

# THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

Meditations on the Last Days of Christ

By

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### “LORD, IS IT I?”

WE RETURN to the chamber in which our Lord and His disciples had assembled to eat the Passover, previous to the institution of the sacred ordinance of which we have been treating. We find the disciples in a state of great excitement, in consequence of the unexpected announcement, which had fallen from the lips of their beloved Master, that one of them should betray Him.

The Lord had revealed to them a painfully affecting secret.

He had told them that among them was an unhappy mortal, who would have no part in the kingdom of God, and would never see life. The blood of the Lamb would not cleanse him from sin, nor the righteousness of the Mediator cover him; on the contrary, he would continue what he was, a child of the devil, with regard to whom it would have been better had he never been born.

This reprobate would spurn from him the only ground of salvation, betray the Lord of Glory, and thus become irrecoverably the subject of death and the curse, and plunge himself into eternal perdition.

It was this which JESUS revealed to them; and how do they receive it? Do they say, “Talk as you please, the consequences will not be so fatal. Eternal perdition? there is no one who need apprehend anything of the kind, since God is love.” No, they do not think thus. The idea which pervades their inmost souls and retains the upper hand is this: “He, who at one glance surveys heaven and earth, the present and the future, and in whose mouth no guile was ever found, affirms it;” and hence it is that this expression causes them such anxiety and alarm.

The Lord has also revealed something of a similar kind to us. We likewise hear from His lips, that in all ages, though many are called, yet only few are chosen and find the path to life; while, on the contrary, many, who had likewise better never have been born, walk the road that leads to destruction. There is no want of such pitiable characters in the present day; for He asserts it who cannot lie.

The peace of the disciples is at an end, after this appalling disclosure. They cannot leave the matter thus; they must ascertain who is intended; and they do not seek the culprit at a distance, but among themselves.

Observe here, that it is no infallible sign that we are not ourselves the sons of perdition, because people regard us as the children of God, and because our external deportment seems to justify their opinion.

For among those who are respected, and reputed as blameless characters, among churchmen and those who are apparently devout, nay, even among those who frequent the Lord's Table, may be found such as are rushing onward to destruction.

In congregations where the gospel is preached, Satan entraps individuals in the snare of religious self-deception, as well as in the pits of infidelity and ungodliness. Among those to whom the dreadful words will be addressed, "**I never knew you,**" not a few will be found, who, with good reason, are able to say, "**Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?**"

The disciples were aware of this; and hence, on the Lord's informing them, that there was one among them, who was accursed, they were by no means satisfied with being merely in their Master's immediate vicinity. Let us follow their example in this respect, and not seek at a distance those who shall eventually perish. Let us commence the inquiry within our own walls, and not exclude ourselves from those whom we regard as being possibly the deplorable people in question. On the contrary, let each first examine himself.

It is not only those who openly revolt, and swear allegiance to the enemies of God and His Anointed, who are hastening to perdition, but there are also others, with the Bible in their hands, and the name of JESUS on their lips, who finally perish.

In order that their investigation may not prove fruitless, the disciples resort to the Light - the brightest and most penetrating in the world - which never deceives nor shines with a delusive radiance. It is to JESUS they refer - to Him who tries the heart and the reins, and fathoms every depth. "**Lord,**" they ask, one after the other, deeply concerned and grieved, "**Is it I? Is it I?**" And O, how affecting is this trait, how pleasing and worthy of imitation!

David drew near to this Light when he prayed, "**Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me.**"

Those who try themselves by any other light, only deceive themselves like the Pharisees of old, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Let us inquire into the result of the investigation, and in so doing, we arrive at the most important and pleasing part of the subject. The son of perdition is discovered. Each of them brings him bound to the Lord, and delivers him up to His judgment.

"Each of them?" you ask with surprise. Yes: with one exception, all of them have found the sinner in their own persons. Hear the anxious inquiry which they address to their Master, "**Lord, is it I?**" and observe the downcast look and tearful eye with which they accompany it.

What do they mean by this?

They each intend to say, "Lord, I feel my heart so corrupt that I am capable of committing any evil, and when the wind of temptation blows in that direction, it were even possible for me to betray Thee as Thou hast said; unguarded, and left to myself, I cannot depend upon myself in any respect. Alas, I feel that I am sold under sin, and with my best resolutions, I find I am only like a reed, shaken by the wind."

Such, we may suppose, were the feelings of the disciples.

But while they thus judge and condemn themselves, a gracious look from their beloved Master assures them of their mistake; and this is immediately confirmed to them, still more intelligibly, by His declaration that it was not one of the eleven, but that he who dipped his hand with Him in the dish, was the man that should betray Him.

Let us attend to the important lesson to be derived from this striking scene.

They who really perish in the world - the children of wrath - are those who either do not acknowledge themselves to be sinners in the sight of God, or who, when conscious that they have sin within them, neither judge themselves, nor deliver themselves over to the Lord for judgment.

All those, however, who have discovered in themselves the sinner, who is capable of all evil, and in holy indignation bring him bound before the Holy One of God, and honor the sentence of condemnation pronounced upon him by the Supreme Judge as just and righteous, and imploringly entreat that he may be destroyed by the Holy Spirit, and a new man, a man of God, may be produced within them in his stead - such characters we pronounce blessed; for from the moment of this self-condemnation, they are marked out as individuals against whom the judicial sentence of the supreme tribunal is withdrawn, and who have no need to tremble at any accusation of Moses or Satan.

**"If we judge ourselves,"** says the Word of God, **"we shall not be judged;"** and in another place, **"They that humble themselves shall be exalted."**

Let us, then, listen to the exhortation of the Prophet Jeremiah, and **"let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."** God grant that "in his light we may see light."

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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