

Gethsemane

by Robert Cummins

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CHAPTER NINE

"They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof he would not drink." No, He came to bear it all. He would have us see that He took ALL the suffering, and that because He took it all, we do not have to bear it.

"And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them. . . . And set up over His head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." That too, awaited us! "This is So-and-So, made in the image of GOD, meant to be a king, but because of sin, brought to this place."

Separation, too, was His lot, that terrible period of darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour. Those of you who have never been through such an experience of darkness can scarcely conceive what it means to have GOD hide His face from you, to have come over you the feeling that there is no hope, the conviction that the darkness which has settled down upon you is forever, and will only increase.

GOD let me go through just that. I knew there was no hope ever again for me. I knew it. No one could convince me otherwise. My wife, my dearest friends, my brother, my father, my spiritual leaders -- none of them could convince me otherwise. And no one knows the agony of those awful years of the experience to which I have already referred.

This same darkness was awaiting all of us -- and for all eternity! Utter separation from Him who is light and life and joy and peace and all that is good or of any value! Who can realize it! GOD does sometimes let some of us go through an experience in which we taste just a bit of it. We need to be patient with anyone who is going through such a time. GOD allows such things to come to more of His children than we think. Many have spoken to me of having gone through such a test. Be patient. If you are ever tempted to believe it is hopeless for you, don't give way to it. It may seem impossible for you to do so, but deep down inside of you hold on to this -- GOD let JESUS go through it for you.

He may let you taste something of what He went through; but He will bring you out victorious.

Would you know and understand the depth of His love? He lets you taste something of the stroke that was your due in order that you may know His love. He loves you and would not have you cold toward His love. Therefore, He lets you experience a little of the stroke that was your due, but which instead fell upon Him, your Saviour, your Lover, your GOD -- crucified for you that you might not be crucified, entering the darkness for you that you might be spared!

As JESUS hangs there upon the cross, all the powers of darkness descend to claim Him as their victim. "Sinners are our prey," they cry as they surround Him and fasten their awful clutches upon Him. That is what would have been my lot. But He took my place! Sickness claims Him, the curse claims Him; grief claims Him; pain and torture claim Him; death claims Him; and the devil takes Him captive while the tomb claims His body.

I look. I gaze, and the sight transfixes me. But as I look again I become aware that the sickness that fastened itself upon Him has left my body, the curse that rested upon my mind and soul has sat upon His thorn-crowned head. He took my cancer of sin and with it went guilt, sickness, curse, condemnation, death, and the legions of demons. He took all claims against me. Every writing, every ordinance, every accusation, every charge against me. He took with Him to Calvary. And as I gaze, I become conscious that they are gone, I am free. The strokes due to me have fallen on Him!

O glorious Redeemer! O wondrous Savior! What depths and heights of love!

I kiss Thy hand, nail scarred for me,
And through hot, blinding tears,
Inscribed upon Thy blessed palm,
My name, in blood divine, appears.

My Lord, my GOD, my KING, my ALL,
I count my gain but loss;
Forever let Thy love enthrall
And keep me at the Cross.

What could bewitch me that I should ever leave the cross! Beneath the cross of JESUS I take my stand, and as I linger there the Spirit lets me see my Saviour taking my place in the tomb. Into the realms of that devouring lion, the devil, into the kingdom of darkness He goes, in my place.

Sin and death, darkness and hell, the hosts of evil and their awful king, the devil, rejoice. They gloat over their captive. But they know not the power of the blood of this victim! That incorruptible blood has been engaged in a death grapple with sin. It triumphs. Now sin is blotted out; yes, just as the hosts of the Philistines of hell are gloating over their victory, the mighty power of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, surges within, and sin is blotted out.

Then all the chains and fetters of sickness and the curse, the ropes and bonds of death and the devil's power, snap like the ropes with which the Philistines bound Samson, and He who was dead takes the keys of death and hell from the king of death in his own den and then rises in victorious and complete triumph!

The Son of GOD has destroyed the works of the devil! He has taken away the sins of the world! He has smashed the power of him who had the power of death! The one who took my place was the mighty Son of GOD, the conqueror. Gethsemane's sin and horror are surpassed by the overwhelming victory of the Resurrection. In Gethsemane and Calvary, sin and sickness, death and the devil, did their worst. They would have done it unto me. But He took my place. Their worst was unutterably awful. If it had happened to me-- but He could not bear to have it happen to me! It would have crushed me to eternal doom! So He took my place. In the garden and on the cross and in death He bared His body and His soul to take all the weight of the blows of the hosts of evil that were meant for me. How He suffered! How He was wounded and bruised! How He was crushed and broken! But He bore it all. He let every ounce of the weight and every blow of sin and the curse that I had earned and deserved, fall upon Him. And after they had been laid upon Him, He made sure that they were all there, that not one sin was missing. And then with a shout of triumph, He did away with every sin, broke every fetter, flung off every principality and power, and rose the last Adam, the crown of GOD's new creation.

He who rose triumphant from the grave is the conqueror of sin's poison, of Calvary's curse, of death's power. The world's horror has been met, and now there is Balm in Gilead. There is a blood that is more than a match for sin, sickness, and death. It is not my blood, but the blood of Him who took my place. And now the horror of Gethsemane's great crushing, and the dread breaking of the cross, and the silence and coldness and darkness of the tomb have simply become the pathway to the victory of the Resurrection.

The victory of the empty tomb was a great victory, because it was a victory over all the curse by Him who become a curse in order to deliver us from the curse; because it was a victory over all sickness and infirmity by Him who carried our sicknesses and bore our infirmities; because it was a victory over death by Him who robbed death of its prey.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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