

The Greatest Theme in the World

by

F. D. Marsh

Copyright, 1908, by F. E. MARSH

Copyright © 1908

by F. D. Marsh

~ *out-of-print and in the public domain* ~

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOLINESS AND CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

The atonement of CHRIST was not only an expiation for sin, but a triumph over it.

CHRIST answered for sin that we should cease to answer to it. His death for sin is the death of sin. His passion for us quenches the passion of sin. The outward crucifixion of CHRIST which procures the benefit of pardon is the inward power which gives us to experience the inward crucifixion of self.

Sir Noel Paton's picture, *Death the Gate of Life*, has a meaning other than in the mind of the artist. A weary knight, wounded in his conflict with evil, has passed through the valley of the shadow of death, and is represented as kneeling in deep humility at the entrance of light and life. He has put off his helmet with the Crest of falcon wings and peacock feathers - emblems of worldly ambition and pride. The belt and sword which are cast aside, and the armour which is falling off, indicate the renunciation of his own strength. The overblown hemlock, rank weeds, and withered branches on this side of the veil speak of sin's deadly poison, and of disappointed hopes, while the white lilies and wild roses on the other side tell of the purity and joy which blossom there. The permanence of the life he is entering is indicated by a dear and steadfast star which shines in the sky, while the waning moon on the horizon typifies the mutability of the life he is leaving behind.

The death of CHRIST is the gate of the spiritual life. No one lives to purpose who does not know the purport of that [104] death.

- The *lowliness of the Cross* is the death of pride and the life of humility;
- The *separation of the Cross* means the severance from sin, and sanctification to the Lord;
- The *manifestation of the Cross* is the unfolding of love and the inspiration of all love;
- The *passion of the Cross* quenches the passion of evil desire, and impassionates with a holy fire of devotion;
- The *Blood of the Cross* cleanses from the pollution of sin and the pleasures of iniquity; the world's ad of murder in crucifying CHRIST, removes the believer from the company of the world's fellowship; and

- The *death of the Cross* is the death to everything not in the will of GOD.

There are certain words, Calvary words, which have a new meaning begotten within them because of their association with the CHRIST of Calvary-

CRUCIFIXION

There are four things which are said to be crucified in the crucifixion of CHRIST, namely, the old man, self, the flesh, and the world.

The Old Man. "**Knowing this our old man is crucified with Him**" (Romans 6:6). The compound word rendered "**crucified with**" means *co-Crucifixion*. To crucify means to impale on a stake, and co-crucifixion means to be crucified in company with others, as when the thieves were crucified with CHRIST. "**The old man,**" which was crucified with CHRIST, is the sum total of the old self life, as made up by sin. The man of old is the old man in the totality of sin.

When the Gibeonites came to Joshua, they came with "**old sacks, old wine skins, old clothes, and old clouted shoes, and dry and mouldy bread.**" Professedly the old things with the old past of their lives. The whole lot of old rubbish should [105] have been burnt, and they themselves killed, but they caught Joshua napping, and got past him by their craft.

Our Joshua was not caught napping; the whole of our old habits formed in sin were condemned on the Cross, and died there the death they deserved, and they are therefore no longer dominating us, for His death ended their existence.

Self Crucified. "**I am crucified with Christ**" (Galatians 2:20). Here, again, it is co-crucifixion. If a dead leaf stalk is examined it will be found that the old channel is silted by a barrier invisible to the naked eye. On last year's leaf the plant has shut the door, condemning it to decay, and soon, without further effort, the stalk loosens, the winds play around it, and it falls away.

The Cross of CHRIST shuts off the life of self, and is a barrier which stands between us and it, as we reckon we have died with Him. The title of a sermon read "Self crucifixion: the secret of a spiritual life." No, that is the blunder which many are making, it is not self crucifixion, but crucifixion with CHRIST. It is not putting ourselves to death, but believing we are put to death in the death of CHRIST. The one is useless trying, and the other is unfailing triumph.

The Flesh Crucified. "**They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof**" (Galatians 5:24). The flesh denotes the principle of life in man which is alienated from GOD, incurably and unmendably bad, of the Blood of CHRIST brings us nigh to GOD, so this death kills that which caused us to go away from Him. The way to overcome the flesh and its works is to die with CHRIST to the flesh which works.

The World Crucified. "**The world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world**" (Galatians 6:14). The world, generally speaking is
[106]

"Whatever passes as a cloud between,
The mental eye of faith and things unseen,
Causing that brighter world to disappear,
Or seem less lovely or its hope less dear,
That is our world, our idol, though it bear
Affections impress, or devotions air."

To the world, and all that is in it, we are crucified.

We read of:

- the debarring wisdom of the world (I Corinthians 1:21),
- the evil character of the world (Galatians 1:4),
- the course of the world (Ephesians 2:2),
- the dominating darkness of the world (Ephesians 6:12),
- the opposition of the friendship of the world (James 4:4),
- the deadening power of the corruption in the world (II Peter 1:4),
- the contamination of the pollutions of the world (II Peter 2:20), and
- the trinity of the things of the world (I John 2:15).

To all of these we are crucified, and they are to be to us as dead things, and then we shall be as a dead thing to the world. If we see the world on the Cross, the world will see us on the Cross.

Professor Upham asks the question, "What is it to be inwardly crucified? It is to have no desire, no purpose, no aim, but such as comes by Divine inspiration, or is attended by the Divine approbation. To be inwardly crucified, it is to cease to love Mammon in order that we may love GOD, to have no eye for the world's possessions, no ear for the world's applause, no tongue for the world's envious or useless conversation, no terror for the world's opposition. To be inwardly crucified is to be, among the things of the world a stranger and a pilgrim; separate from what is evil, sympathizing with what is good, but never with idolatrous attachment; seeing GOD in all things, and all things in GOD. To be inwardly crucified is, in the language of Tauler, to cease [107] entirely from the life of self, to abandon equally what we see and what we possess, our power, our knowledge, our affections; so that the soul in regard to any action originating in itself is without life, without action, and without power, and receives its life, its action, and its power from GOD alone."

DEATH

CHRIST's death for sin is our death to it.

There are many things to which we are dead in that death.

- We are dead to sin's penalty (Romans 6:7),
- We are dead to sin's power (Romans 6:2),
- We are dead to sin's presence (Romans 6:7),
- We are dead to sin's practice (I Peter 2:21),
- We are dead to the law (Galatians 2:19; Romans 7:4),

- We are dead to self (II Corinthians 5:15), and
- We are dead to the world (Galatians 2:20); and

He died that we should live to Him (II Corinthians 5:15), and ultimately live with Him (II Timothy 2:12).

When Clerk Maxwell, the scientist, was asked what he thought was the greatest discovery of the nineteenth century, he replied that the greatest discovery that he knew of was that "the Gramm machine is reversible." The Gramm machine is for the producing of electricity; and it had been discovered that both power develops electricity, and electricity develops power; and that is what he meant when he referred to the fact that the machine is reversible.

As powers develops electricity, and electricity power; so the death of CHRIST for us generates power over the cause of death - sin; and that victory over sin makes us appreciate more than ever His death for sin.

PASSION

CHRIST showed Himself alive after His passion (Acts 1:3) . The word "**passion**" signifies *intense suffering*. It is [108] translated "**vexed**" in Matthew 17:15; and "**felt**" in Acts 28:5.

The word is used to denote the sufferings of CHRIST on our account twenty times (Matthew 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; Hebrews 2:9; 5:8; 9:26; 13:12; I Peter 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1).

We too are called to suffer for Him, since He has suffered for us.

- We are called, as Paul was, to suffer at the hands of the world for His sake (Acts 9:16; Philippians 1:29; I Thessalonians 2:14; II. Thessalonians 1:5; II. Timothy 1:12).
- We are called to suffer wrongfully and thus follow in the steps of CHRIST (I Peter 2:19-21); not threatening our enemies (I Peter 2:23); and yet further,
- We are also called to suffer for righteousness sake and well doing (I Peter 3:14, 17); and in it all to commit ourselves in well doing to GOD (I Peter 4:19), remembering that suffering leads to the glory (I Peter 5:10).

The suffering we may receive from men is nothing in comparison to the suffering of soul which the saint experiences on behalf of men.

The sufferings of CHRIST make us feel with the CHRIST of the sufferings (I Peter 4:1). To arm ourselves with the same mind of CHRIST in suffering, we must know the sufferings of the mind which suffered.

Henry Martin knew something of this when he said "I desire to burn out for my GOD."

James Hannington had the same spirit when, in the face of tremendous opposition, he exclaimed, "I refuse to be disappointed; I will only praise."

"David Brainerd, burned with the same fire. He wrote in his journal: 'I think my soul was never drawn out in intercession for others as it has been this night; I hardly ever so longed to live to GOD, and to be altogether devoted to Him; I wanted to wear out my life for Him. I wrestled for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes [109] of poor souls. I was in such an agony from sun half-an-hour high, till near dark, that I was all over sweat; but, oh! my dear Lord did sweat Blood for such poor souls: I longed for more compassion.'"

SACRIFICE

CHRIST's sacrifice is alone and unique. He gave Himself "**a sacrifice to God**" (Ephesians 5:2) . That sacrifice ascended, like the burnt offering, as a sweet savour to GOD. It brought satisfaction and delight to Him. CHRIST was daily His delight before He came to earth; but on the earth, when He gave Himself up to death "**for us**," GOD received a pleasure He had not received before.

We are now called, as the Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5).

Some of those sacrifices are:

- the humble sacrifice of a broken heart (Psalm 51:17),
- the heart's sacrifice of adoring praise (Hebrews 13:15),
- the helpful sacrifice of doing good to others (Hebrews 13:16; Philippians 4:18),
- the holy sacrifice of fellowship with others (Philippians 2:17), and
- the living sacrifice of a wholly yielded body (Romans 12:1).

Froude says of sacrifice, "In common things the law of sacrifice takes the form of positive duty. The law of Christian sacrifice goes beyond 'positive duty,' it spends itself, at its own cost out of love to Him Who spent Himself out for us. The Apostle uses two expressions which exemplify what kind of sacrifice is ignited by the flames of Calvary's sacrifice. He says, "**I will gladly spend and be spent**" (II Corinthians 12:15).

"**Spend**" means *to incur cost, to expend, to consume*. The word is used to denote the bankruptcy of the prodigal and the diseased woman: the one spending his all in riotous [110] living, and the other in paying doctors to rid her of her malady (Luke 15:14; Mark 5:26). The word is rendered "**Consume**" in James 4:3, and "**charges**" in Acts 21:24.

"**Spent**" means *to be exhausted*. It is the same as the previous word, with the added preposition "ek" -" *ekdapanao*." We might paraphrase the apostle's sentence, "I would gladly spend all I have, and be spent out in doing it."

The seal of the London Missionary Society is an ox standing between an altar and a plough, with the words, "Ready for either." Sacrifice or service. The Calvary moved man sacrifices himself in serving. "The Church is Christian, as it is a continuous organ of the passion of CHRIST." "We can never heal the needs we do not feel. Tearless hearts can never be heralds of the Passion. We must pity if we would redeem."

We must perfect, by our passion and sacrifice, the sacrifice and passion of our Lord. The dying

of our Lord in His members is to be constantly effected by the indwelling Spirit.

"DELIVERED"

"**He was delivered for our offences**" (Romans 4:25). Men that have "**hazarded**" their lives (Acts 15:26). Here is another blood-drenched word.

The word translated "**hazarded**" and "**delivered**" signifies *to be absolutely given over*. There is more than risk suggested, another word would be *abandoned*. It is used to denote wicked men given over by GOD to the sins to which they had given themselves.

When we give ourselves up, like the Lord, to Obedience unto death, we are effective servants as He proved to be. An old proverb says, "We cannot have omelet without breaking eggs." We cannot get anything whole without something being broken.

The aroma which filled the house [111] of Martha came from the broken box of spikenard and gave pleasure to the contemplating Sufferer.

Judas spoke of "**waste**" because he was "*a son of waste*" (the word "**waste**" and "**perdition**" are one and the same in the Greek - John 17:12; Matthew 22:8).

When we give up our lives to Him Who gave Himself for us, we give to some purpose. The apostle speaks of the "**form of doctrine which was delivered unto you**" (Romans 6:17). The word "**delivered**" is the same as occurs in Romans 4:25 and Acts 15:26. Rotherham comments on the passage, "Ye become obedient out of the heart into the mould of teaching into which ye were delivered"; or as Moule, "To which ye were handed over."

The truth of the death of CHRIST is likened to a mould into which believers had abandoned themselves like molten metal, to be formed. We often speak of holding truth, but the true way is to let the truth hold us. To be held by the truth of CHRIST's death is to be fashioned like to Him Who gave Himself up for us, which means we give ourselves over in obedience to the will of GOD even as He did.

"LIFTED UP"

CHRIST spoke of His death as a lifting up (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34).

The word "**lifted up**" is also associated with the spiritual life. It is rendered "**exalted**" in calling attention to the action of the Father in exalting CHRIST to His own right hand (Acts 2:33; 5:31), and the Lord promises He will "**lift up**" (James 4:10) and "**exalt**" those who take the place of humility.

CHRIST took the lowest place in death, and He now occupies, in consequence, the highest position in glory.

He stooped and conquered.

Those who seek the highest place get the lowest, while those who seek the lowest position are sooner or later given the highest [112] one. The highest form of holiness is humility. Lowliness is the base of every virtue, and where it is not found holiness does not exist.

One thing of passing interest, in CHRIST's reference to the uplifted serpent in the wilderness is the word translated "**pole**" in Numbers 21:8, 9; it is the same as rendered "**Nissi**" in speaking of **the Lord our Banner** (Exodus 17:1 5, margin). The word is frequently rendered "**banner**" (Psalm 9:4; Isaiah 13:2), and "**ensign**" (Isaiah 5:26; 11:10, 12; 18:3).

The word means a sign or a signal. The author of Wisdom (16:6) says, "A sign or signal of present salvation to the Israelites from the poison of the fiery serpents, and of the spiritual salvation from that old serpent, through Him Who was lifted upon the Cross." "The lifting up of CHRIST is GOD's sign of assurance that He will lift us up into all He has for us. Fellowship with the CHRIST in the lowliness of His death, is GOD's assurance that we shall have the livingness of His life. The deeper we sink into His death, the higher we rise into His life.

"MANIFESTED."

CHRIST in His death was the manifestation of the love and purpose of GOD (I John 4:9); hence we read, "**He was manifested**" to put away sin (Hebrews 9:26), and to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). As He was the manifestation of GOD in all He did, so we are to manifest we belong to Him by not sinning (I John 3:10), by diligent heed to the things which He enjoins (I Timothy 4:16), and by letting our blamelessness and harmlessness be seen by the world (Philippians 2:15).

As CHRIST was the revelation of the Father in all He did and said, so we are to be the manifestation of CHRIST in all we do and say. [113]

Shakespeare says-

"To thy own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

I prefer to say-

"To the Lord's death be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false in anything."

Loyal-heartedness to His love will make us loving-hearted to our fellows. We love Him faithfully, as we serve others heartedly.

"BOUGHT"

"**Bought with a price**" is the Spirit's word as He reminds us to Whom we belong, and the price which CHRIST paid for us (I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23).

The price which He paid was His own Blood as the Elders affirm (Revelation 5:9), and the answer to that price is our Blood if needs be (I John 3:16).

In the days of slavery an aged Negro was put up for sale. A gentleman asked him, "My man, to whom do you belong?"

He answered, "My flesh, and bones, and blood belong to old Massa Carl, but my spirit am a free-born child of GOD, bought by the precious Blood of CHRIST."

Not only our spirit, but spirit, soul, and body belong to Him Who purchased us. The price He paid for us is above all price.

"What is the price of that picture?" said a lady to an artist's widow.

"That last work of my husband is beyond all price." [114]

The price. CHRIST paid for us cannot be priced, neither can we be bought by sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, if we price ourselves at the price He paid. We were precious to Him so He paid His precious Blood for us. And if we estimate ourselves at His price, no price can buy us from Him.

"CONSTRAINETH"

CHRIST in contemplating the fiery baptism of GOD's judgment against sin, with which He was to be immersed, said, "**How am I straightened till it be accomplished?**" (Luke 12:50). The word "*sunecho*," rendered "**straightened**," means *to compress, to hold together*.

It is used in speaking:

- of a person "**taken**" with a sickness (Matthew 4:24; Luke 4:38),
- of one who is in the "**throng**" of a multitude (Luke 8:45),
- of a man "**held**" forcibly by others (Luke 22:63), and
- of one in a "**strait**" between two things, who does not know which one to choose (Philippians 1:23).

The word is further found in connection with Paul, once when he was "**pressed in spirit**" (Acts 18:5), and when he said, "**The love of Christ constraineth us**" (II Corinthians 5:14). CHRIST was pressed, thronged, impelled by the mighty love He had for us, hence., He went through the pressure of the winepress of GOD's judgment against our sin, and it is that fact of His love which holds us as in a master grip, and with which we grip Him and others.

There is a legend of an artist, who had in his picture a marvellous red tint. No other had learned the secret, and it died with him. After his death a red wound was discovered near his heart, and the secret of the wonderful color in his paintings was revealed. It was his heart's blood which gave his work the peculiar tint. The old legend [115] tells a deep spiritual truth. Only heart's blood can give the hand of labor the needed touch of sympathy. Labor without love fades away

like the cloud of mist before the sun, but love's labor is always in favor. The warmth of love makes the hand of work of sterling worth.

"REDEEM"

The practical purpose of CHRIST's redemptive work is, "**that He might redeem us from all iniquity.**" The word "*lutroo*," translated "**redeem**" in Titus 2:14, means *to ransom*, and comes from "*lutron*," which means *a redemptive price by means of which anything is loosened from bondage*, and "*lutron*" comes from the primary verb "*luo*," which means *to loosen, to dissolve, melt, put-off*. "*Luo*" is rendered "**melt**" and "**dissolved**" in II Peter 3:10, 11; "**unloose**" in Mark 1:7; "**put off**" in Acts 7:33; "**broken up**" in Acts 13:43; and "**destroy**" in I John 3:8.

CHRIST died to break the power of sin, to destroy the works of the devil, to put off from us the old habits, and to dissolve the iniquity which once held us in its sway and way.

"**Iniquity**" is that from which CHRIST redeems. There are two words rendered "**iniquity**."

One signifies *unrighteousness*, that is, anything which is not straight. It is translated "**iniquity**" and "**unrighteousness**" in II Timothy 2:19 and I John 1:9.

The other word which is used in the sentence we are considering, means *lawlessness, the violation of law*, and indicates man's self-will in opposition to GOD's will. We read of "**the mystery of iniquity**" in II Thessalonians 2:7.

The essence of sin is self-will, the essence of holiness is doing GOD's will. To delight in GOD's will is to know GOD will delight in us. CHRIST died for us in carrying out GOD's will [116] in our salvation, and the outcome is, we die to our will, and let Him work in us according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

"SANCTIFY"

CHRIST in His prayer for His disciples prays, "**For their sakes I sanctify myself**" (John 17:19). CHRIST consecrated Himself in the consecration of His Father's will that He might consecrate us to the Father.

"**For their sakes**" implies the sacrifice of Himself, and that sacrifice was that believers might be sanctified in the truth.

He gave Himself for the Church that He might sanctify and cleanse it, and He suffered without the gate that He might sanctify the people with His own Blood (Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 13:12). The iron ore is put into the furnace that the slag may be separated from the useable and useful metal. CHRIST was the holy fuel Who was consumed in the furnace of GOD's holy purpose, that He might separate the refuse of every unclean thing from us, and separate us, in the qualification of the HOLY SPIRIT, to the Lord, that we might be useable to Him and useful to others for Him. Separation to the Holy One is to find the holiness, the love, the joy, the grace, the power, the truth, of the Holy One, and for the Holy One, to be separated to us.

"PERFECTED"

The goal of CHRIST's life was His death.

One step short of that end would have meant failure to Him, but He knew He would be "**perfected**" (Luke 13:32), that He would "**finish**" the work allotted to Him (John 4:34), and He was not disappointed in His faith, hence, He joyfully [117] exclaims His work finished, "**It is finished**" (John 17:4; 19:30.).

As a matter of grace, He has "**perfected**" for ever "**those who are sanctified**" (Hebrews 10:14).

Now He desires that we should have:

- a perfect understanding in spiritual things - a mature faith (I Corinthians 14:20),
- a perfect standing in the will of GOD (Colossians 4:12),
- a perfect stature in the Divine Life. (Philippians 3:15; Hebrews 5:14; James 1:4),
- a perfect mastery over the tongue (James 3:2),
- a perfect faith by corresponding work (James 2:22),
- a perfect keeping of GOD's Word by our obedience (I John 2:4, 5), and
- a perfect love to GOD by loving each other (I John 4:12).

"*Teleioo*" and "*teleios*," which are rendered "**perfect**" and "**finished**" in the above scriptures, signify completeness, reaching a goal, answering to a given end. CHRIST did that for us when He died on our account. All things that were written of Him were accomplished (John 19:28), for He accomplished all the things which were written. All He commands us to do in His Word is possible, for He lives, since He died to carry out in us all He asks from us. He lives to purpose, when He lives in us to carry out His purpose.

"POURED OUT"

"**He poured out His soul unto death**" (Isaiah 53:12) is the expressive declaration which reveals how much CHRIST gave in dying for us. The term, "**poured out**," means, *to demolish, to be destitute, to. empty, to be made bare*. It is rendered "**emptied**" in speaking of Rebekah emptying the water out of her pitcher (Genesis 24:20.), and "**rase**" (margin, "*make bare*") in describing the razing of a building to its foundation (Psalm 137:7). CHRIST emptied Himself out for us that He might enrich us with the water [118] of life; and He was razed to the ground that we might be found in the beautiful temple of His holiness.

The apostle, in writing to the Church at Philippi, says "**If I be offered** [poured forth, margin] **upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy**" (Philippians 2:17); and to his son, Timothy, he says, as he contemplates his death, "**I am now ready to be offered** [*poured out as a drink offering*]" (II Timothy 4:6). The reference is to the drink offering (Exodus 29:40, 41).

The Greeks of old delighted to relate how Phidippides, having achieved great success in the great battle at Marathon, ran into Athens, and recounted the event, and closed his oration by exclaiming, "Rejoice ye, as we rejoice," and fell down dead. He out of love of country could do this, how much more should we be willing, out of love to CHRIST, to pour ourselves out for

Him Who poured Himself out for us.

"THE PRINT OF THE NAILS"

"**The print of the nails**" (John 20:25). The word translated "**print**" suggests *a die, a stamp, or scar*, and thus by analogy denotes *a resemblance to that which made the impression*. It is the word used in speaking of a sample, a figure. It is rendered "**figure**" in Romans 5:14, "**pattern**" in Hebrews 8:5, and "**examples**" in I Corinthians 10:6, 11.

The nails' print proclaims the nails of our sin which made the print.

The same word frequently occurs in connection with the believer being an example of the power and blessing of the Gospel. See Philippians 3:17; I Thessalonians 1:7; II Thessalonians 3:9; I Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7; I Peter 5:3, where the words "**pattern**" and "**ensample**" are the same. The HOLY SPIRIT also uses the word in Romans 6:17, [119] where it is given "**form**" in calling attention to the "**form of doctrine**" to which the saints had been given up.

Hall gives the best interpretation of this thought - "Seest thou thy Saviour hanging on the Cross? All hang there with Him, as a knight or burgess of Parliament voices his whole borough or country. The members take the same lot as the head. Every believer is a limb of that body; therefore, how can he but die with Him and in Him? That real union, then, which is betwixt CHRIST and us, makes the Cross or any passion of CHRIST's ours; so the thorns pierced our heads, the scourges blooded our backs, the nails wounded our hands and feet, and the spear gored our sides and hearts; by virtue whereof we receive justification from our sins, and true mortification of our corruptions. Every believer, therefore, is dead already for his sins in his Saviour; he need not fear that he shall die again." [120]

~ end of chapter 8 ~
