the bitter enmity and influence of the Jewish leaders who "moved the people" to ask that the criminal be released from custody, and that Jesus be crucified. (See Mark 15:6-13.)

Matthew declared that Barabbas was "a notable prisoner," John said that he "was a robber," Mark declared that he had "made insurrection" and "had committed murder in the insurrection," and Luke said of him, "Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison." He was therefore guilty of robbery, murder, sedition, and insurrection, all of which were serious infractions of law. Since at that time the Jews were expecting their Messiah, most insurrections against Rome were led by men pretending to be the Messiah, and the evidence is strong that Barabbas had made such a claim and attempted to establish it by force. In that sense also he was therefore guilty of treason against Rome, for which the penalty was death. He was virtually under sentence of death by crucifixion.

### **Criminal record of Barabbas**

## CHRIST OF BARABBAS?

*Bar* means "son," and *abba* means "father;" therefore the name Barabbas has the meaning of "father's son." There is considerable evidence that his first name was "Jesus," which is supported by several translations and manuscripts, including the Armenian and Syriac versions, which were cited by Origen. An 1892 copy of an ancient Syriac New Testament, which was found in the convent of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, reads: "Which will you that I release unto you, Jesus Bar Abba, or Jesus that is called Christ?" They were given their choice between Jesus the son of Abba and Jesus the Son of God. James Moffatt thus translates Matthew 27:16, 17: "At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus Bar-Abbas; so, when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Who do you want released? Jesus Bar-Abbas or Jesus the so-called "Christ"?"

This is also the conclusion given in several well-known commentaries: "There is much to be said in favor of the opinion that Barabbas was also called Jesus, or Joshua," is a statement in *Christ on Trial*, by Schilder, page 464. The terms Jesus and Joshua mean the same. In some manuscripts the name is given as "'Jesus Barabbas, the hideous caricature of the true Jesus, the Son of the eternal Father.'"—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Matt. 27:16. In *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia* it is stated that "we can certainly conceive that a name afterwards so sacred may have been thrown out of the text by some bigoted transcriber."

In the offer made by the governor, the choice was limited between the two who claimed to be the Messiah. In grasping for a way of escape, Pilate was willing to gamble on the outcome by abdicating the judicial bench and turning the verdict over to the multitude. In doing this "Pilate unwittingly pitted against each other two prisoners who represented the antagonistic forces of all time," declared Dr. A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 1, comment on Matt. 27:17.

In asking the question, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" or the Messiah, Pilate intimated that in a wrong choice they would reject and put to death their own Messiah and King, which would be a serious blunder that would affect their eternal destiny. The multitude began to waver and would have chosen Jesus if the priests had not

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interfered (see Matt. 27:20). Only five days before, at the triumphal entry of Jesus, crowds had joined in the cry, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Now many of the same persons are crying out, "Crucify him, crucify him." How fickle are public popularity and opinion! Horace Greeley said: "Fame is vapor; popularity is an accident. . . . They that cheer today, may curse tomorrow. Only one thing endures—character."

At this point in the proceedings an interruption took place that gave the chief priests time to do their persuading work among the mob. Pilate's wife, Claudia Procula, the stepdaughter of Tiberius Caesar, sent a message to the governor, urging him not to condemn Jesus, because of a dream she had just had:

**A solemn warning  
from Pilate's wife**

the mob. Pilate's wife, Claudia Procula, the stepdaughter of Tiberius Caesar, sent a message to the governor, urging him not to con-

demn Jesus, because of a dream she had just had:  
In *The Desire of Ages*, pages 732, 733, we are told that this dream came in answer to Christ's prayer, and the contents of the dream are vividly described, with the effect it had on Pilate. He was therefore frightened and desired more than ever to release Him. The record is, "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him." He was a keen judge of character, and what he had seen and heard of Jesus deeply impressed him. He also knew the Jews, and had no confidence in them. They had inconsistently accused Jesus of the very crime of sedition of which Barabbas was guilty. In the words of Bruce, "What unprincipled characters they were! They accuse Jesus to Pilate of political ambition and they recommend Barabbas to the people for the same reason." Their conduct throughout the entire proceedings represents the height of inconsistency and is a notable example of the vicious results of hatred, envy, prejudice, and jealousy as described in Song of Solomon 8:6 and Proverbs 27:4.

When Pilate suggested the release of Jesus the Christ, the immediate insistent cry of the multitude led by the chief priests was, "Not this man, but Barabbas." But they are not the only ones who have joined in this cry, for "the world has ever cried, 'Not this Man'—not Jesus of Nazareth—but 'Jesus Barabbas is Son of God.' It will find out its mistake too late."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on John 18:40. "The innocent Son of the Father is rejected for the bloodstained son of a father," declares *The Cambridge Bible*.

## CHRIST OF BARABBAS?

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" asked the governor, still hoping that they would decide in favor of the Nazarene. There was no choice except between the condemned convict and the Prince of life, the notorious criminal and the Innocent One, and Pilate felt there could be but one decision. We, too, must make the same decision, and none can escape that responsibility. It is really a choice between Christ and Satan, the leaders of the two antagonistic forces of good and evil. The vast majority today, as then, are making the wrong decision.

Before the condemned culprit was placed beside the Son of God as the alternate choice, his case was hopeless, with every prospect of escape cut off. There was not the slightest hope of ransom from any source, or liberation from his well-guarded prison cell. He could not even dream of a sentence lighter than death by crucifixion for his crime of treason against Rome. And that day was the day of execution, and the appointed hour was at hand.

**Hope for the guilty  
only in Christ**

Barabbas doubtless did not know of the tragic scene taking place at the gate of the palace where the decision was being made by which the two prisoners would change places. The bonds and curse and disgrace of the vile murderer would be transferred to the innocent Jesus, and likewise the rights and privileges and liberty belonging to Christ were being transferred to him. Each inherited the lot and fate of the other.

Approaching footsteps outside the prison cell filled Barabbas with fearful dread. It was the fatal hour. He was stunned by the unexpected news that seemed so absolutely impossible. He could not believe his own ears. What strange emotions must have shaken the guilty and condemned criminal on finding himself selected for liberation in the place of the miracle-working Nazarene of whom he had heard so much and who had more than once been declared innocent by the same judge who had previously condemned Barabbas to die for his crimes. Could such a man ever repay the One who would go to the cross in his stead, the innocent substitute in the place of the guilty?

A feeling of our unworthiness of Christ's infinite sacrifice should grip our hearts, especially on the occasion of the celebration of the

ordinances when we realize that Jesus, the Innocent One, died in our stead, the just for the unjust, the guiltless for the guilty, who are under the sentence of eternal death. The plight of Barabbas was desperate, and so is ours from a human viewpoint. With us also the question is asked, "Who shall die—the transgressor or the Just One?" Both cannot escape. The sword of divine justice must slay one or the other. The righteousness of the law must be upheld. How grateful we should be that God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," and that "with his stripes we are healed."

Therefore in the deliverance of Barabbas we can see our own emancipation from the penalty of sin. When Christ took our place and God placed "on him the iniquity of us all," our redemption was eternally decided and made sure, and we can say boldly, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33, 34).

We cannot possibly imagine the hitherto unexperienced joy that came to Barabbas with the unexpected news of his deliverance. It was good news, for a way of escape had been provided. What should our deliverance from the bondage and penalty of sin mean to us as we partake of the emblems of the atoning death of our Substitute and Emancipator? Surely we can never forget the One who "was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves," and "was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share," and who "suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25).

## *Love Speaks From the Cross*

FROM the cross the Redeemer spoke seven times. Luke records three of these communications, as does John, and Matthew and Mark add their testimonies of the final words, revealing the unlimited and unconditional love of the Man of Calvary for lost sinners.

The first of these Seven Words from the summit of Golgotha is recorded in Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," or "are doing" (Phillips). "But Jesus was saying ["kept saying," margin]—Father! forgive them; for they know not what they do," is the translation by Rotherham. The first and last of the seven sayings of Jesus were prayers to His Father. It is interesting to note that the term "Father" is applied to God only seven times in the Old Testament, but 227 times in the New.

It is agreed that the first of the Seven Words was uttered as Jesus was being crucified and the spikes were being driven through His hands, which had so often been stretched out in blessing in the ministry of love, and the feet, which had carried Him on so many errands of mercy, or at the time when the cross with its Victim was dropped with a heavy thud into its place in the earth with un pitying violence, causing the most excruciating agony. Marvelous love! No thought of self in this hour of extreme suffering! Only a last plea for lost sinners, crucifying their own Saviour.

Under such circumstances the prayer of Jesus was a marvelous demonstration of a love that is indescribable and unspeakably glorious. In fact, He was putting into practice His own instruction: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). Jesus always practiced what He preached, and His life was a living epistle of His teachings. "A man only believes what he practices," declared Savonarola, and Jesus is the only person who translated all of His beliefs into practical experience.

### **Jesus translated belief into practice**

On the Mount of Calvary He put into practice what He had preached on the Mount of Blessing. It is always easy to love and forgive those who love us and who put into practice the golden rule, but how difficult it becomes when they hate and persecute us without cause.

Concerning the unjust treatment accorded Jesus during His trials and crucifixion, the apostle Peter wrote: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He declared that in this experience Jesus left "us an example, that ye should follow his steps," and that we deserve no credit when we "take it patiently," when the treatment is deserved because of our own faults, but only when it is unjustly administered (see 1 Peter 2:19-23). With love there is no limit to forgiveness, even though the sin be repeated "seventy times seven." We are told that "love suffereth long, and is kind," and "endureth all things," and "never faileth." Jesus was crucified by hate, but He conquered by love, and overcame "evil with good."

This is a difficult assignment, one that is possible only through love. Samson prayed for his enemies, but it was a request for their destruction, that he might "be at once avenged of the Philistines" because they had imprisoned him and put out his eyes (see Judges 16:28). How beautiful the spirit of Stephen, whose dying appeal was, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He had learned of Jesus how to die the death of a martyr. Such a prayer gives evidence of a nobility of character of the Christlike variety. It is a Christian attainment rather than a natural endowment. Most people, especially when facing death, think only of themselves and pray, "Father, forgive me," but Jesus had no need for such a prayer, because He had never sinned. His petition in behalf of His enemies

## LOVE SPEAKS FROM THE CROSS

was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12: "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Without any feelings of anger, resentment, or threat of retaliation, Jesus forgot Himself and His terrible sufferings and thought only of His tormentors and their great guilt, and requested that they be pardoned on the basis of their ignorance, because, He said, "they know not what they are doing." They were unenlightened and spiritually blind even though they were "willingly . . . ignorant." Had they only known the consequences of their course, how differently many of them would have acted. While Jesus was not excusing them, had they asked for pardon, it would have been freely given, as it was to the penitent thief and to thousands of them on the day of Pentecost. If we could see the awfulness of sin as heaven sees it, how different it would appear, and how ashamed we would be of our complacency about it.

While ignorance does not excuse those who commit any sin or crime, it does diminish the degree of guilt and therefore the punishment. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter said to those responsible for the crucifixion: "Through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17), and Paul said of them: "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). "The ignorance of the soldiers was circumstantial ignorance; the ignorance of the Jews was 'judicial' ignorance. Both are held up before the face of God with merciful entreaty."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8, on Luke 23:34.

The Jews could and should have known. Theirs was a willing ignorance, a presumptuous sin, but provision has been made even for known sins, because they are all the result of at least partial ignorance. Whenever we sin we know not fully what we do or the consequences, or we would not do it. In one sense, therefore, all sins, except the sin against the Holy Spirit, are sins of ignorance and are therefore pardonable. It is impossible for anyone to fully realize "the exceeding sinfulness of sin"; in every sin we commit we "crucify" to ourselves "the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," but such sins are forgivable. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," is one of the

**Sins of ignorance  
are pardonable**

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

"exceeding great and precious promises" of the Word of God, dependent of course on repentance and confession.

It was because of his repentant attitude that the thief was pardoned and assured of a home in Paradise. After hearing the prayer of Jesus in behalf of His murderers, he was given courage to make his request. He knew that if those responsible for the crucifixion of an innocent man could be forgiven, there was hope for him. His conversion was the first fruit of a great harvest of souls saved as the result of Christ's atoning death and forgiving spirit expressed when love spoke from the cross of Calvary. Pardon is available to all who, with the prodigal son, make the acknowledgment, "I have sinned against heaven," and cry out with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Repentance is thus interpreted by Jesus, as recorded in Luke 13:3 in *The Amplified New Testament*: "Unless you repent—[that is,] change your mind for the better and heartily amend your ways with abhorrence of your past sins—you will all likewise perish and be lost [eternally]."

We cannot fully realize the results of a wrong example on others, and we must remember that because of our influence, "none of us liveth to himself." By our example we either gather to Christ or scatter abroad, lift others up spiritually or drag them down toward perdition. Nor can we fully comprehend the dishonor and discredit sin brings on Christ and His church. When a saint sins, not only are others shocked, but their confidence is shaken, not alone in the individual but often in the Christian religion.

Yes, when Jesus prayed that His tormentors be pardoned He included Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, the members of the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, the centurion and his soldiers who did the scourging, mocking, and crucifying, the priests, the scribes and Pharisees, the members of the mob who joined in selecting the criminal Barabbas to be released, and who, when Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" cried out, "Let him be crucified." In fact, His petition includes every sinner, for every sin committed crucifies "the Son of God afresh" and puts "him to an open shame." Christ's prayer is an eloquent appeal for all to manifest the same spirit of love to the unlovable, and leads us to pray

## LOVE SPEAKS FROM THE CROSS

from the heart, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." The promise is, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Some believe that the request of Jesus was especially in behalf of the centurion and his soldiers, who in crucifying Jesus were acting under orders from the governor and therefore could not be responsible, but it included all who were in any wise guilty then, and to the end of time. Although the Jewish leaders and Pilate knew they were slaying an innocent man, they did not know the full significance of their act to their nation and to the world.

The crucifiers of Jesus thought they were executing a sentence against a malefactor and did not fully realize that they were slaying the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. They could not realize the seriousness of their crime and its terrible consequences. How different would have been their attitude and conduct if they could have looked forward to the Second Advent and seen themselves as pictured in the prophecy of Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." When Caiaphas put Jesus under oath in order to condemn Him for claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus said to him: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

W. E. Sangster said: "The first word from the cross is among the sublimist words Jesus ever uttered. Tradition and the sense of the thing both indicate that this prayer leaped from His heart as they were actually nailing Him to the cross. Prostrate on the wood still flat on the ground, He cried as the blood spurted from His palms: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'"—*Secret of Radiant Life*, p. 90.

## *Love's Answer to Prayer*

THE second of the Seven Words of Jesus spoken from the cross was directed to the penitent thief and is recorded in Luke 23:39-43. According to tradition the three crosses were in a semicircle so that the victims could gaze into one another's faces and thus witness their sufferings, as a part of the punishment. While it was the custom of the Romans to crucify several at the same time, some believe that Pilate had the two thieves crucified with Jesus as a mockery to the Jews. His act, however, fulfilled the Messianic prophecy recorded in Isaiah 53:12: "He was numbered with the transgressors," or, He "let himself be numbered among rebels," as it is translated by James Moffatt.

Jesus was probably placed on the central cross at the insistence of the Jewish leaders, because that position was accorded to the worst of offenders. It was in a sense appropriate that Jesus should be crucified in the companionship of criminals, because He had come into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost," which included the most degraded and guilty sinners. In accusation the Pharisees and scribes said of Him, "This man receiveth sinners," and in fact that was the purpose of His earthly visit. He declared, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He therefore spent His last hours in the company of two sinners and was rewarded by seeing one of them redeemed before his death. Later the centurion and thousands of others who were responsible for or consenting to His crucifixion accepted Him as their Redeemer.

The two malefactors were being executed to meet the demands of justice. They may have been connected with Barabbas in his

attempted insurrection. They had read the inscription over the head of Jesus and had heard the words of the priests who mocked Him and derided His Messianic claims, and in which they had joined, for we are told in Matthew 27:44 that they "cast the same in his teeth." Their execution was no miscarriage of justice, and one of them acknowledged their guilt and then said of Jesus, "This man hath done nothing amiss." The crucifixion of Jesus was the greatest miscarriage of justice in all history, and He therefore had every human reason to resent the treatment He was receiving, and to indulge in feelings of self-pity. All but one of His disciples had forsaken Him. But He unselfishly forgot Himself and His own sufferings and centered His attention on those He had come to save.

***Greatest miscarriage  
of justice in history***

Finally, one of the thieves sarcastically said to Jesus, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." The "if" revealed his unbelief, as it did that of the chief priests who mockingly said, "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross," and of Satan, who tempted Jesus with the words, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Jesus ignored the faithless petition of the impenitent thief, because for such neither mercy nor grace is possible.

The other thief had at first joined his companion and the priests in their mockery. But as the result of what he saw and heard, his attitude gradually changed. The first gleam of hope was doubtless awakened by the prayer of Jesus for His murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." According to one translation, he kept repeating this prayer. The thief knew that if pardon was possible for them, it was available to him. He became convinced that the inscription, "This is the King of the Jews," meaning, "This is the Messiah," was the truth, and disapproving the words of his companion, he "rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." What an eloquent appeal of one sinner to another, and what a courageous testimony to the innocence of the One who had been unjustly condemned by two tribunals and was being ridiculed by His judges. The night of despair was not too dark nor the

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hour too late for the thief to see the light and to acknowledge that Jesus was the expected Messiah.

This event is vividly portrayed in *The Desire of Ages*: "To Jesus in His agony on the cross there came one gleam of comfort. It was the prayer of the penitent thief. . . . He had seen and heard Jesus, and had been convicted by His teaching, but he had been turned away from Him by the priests and rulers. . . . In the judgment hall and on the way to Calvary he had been in company with Jesus. He had heard Pilate declare, 'I find no fault in Him.' . . . He had marked His godlike bearing, and His pitying forgiveness of His tormentors. . . . The conviction comes back to him that this is the Christ. . . ."

"He has seen and read the title above the Saviour's head. . . . The Holy Spirit illuminates his mind, and little by little the chain of evidence is joined together. In Jesus, bruised, mocked, and hanging upon the cross, he sees the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. 'Lord, remember me,' he cries. . . ."

"Many were ready to call Him Lord when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour."—Pages 749-751.

The penitent thief then turns his face to Jesus and humbly and trustingly says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). He did not address Him as "Rabbi," "Teacher," or "Master," nor did he say, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us," but he addressed Him as "Lord," a title of royalty and majesty. When did he ask to be remembered? Not "today," but "when thou comest into thy kingdom." He was more orthodox than most modern theologians. To him Jesus was his Intercessor and would some day return as King. He believed that the earthly mission of Jesus was not a failure, and that He would break the bands of death and come forth in triumph from the tomb and ascend to heaven and finally return to establish His kingdom of glory.

The repentant thief manifested a faith that exceeded even that of the disciples, and it is, in fact, one of the greatest exhibitions of

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unquesting faith in all history, comparable to that of the centurion of whose confidence Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He did not ask for pardon, or for a position in the kingdom, as did James and John. He only asked to be remembered in the rewarding time, the time when, according to the plain teaching of the Scriptures, all the righteous will receive their rewards, at the time of Christ's second advent to establish His kingdom of glory. A vision of Christ had given him a vision of himself, and his attitude and request indicated godly sorrow for sin, repentance, and deep humility. Jesus gladly fulfilled His promise that "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), and demonstrated that He "is able . . . to save . . . to the uttermost" all that "come unto God by him."

This touching exhibition of faith and confidence when Jesus needed it most was like a "song in the night," bringing great hope and cheer from the dying thief to the dying Lamb of God, and indicating that the apparently forsaken and rejected Messiah would die in triumph and would one day reappear as the King of glory. In the midst of almost universal derision, when even Christ's own disciples had apparently failed Him, the thief, in the hearing of all who were assembled, testified to his belief that Jesus was indeed the true Messiah, the Son of God, and that His Messianic sovereignty was a certainty. Dr. Adam Clarke said: "This man appears to have been the first who believed in the intercession of Christ." Although he was the only one who bore such witness during our Lord's sufferings, after His death ***The centurion confesses his faith*** the centurion followed his example with the confession, "Certainly this was a righteous man. Surely this was the Son of God." The conversion of the thief doubtless played an important part in bringing the centurion to his decision.

The thief could have asked for many things, but he requested only that he be remembered in the final rewarding time. He said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power," or "Lord, do not forget me when you have come to your kingdom," as rendered in other translations. And Jesus did not ignore this request as He did that of the other thief, and the requests of the priests. Without a moment's hesitation He responded in a voice

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that could be heard by all those surrounding the cross, "Verily," or certainly, assuredly, or without fail, "to day," under these apparently hopeless circumstances, "I say unto thee" that "thou shalt be with me in paradise." He might have added, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

Two days later, on the morning of the resurrection, Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Since according to the previously quoted text, together with other scriptures, Paradise is the dwelling place of God, Jesus did not enter Paradise at the time of His death, and therefore could not possibly have meant that the penitent thief would accompany Him to heaven that day. Unfortunately the meaning of the statement of Jesus is distorted by a misplaced

### **Christ's promise to the penitent thief**

comma, for which the translators are responsible. It should have been placed *after* rather than *before* "to day." What the Lord meant was, "To day," even under these seemingly hopeless circumstances, while we are both dying on the cross, I promise that you will be with me at the time you ask to be remembered. Dr. Adam Clarke said that in his day "men of great learning and abilities" believed that the comma should be moved, and fortunately the correction has been made in some translations:

"And he said to Jesus, Remember me, my Lord, when you come in your kingdom. Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise," is *The Modern New Testament From the Aramaic*, by George M. Lamsa. "And he said to Jesus, 'Be reminded of me, Lord, whenever Thou mayest be coming in Thy kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Verily to you I am saying today, with Me you shall be in the paradise,'" is the Concordant Version. "You ask to be remembered then, verily thou art assured now," is another rendering that gives the correct meaning.

At a time when the fulfillment of His promise seemed absolutely impossible, Jesus assured the repentant thief that he would be with Him at the time requested, at the time when all the saints are promised their reward. (See Rev. 22:2, 11-14.) "Paradise" is derived from the Persian *pairidaēza*, which described the king's gar-

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den as "the garden of all delights." Xenophon said that it was an enclosed park. What a wonderful promise to the dying thief, and what a contrast between the beginning and close of that tragic day. In the morning he was a culprit being punished for crimes he had committed and acknowledged, but before evening he was divinely pardoned and declared guiltless by the Supreme Judge of the heavenly tribunal and promised an eternal home in Paradise. Doubtless his countenance radiated a peace and happiness known only to the justified. The promise is: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 5:1; 8:1).

In this experience we have the greatest of all demonstrations of the unselfish and inexhaustible love of God and a wonderful example of His power to pluck "a brand . . . out of the fire." Jesus saw virtue even in the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene, Zachaeus, and the thief on the cross. We are not told the nationality of the thief, but this made no difference with the Saviour of men. All racial, national, and social distinctions break down and disappear at the cross, for He is "no respecter of persons," and was "lifted up from the earth" on the cross of Calvary that He might "draw all men unto" Him.

The conversion of the thief is the only example in Scripture of salvation as the result of a deathbed repentance. This experience shows that it is never too late to be saved, provided the repentance is sincere and genuine. He was saved at the very gateway of death to give assurance to all who repent, and especially to those who accept their first and last opportunity for salvation. Only one such example is recorded as a warning to those who are tempted to presume on the love and mercy of God by putting off repentance and salvation to the last possible moment. Such a course constitutes a fearful risk, which the truly wise will never take.

**Saved at the very gateway of death**

This experience is also a wonderful illustration of the work of justification by faith, which instantly takes care of the past as completely as if the person had never sinned. The thief, like the publican in the Temple, received justification, or freedom from guilt,

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and therefore received his title to heaven and the assurance that his name was written in the book of life and that he had received the life "more abundant."

As we partake of the emblems of the atoning death of Christ in the communion service in obedience to the command of our Lord, "This do in remembrance of me," may each of us say in faith, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and then in faith accept the assurance, "You ask to be remembered then, verily thou art assured now."

## CHAPTER 25

### *Calvary and Filial Love*

THE third of the Seven Words of Jesus spoken from the cross is recorded in John 19:25-27: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by her, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his home." "He said to his mother, 'Woman, there is your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'And there is your mother!'" is the James Moffatt translation.

These women, standing in the shadow of the cross, are pictured in bold contrast with the four greedy soldiers who are described in the two previous verses as casting lots for the possession of the only material assets of Jesus, His seamless garment. In Matthew 27:55, 56, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children" are included among the women who "followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him," and were "beholding afar off." At first they were either afraid or were not permitted to come near to their Lord, but later they stood near the cross of Jesus, ready to render any help possible under the circumstances. They were far more courageous than any of the eleven disciples, except John, who had remained by the side of his Master during the trials before the Hebrew and Roman tribunals, and was now as close to the cross as he was permitted to stand. The other ten disciples, including impetuous, boastful Peter, had fled for fear of arrest and execution because of their known connection with Jesus.

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Under these circumstances it took great courage to remain near the cross and among those who were ridiculing Jesus, and thus to identify themselves as His friends and followers. Also it was not customary for women to be present on such tragic occasions. These women were doubtless included in the scorn and mockery hurled at their Lord. They were really in personal danger, as were all who showed sympathy to one who was being executed as a criminal, especially when the charge was insurrection. What a noble demonstration of love, courage, self-control, and emotional balance. They created no scene of hysterical disorder, as so many do at the death and funeral of loved ones or on occasions of excitement and mob violence.

It was one thing to stand with Jesus when He was the popular hero and healer of the nation, and especially during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when the vast multitude shouted His praises and proclaimed Him their King. But it was very different now as He was treading "the winepress alone," and "of the people there was none with" Him. "He suffered, bled, and died alone, alone."

In His prayer for the Father to pardon His tormentors, Jesus made the cross the altar of His mediatorial and priestly ministry; in the assurance of salvation to the penitent thief He made it the door to heaven and eternal life, and in the provision made for His mother's care, He made it the inspiration for loving ministry in behalf of man's material needs. We can imagine Jesus looking about for a familiar face, that of a disciple, a loved one, or a friend. How cheered He must have been to discover His beloved disciple John, and beside him His own mother and the other women, who had been so close to Him in love, fellowship, and ministry, all standing nearby and looking into His face in affection and sympathy. They were watching Him die the death of a criminal.

At that time the cross had the same meaning as the gallows, electric chair, and the gas chamber do now—the most disgraceful of all deaths. As Jesus looked at His mother He doubtless thought of Simeon's words to her, "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also," and was sure that at last she understood its meaning. But she was greatly cheered to have Him speak to her in a tender and loving voice and make provision for her future care in what

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was a last will and testament. John was greatly loved by Jesus because he seemed to understand Him better than did the others, and also because he had been the most loyal during the great crisis, which is the chief test of genuine love and friendship.

We can imagine that the brokenhearted mother had been saying in her thoughts, "Oh, if He would only give me a look of recognition and a message of love and comfort." Then suddenly, as if in answer to her prayer, He turned His head and looking at her with eyes of love and tenderness, said, "Woman, behold thy son!" referring to John, upon whose arm she was doubtless leaning. But why did He address her as "woman" instead of "mother"? He used the same term when His mother suggested that He do something about the lack of wine at the marriage feast at Cana. In the Orient the term was one of respect and honor. Also, as He died, all earthly ties were being broken, and as far as access to Him is concerned all believers would henceforth be His fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters (see Matt. 12:48-50).

*Jesus commits His  
mother to John*

Never did a mother have such a son, and probably never a son such a mother. From her He had obtained His human nature, as well as the early home training that had helped to qualify Him for His earthly mission. No other woman had ever been given such high honors or experienced such height of joy or depth of sorrow. It was a terrible ordeal to see her beloved and innocent son tortured as the worst of malefactors, especially when she had hoped that He was the expected Messiah.

The question is naturally raised, "Why did Jesus give His mother into the care of John instead of one or all of His brothers and sisters?" Perhaps they were not present at the crucifixion, and in the second place they had been slow to understand the nature of His mission (see John 7:5). It is also quite certain that they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage and were therefore Mary's stepchildren and not related by blood to either Jesus or His mother. It is believed that because of this they had been unfriendly to Jesus, and that He knew by experience the meaning of His statement that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Happily they later changed their attitude, two of them becoming church leaders.

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John had been a member of the inner circle of Jesus in association and ministry. Jesus believed that His mother would be happier and would receive better care in the home of John, who would consider it a great privilege to take her into his own home and treat her as his own mother. It may be that she had been like a mother to him, and he a son to her.

John was evidently a man of some means and influence. He was "known unto the high priest" and his household (John 18:16), and while in the fishing business at Bethsaida had "hired servants" (Mark 1:20). He also had "his own home" in Jerusalem, to which he took Mary at the request of Jesus. Some believe that the words of Jesus indicate that He wanted John to take her away in order to spare her the heartache of witnessing His death, and that the statement "from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home," proves that he did take her away at once. A well-known writer says: "John stood close by the cross. Mary had fainted in her anguish, and John had taken her to his house away from the harrowing scene. But he saw that the end was near, and he brought her again to the cross."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on John 19:25-27. According to a tradition John and Mary remained in Jerusalem for some time before moving to Ephesus, where she died.

Among the Jews, family life was glorified and the home was to them a divine institution. Great emphasis was placed on the duties of parents to their children and of children to their parents. "Honour thy father and thy mother" was to children a sacred obligation that lasted as long as they lived. It is not at all strange, therefore, that Jesus, even under these strange circumstances, should make provision for the future care of His mother. Also much of His life had been spent in ministering to the physical needs of men and women by healing the sick and feeding the multitudes.

Jesus was selflessness personified. If ever a person was justified in indulging in self-pity and thinking only of His personal needs, Jesus had every provocation to do so. While He was hanging on the cross He suffered such indescribable mental and physical anguish that it literally broke His heart. He prayed for His cruel and un-

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feeling murderers, gave assurance of salvation to the penitent thief, and made provision for the future needs of His mother. His example of obedience to the fifth commandment, and His filial love, were unparalleled. Mary had given Him birth at the risk of her reputation, had provided care and training from infancy, and at the hazard of her own life had come to witness His crucifixion, and He appreciated it to the full.

What a demonstration Jesus gave of filial love and of devotion of a son to a parent! What a noble example for children to honor their parents by making provision for their care and comfort in old age rather than to leave this responsibility to the church, the state, or other welfare agencies. Also what a testimony to the home life and training of Jesus, as well as an index to the nobility of His character. His life and conduct were exhibitions of His teachings in action. A minister's wife once said that her husband was "an angel in the pulpit and a demon in his home," and an actor's wife said that her husband was "a comedian on the stage and a tragedian in his home."

But Jesus was a saint in His home and private life and therefore everywhere else, for "the secret of being a saint is being a saint in secret," and Jesus was at all times and places the Saint of all saints. In all things, including His demonstration of filial love on the cross, He left us "an example," that we "should follow his steps."

## *Love's Cry of Despair*

THE fourth of the Seven Words of Jesus during His six hours of agony on the cross is recorded in Matthew 27:45-47: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias."

Roman time is here used, probably because the writer had been a publican or Roman official, and also because Jesus was being tried and executed by a Roman tribunal. The Roman day began at six in the morning, which was known as the first hour, and was the time when the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate to have Him condemned and crucified. Although they had spent the entire night carrying on their unlawful proceedings against their Messiah, they could not expect the governor to convene court before the first hour of the day, since night sessions were illegal according to Hebrew law.

Jesus was crucified at about the "third hour," or 9:00 A.M. It was the "sixth hour," or noon, when the supernatural darkness enveloped the cross and "all the land" and continued "unto the ninth hour," or 3:00 P.M. This three-hour period was one of silence as far as Jesus was concerned, for none of His Seven Words were spoken during that time. The silence was broken by the loud and agonizing cry of despair from the cross.

This darkness is unexplainable except on the basis of a miracle. It could not have been caused by an eclipse of the sun, since the moon was already past full. The sun refused to look upon the terrible scene. Nature was sympathizing with her Creator in His dying

## LOVE'S CRY OF DESPAIR

hours. The spectators had demanded a sign, and a sign appeared, but one that filled them with terror and dismay. Of this event one writer says: "The sun, just arrived at the meridian, withdraws its beams, as if the earth were no longer worthy of its light, and begins visibly, in a clear sky, to grow dark. . . . The primitive fathers, as for instance Origen and Eusebius, were acquainted with heathen records, some of which were from distant countries, such as that of Phlegon a freedman of the Emperor Adrian, which mentions an eclipse of the sun at the same time with the crucifixion of Christ, and that none so entire, terrific, and wonderful had ever before been seen in the world. An ancient tradition also states that Diogenes witnessed, in Egypt, the solar darkness which preceded the death of Jesus, and exclaimed, 'Either the Deity Himself suffers at this moment, or sympathises with one that does.' . . . The Lord withdrew Himself from the eyes of men behind the black curtain of appalling night, as behind the thick veil of the temple."—F. W. KRUMMACHER, *The Sufferings of Our Saviour*, pp. 378-380.

**Supernatural darkness  
around the cross**

What happened during those hours of darkness can only be conjectured. We do know that Jesus was passing through a terrible conflict with the powers of darkness that resulted in a brilliant and crowning victory which dethroned the rebel prince of this world, made possible the blotting out of the sins of all who repent and confess, and made certain the final end of the curse of sin and the fulfillment of God's original and eternal purpose for man and his Eden home. Isaac Watts states it thus in one of his hymns:

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ the Lord was crucified  
For man, the creature's sin."

Most of the curious spectators had returned to the city. To their mocking cry, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross," no answer had come through the mantle of darkness. The feared and partially expected deliverance had not taken place, and they concluded that He could not be the Messiah; so, why should they remain when they could no longer see the victim of their hatred?

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The despairing cry was uttered at the very time of both the evening and the Passover sacrifice. His death therefore was the antitype of all the sacrificial offerings and services back to the gates of Eden. The scriptural evidence that Jesus was indeed the expected Messiah was so complete that the Jewish leaders and people were without excuse.

"Eli" is a Hebrew word, and is more correctly rendered "*Elōi*" in Mark 15:34 in the Aramaic language. "*Lamma sabachthani*" is also Aramaic, which was the language used by Christ and His disciples. The words were a translation of Psalm 22:1 in the Hebrew hymnal. This psalm contains a prophetic description of the prayers and meditations of Jesus on the cross, beginning with the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The first 21 verses describe His feelings of abandonment and the last ten express His faith and confidence in God.

These words from the cross have been called "the cry of dereliction," suggesting a derelict ship forsaken and abandoned by the captain and crew and left to its fate. Someone has said that Jesus was experiencing "Sorrow's crown of sorrows." To be rejected and persecuted by His own people, and forsaken by His disciples, was serious enough, but to be forsaken by His own Father brought an agony that was heartbreaking. His cry indicated utter loneliness and desolation. Since all sinners are lonely because they are without the presence and favor of God, Jesus had to go through this experience

**Solitary and lonely in a hostile world** in taking the place of the lost sinner, in order to make possible his salvation. In fact, Jesus lived a lonely life during His sojourn on this earth. It was difficult for others to understand Him, including His own family and disciples. The prophet declares that He would be "despised and rejected of men," and quotes Him as saying, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me" (Isa. 53:3; 63:3). The poet said of Him:

"Despised, rejected, forsaken, tried,  
In the shadow of death, betrayed, denied,  
'Alone,' was the cry of the Crucified."

One writer said that these words of Jesus were "a cry out of the

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lowest depths of despair, indeed it is the most appalling sound that ever pierced the atmosphere of the earth. . . . It cannot be heard even at this day without causing a cold shudder of terror."—JAMES STALKER, *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, pp. 218, 219. Martin Luther declared that this cry was beyond his ability to understand or explain, but that this is not strange, because Jesus, who went through the experience, did not Himself understand, as is indicated by the question, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" If He could not understand, how can we? Luther said that its contemplation caused him to sit spellbound and in silent meditation for hours without food and at length to arise and cry in amazement, "God forsaken by God! Who can understand it?"

Naturally this is considered the most puzzling of all the Seven Words of Jesus and the most difficult to explain of all His "hard" sayings. For centuries theologians have been divided as to its significance. What could be the real meaning of this cry of abandonment and desertion? Had the Father actually forsaken Him, or had He in a moment of discouragement only *felt* or *imagined* that He was forsaken, so that He lost the consciousness of His Father's presence? Or, was He merely quoting Psalm 22:1 to show that it was meeting its fulfillment? Some even believe that the previous night of suffering, without any sleep, together with the terrible mental and physical strain of the Gethsemane struggle, the cruel scourging, and the crucifixion, had brought on such a degree of temporary depression that He *felt* forsaken, as did Elijah when he prayed, "O Lord, take away my life," and Job when he cried out, "Let the day perish wherein I was born," and John the Baptist when from his prison cell he sent his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

We must come to the conclusion that Jesus was either sadly mistaken, or that He was actually forsaken by His Father. There is no other alternative. It is unthinkable that the Son of God, who was infinite in wisdom and who had never uttered a false statement or come to a wrong conclusion, could do so during the crisis hour of His ministry when the fate of the world was hanging in the balance. It would be a reflection on His character and divinely appointed mission. Whether or not we can fully understand the reason, we

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must accept His word by faith, which is "the evidence of things not seen." All through His earthly sojourn Jesus had never questioned His Father's love and abiding presence or the reasons for life's varied experiences.

It is easy to understand how God could forsake a sinner, as He will all who are eventually lost. But Jesus was sinless and had done nothing to deserve being forsaken. He knew that He was not suffering for His own sins, but for those of the sinful human race. We read of the Father's dealings with His Son: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus had never forsaken His Father, and even in this crisis hour addressed Him by the endearing term, "My God." No, Jesus was not mistaken. He was not deceived by a mere emotional illusion. As the Substitute for the lost sinner He was suffering in his stead and meeting the full penalty of

*Jesus died like an abandoned sinner*

the broken law. The Father therefore had to treat His Son as He must treat a lost and abandoned sinner in whose stead Jesus was dying. He went down into the depth of the awful pit of sin and the horror of great darkness, where there is "wailing and gnashing of teeth." He did not die the death of a saint, or a martyr, but of an abandoned sinner. It was this separation from His Father that broke His heart.

It is, of course, impossible for us to fully comprehend how Jesus, who lived closer to God than any other, could be forsaken, but He was, even though the Father remained close by His side. In the National Gallery in London is a picture of Calvary with Christ almost hidden by darkness. The observer must look intently to discern Him, but finally he sees not only Christ but also another figure, with outstretched arms holding Him up. His face also is twisted with pain—an indication of great agony. It is the Father suffering with His Son, but the Son does not know it. He is forsaken, even though the Father is very near and is holding Him in His embrace.

Jesus stood the test and paid the redemption price to the utmost, and then the peace of heaven returned to Him. Those who accept His sacrificial atonement can escape the awful experience of aban-

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donment. Salvation is assured to all who get a vision of the cross and its meaning. The well-known hymn by Henry F. Lyte contains the prayer that should accompany a Calvary vision:

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee  
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

The agony of Jesus began in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He felt the weight of the sins of the world and cried out to the Father, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." It was there that He sweat great drops of blood in the agony of His soul. This experience is again described in Hebrews 5:7. Skeptics have said that martyrs and criminals have met death more courageously than did Jesus, but we must remember that the distinction between His death and theirs was infinitely great. There is no comparison between them.

Forsaken by God? Here we may see God's wrath toward sin and contemplate His love for man. Here is revealed the measure of Christ's ministry for our redemption. There is comfort for every repentant sinner in the knowledge that Christ did experience the utmost penalty for sin; that He did experience such desolation and separation from God. Herein is hope and comfort that the penalty for sin was fully paid. Who can know or measure the mystery of divine love?

"Of all the seven words from the cross, this is the most puzzling. Had the Father actually forsaken His Son? Or had Jesus lost, for a time, the consciousness of His Father's presence? . . . He sought the Father and could not find Him. He endured the final tragedy of sin in human life, which is separation from God. With bated breath our fathers spoke of the fourth word from the cross as 'the cry of dereliction,' the cry of one who feels utterly, utterly lost. The cry means that man's ultimate misery—separation from God—has penetrated to the very heart of the Holy Trinity. It means that God Incarnate has entered completely into man's condition; that Christ has experienced life at the bottom of the heap; that He knows pain, loneliness, discouragement, and despair. It means that our divine

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Saviour, who sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, knows what it means to feel forsaken by God." "The cry of dereliction is the fourth word from the cross, not the last. A few moments later, the Lord uttered a cry of need, then a shout of victory, before He commended His spirit into the hands of the heavenly Father."—ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, JR., *The Voice From the Cross*, pp. 41, 48.

In the light of the indescribable love of the Lamb of God exhibited on the cross of Calvary, surely we can sing from the heart with Isaac Watts:

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?

"Was it for crimes that I have done,  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree!"

## CHAPTER 27

### *Love's Appeal for Compassion*

THE fifth of the Seven Words of Jesus from the cross is recorded in John 19:28-30: "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. And when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." In Matthew 27:48, instead of "they" it is declared that "straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink." It is then stated that "the rest," that is, of the soldiers, "said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him."

The unknown soldier placed the sponge containing the vinegar to the lips of Jesus on the end of a "reed," "hyssop," "stick," "cane," "staff," or "spear," according to the different Gospel writers and translations. "After this" refers to the period of despair through which Jesus had just passed. The conflict was so severe that He was not conscious of His physical needs, as was true during the forty days of temptation in the wilderness. We are told that "when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."

Jesus was twice offered a drink during the period of His crucifixion, and the first He refused. We read in Mark 15:23: "And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not" (see also Matt. 27:33, 34). This happened just before He was nailed to the cross. The purpose of this cup was to deaden the pain and make the victim less conscious of the tortures of crucifixion. It

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was customarily provided by a group of wealthy women of Jerusalem out of compassion for those who were condemned to die such a terrible death.

Jesus was doubtless very thirsty, as is indicated by the fact that He "tasted" it before refusing to drink. He may have gone through the entire night of trial and torture without an opportunity to quench His thirst. He refused the drink because He knew that it was imperative that He have a clear mind and the full use of His faculties through the terrible ordeal just ahead of Him. There was too much at stake to risk the use of a sedative. In fact, the destiny of the world and its inhabitants was hanging in the balance and He must not fail.

But six hours later Jesus asked for and accepted a drink. The sponge furnished only enough moisture to dampen His parched lips and give Him the needed voice stimulation to utter with a loud voice the words, "It is finished," and, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Someone has suggested that because of

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the condition of His throat and lips He may have made the request in a whisper. Prophecy thus describes the burning thirst of Jesus on the cross: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps. 22: 15, 16).

Physical thirst is one of the greatest cravings of all living things, and is therefore used to symbolize the spiritual longings of the soul. In Psalm 42:1, 2, we read: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Jesus pronounced a blessing upon all who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and promised that they would be "filled," or "completely satisfied." He says to all: "He that believeth on me shall never thirst," because the water of life brings permanent satisfaction.

The cause of the intense thirst of Jesus is self-evident. Those who have attempted to describe the agonies of crucifixion, place

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thirst as the chief cause of torture. Not only was Jesus very thirsty when He was crucified, but His cravings were intensified by the loss of blood, infection, high temperature, and dehydration as the result of His almost naked body being exposed to the wind and heat for so many hours. Cicero declared that death on the cross was "the most over-whelming and pitiless doom," and Dr. Richter, a celebrated physician, in describing the pathological phases of death by crucifixion, declared that one of the chief causes of physical torture was "burning and raging thirst."

Geikie thus describes the results of death on a cross: "Inflammation of the wounds in both hands and feet, speedily set in, and ere long rose also in other places, where the circulation was checked by the tension of the parts. Intolerable thirst, and ever-increasing pain, resulted. . . . The burning heat of the sun scorching the veins, and the hot wind, which dried up the moisture of the body, made each moment more terrible than that before."—CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, *The Life and Words of Christ*, vol. 2, pp. 565, 566.

We are told that "there was set a vessel full of vinegar," evidently for the use of the soldiers who had to stand guard until their victim died, which usually required several days. The vinegar, or sour wine, was a common drink among Roman soldiers. The word *vinegar* is of French extraction, and means "sour wine." It is stated that "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished," or that His work was finished and His earthly mission fulfilled, "that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." The scripture referred to was Psalm 69:21: "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." The previous verse definitely discloses the time this was to happen.

The question arises, Did Jesus say this deliberately in order to fulfill the prediction, or was the forecast written by the prophet through the gift of prophecy because he saw that this was what He would say? Is prophecy a mere plan carried into execution, or is it history written in advance? It is definitely the latter. Jesus did not say this because it was foretold that He would, but it was foretold because this experience in His life was foreseen. He would have said it if the prediction had not been made. John quotes Jesus as saying only "I thirst," and the explanation was his own.

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Jesus had been on the cross six hours and had just passed through a terrible struggle during the three hours of darkness which caused Him to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His mental anguish was so great that He was scarcely conscious of His physical pain and torture. He had won the victory, and knowing that His sacrifice was complete and had been accepted, He naturally relaxed and for the first time thinks of His own physical sufferings, the greatest need being the quenching of His thirst.

The Scriptures furnish abundant evidence of the human nature of Christ. He suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness in common with humanity. His physical sufferings, including the burning thirst, emphasizes His humanity, and shows that He was not only the Son of God but also the Son of man. We must recognize the fact that no human being can make the proper balance between His divinity and His humanity. This is well stated in a recently published book:

"Sometimes in Christian thought the heavy evidence has been upon the divinity of our Lord, sometimes upon His humanity. The religious conservative of today stresses the divine, the religious liberal, the human. Though each is right in what he stresses, each is dead wrong if he denies, or fails to emphasize, the opposite truth. . . . The orthodox Christian believes that Christ is fully God and fully man. . . . The attempts to clarify the mystery of the Incarnation have not been successful. Some have sought the easy way

**The Incarnation was  
a mystery**

out, denying either the divinity of our Lord or His humanity. The vast majority of Christians, faced with the fact of revelation and experience, have stubbornly clung to the full truth, The Incarnation is a mystery. We do not, indeed we cannot, comprehend it. Though the navigator does not understand the mystery of light, still he confidently steers his ship by the distant stars. The Christian has found the Incarnation of our Lord to be a mystery of light by which he can guide his life with perfect confidence."—ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, JR., *The Voice From the Cross*, pp. 50, 51.

It is impossible for any human being to understand exactly the relationship between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. The result is controversy and even division. Therefore discussions of

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the Incarnation and the atonement demand not only the avoiding of extremes but also a spirit of meekness and humility that will keep pronouncements from becoming dogmatic and pharisaical. The important point is the cleansing of the soul of vanity and pride and the enthroning of Christ in the heart to rule the life. We must ever remember the statement previously quoted, that "human science is too limited to comprehend the atonement" and that "the plan of redemption is so far-reaching that philosophy cannot explain it," that "it will ever remain a mystery that the most profound reasoning cannot fathom," and that "the science of salvation cannot be explained; but it can be known by experience" (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 494, 495).

In the first three words of Jesus from the cross, His thoughts were only of others. In the first place He prayed for the forgiveness of those who were impaling Him to the cross, and in the second place He assured the penitent thief of a place with Him in Paradise, and then He demonstrated His love and sympathy for others by making provision for the future needs of His sorrowing mother. Then after experiencing the anguish of the lost and God-forsaken sinners, in order to pay the price of their redemption, He sensed again the Father's love and approval and became conscious of His own needs and asked for a drink.

The cross is indeed the crowning evidence of Christ's unquenchable love and infinite yearning for the salvation of man. He passed through the agonies of crucifixion, including intense thirst, so that He could say to every soul thirsting for the water of life and the righteousness of Christ, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink," and, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied" (Weymouth).

## *The Unknown Soldier at the Cross*

SOON after World War I the writer attended an Armistice Day program in Arlington National Cemetery at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Gen. John J. Pershing was the principal speaker. The event was to honor the thousands resting in unmarked graves because their bodies could not be identified. On the tomb of the soldier being honored is the inscription, "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God." The body had been chosen from unidentified dead in France and conveyed across the Atlantic on the cruiser *Olympia*.

The final choice from among four unidentified dead was made in a chapel at Châlons-sur-Marne by Sgt. Edward F. Younger, who placed a spray of roses on one of the coffins. How honored the parents and family would have been if they could have known the one chosen to occupy the tomb that is under a permanent guard of honor was their loved one. It is probably best, however, that his identity is not known, for while he might have been a person of noble character wholly deserving of the honor, on the other hand he could have possessed a character and reputation unworthy of such recognition.

In consideration of the memorial communion service we shall discuss another unknown soldier, a nameless hero whose character and deeds deserve a monument that has never been erected to commemorate his heroic act and who is seldom even mentioned except with an occasional passing thought. He is referred to in Scripture in connection with the fifth of the Seven Words from the cross.

Jesus was nailed to the cross by Roman soldiers under the command of a centurion, a military officer in charge of a hundred sol-

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diers. This is the military leader who later said of our Lord, "Truly this was the Son of God." The cruel and bloody task of crucifixion had been accomplished, and the soldiers were placed on guard lest friends of the victims should attempt a rescue. There was nothing to do but wait in vigil for their death, which usually took several days. They amused themselves for a while by gambling over the seamless garment of the victim on the central cross. We are told that "they looked upon Christ," they watched Him there, as He hung on the cross between the two thieves.

*Cruel unconcern of  
His tormentors*

But suddenly they were startled by a loud and piercing cry from the cross, as Christ uttered the words "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" followed later by the pathetic appeal, "I thirst." According to the testimony of historians and physicians, a burning thirst, as the result of the loss of blood, high temperature, and inflammation, constituted the terrible torture of crucifixion.

While all heard the cry and appeal, many of them misunderstood the meaning of the Aramaic words of Jesus, and someone suggested that He was calling for Elias. All turned and looked at the Sufferer and knew that the cry was the result of great agony. If someone had asked, "Why doesn't someone give Him a drink?" the answer could have been, "He is calling for Elias, and let us see whether Elias will come to His assistance." Or others might have answered, "It is none of my business," and still others, "He is supposed to suffer thus as a part of His punishment," or, "A drink can only bring temporary relief and would prolong His suffering." There were other available alibis for not ministering to the physical needs of the Sufferer.

Jesus may have looked around to see whether any of His friends, including John, would come to His aid, but if they heard His appeal they were doubtless helpless under the circumstances. But there was one who cared and responded, a lone soldier, unknown but to God, perhaps a Gentile, and one who helped to crucify Him. Help therefore came from a most unexpected source. The conduct of this nameless soldier was not regulated by the mere requirements of duty, but he was willing to go the second mile in service. Even though others tried to stop him with the words,

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"Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come and save him," the record is that he "at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink."

This nameless hero could not be stopped. With him there was not the least hesitation. In fact, he "ran" to perform the service. Some believe that the vessel of vinegar was his own portion, which he willingly shared with Jesus. Even though the situation was hopeless, he did what he could, rendering the only service possible under the circumstances. He doubtless would have done more if it had been possible. Browning has truly said that "it is not what a person does that determines his worth, but what he would do if he had the opportunity."

The soldier's act under the circumstances indicated he possessed a noble character. His act may even have placed him in the company of the repentant thief and the centurion, his superior officer, who later declared Jesus to be the Son of God. These were among the first fruits of the atoning death of Christ and a demonstration of His power to save even to the uttermost all classes, including criminals, cruel soldiers, and calloused officials, and that none are excluded from His saving grace and redeeming love.

The cry of human misery and need comes to all from crosses of suffering humanity everywhere. Some are moved with compassion by these outstretched hands, but from the majority there is no response. They wait to see whether others will do something about the need. Their alibis are multiple, and like those who were invited to a great supper in the parable, "they all with one consent" begin "to make excuse." Our soldier hero did not seek to hide behind excuses. He did what he could, even though it brought only temporary relief to the thirsty Sufferer.

As this anonymous soldier sprang so quickly and willingly into action to quench the burning thirst of the Son of God, we can imagine John or one of the others of His friends asking the question in their minds, "Who are you?" The same question comes to us, but all we can learn about this nameless hero is his noble deed of kindness. Like the good Samaritan of the parable, he is unknown and unknowable to man, but on his tomb could appropri-

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ately be written the inscription, "Here rests in honored glory a Roman soldier known but to God."

We can safely imagine that if the Man of Calvary did not express His feelings, He at least gave His benefactor a look of gratitude and appreciation, and he is doubtless included in the promise of Jesus: "For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:40, 41).

Like the thief, the soldier had been observing and meditating on what he had seen and heard and was greatly and favorably impressed, and some believe that this experience led to his conversion, so that in the rewarding time when Jesus returns to "sit upon the throne of his glory" and to reward both saints and sinners "according to their works," he will be among those to whom Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." When they ask when they had thus ministered unto Him, He will reply, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (See Matt. 25:31-40.)

If such acts of kindness ministered to one of the least of saints brings such a rich reward at the Second Advent, surely the unnamed soldier who ministered directly to Christ in person in the hour of His extremity should at least receive the same recompense. He demonstrated his kind and unselfish spirit in contrast to that of the great majority gathered about the cross, including the religious leaders. His was a gift of love and can therefore never be measured except on the basis of the motives.

The widow's gift of love and sacrifice, although it was only "two mites," which is less than a penny of our money, was declared by Jesus to be more than all the other gifts cast into the treasury. If Jesus should speak of the soldier's gift He would doubtless say, "Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward," and would say to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant:

thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25: 21).

On a former occasion Jesus had asked a despised and sinful woman at the well of Samaria for a drink. This resulted in her conversion, and through her many others received the precious light. Jesus was not too proud to ask such favors from an outcast woman and a cruel soldier. Asking for and accepting favors is one of the most important means of approach in fostering favorable reactions. It has often turned an enemy into a friend, and a sinner into a saint.

As we take part in the preparatory service for the Lord's Supper we have the privilege of demonstrating our appreciation for the ministry of Christ by serving one another. Then in partaking of the emblems of the communion service we show our faith in the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, which was shed when He gave the greatest exhibition of His love and ministry to lost humanity. May we daily imitate the example of Him who came into the world to serve rather than to be served.

## *Love's Shout of Triumph*

THE sixth of the Seven Words of Jesus spoken from the cross is recorded in John 19:30: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Someone has called the cry, "It is finished," "the Magna Charta of true freedom." It is the Emancipation Proclamation of the great Liberator to the slaves of sin and is therefore a most significant pronouncement. It did not merely mean something brought to an end, but a mission completed, accomplished, perfected.

All works are judged by the finished product. A good workman is known by the finish he puts on the product of his labor. As a carpenter at Nazareth, Jesus saw to it that nothing left the shop that was not the very best He could produce. Likewise in the building of His character He put into it only the characteristics of perfection, so that even Pilate was compelled to three times pronounce the verdict, "I find no fault in him." The prophet declared that as the result of His Passion, Jesus "saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied" with the results of His mission. Looking back from the cross, He knew that nothing was lacking in His appointed task, and that He had given it the finishing touch. It could not be said of Him, as was said of the man in the parable, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke 14:30). No human being has ever been able to say that his work was finished and that he was completely satisfied with the results.

In taking the place of the lost sinner and in being forsaken by God, Jesus had gone the last mile in the work of redemption. He had gone through the horror of great darkness, His sacrifice had

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been accepted as perfect and complete, and peace again flooded His soul. He could now proclaim His mission finished, the last part being by far the most trying, but it was the end and climax of the price He paid to redeem the lost. As He hung on the cross the fate of mankind was in the balance and the world's eternal destiny was at stake, but now the price was fully paid and the atoning sacrifice complete.

Human beings cannot say at the end of life, "It is finished," so far as their work and mission in life are concerned, for they always leave many unfinished tasks. Robert Louis Stevenson suggested as an appropriate epitaph for his tombstone, "Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much." This is also well stated by another: "We use all our brief span of life learning how to live; and having learned a little, get no chance to put it into practice. For our opportunity is over. We just begin, and then our work is done, poor fumbling blunderers that we are."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, on John 19:30. At the age of thirty-one, Franz Schubert died, leaving one of his most famous works uncompleted—the symphony that came to be known as his *Unfinished Symphony*.

Jesus died at the age of thirty-three, and He did all that He came to the earth to do. His was a pre-eminently successful career, and He produced the *Finished Symphony* of life. In His report to the Father at the close of His mission He could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). No human being has ever been able to say that. Life is not so much a question of time, or years, or quantity, as quality. As far as the Biblical record goes, the oldest man, Methuselah, said or did nothing worth recording for future generations. It simply gives his name and age. What a contrast it is to the biography of Enoch, whose beautiful character was rewarded with translation. This point is well stated by the poet:

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

—PHILIP J. BAILEY

## LOVE'S SHOUT OF TRIUMPH

The Jewish leaders and soldiers and the mob must have been amazed because Jesus seemed to consider His death a triumph rather than a defeat. His shout and tone of voice must have seemed strange in their ears. The soldiers had seen many die on the cross, but none like this. All may have thought that the cry indicated only a relief from suffering. None realized its true significance. While the disciples were not present, with the exception of John, they believed that the mission of Jesus had failed, and those who had been fishermen returned to their former work. His death seemed to bring an end to their dreams and expectations. The two men on their way to Emmaus said, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," indicating their disappointment. His followers did not know it then, but what happened that day changed the history of the world and determined the destiny of mankind.

This was not the first time Jesus had completed a task and pronounced it finished. At the close of the work of Creation He had declared His work finished and said that it was "very good." A similar pronouncement would naturally be made when the plan of salvation was finished on the cross and the new covenant was ratified by Christ's death. It will happen the third time when human probation closes and the work of salvation is finished, and He stands up to reign as King (Dan. 12:1). The fourth will come at the close of the falling of the **Five pronouncements of a finished work** seven last plagues, in which are filled up "the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation" (Rev. 14:10). The fifth and last comes when the curse of sin is removed and the earth is brought back to its original Edenic glory and God's original plan for man is carried out as completely as though man had never fallen.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that He might be delivered from drinking the cup of agony, but because it was His Father's will, He drained it to its bitter dregs and then died with a shout of triumph, and the broken connection between God and man was fully repaired. A picture was painted in honor of the Royal Corps of Signalers in the British Army because of their service during World War I. An unarmed soldier had crawled

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out into no man's land to repair a broken cable, which had been snapped by shellfire. When he took hold of the two ends to pull them together for repair, his body made the connection for the electricity and the shock killed him. In the painting he is pictured as lying there dead, with the living current passing through his body. He finished his task of restoring the broken connection, so that vital messages could again be dispatched, but at the cost of his life. Sin broke the connection between God and man and Jesus came down into this dark world to repair the breach, and it cost Him His life.

In finishing the task He came to perform, Jesus practiced what He had preached, as recorded in Luke 9:62: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" so "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Prophecy quotes Him as saying, as He faced the terrible ordeal, "I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed," or fail (Isa. 50:7).

The cry, "It is finished," indicated that His death was the very climax of His earthly mission to save sinners by drawing them to Himself. He had said concerning this event: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:31, 32). That this included the whole universe is made evident in Colossians 1:20. The cross is the great spiritual magnet that will eventually draw the whole universe into the perfect unity it once enjoyed.

Although Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," He was never gloomy or pessimistic. He was always cheerful and happy, because He was "anointed . . . with the oil of gladness above" His fellows. He therefore had a glad heart, a cheerful disposition, a sunny countenance, a smiling face, which attracted all to Him, including little children. He told His followers to "be of good cheer," and prayed that they might have His "joy fulfilled in themselves." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." He was the very fountain of joy and gladness. What a pity that so

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many of His professed followers misrepresent Him by their sad and gloomy countenance and disposition.

Jesus faced death with no regrets or sense of failure or feeling of disappointment, and with His last breath announced a completed mission to an unfeeling world and an expectant universe. He did not say that His work was finished, for that must include the proclamation of the gospel to all the world, including "every creature," together with His priestly and mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Before man sinned, Christ promised the Father that He would pay the redemption price and thus provide a complete remedy. Although the price of the atonement was fully paid on the cross, it is ineffectual until guilty man hears and accepts the gospel.

*Redemption is only  
for those who heed*

This is strikingly illustrated by the statement of a man who, when asked why he was so happy, answered, "Because I am saved." When asked when it happened, he answered, "It happened two thousand years ago, but I only found it out recently." President Andrew Jackson pardoned a man who had been condemned to die on the gallows, but he refused to accept the pardon. This was something so unusual that it created an issue in the courts as to what constitutes a pardon, and the Supreme Court was asked to make a decision, which has settled the question ever since. It was decided that a pardon is not a pardon until it is accepted. While the death of Christ made pardon from sin available to every sinner, it is not a pardon until it is accepted by the sinner. It therefore involves the hearing and acceptance of the gospel by the sinner, together with the mediatorial ministry of Christ, who presents His own blood in the sinner's behalf, for "without shedding of blood is no remission." Therefore the finishing of the work of redemption must include the fulfillment of the gospel commission by the church, as well as the priestly service of Christ, and these are still incomplete.

The death of Christ not only fulfilled all prophecies and met all types back to the entrance of sin but it also vindicated the law and government of God, and completely refuted the charges of Satan against the divine administration. Hence the throne of the

Eternal was made forever sure. It will eventually reconcile the whole universe to God, so that "affliction shall not rise up the second time." Calvary forever erased all questions from the minds of angels and unfallen beings, and when the inhabitants of this rebel world make their final decision, rebellion will forever end.

The atoning death of Christ was therefore not a tragedy but a triumph. The cry, "It is finished," produced the greatest celebration of joy the universe had ever known (see Rev. 12:10-12). Another and greater celebration will be held when the redeemed reach the Celestial City and take part in the marriage and wedding banquet of the Lamb (see Rev. 19:1-9). To this marital festival all have been invited, and may we not disappoint the gracious Host, the Bridegroom. In partaking of the ordinances we indicate our acceptance of the invitation.

## *Love's Final Surrender*

FATHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These last words spoken by Christ from the cross, crown and seal His life and mission. They breathe complete love, trust, surrender, and peace. From Luke's account of the events at Calvary, we have this report of the last of the Seven Words from the lips of the Conqueror: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (chap. 23:46). One of the other Gospel writers wrote: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

Matthew describes the death of Jesus as follows: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things which were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:50-54).

Jesus had come triumphantly through the terrible ordeal, and with the peace of heaven again flooding His soul, He expressed His complete confidence in His Father in an unconditional surrender. In His last words He did not threaten His enemies, but was willing to leave all in the hands of His Father. His surrender was not to His foes, but to His Father. In literal warfare, victory is gained by fight-

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ing, but in spiritual conflict by surrender to the will of God. This had been the practice of Jesus through life, and He had never known defeat.

Death is always a solemn and sobering event. The most giddy, frivolous, careless, and thoughtless persons are hushed and silent in the presence of the grim reaper. The last words of loved ones and noted people are remembered and treasured. Thus the last words of the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of men, have come ringing down through the ages in a message of triumph and comfort, and will resound through all eternity.

The atoning death of Christ was a voluntary sacrifice motivated by love. As stated previously, its significance can never be fully comprehended, or its importance overemphasized. It was a freewill offering, for He "yielded" and "gave up" His spirit. He said of His life, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10: 18). In Ephesians 5:2 we are told that "Christ also hath loved us,

### **Mystery of Christ's voluntary sacrifice**

and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice." The word "also" includes the Father in this voluntary love offering, and this is beautifully stated in John 3:16. On the part of both, this love gift was on an equal basis, and therefore both will receive praise and thanksgiving for the plan of salvation through all eternity.

Jesus died with words of Scripture on His lips, quoting Psalm 31:5. The entire verse reads: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." This is one of the so-called Passion Psalms, and it is believed that quoting it was a part of the daily ritual in all Jewish homes, and if so, Jesus had known and quoted it from childhood. He was well acquainted with the Psalms or hymnbook of the Israelites and could sing from memory many of them.

Jesus naturally turned to the Scriptures in death as He had in life. "It is written" had been His constant appeal. He always turned to the Book, which had been His constant companion from childhood. He was so well acquainted with its contents that His knowledge amazed the greatest Jewish scholars in the Temple at

## LOVE'S FINAL SURRENDER

Jerusalem when He was only twelve years of age. The quotation at the time of His death may have also been an answer to the taunt of the mocking priests a few minutes before when they cried out, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him." In this they unconsciously fulfilled Psalm 22:7, 8: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him."

Jesus died with the same abiding faith and confidence and dedication to God and His Word that had characterized Him throughout His ministry, and with which He had defended Himself against all the attacks of the enemy and his agents. Jesus prefaced His quotation from Psalm 31:5 with the word "Father," which He used in both of His prayers that constituted the first and last of His Seven Words from the cross. Sin had destroyed man's filial relationship with God, and Christ came to restore it, so that all who accept His sacrifice can with confidence address their petitions to "Our Father who art in heaven." After making His final commitment, Jesus went to sleep in the arms of His Father. He may have had in mind the statement in Psalm 31:15, "My times are in thy hand."

As our example, Jesus not only showed us how to live but also how to die, and both are important. It is therefore our privilege to face death with calmness and serenity, with a spirit of peace, tranquillity, and spiritual composure. The secret of dying as Jesus died is to live as He lived in constant union with God. With but few exceptions, one of them being the repentant thief, people die as they lived. Leslie Badham says: "While the coming death does not necessarily change a man, it invariably reveals him. It shows where his heart has been, where his mind has fed, where his secret thoughts have turned. It discloses what he had practiced—for the steadying of his soul. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that Jesus closed His life with a prayer. His whole life had been an abiding in God, an at-one-ment with Him. Nor was His final prayer a form of words put together in a crisis. It was a prayer that was familiar. The mind had traveled its thoughts before. He had known it since childhood."—*Love Speaks From the Cross*, p. 58.

**To live victoriously  
is to die triumphantly**

"Father, I trust my spirit to thy hands" (Moffatt), and, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (R.S.V.) are other translations. The final words of thousands of saints have been virtually the same. At his death, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:59, 60).

The apostle Paul exhibited the same spirit when he said, "I die daily," and, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). He was therefore always ready to face death. He had presented his body "a living sacrifice" and when he finally faced martyrdom he could say with assurance, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The same words or words similar to those of Jesus and Stephen were spoken by Polycarp at his martyrdom at Smyrna in the second century, and by Bernard, Jerome, Thomas à Becket, Nicholas Ridley, Martin Luther, and John Knox. Augustine expressed the same trust and confidence in the prayer, "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." John Huss said as his persecutors were burning him at the stake, "But I commit my spirit into Thy hand, O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast redeemed me."

As we face the uncertainties of life, with death often coming unexpectedly, how thankful we should be for the exceeding great and precious promises of the Prince of life, whose triumphant death reduced this great enemy to a mere "shadow," so that we can say with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me," and cry with Balaam when he saw Israel favored by God, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Num. 23:10).

## *He Died of a Broken Heart*

CRUCIFIXION was perhaps the most painful and torturous death known to the ancients, and for this reason was inflicted only on slaves and the worst criminals, and was not permitted to be used in the punishment of Roman citizens. The Romans probably borrowed this method of punishment from the Carthaginians. This mode of execution is supposed to have been introduced into Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes about 165 B.C. The infliction of this terrible punishment was abolished by an edict of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century of the Christian Era.

Paul declared that when he became a Christian all that he had previously valued was "mere refuse" in comparison with "the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus" and being "found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the law, but that which arises from faith in Christ," and that he longed "to share in His sufferings and die even as He died" (Phil. 3:7-11, Weymouth). The language indicates that he was disappointed because he could not be crucified as was his Lord, a privilege denied him because of his Roman citizenship.

Crucifixion was terrible, chiefly because in it no vital organ of the body was involved, and therefore the torture continued for several days and sometimes more than a week before the victim was relieved by death. A celebrated physician discussed the pathological phase of death by crucifixion, and based on his treatise, M'Clintock and Strong give the following six reasons for the indescribable torture of such a death:

"1. The unnatural position and violent tension of the body, which cause a painful sensation from the least motion. 2. The nails,

## MEMORIALS OF CALVARY

being driven through parts of the hands and feet which are full of *nerves* and *tendons* . . . create the most exquisite anguish. 3. The exposure of so many wounds and lacerations brings on inflammation, which tends to become gangrene, and every moment increases the poignancy of suffering. 4. In the distended parts of the body more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins: hence too much blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, and the blood vessels of the head become pressed and swollen. The general obstruction of circulation which ensues causes an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety more intolerable than death itself. 5. The inexpressible misery of *gradually increasing* and lingering anguish. . . . 6. Burning and raging thirst."—*Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. 2, p. 590. Is it any wonder that Cicero said that death on the cross was "the most overwhelming and pitiless doom"?

But the sufferings of a crucified criminal were not to be compared with those of Christ, whose mental anguish was so indescribably terrible that the physical torture was small in comparison. In fact, it was the former that caused Him to die of a broken heart, which is evident from the records of both Scripture and medical science. Bible Prophecy describes the sufferings and death of the Son of God, and quotes Him as saying: "Therefore my heart faileth me," and, "Reproach hath broken my heart," or, "Their taunts have broken my heart" (Moffatt). (See Ps. 40:6-8, 12, 13; 69:19-21.)

The sudden death of Jesus after only six hours on the cross gives evidence of a ruptured heart. Without question Jesus lived in harmony with the laws of physical health and must have had an unusually strong body, and should therefore have had strength enough to live for several days, rather than only six hours. There is a record of a crucified man being released and living a normal life for many years.

The following are but a few of the many statements made in regard to the cause of the death of Christ: "Everything leads to the belief that the instantaneous rupture of a vessel in the heart brought Him . . . to a sudden death."—RENAN, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 367, 368. "The immediate cause of death appears, beyond question, to

## HE DIED OF A BROKEN HEART

have been the rupture of His heart, brought about by mental agony."—GEIKIE, *The Life and Words of Christ*, vol. 2, p. 574.

Dr. David Russell declares that on the cross the Gethsemane struggle of Jesus, which had been temporarily abated by the visit of the angel, was resumed and carried to its tragic climax. He said: "On the cross the scene of Gethsemane was renewed; the cup was again presented to Him, and there He drank it to its very dregs. On Calvary His distress reached its height, and drew from Him the bitter exclamation, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Mysterious dereliction! only to be accounted for by the nature of His death. . . . He at last expired under the curse, not so much in consequence of the exhaustion of nature by bodily pain and the loss of blood, . . . as in consequence of the extreme pressure of mental torture. This was too racking, too exquisite for nature to support—it literally broke His heart."—*Letters, Chiefly Practical and Consolatory*, vol. 1, p. 79.

This conclusion was based on the following facts concerning the death of our Lord: In the first place, He lived only six hours on the cross. Even Pilate "marvelled" when he learned that He was "already dead," because such a quick death from crucifixion was most unusual. Medical authorities assure us that a normal, healthy heart does not "rupture" suddenly. But Jesus died suddenly in the midst of great agony when there was no evidence that death was near, indicating some extraordinary pathological phenomenon. Again, His death immediately followed a loud and piercing cry (see Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46). Generally the voice of a dying person grows weaker until it becomes inaudible. In the case of the Saviour, He "cried with a loud voice" and then died instantly. There are historical records of a number of deaths from rupture of the heart, one evidence being, according to one writer, when "the hand is suddenly carried to the front of the chest and a piercing cry uttered." Naturally a crucified person could not do this.

*Varied aspects of the Lord's anguish*

Another proof that Jesus died of a broken heart was that when the soldier pierced His side with a spear to make sure He was dead, "blood and water," or serum, flowed out in such quantity as to attract the attention of John. Medical science has recorded a number

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of cases of sudden death by physical rupture of the heart caused by extreme grief, mental anguish, or violent passion, and when the pleural sac surrounding the heart was punctured, coagulated blood and waterlike serum flowed out, sometimes in large quantities.

Much of this is corroborated by William Stroud, M.D., in his book, *"The Physical Cause of Christ's Death,"* published when he was a resident of Edinburgh, Scotland, and was president of the Royal Medical Society of Scotland. The book was endorsed by prominent physicians of Scotland and England and was printed in two or three editions. Dr. Stroud thus concludes his argument: "In conclusion, it may therefore with certainty be affirmed, that between the agony of mind which the Saviour endured in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the profuse sweat mixed with clotted blood which so rapidly followed it, violent palpitation of the heart must necessarily have intervened; this being the only known condition which could have been at once the effect of the former occurrence, and the cause of the latter. . . . The cause now assigned for the death of Christ, namely, RUPTURE OF THE HEART FROM AGONY OF MIND, has been proved to be the result of an actual power in nature, fully adequate to the effect, really present without counteraction, minutely agreeing with all the facts of the case, and necessarily implied by them, this cause must, according to the principles of inductive reasoning, be regarded as demonstrated."—Pages 155, 156.

The crucifixion of Christ was the greatest event and the master crime of all history. The cross is not only the means of salvation but also the great symbol of injustice. The **The master crime of all history** noted Italian advocate, Giovanni Rosadi, wrote: "The dishonor of Golgotha is the dishonor of justice. And it has been a wise measure to remove the crucifix from almost all the halls of justice among Christian nations, since this sign frequently discredits the work of the judges." "The cross of His martyrdom will stand fixed forever upon the crowning summit of injustice, stupidity, and civil falsehood, a symbol of eternal reprobation."—*The Trial of Jesus*, pp. 142, 313.

Ellen G. White says of Christ's atoning death: "In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was

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oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; and His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin. . . . With the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of extreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt. . . . He feared that sin was so offensive to God, that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 752, 753. See also *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 214, 215.

This, then, is the event we are to commemorate in the communion service. When Jesus gave the symbolic wine to His disciples He said, "Drink of it, all of you," and the record is that "they all drank of it" (Matt. 26:27, R.S.V.; Mark 14:23). All took part in the first sacramental service, and we can hardly imagine that in the early church any member would be absent or would neglect the opportunity of demonstrating his faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. How different it is today. Is it because the many absent members do not have a real vision of the significance of this important service?

None would absent themselves without a justifiable excuse if they realized that the symbolic service testifies of the glorious truth and experience of justification by faith by which we are divinely declared to be innocent, guiltless, and sinless, which is possible only by means of the atoning blood of Christ, for we are "justified by his blood." Paul wrote: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:1, 8, 9).

*Hope of eternal life  
for every sinner*

Righteousness by faith is the positive phase of the gospel, and the center and core of the plan of salvation. It makes the gospel "good news" and "good tidings of great joy," and "the sweetest melodies that come from God through human lips," because it takes care of all our sins as completely and permanently as if they had never been committed. It is therefore declared to be "the third angel's message in verity." It is the everlasting gospel in reality.

Faith in the atoning blood of Christ is the only means of reconciliation with God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," or "reconciliation," according to the marginal reading (Rom. 5:10, 11). This unity, or at-one-ment, brings an end to all estrangement and alienation, for Christ was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Again we read of Christ: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). The price of our salvation was so great that it could not be purchased with earthly riches, such as "silver and gold," "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Since the communion service symbolizes this blessed experience in cleansing from all sin and receiving by faith the righteousness of the Sinless One, may we renew our consecration and in humility of heart and mind prepare to meet our King.

## *The Vision of Calvary*

LET us ever remember that the purpose of the communion service is to renew and enlarge our vision of the atoning death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, and to bear a testimony to others of our faith in the efficacy of that great event in the transformation of character. This was the purpose of all the typical sacrifices and services pointing forward to the death of the Lamb of God, and of the memorial ordinances pointing back to the same event. To those who fail to get this vision the communion service is meaningless.

Therefore our greatest need is a vision of the Crucified One and of the price He paid for our redemption. In the closing study of this series it is appropriate that we read again the following statements which so forcefully and beautifully emphasize the importance and necessity of the vision of the cross:

"The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 315.

"As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 163.

"The thought of Calvary awakens living and sacred emotions in our hearts. Praise to God and the Lamb will be in our hearts and on our lips; for pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the soul

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that keeps fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 661.

Calvary! The place and day of destiny for the whole universe, but especially for this world. Said Christ: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:31, 32). What of those who were present and eyewitnesses of the crucifixion? What thoughts and emotions were awakened that

### **Unnamed sympathizers with the Saviour**

led to deeper understanding of man’s destiny? How many were drawn to Him that day? Too often we recall only the penitent thief, who died in faith, assured by Jesus of a home in Paradise. There were others, how many we do not know, but let us look into the record. What about the unknown soldier who so willingly responded to the agonizing appeal of the Divine Sufferer when He said, “I thirst”?

Simon of Cyrene was another who received a saving knowledge of Christ as the result of his experience in connection with the crucifixion. His home was in a town and province in North Africa. Perhaps he had just completed his long and tiresome journey of nearly a thousand miles to attend the Passover festival. As he was entering Jerusalem he met an immense crowd on their way to Golgotha. Their destination was revealed by the fact that three of the men were carrying crosses and were therefore under sentence of death by crucifixion. As he stopped to watch them go by he was amazed at the size of the multitude and especially at those who composed it. There were the high priest and a great number of other religious leaders who were leading out in ridicule and mockery against one of the condemned men.

One look at the first two of the cross-bearing men told Simon that they were criminals, for their countenances witnessed against them, and the soldier walking ahead of each carried a placard giving the name and reason for the execution. They were thieves who were receiving their just rewards. But the third, who was attracting almost all the attention, looked very different, and the placard carried before Him contained the announcement written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.” This inscription, to-

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gether with the deriding statements of the religious leaders, revealed the fact that He was being crucified because He claimed to be the hoped-for and expected Messiah. The Victim presented a pitiful sight. He wore a crown of thorns, His face was streaked and His hair matted with dried blood, and His white raiment was dyed red as the result of His bloody sweat and cruel scourging.

The Cyrenian traveler stared in pity and amazement and wondered why some relative or friend did not come to His rescue and carry the heavy cross under which He was staggering and seemed about ready to fall. He may have been wondering whether he should offer his services, when the centurion or one of his soldiers saw him and ordered him to carry the cross. As he lifted the heavy load from the bruised and bleeding shoulder of Jesus he was given a look of love and gratitude he could never forget. Later, when he learned the identity of the One he had assisted, he must have regretted that he had not offered to render the service which he gave through compulsion.

After witnessing the crucifixion and the many events connected with it, and hearing the assuring words of Jesus to the penitent thief, together with the Seven Words of Jesus from the cross, he was convinced that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, and was forever afterward grateful for the privilege and honor that had been his. He knew by experience what Jesus meant when He said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). The term “the cross” is used in Mark 10:21. After having personally carried the cross of Christ, Simon found it a delight to bear not only his own but also the cross of Christ, with the reproach and persecution which come to all who become His disciples.

### **The reproach for bearing His cross**

In this connection the following concerning Simon is of interest: “The cross he [Simon] was forced to bear became the means of his conversion. His sympathies were deeply stirred in favor of Jesus; and the events of Calvary, and the words uttered by the Saviour, caused him to acknowledge that He was the Son of God.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Matt. 27:32.

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Simon carried the gospel back to his friends, and one of the earliest Christian churches was established in Cyrene, doubtless in part at least as the result of his witnessing. In Mark 15:21 we are told that Simon was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," and Romans 16:13 records Paul as saying, "Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." Some commentators believe that the mother here mentioned was the wife of Simon and was the one who was like a mother to the apostle.

Another conversion that resulted from the crucifixion was that of the centurion who had charge of the soldiers who carried out the decree of Pilate to scourge and crucify the Son of God. He had seen and heard everything that happened from the time of the beginning of the trial before Pilate at six o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon, when Jesus died of a broken heart. A centurion was the captain of a hundred soldiers in the Roman

### **Converts who became benefactors**

army. It was the centurion stationed at Capernaum who built a synagogue for the Jews and who went to find Jesus to ask Him to heal his servant, and whose great faith caused Jesus to say, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:10). Cornelius, another centurion, together with his family, accepted the gospel under the preaching of Peter (Acts 10).

According to a tradition, the centurion who had charge of the crucifixion of Jesus was named Longinus. He heard the Roman governor three times pronounce Jesus to be guiltless of all the charges made against Him. He saw him wash his hands as a symbol of freedom from all responsibility for condemning and executing an innocent man. Together with Pilate, the centurion knew that the accusers of Jesus were controlled by envy, and that they clamored for His death because of His Messianic claim. He also knew that in the trials and crucifixion of Jesus many of the most fundamental rules of Roman law were ruthlessly trampled underfoot.

The centurion also knew that Pilate finally yielded to the demand of the mob because of the threat of an appeal to Caesar that would probably cost him his position. It was doubtless with reluctance and against his own conscience and sense of justice that the centurion carried out the decree that Jesus be crucified, which always

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included a previous cruel and inhuman scourging, a torture so terrible that many died under the ordeal. In this experience the flesh of the victim was cut to pieces on all parts of the body, including the face. Prophecy says of this experience of Jesus: "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14). The scourging was followed by a period of mocking and derision by the soldiers.

The centurion was greatly impressed by the reaction of Jesus to this cruel treatment, which was so different from that of the criminals he had tortured and crucified. These had been defiant and filled the air with shrieks and curses. But Jesus was calm, silent, patient, submissive, and forgiving, and as they were driving the nails through His hands and feet, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The centurion knew that this prayer in a special sense applied to him who was directing the soldiers in their torturing work. He had never witnessed anything like this before and he was greatly impressed.

### **The Saviour's calm under torture**

He heard the appeal of the penitent thief and the immediate assurance of pardon and salvation. He witnessed the three hours of intense and supernatural darkness and its terrifying effect on the multitude. He felt the severe earthquake at the moment of Christ's death. Later he learned of the opening of the graves and the resurrection of the saints who appeared in the city to bear their testimony; doubtless also he knew that at the time Christ died the beautiful curtain between the holy place and the Most Holy Place in the Temple had been torn from the top to the bottom by an unseen hand. The result of this event is thus described: "The veil of the temple rent so mysteriously, changed the religious ideas of many of the Jewish priests, and a large company changed their faith."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Matt. 27:45, 46.

What the centurion had seen and heard was all the evidence he needed and he could restrain himself no longer, and breaking his silence he made the long-delayed confession, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47). We are told that "when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the

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earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54). The confession therefore included more than the centurion. Do we not have reason to expand our faith to believe that in the kingdom we will meet not only the centurion but also a number of his companions?

Also two of the leading members of the Sanhedrin, Joseph and Nicodemus, accepted Jesus as their Saviour, and it was the crucifixion that brought them to their final decision to openly declare their faith and unite with the church of Christ and devote their wealth and talents to the proclamation of the gospel. Jewish tradition declares that these two were men of great wealth.

Note the following: "Joseph and Nicodemus watched every development at the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ. Not an action escaped them. These men were diligent searchers of the Scriptures, and they were deeply indignant as they saw this man, whom the judges had pronounced to be entirely without fault, placed in the center of the two thieves, 'on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.' This instruction had been given by the chief priests and rulers, that by His position all might judge that Christ was the most notorious of the three."—*Ibid.*, on Matt. 27:38.

Would it be presumption to stretch our faith and expectation to include the wife of Pilate among the redeemed as the result of the cross of Calvary? At the most crucial moment of the trial of Jesus she sent her husband a letter begging him not to condemn an innocent man, as she had "suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matt. 27:19). In *The Desire of Ages*, pages 732, 733, we are told that the dream was sent to her in answer to the prayer of Christ, and the dream, as well as the effect it had on Pilate, is described in detail.

But this is not all that was included in the direct and immediate effects of the crucifixion. In fact, only a small part of those who will be numbered among the redeemed because of what then took place, have been mentioned. On the day of Pentecost, Peter closed his sermon to "the multitude" with the statement that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," and it is stated that "when they heard this, they were

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pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them that in order to be pardoned for their terrible sin and become reconciled to God they must repent, and be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," so that they could "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Of this great multitude who were charged with the responsibility of the death of the Son of God and were convicted by the prickings of the mighty two-edged sword of the Holy Spirit, "about three thousand souls" surrendered and were baptized and united with the church. We must therefore conclude that this great harvest of souls was from among those who not only had witnessed and given their sanction to the crucifixion but were in different degrees responsible for the most terrible act of injustice in all history (see Acts 2:36-47).

**A joyous harvest  
of believers**

In the third chapter of the book of Acts is the record of another sermon by Peter in the Temple courts, to a great audience in which he said that his hearers had "delivered up, and denied" Jesus "in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14, 15). He then called upon them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. The results of this sermon by Peter, who was assisted by John, are described in the next chapter: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). As was the custom in those days only the men were numbered.

The following expressions indicate a continuing ingathering of souls: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (See Acts 4:32; 5:14; 6:7.) From all of these statements it seems evident that the total number saved in Jerusalem num-

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bered well up in the thousands, and that they had all either witnessed or were in some degree responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. This happened under the early rain, and we are promised that "the latter rain will be more abundant," and will also come through a clear vision of the cross of Calvary.

This subject, and in fact this entire series of studies, is vividly summed up by the beautiful hymn written by James McRoberts, entitled "Why Was He There?"

"When I behold my Saviour there on Calv'ry,  
O soul of mine be still, reflect awhile;  
Gaze on that face, those hands, His feet and side,  
Into those eyes, portraying naught of guile.  
Why was He there? by God and man forsaken?  
The Man of Sorrows bows His head to die.

"He trod our streets and lanes, our fields and highways,  
He shared the joys we love and trials too;  
He raised the dead, made blinded eyes to see,  
The words He spake were ever kind and true.  
Why was He there? the powers of hell conniving  
With wicked men the Christ to crucify.

"Why was He there? Ah, yes, there is an answer,  
'Tis found within the Word for all to see,  
That God so loved the world He gave His Son,  
Who gave Himself from sin to set me free.  
Why was He there? My God, I'm lost in wonder,  
But show to me how dreadful sin must be.

"Just as I am, behold me, Lord, in mercy;  
I would be Thine and Thine for evermore;  
Do Thou me cleanse, Thy blood is my atonement.  
If Thou wilt pardon, I will Thee adore.  
No longer there, no more a Man of Sorrows,  
But ris'n, exalted, reigning Prince is He."

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