

JOHN THREE: SIXTEEN

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CHAPTER FOUR -

That He Gave

THE WORLD KNOWS something about gifts. "Philanthropy" is a common word. It means "love of man." A philanthropist is one who gives that which may help man, he gives to promote happiness or the social elevation of man. A man may be philanthropic without having any real love, or without doing much good. A philanthropist's gifts may be administered through committees. We have read a great deal, recently, of the gifts of Rockefeller. You might say that a great university was born out of this man's gifts. Carnegie gave millions for the establishment of libraries, and you find them everywhere. He gave that the poor as well as the rich might read, study, learn. There are others whose benefactions have been printed in the columns of the newspapers, and in magazines. These men have given much. Society says so. These men have given much. Platform, press and pulpit say so. These men have given much? Who says they have given much? How many philanthropists have ever missed a meal because of their giving? How many have had to go without luxuries because of their giving? How much did their giving cost them?

You may have heard of the humble Scotch woman who lived for many years on porridge that she might give to missions the cost of her comforts and luxuries. One day a friend gave her sixpence to "buy a chop," as he said. She looked at it, and then said, "I have got on very well on porridge so far, and I think I'll just stick to it, and give the sixpence to missions."

Have you ever given a chop for CHRIST's sake? John Howard said something on Christian giving that is well worth repeating: "We must learn to give of our luxuries to supply the comforts of others; our comforts to supply their necessities; and even our necessities to supply their extremities."

In the temple, rich men came and cast in much? and then came a poor widow who cast in two mites - less than half a cent. The world would speak of the large gifts of the rich men, and ignore the insignificant gift of the widow, but our Lord said: **"Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living"** (Mark 12:41-44). She gave. Giving, in the sight of GOD, costs.

Well, we talk about our giving. We pay a thousand dollars for a car, and give ten dollars to missions; so much do we love the world. We pay ten dollars for a hat, and give a dime to missions; so much do we love the world.

"God so loved the world that He gave" - what?

- The silver and the gold which are His? No. Such a gift would cost Him nothing.
- The cattle on a thousand hills? No. Such a gift would cost Him nothing.
- GOD so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son - that cost Him everything.

That is the measure of His love for you. When John says, "**God... gave,**" it means that He did something out of love for us - did it quite voluntarily, freely, without being forced. GOD loves us.

"That He Gave" Means Suffering - The Suffering of the Son

Some one has said that His life was a continual crucifixion, and such it might be called. Through His whole life, He was a **"Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."** In life. From Bethlehem to Calvary the shafts of hatred and cruelty were directed against Him. He was scarcely come into the world when Herod sought His life. As an **"Infant of days,"** He was compelled to flee into Egypt. He suffered the pinch of poverty. He was born in a stable and laid in a manger. Undoubtedly the home of His youth was a poor one - the Son of GOD in the home of a carpenter.

From Himself, when a grown man, came the statement **"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."** He was a homeless man.

He suffered the pangs of hunger. We miss one meal and say, "I'm starved!" I doubt if any of us know what real hunger is. He was forty days and nights without food, and the SPIRIT of GOD records:

"He afterward hungered." Did you ever notice how interested He was in hungry people? He knew what they suffered. He suffered the parch of thirst. He sat on the well, and asked the woman of Samaria for a drink. Thirsty! But that thirst was as nothing in comparison to the thirst of Calvary. His mouth was dry as dust. He was like a vessel in the potter's kiln. Stalker tells of a wounded soldier who lay on the battlefield in pain and suffering; After a time one agony outdid all the rest - it was the agony of thirst. The agonies of our Lord were all swallowed up in that one intense, tormenting, most intolerable agony that man can suffer, and He opened His parched, glazed lips to cry, **"I thirst."** He suffered the agony of the rich man in Hell who begged for one drop of water to cool his tongue.

He suffered the droop of weariness. His was a continual service, that ignored food and rest in behalf of others. He slept in a boat in the midst of a raging storm which would not permit others to sleep, so worn was He. Nor did He awake until roused by His disciples.

He suffered the sting of slander. The Holy One was called a wine-bibber and a glutton. It was declared to Him that He did His work through Beelzebub, a filthy, unclean spirit. His enemies slapped Him in the face with: **"We be not born of fornication,"** implying that He was.

He suffered the hurt of misunderstanding. Even His own did not understand Him. The Lord of Glory was railed at for the humbleness of His birth. The educated of His day sneered at the Omniscient One as "**having never learned.**" Herod tried to make a county-fair buffoon out of Him. The King of Kings was made a mock king, with thorns for a crown, and a rotten reed for a scepter. He was called in derision the "**Friend of... sinners.**"

He suffered the sadness of loneliness. He was in the world, but the world knew Him not. He was in the world, away from His home, away from His kind. He was alone, in life, in death - alone. He wrestled, sorrowed, suffered, died, alone.

He suffered the grief of estrangement. The crowds that followed Him to see His miracles, or to eat His bread, forsook Him to such an extent that He finally turned to His disciples and said, "**Will ye also go away?**" In His last hours they "**all forsook Him and fled.**"

He suffered the horror of anticipation. Anticipated evil is sometimes worse than the reality. He foreknew His sufferings and foretold them to His disciples, and, as Stalker says, "These communications grew more and more vivid and minute month by month, as if they were taking stronger hold on His imagination." This horror of anticipation culminated in Gethsemane.

He suffered the agony of temptation, or testing. Not only was He tested forty days in the wilderness, but He was tested and tried every day. Throughout all His life He endured the "**contradiction of sinners against Himself.**" He was tested by His FATHER. He was tested by Satan. He was tested by men. He was the Tested One.

He suffered the anguish of rejection. He was wounded in the house of His friends! The wounds of enemies are bad, but the wounds of friends much worse. Peter took an oath that he had never known this man JESUS. He was betrayed by one of His own. A chosen follower sold Him for thirty pieces of silver, and betrayed Him with a kiss - a kiss! The most notorious kiss in human history. He came into the world to save men, to make men His friends. He put His foot into a fallen world, and entered the circle of human society. He let His love shine in their haunts of sin. He was called in derision the "**friend of publicans and sinners.**"

Then men whom He loved cried out, "**Away with Him!**" Jews and Gentiles joined hands in crucifying the One Who was their Friend. He was wounded in the house of His friends. He was rejected by the world; He was rejected by His nation; He was rejected by His country; He was rejected by His city; He was rejected by His kindred; He was rejected by His friends. He was even rejected by His GOD!

These sufferings and many more He endured for us. They were necessary. "**It behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.**" "**In that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.**" "**We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.**" He knows from experience what sorrow means. He knows a wounded spirit, a burdened soul, a bleeding, broken heart. He suffered bitterly to enter into our sufferings that we might have a sympathizing SAVIOUR. In sorrow we can lay our head upon His bosom.

In death. He went to Calvary from Gethsemane - the place of the olive press. Go with Him to Gethsemane, and hear Him exclaim, "**My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.**" "**Oh My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.**" "**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.**" The moon was full and clear that night, but He was in the inky shadows cast by the olive trees, going through the darkest experience of His career. He was in an agony strange to men, to angels, to demons. Sometimes we sing, "*I'll go with Him through the garden.*" Better not sing it. You'll never go into that garden experience. You cannot, for you are sinful, while He was sinless. You cannot understand that fact. There was in Him no twist or taint of sin, yet He must accept sin with all its dread consequences. Calvary was in Gethsemane. The Cross was there in anticipation. He carried the Cross before He ever went up the hill called Calvary. It was that anticipated separation from GOD that made Him sweat blood.

Some one says, "Yes, but that experience was for a short time only." Short? As if such experiences could ever be measured by the clock! A man can live eternity in an hour. No clock can ever tick! tick! tick! the length of time to our Lord when GOD's face was hidden from Him.

We can't understand. He came out of that Garden with His white garment crimson splotted. He had ceased to sweat water. He had sweat blood.

He went from the Garden to the hands of men - the Creator in the hands of His creatures. Here one clenched his fist and smote Him in the face. There another wrapped his hand in the beard of our Lord and plucked away hair, skin, flesh. Another puckered up his lips and spat full into that blessed face. My soul! They spit upon Him! They spit upon Him! They crowned Him with thorns. They beat Him over the head with a rod. They scourged Him. The scourging was torture - indeed, it tortured many a man to death. The scourged one had wrists bound to ankles, with the back bared. The leather thongs of the scourge, into which bits of steel and stone and bone had been knitted, wrapped themselves round the body of the victim, sometimes smashing out eyes, or teeth, cutting flesh to shreds. They scourged Him!

They crucified Him. The agonies of the Cross were so extreme that they were pronounced the utmost torment possible. The Cross was the most extreme punishment that man has ever inflicted. "The extension of the limbs after scourging, the impossibility of making the slightest change or motion without occasioning suffering; the piercing of the hands and the feet, the exposure of the lacerated flesh and the wounds to the action of the hot burning sun and air, hour after hour, the sense of indignity and contempt, which was the most bitter, malicious, and unsparing that can be conceived, all conspired to make this the most dreaded death of all modes of execution."

Thus CHRIST suffered - stripped, scourged, pierced on the Cross.

"Ye that pass by, behold the Man!
The Man of Grief, condemned for you,
The LAMB of GOD for sinners slain,
Weeping, to Calvary pursue.

"His sacred limbs they stretch, they tear

With nails they fasten to the wood;
His sacred limbs exposed and bare,
Or only covered with His blood."

A woman in New York City was showing a girl Tintoretto's great picture of the crucifixion. To the right in the picture is a cross with one of the thieves nailed to it. On the left is the other thief, just being nailed to his cross. The soldiers have stretched him out and some are brutally holding down his hands, while another is driving the spikes through the tender palms. He is resisting with all his might, and filling the air with groans and curses. In the center of the picture is CHRIST. He is already crucified. The soldiers have stretched Him out on the Cross, and the nails have been driven through His hands and His feet. The soldiers have taken the Cross with its heavy burden, and dropped it into the deep hole prepared. As the Cross sank into its place and the terrible strain fell upon His hands and feet, an agony was produced that no tongue could express.

The artist has brought out the expression with startling vividness. As the woman showed the picture to the girl, and tried to describe the crucifixion, the girl, eyes widening with horror, finally said: "O-o-oh! You don't mean to say that JESUS was crucified ALIVE?"

Alive? Oh, yes, we have no conception of the unearthly sufferings He endured in death - sufferings that broke His heart.

These sufferings were necessary. Only through such sufferings could the CAPTAIN of our salvation be made perfect (Hebrews 2:10). Make no mistake about this perfection. He was ever perfect in Person, but He could not be a perfect SAVIOUR apart from sufferings and death, for such are the wages of sin. He was made a little lower than the angels that He might taste death for every man (Hebrews 2:9).

In judgment. His sufferings from men were as nothing in comparison to the judgment of GOD which rested upon Him. The malice of hell was in the hatred of men loosed against Him at the Cross. No suffering which could be invented but was added to His cup. His outward sufferings were practically forgotten when GOD inflicted Him with the just judgment against our transgressions.

GOD's curse consists of what is far worse than bodily pain. He suffered penal sorrow, of which we know nothing. We have experienced nothing but mercy at GOD's hand.

We have never tasted one drop of the cup whose dregs the SAVIOUR drained. He suffered immediately at the hand of GOD. No wonder Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with fire; but, oh! why did GOD visit the fire of His wrath upon the Son of His love? Because GOD is the avenger of sin. It is GOD's honor that is vindicated. It is GOD's law that is magnified. He was shut out from GOD that we might eternally be shut in with GOD. He suffered hell for us when He cried, "**My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?**"

Bishop Ryle said, "Real and literal must have been our Lord's substitution for us, when He could speak of Himself as forsaken." CHRIST was taking the place of the lost. One has written: "It is the picture of an eclipsed GOD and a lost soul."

There is nothing in all the annals of the human race like this. When Stephen died, the grace of GOD was so sufficient that his face shone. Stephen did not cry, "Forsaken!" Martyrs have praised GOD in death, but on the Cross, out of an endless eternity of fellowship, came that cry from CHRIST's lips. Sinner, the torment of a single sin is infinitely worse than the Cross, the nails, the spear.

These sufferings were necessary. It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment. That is GOD's official pronouncement upon a race of sinners, so He must suffer judgment and death. These sufferings were for our sins.

- Had it not been for our sins the fiends of hell might have raged, but would not have been suffered to have any power against Him.
- Had it not been for our sins, His human enemies would have been restrained from injuring a hair of His head.
- Had it not been for our sins, GOD's arm would never have been stretched out against Him - yea, it would sooner have forgotten its cunning.

No, "none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through to save that one that was lost."

The Sufferings of the FATHER

We must remember, when we say GOD so loved the world, that GOD so loved His Son! GOD's love for the Son was much greater than His love for the world. His love for His Son was an ineffable love. Consider how near the Son was to the Father. He was His only Son. He was the Son of His love. GOD calls Him His dear Son. We cannot understand that infinite, holy love, nor can we understand that gift of love for the world. That love wants a name, which made the FATHER of mercies deliver His Son to such miseries for us. It breaks our hearts to see our children struggling in the pangs of death. Would I stand within the windows of my house and look upon my son in the hands of an angry mob - a mob that smote him, spit upon him, and tried to kill him? Indeed, no!

I would rush into the midst of that mob and do my best to rend them limb from limb to save my son! Indeed, I would! The FATHER in Heaven saw the motley crowd take the Son of His love and smite Him, and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and crucify Him! With one blast of His lips GOD could have scattered that Christ-crucifying crowd; with His hand GOD could have swept that murderous crowd into an eternal hell. But, wonder of wonders! When GOD saw all this, He held the breath of His lips, He stayed His hand - GOD GAVE!

The Son suffered, Oh, yes, but know that every thong of that scourge that wrapped itself around the body of the Son, wrapped itself round the heart of the FATHER! Every thorn that pierced the brow of the Son pierced the heart of the FATHER. Every nail that pierced the hands and feet of the Son pierced the heart of the FATHER. The rough Roman spear that was thrust into the side of the Son was thrust into the heart of the FATHER. **"God so loved the world that He GAVE."**

"That He Gave" Means Substitution

Is it not plain to you that because GOD is just He must judge sin? Our GOD would be no GOD were He not just. His justice is as high as His love. A just GOD can have no mercy upon sin. Let me emphasize that there never was, there never will be mercy for sin. There is mercy for the sinner, but none for sin. I am forgiven, but my sins were laid on CHRIST and judged in His person. The reason there is mercy for the sinner is that GOD gave His Son to justice in our stead.

"That He Gave" means that GOD gave His Son up into the hands of justice. Even as the condemned criminal is by the sentence of the law delivered into the hands of the executioner, so GOD delivered up His Son.

Here is a man in the death cell. The morning of execution arrives. The door of the cell is opened and the condemned man steps out into the hands of his executioners. In their hands he marches to the gallows. In the hands of the executioners he is set upon the trap, his hands are bound, the black bag is placed over his head, and the rope is around his neck. The executioner springs the trap and the body shoots down to death. Justice is done. Just as that murderer was delivered into the hands of the executioners that justice might be done, so JESUS CHRIST was delivered into the hands of the executioners, who led Him away to Calvary and crucified Him - that JUSTICE might be done.

The difference between the murderer and CHRIST is that the murderer died for his own crime, while CHRIST died for OUR sins. When the murderer stood upon the trap of death the penalty for his own crime was upon his own head; when CHRIST was nailed to the accursed tree the penalty of my sin was upon His head.

This thought is given to us in an old Irish poem from which we quote a stanza concerning the mother of us all - Eve:

"I am Eve, great Adam's wife,
'Twas my guilt took JESUS' life,
Since of Heaven I robbed my race,
On His Cross was my true place."

It is a good thing to own to our true place, that we may know what it meant when He took our place.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood."

"That He Gave" Means Salvation

GOD gave His Son that we might be saved. That plan came out of the mind and heart of GOD.

De Witt Talmage said: "No elaborate thinking is necessary to understand our religion. You have

only to put two ideas together; the one is the saddest in the universe, and the other is the gladdest: I am a sinner, but JESUS died for me."

"God spared not His Son" is now explained. GOD could not save His Son and save us at the same time. The keeper of a drawbridge over a great river heard the thunder of the approaching train, and just then his little child, playing by his side, rolled down the sharp embankment into the mad stream. He knew that if he plunged down after his child he would not close the drawbridge, and the trainload of passengers would plunge to death. He hesitated just a moment, and then slowly swung the great bridge out to its place. Then he plunged into the wild waters and pulled out his dead child. This is a finite, weak illustration, but, listen - he couldn't save both. **"God spared not His Son"** - He couldn't save both.

God did not save His Son, that He might save us to the uttermost. GOD condemned His Son, though innocent, that He might acquit us, though guilty.

- The Son was crowned with thorns that we might be crowned with glory;
- He was stripped of His raiment that we might be robed in righteousness;
- He was mocked that we might be honored;
- He was reviled that we might be blessed;
- He was numbered with the transgressors that we might be numbered with the redeemed;
- He went to the depths of degradation that we might be lifted to the heights of glory;
- He suffered an awful separation from GOD that we might dwell eternally with GOD.

"God... gave." Have you accepted?

We read somewhere of a lad whose parents were dead, and who was compelled to live with a married sister. Apparently the sister took her brother in because no other provision could be made for him. She seemed not to love him; she treated him coolly and disdainfully, causing him great grief. He worked, and saved his pennies until he had about fifty; then he bought a gift for that sister whom he loved - gave every penny he had for it. "It's for you," he said, as he handed it to her, with hope in his heart that she would understand his love, and love him in return. His sister merely glanced at the gift, dropped it to the floor, set her foot upon it and - set her foot upon the boy's heart at the same time. Is that the way you treat GOD's love Gift?

We close by saying that GOD's pardon through His Son must be received before it becomes pardon.

In Pennsylvania, in 1829-30, George Wilson was found guilty of robbing the United States mails and of murder. Great interest was aroused in the case, and because much of the evidence which brought conviction was circumstantial, some friends prevailed upon President Andrew Jackson to grant Wilson a pardon. However, when the pardon was presented to Wilson he refused to accept it. Then a question arose: what was the status of George Wilson? Was he a pardoned man, or not? Such a point of law never before had been reached in the United States. The President was urged to call upon the Supreme Court at once to decide what was to be done. The day of execution was drawing near, and the sheriff did not know what to do.

Finally one of the greatest judges our country has had, Chief Justice John Marshall, handed out

this decision: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated.

It is hardly to be supposed that one under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang."

GOD's gift of pardon through His Son is no pardon unless accepted.

"Oh what a gift the FATHER gave
When He bestowed His Son,
To save poor ruined, guilty man,
By sin defiled, undone!"

~ end of chapter 4 ~
