

ON THE CROSS AFTER DEATH

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A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was a high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knows that he says true, that you might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of Him shall not be broken.’ And again another scripture says, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

John 19:31-37.

CRIMINALS who were crucified by the Romans were allowed to rot upon the cross. That cruel nation can hardly be as severely condemned as our own people, who up to a late period allowed the bodies of those condemned to die to hang in chains upon gallows in conspicuous places. The horrible practice is now abandoned, but it was retained to a time almost, if not quite, within living memory. I wonder whether any aged person here remembers such a horrible spectacle.

Among the Romans it was usual, for there are classical allusions to this horror, showing the bodies of persons crucified were usually left to be devoured by ravenous birds. Probably out of deference to the customs of the Jews, the authorities in Palestine would sooner or later allow of the interment of the crucified, but they would by no means hasten it, since they would not feel such a disgust at the sight as an Israelite would.

The Mosaic law, which you will find in the Book of Deuteronomy, runs as follows—“If you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall in any wise bury him that day” (Deu 21:22-23). This alone would lead the Jews to desire the burial of the executed, but there was a further reason. Lest the land should be defiled upon the holy Sabbath of the Passover, the chief priests were persistent that the bodies of the crucified should be buried, and therefore that their deaths should be hastened by the breaking of their legs. Their consciences were not wounded by the murder of Jesus, but they were greatly moved by the fear of ceremonial pollution. Religious scruples may live in a dead conscience. Alas! This is not the only proof of that fact—we could find many in our own day.

The Jews hurried to Pilate, and sought as a boon the merciless act of having the legs of the crucified dashed to pieces with an iron bar. That act was sometimes performed upon the condemned as an additional punishment, but in this instance it was meant to be a finishing stroke, hastening death by the terrible pain which it would cause, and the shock to the system which it would occasion.

Ferocious hate of our Lord made His enemies forgetful of everything like humanity. Doubtless the more of pain and shame which they could cause to Him the better would they be pleased. Not, however, out of cruelty, but out of regard to the ceremonials of their religion, they “besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” I have already told you that this breaking of the bones of the crucified was a Roman custom, and of this we have evidence, since there is a Latin word, *crucifragium*, to express this barbarous act. Pilate had no hesitation in granting the desire of the Jews—what would he care about the dead body, since he had already delivered up the living man?

Soldiers go at once to perform the hideous operation, and they commence with the two malefactors. It is a striking fact that the penitent thief, although he was to be in Paradise with his Lord that day, was not, therefore, delivered from the excruciating agony occasioned by the breaking of his legs. We are saved from eternal misery, not from temporary pain. Our Savior, by our salvation, gives no pledge to us that we shall be screened from suffering in this life. It is true, as the proverb has it, "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean and to the unclean."

Accidents and diseases afflict the godly as well as the ungodly. Penitent or impenitent, we share the common lot of men, and are born to troubles as the sparks fly upward. You must not expect because you are pardoned, even if you have the assurance of it from Christ's own lips, that, therefore, you shall escape tribulation. Nay, but from His gracious mouth you have the forewarning assurance that trial shall befall you, for Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation."

Suffering is not averted, but it is turned into a blessing. The penitent thief entered Paradise that very day, but it was not without suffering. Say, rather, that the terrible stroke was the actual means of the prompt fulfillment of his Lord's promise to him. By that blow he died that day, otherwise he might have lingered long. How much we may any of us receive by the way of suffering it is hard to guess—perhaps, the promise that we shall be with our Lord in Paradise will be fulfilled that way.

At this point it seemed more than probable that our blessed Lord must undergo the breaking of His bones, but "He was dead already." It had pleased Him, in the infinite willingness with which He went to His sacrifice, to yield up His life, and His spirit had therefore departed. Yet one might have feared that the coarse soldiers would have performed their orders to the letter. See, they do not so! Had they conceived a dread of one around whom such prodigies had gathered? Were they, like their centurion, impressed with awe of this remarkable personage?

At any rate, perceiving that He was dead already, they did not use their hammer. Happy are we to see them cease from such loathsome brutality. But we may not be too glad, for another outrage will take its place. To make sure that He was dead, one of the four soldiers with a spear pierced His side, probably thrusting His lance quite through the heart. Here we see how our gracious God ordained in His providence that there should be sure evidence that Jesus was dead, and that therefore the sacrifice was slain.

Paul declares this to be the Gospel that the Lord Jesus died according to the Scriptures. Strange to say, there have been heretics who have ventured to assert that Jesus did not actually die. They stand refuted by this spear-thrust. If our Lord did not die, then no sacrifice has been presented, the resurrection is not a fact, and there is no foundation of hope for men. Our Lord assuredly died, and was buried. The Roman soldiers were keen judges in such matters, and they saw that "he was dead already," and moreover, their spears were not used in vain when they meant to make death a certainty.

When the side of Christ was pierced, there flowed from it blood and water, upon which a great deal has been said by those who think it proper to dilate upon such tender themes. It was supposed by some that by death the blood was divided, the clots parting from the water in which they float, and that in a perfectly natural way. But it is not true that blood would flow from a dead body if it were pierced. Only under certain very special conditions would blood gush forth.

The flowing of this blood from the side of our Lord cannot be considered as a common occurrence—it was a fact entirely by itself. We cannot argue from any known fact in this case, for we are here in a new region. Granted, that blood would not flow from an ordinary dead body, yet remember, that our Lord's body was unique, since it saw no corruption. Whatever change might come over a body liable to decay, we may not ascribe any such change to His frame, and therefore there is no arguing from facts about common bodies so as to conclude from them anything concerning our blessed Lord's body.

Whether, in His case, blood and water flowed naturally from His holy and incorruptible body, or whether it was a miracle, it was evidently a most notable and remarkable thing, and John, as an eyewitness, was evidently astonished at it, and so astonished at it that he recorded a solemn affirmation,

in order that we might not doubt his testimony. He was certain of what he saw, and he took care to report it with a special note, in order that we might believe—as if he felt that if this fact was truly believed, there was a certain convincing power which would induce many to believe on our Lord Jesus as the appointed Savior.

I could enter into many details, but I prefer to cast a veil over this tender mystery. It is scarcely reverent to be discoursing anatomy when the body of our adorable Lord is before us. Let us close our eyes in worship rather than open them with irreverent curiosity.

The great task before me this morning is to draw truth out of this well of wonders. I shall ask you to look at the events before us in three lights. First, let us see here *the fulfillment of Scripture*, secondly, *the identification of our Lord as the Messiah*, and thirdly, *the instruction which He intends*.

I. I ask you to notice THE FULFILLMENT OF SCRIPTURE.

Two things are predicted—not a bone of Him must be broken and He must be pierced. These were the Scriptures which now remained to be accomplished. Last Lord's-day morning we were all of us delighted as we saw the fulfillment of Scripture [#1955—*Jesus Declining the Legions*] in the capture of our Lord, and His refusal to deliver Himself from His enemies. The theme of the fulfillment of Scripture is worth pursuing yet further in an age when Holy Scripture is treated with so much slight, and is spoken of as having no inspiration in it, or at least, no divine authority by which its infallibility is secured.

You and I favor no such error. On the contrary, we conceive it to be to the last degree mischievous. "If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?" We are pleased to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ and those who wrote concerning Him treated the Holy Scriptures with an intensely reverent regard. The prophecies that went before of Christ must be fulfilled, and holy souls found great delight in dwelling upon the fact that they were so.

I want you to notice concerning this case, that *it was singularly complicated*. It was negative and positive—the Savior's bones must not be broken, and He must be pierced. In the type of the Passover lamb, it was expressly enacted that not a bone of it should be broken, therefore not a bone of Jesus must be broken. At the same time, according to Zechariah 12:10, the Lord must be pierced. He must not only be pierced with the nails, and so fulfill the prophecy, "They pierced my hands and my feet," but He must be conspicuously pierced, so that He can be emphatically regarded as a pierced one.

How were these prophecies, and a multitude more, to be accomplished? Only God Himself could have brought to pass the fulfillment of prophecies which were of all kinds, and appeared to be confused and even in contradiction to each other. It would be an impossible task for the human intellect to construct so many prophecies, and types, and foreshadowings, and then to imagine a person in whom they should all be embodied.

But what would be impossible to men has been literally carried out in the case of our Lord. There are prophecies about Him and about everything connected with Him, from His hair to His garments, from His birth to His tomb, and yet they have all been carried out to the letter. That which lies immediately before us was a complicated case, for if reverence to the Savior would spare His bones, would it not also spare His flesh? If a coarse brutality pierced His side, why did it not break His legs? How can men be kept from one act of violence, and that an act authorized by authority, and yet how shall they perpetrate another violence which had not been suggested to them? But, let the case be as complicated as it was possible for it to have been, infinite wisdom knew how to work it out in all points, and it did so. The Christ is the exact substance of the foreshadowing of the Messianic prophecies.

Next, we may say of the fulfillment of these two prophecies, that *it was especially improbable*. It did not seem at all likely that when the order was given to break the legs of the crucified, Roman soldiers would abstain from the deed. How could the body of Christ be preserved after such an order had been issued? Those four soldiers are evidently determined to carry out the governor's orders. They have commenced their dreadful task, and they have broken the legs of two of the executed three. The crosses were arranged so that Jesus was hanging in the midst. He is the second of the three.

We naturally suppose that they would proceed in order from the first cross to the second, but they seem to pass by the second cross, and proceed from the first to the third. What was the reason of this singular procedure? The supposition is, and I think a very likely one, that the center cross stood somewhat back, and that thus the two thieves formed a sort of first rank. Jesus would thus be all the more emphatically “in the midst.” If He was placed a little back, it would certainly have been easier for the penitent thief to have read the inscription over His head, and to have looked to our Lord, and held conversation with Him. Had they been placed exactly in a line, this might not have been so natural, but the suggested position seems to suit the circumstances.

If it were so, I can understand how the soldiers would be taking the crosses in order when they performed their horrible office upon the two malefactors, and came last to Jesus, who was in the midst. In any case, such was the order which they followed. The marvel is that they did not in due course proceed to deal the horrible blow in the case of our Lord. Roman soldiers are apt to fulfill their commissions very literally, and they are not often moved with much desire to avoid barbarities.

Can you see them intent upon their errand? Will they not even now mangle that sacred body? Commend me for roughness to the ordinary Roman soldier. He was so used to deeds of slaughter, so accustomed to an empire which had been established with blood and iron, that the idea of pity never crossed his soul, except to be rejected as a womanly feeling unworthy of a brave man. Yet behold and wonder! The order is given to break their legs—two out of the three have suffered, and yet no soldier may crush a bone of that sacred body. They see that He is dead already, and they break not His legs.

As yet you have only seen one of the prophecies fulfilled. He must be pierced as well. And what was that which came into that Roman soldier’s mind when, in a hasty moment, he resolved to make sure that the apparent death of Jesus was a real one? Why did he open that sacred side with his lance? He knew nothing of the prophecy. He had no dreams of Eve being taken from the side of the man, and the church from the side of Jesus. He had never heard that ancient notion of the side of Jesus being like the door of the ark, through which an entrance to safety is opened. Why, then, does he fulfill the prediction of the prophet?

There was no accident or chance here. Where are there such things? The hand of the Lord is here, and we desire to praise and bless that omniscient and omnipotent Providence which thus fulfilled the word of revelation. God has respect unto His own Word, and while He takes care that no bone of His Son shall be broken, He also secures that no text of Holy Scripture shall be broken. That our Lord’s bones should remain unbroken, and yet that He should be pierced, seemed a very unlikely thing, but it was carried out. When next you meet with an unlikely promise, believe it firmly. When next you see things working contrary to the truth of God, believe God, and believe nothing else. Let God be true and every man a liar. Though men and devils should give God the lie, hold on to what God has spoken, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His Word shall fall to the ground.

Note again, dear friends, concerning this fulfillment of Scripture, that *it was altogether indispensable*. If they had broken Christ’s bones, then that word of John the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God,” had seemed to have a slur cast upon it. Men would have objected, “But the bones of the Lamb of God were not broken.” It was especially commanded twice over, not only in the first ordaining of the Passover in Egypt, but in the allowance of a second to those who were defiled at the time of the first Passover.

In Numbers, as well as in Exodus, we read that not a bone of the lamb must be broken. How, then, if our Lord’s bones had been broken, could we have said, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” when there would have been this fatal flaw? Jesus must remain intact upon the cross, and He must also be pierced, for else that famous passage in Zechariah, which is here alluded to, “They shall look on me whom they have pierced,” could not have been true of Him. Both prophecies must be carried out, and they were so in a conspicuous manner.

But why need I say that this fulfillment was indispensable? Beloved, the keeping of every Word of God is indispensable. It is indispensable to the truth of God that He should be true always, for if one

word of His can fall to the ground, then all may fall, and His veracity is gone. If it can be demonstrated that one prophecy was a mistake, then all the rest may be mistakes. If one part of the Scripture is untrue, all may be untrue, and we have no sure ground to go upon.

Faith loves not slippery places. Faith seeks the sure word of prophecy, and sets her foot firmly upon certainties. Unless all the Word of God is sure and pure “as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times,” then we have nothing to go upon, and are virtually left without a revelation from God. If I am to take the Bible and say, “Some of this is true, and some of it is questionable,” I am no better off than if I had no Bible.

A man who is at sea with a chart which is only accurate in certain places, is not much better off than if he had no chart at all. I see not how it can ever be safe to be “converted and become as little children” if there is no infallible teacher for us to follow. Beloved, it is indispensable to the honor of God and to our confidence in His Word, that every line of Holy Scripture should be true. It was evidently indispensable in the case now before us, and this is only one instance of a rule which is without exception.

But now let me remind you that although the problem was complicated, and its working out was improbable, yet *it was fulfilled in the most natural manner*. Nothing can be less constrained than the action of the soldiers. They have broken the legs of two, but the other is dead, and they do not break His legs. Yet, to make sure that they will be safe in omitting the blow, they pierce His side. There was no compulsion put upon them, they did this of their own proper thought. No angel came from heaven to stand with his broad wings in front of the cross, so as to protect the Savior. No awful aegis of mystery was hung over the sacred body of the Lord so that intruders might be driven back with fear.

No, the quaternion of soldiers did whatever they wished to do. They acted of their own free will, and yet at the same time they fulfilled the eternal counsel of God. Shall we never be able to drive into men’s minds the truth that predestination and free agency are both facts? Men sin as freely as birds fly in the air, and they are altogether responsible for their sin, and yet everything is ordained and foreseen of God. The fore-ordination of God in no degree interferes with the responsibility of man.

I have often been asked by persons to reconcile the two truths. My only reply is—They need no reconciliation, for they never fell out. Why should I try to reconcile two friends? Prove to me that the two truths do not agree. In that request I have set you a task as difficult as that which you propose to me. These two facts are parallel lines, I cannot make them unite, but you cannot make them cross each other.

Permit me also to add that I have long ago given up the idea of making all my beliefs into a system. I believe, but I cannot explain. I fall before the majesty of revelation, and adore the infinite Lord. I do not understand all that God reveals, but I believe it. How can I expect to understand all the mysteries of revelation, when even the arithmetic of Scripture surpasses My comprehension, since I am taught that in the Godhead the Three are One, while in the undivided One I see most manifestly Three?

Need I measure the sea? Is it not enough that I am upborne by its waves? I thank God for waters deep enough for my faith to swim in, understanding would compel me to keep to the shallows, but faith takes me to the main ocean. I think it more to my soul’s benefit to believe than to understand, for faith brings me nearer to God than reason ever did. The faith which is limited by our narrow faculties is a faith unworthy of a child of God, for as a child of God he should begin to deal with infinite sublimities, like those in which his great Father is at home. These are only to be grasped by faith. To return to my subject, albeit the matter must be as Scripture foreshadowed, yet no constraint nor inducement was put forth, but as free agents, the soldiers performed the very things which were written in the Prophets concerning Christ.

Dear friends, suffer one more observation upon this fulfillment of Scripture, *it was marvelously complete*. Observe that in these transactions a seal was set upon that part of Scripture which has been most exposed to skeptical derision, for the seal was set first of all upon *the types*. Irreverent readers of Scripture have refused to accept the types, they say, “How do you know that the Passover was a type of Christ?” In other cases, more serious persons object to detailed interpretations, and decline to see a

meaning in the smaller particulars. Such persons would not attach spiritual importance to the law, “Not a bone of it shall be broken,” but would dismiss it as a petty regulation of an obsolete religious rite.

But observe, beloved, the Holy Spirit does nothing of the kind, for He fixes upon a minor particular of the type, and declares that this must be fulfilled. Moreover, the providence of God intervenes, so that it shall be carried out. Wherefore, be not scared away from the study of the types by the ridicule of the worldly-wise. There is a general timidity coming over the minds of many about Holy Scripture, timidity to which, thank God, I am an utter stranger. It would be a happy circumstance if the childlike reverence of the early fathers could be restored to the church, and the present irreverent criticism could be repented of and cast away.

We may delight ourselves in the types as in a very Paradise of revelation. Here we see our best Beloved’s beauties mirrored in ten thousand delightful ways. There is a world of holy teaching in the books of the Old Testament, and in their types and symbols. To give up this patrimony of the saints, and to accept criticism instead of it, would be like selling one’s birthright for a mess of pottage. I see in our Lord’s unbroken bones a setting of the seal of God upon the types of Scripture.

Let us go further. I see, next, the seal of God set upon *unfulfilled prophecy*, for the passage in Zechariah is not yet completely fulfilled. It runs thus, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.” JEHOVAH is the speaker, and He speaks of “the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” They are to look on JEHOVAH whom they have pierced, and to mourn for Him. Although this prophecy is not yet fulfilled on the largest scale, yet it is so far certified—for Jesus is pierced, the rest of it, therefore, stands good, and Israel shall one day mourn because of her insulted King.

The prophecy was fulfilled in part when Peter stood up and preached to the eleven, when a great company of the priests believed, and when multitudes of the seed of Abraham became preachers of Christ crucified. Still it awaits a larger fulfillment, and we may rest quite sure that the day shall come when all Israel shall be saved. As the piercing of their Lord is true, so shall the piercing of their hearts be true, and they shall mourn and inwardly bleed with bitter sorrow for Him whom they despised and abhorred.

The point to mark here is, that a seal is set in this case to a prophecy which yet awaits its largest fulfillment, wherefore, we may regard this as a pattern, and may lay stress upon prophecy, and rejoice in it, and receive it without doubt, come what may.

I have said this much upon the fulfillment of the Word concerning our Lord—let us learn hence a lesson of reverence and confidence in reference to Holy Scripture.

II. But now, secondly, and briefly, THE IDENTIFICATION OF OUR LORD AS THE MESSIAH was greatly strengthened by that which befell His body after death.

It was needful that He should conclusively be proven to be the Christ spoken of in the Old Testament. Certain marks and tokens are given, and those marks and tokens must be found in Him—they were so found.

The first mark was this—*God’s Lamb must have a measure of preservation*. If Christ be what He professes to be, He is the Lamb of God. Now, God’s lamb could only be dealt with in God’s way. Yes, there is the lamb—kill it, sprinkle its blood, roast it with fire, but break not its bones. It is God’s lamb, and not yours, therefore hitherto shall you come, but no further. Not a bone of it shall be broken. Roast it, divide it among yourselves, and eat it, but break no bone of it. The Lord claims it as His own, and this is His reserve.

So, in effect, the Lord says concerning the Lord Jesus, “There is My Son. Bind Him, scourge Him, spit on Him, crucify Him, but He is the Lamb of My Passover, and you must not break a bone of Him.” The Lord’s right to Him is declared by the reservation which is made concerning His bones. Do you not see here how He is identified as being “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world”? It is a mark of identity upon which faith fixes her eyes, and she studies that mark until she sees much more in it than we can this morning speak about, for we have other things to dwell upon.

The next mark of identity must be, that *JEHOVAH our Lord should be pierced by Israel*. So Zechariah said, and so must it be fulfilled. Not merely must His hands and feet be nailed, but most conspicuously must Himself be pierced. “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him.”

Pierced He must be. His wounds are the marks and tokens of His being the real Christ. When they shall see the sign of the Son of man in the last days, then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and is not that sign His appearing as a Lamb that has been slain? The wound in His side was a sure mark of His identity to His own disciples, for He said to Thomas, “Reach hither your hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” It shall be the convincing token to all Israel, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one that mourns for his only son.” To us the opened way to His heart is in His flesh the token that this is the incarnate God of love, whose heart can be reached by all who seek His grace.

But I have not finished this identification, for observe, that when that side was pierced, “forthwith came there out blood and water.” You that have your Bibles will have opened them already at Zechariah twelve. Will you kindly read on till you come to the first verse of the thirteenth chapter, which ought not to have been divided from the twelfth chapter.

What do you find there? “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.” They pierced Him, and in that day they began to mourn for Him. But more, in that day there was a fountain opened. And what was that fountain but this gush of water and of blood from the riven side of our redeeming Lord? The prophecies follow quickly upon one another. They relate to the same person, and to the same day. And we are pleased to see that the facts also follow quickly upon one another, for when the soldier with the spear pierced the side of Jesus, “*forthwith came there out blood and water.*” JEHOVAH was pierced, and men repented, and beheld the cleansing fountain within a brief space. The men who saw the sacred fountain opened rejoiced to see in it the attestation of the finished sacrifice, and the token of its cleansing effect.

The identification is more complete if we add one more remark. Take all the types of the Old Testament together, and you will gather this, that *the purification of sin was typically set forth by blood and water*. Blood was conspicuous always, you have no remission of sin without it, but water was exceedingly prominent also. The priests before sacrificing must wash, and the victim itself must be washed with water. Impure things must be washed with running water. Behold how our Lord Jesus came by water and by blood, not by water only, but by water and blood.

John who saw the marvelous stream never forgot the sight, for though he wrote his epistles, I suppose, far on in life, the recollection of that wondrous scene was fresh with him. Though I suppose he did not write his Gospel until he was a very old man, yet when he came to this passage it impressed him as much as ever, and he uttered affirmations which he was not at all accustomed to use, “He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knows that he says true”

In solemn form he thus, after a manner, gave his affidavit before God’s people, that he did really behold this extraordinary sight. In Jesus we see one who has come to atone and to sanctify. He is that High Priest who cleanses the leprosy of sin by blood and water. This is one part of the sure identification of the great Purifier of God’s people, that He came both by water and by blood, and poured out both from His pierced side.

I leave these identifications to you. They are striking to my own mind, but they are only part of the wonderful system of marks and tokens by which it is seen that God attests the man Christ Jesus as being in very deed the true Messiah.

III. I must close by noticing, thirdly, THE INSTRUCTION INTENDED FOR US in all these things.

The first instruction intended for us must be only hinted at, like all the rest. *See what Christ is to us*. He is the Paschal Lamb, not a bone of which was broken. You believe it. Come, then, and act upon your belief by feeding upon Christ. Keep the feast in your own souls this day. That sprinkled blood of His has brought you safety. The Destroying Angel cannot touch you or your house. The Lamb Himself has

become your food, feed on Him, remove your spiritual hunger by receiving Jesus into your heart. This is the food of whereof if a man eats he shall live forever.

Be filled with all the fullness of God, as you now receive the Lord Jesus as God and man. “You are complete in him.” You are “perfect in Jesus Christ.” Can you say of Him, “He is all my salvation and all my desire”? “Christ is all and in all.” Do not merely learn this lesson as a doctrine, but enjoy it as a personal experience. Jesus our Passover is slain; let Him be eaten. Let us feast on Him, and then be ready to journey through the wilderness, in the strength of this divine meat, until we come to the promised rest.

What next do we learn from this lesson but this? See *man’s treatment of Christ*. They have spit on Him, they have cried, “Crucify him, crucify him,” they have nailed Him to the cross, they have mocked His agonies, and He is dead, but man’s malice is not glutted yet. The last act of man to Christ must be to pierce Him through. That cruel wound was the concentration of man’s ill-treatment of Jesus. His experience at the hands of our race is summed up in the fact that they pierced Him to the heart.

That is what men have done to Christ. They have so despised and rejected Him that He dies, pierced to the heart. Oh, the depravity of our nature! Some doubt whether it is *total* depravity. It deserves a worse adjective than that. There is no word in human language which can express the venom of the enmity of man to his God and Savior. He would wound Him mortally if He could. Do not expect that men will love either Christ or you, if you are like Him. Do not expect that Jesus will find room for Himself in the inn, much less that He will be set on the throne by guilty, unrenewed men. Oh, no! Even when He is dead they must insult His corpse with a spear thrust. One soldier did it, but he expressed the sentiment of the age. This is what the world of sinners did for Him who came into the world to save it.

Now, learn, in the next place, *what Jesus did for men*. Beloved, that was a sweet expression in our hymn just now—

***“Even after death His heart
For us its tribute poured.”***

In His life He had bled for us—drop by drop the bloody sweat had fallen to the ground. Then the cruel scourges drew from Him purple streams, but as a little store of life-blood was left near His heart, He poured it all out before He went His way. It is a materialistic expression, but there is something more in it than mere sentiment—that there remains among the substance of this globe a sacred relic of the Lord Jesus in the form of that blood and water. As no atom of matter ever perishes, that matter remains on earth even now. His body has gone into glory, but the blood and water are left behind.

I see much more in this fact than I will now attempt to tell. O world, the Christ has marked you with His blood and He means to have you! Blood and water from the heart of God’s own Son have fallen down upon this dark and defiled planet, and thus Jesus has sealed it as His own, and as such it must be transformed into a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Our dear Lord, when He had given us all He had, and even resigned His life on our behalf, then parted with a priceless stream from the fountain of His heart, “forthwith came there out blood and water.” Oh, the kindness of the heart of Christ, that did not only for a blow return a kiss, but for a spear thrust returned streams of life and healing!

But I must hurry on. I can see in this passage also *the safety of the saints*. It is marvelous how full of eyes the things of Jesus are, for His unbroken bones look backward to the Paschal lamb, but they also look forward throughout all the history of the church to that day when He shall gather all His saints in one body and none shall be missing. Not a bone of His mystical body shall be broken.

There is a text in the Psalms which says of the righteous man—and all righteous men are conformed unto the image of Christ—“He keeps all his bones: not one of them is broken.” I rejoice in the safety of Christ’s elect. He shall not permit a bone of His redeemed body to be broken.

“For all the chosen seed

*Shall meet around the throne,
Shall bless the conduct of His grace,
And make His glories known.”*

A perfect Christ there shall be in the day of His appearing, when all the members of His body shall be joined to their glorious Head, who shall be crowned forever. Not one living member of Christ shall be absent, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” There shall be no lame, maimed Christ, no half-wrought redemption, but the purpose that He came to accomplish shall be perfectly achieved to the glory of His name.

I have not quite done, for I must add another lesson. *We see here the salvation of sinners.* Jesus Christ’s side is pierced to give to sinners the double cure of sin, the taking away of its guilt and power, but better than this, sinners are to have their hearts broken by a sight of the Crucified. By this means also they are to obtain faith. “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.”

Beloved, our Lord Jesus came not only to save sinners, but to seek them. His death not only saves those who have faith, but it creates faith in those who have it not. The cross produces the faith and repentance which it demands. If you cannot come to Christ *with* faith and repentance, come to Christ *for* faith and repentance, for He can give them to you. He is pierced on purpose that you may be pricked to the heart. His blood, which freely flows, is shed for many for the remission of sins.

What you have to do is just look, and as you look, those blessed feelings which are the marks of conversion and regeneration shall be wrought in you by a sight of Him. Oh, blessed lesson! Put it into practice this morning. Oh, that in this great house many may now have done with self and look to the crucified Savior, and find life eternal in Him!

For this is the main end of John’s writing this record, and this is the chief design of our preaching upon it—we long that you may believe. Come, you guilty, come and trust the Son of God who died for you. Come, you foul and polluted, come and wash in this sacred stream poured out for you. There is life in a look at the Crucified One. There is life at this moment for every one of you who will look to Him. God grant you may look and live, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 19:13-42

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—910, 276, 277

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