

A Dire Disease Strangely Cured

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon powerfully illustrates how the dire disease of sin is uniquely and fully healed through the substitutionary sufferings and stripes of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24, Philippians 3:1, John 15:13, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 8:34, Isaiah 1:16-17, Hebrews 9:22

Topics: "Atonement", "Sin and Salvation", "Healing in Christ"

Description

In this compelling sermon, C.H. Spurgeon returns to the foundational truths of the Christian faith, exploring the devastating disease of sin and the miraculous healing found only in the substitutionary sufferings of Jesus Christ. Spurgeon vividly describes the nature of sin's damage and the profound justice and mercy revealed in Christ's atoning stripes. This message encourages believers and seekers alike to trust fully in Christ's sacrifice for forgiveness, healing, and eternal life.

Transcript

"With His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5.

"By whose stripes you were healed." 1 Peter 2:24.

IT is well for the preacher, every now and then, to go back to the very beginning and once again traverse the whole ground of the Gospel, just as the schoolteacher does when, after his pupils have advanced to some of the higher branches of study, he deems it desirable to make sure that they are well grounded in the very elements of knowledge, for he knows that it is quite possible for him to be doing mischief in leading them on to the higher forms of study unless they are thoroughly familiar with the first principles. So he goes back to the beginning over and over again—and a wise preacher will do likewise. As for myself, it is not at all grievous to speak, in the simplest terms, of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation and, for you, it is safe as Paul said in writing "the same things" to the Philippians. I have always noticed that those who love Christ best and who know the most about His great salvation are just the very people who delight to hear again and again—

"The old, old story Of Jesus and His love."

To persons of that sort, the Gospel message never grows stale! It is like that familiar song, "Home, Sweet Home," which had such a strange influence over our soldiers in the Crimea, only that whereas the playing or singing of that tune brought on such an attack of homesickness that the men who heard it, when far

from their native land, were rendered quite unfit for duty! In our case, the familiar story of Jesus and His dying love, and His substitutionary sufferings will never cease to charm our ears and fire our hearts with holy ardor in His blessed service. I am also quite sure that to those who least relish the Gospel and who know the least about it, it is beyond measure important that they should hear it as often as they possibly can—for it may be that one of these days it will find an entrance into their hitherto closed hearts.

Therefore, preacher, ring that bell again and again! It may be that when you rang it before, their ears were stopped up, so that they did not catch its sweet silvery note. So, ring it again, Brother, for it may be that the next time you do so, the Holy Spirit will unstop those ears that have been so long shut to the Gospel—yes, even though the blessed bell has been ringing close to them for 70 years or more and they have grown gray, or white, without having ever caught the sweetness of its melodious music! So, ring that bell again, Brother! Yes, even if they are dying, let them still hear it, for the dying have, through the mercy of God, at last heard and heeded it and so have begun to hear the harps of angels only a few moments afterwards!

I am going, at least on this occasion, to do what I urge other preachers often to do—that is, keep to the simplicities of the faith, trying to show how the dire disease of sin is strangely cured by the stripes that fell upon our Lord Jesus Christ—for both the Prophet and the Apostle say that we are healed by or with "His stripes"

I. So, I begin by saying THERE IS A DISEASE IMPLIED.

You cannot heal men who are not sick, or wounded. It matters not how matchless the medicine is—even though it is the substitutionary suffering of the Son of God, Himself—if it is to heal, it must heal some malady or other and, Brothers and Sisters, it is quite true that there is a dreadful disease which has attacked the whole human race! You scarcely need that I should tell you that it is the disease of sin. It came to this earth when that old serpent, the devil, tempted Mother

Eve. Then did this dire disease begin to course through human veins and it has descended to every individual of the whole race and, at this moment, it lurks within each one of us. "Lurks," did I say? No, it is worse than that, for it has manifested itself—it has displayed its venom and virulence, it has shown itself in the life and, like the leprosy upon the brow of the man suffering from that dreadful disease—it is visible upon us all!

The disease of sin is exceedingly injurious. There are some diseases that affect the heart and sin has turned the heart of man to a stone. There are some other diseases that afflict the eyes and sin has blinded man's understanding—his mental and spiritual eyesight. There are some diseases that affect the hands and, in our natural condition, we cannot work for God's Glory, or grasp Gospel blessings because the disease of sin has spiritually withered our hands. We never know at exactly what point the danger from any disease may be the greatest, for it is not always that which appears upon the surface which is most to be dreaded, as there are hidden places in the system which may be seriously affected without giving eternally any indication of the mischief. The Lord desires truth in our inward parts, but sin is the enemy of truth and it is only the Lord who can make us to know wisdom in our hidden parts, for sin has made us foolish, even as Solomon says that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." Sin has injured us in more ways than I can tell. When man fell, it was no slight accident that happened—it was the utter ruin of humanity that occurred! There is something grand, at least in appearance, about humanity, even in its ruined condition, for it is the work of God, but, alas, the bat, the owl and the viper and many other unclean creatures have made human nature to be their foul den. "Lucifer, son of the morning," is not the only one

who has fallen as from Heaven, for this is also true of the whole race of mankind!

You see, then, that this disease of sin is most injurious. There are some diseases that make men quite helpless. We have seen a man who could not do a day's work even if his very life depended upon it. He could not lift so much as his hand—and he had to be fed, nursed and cared for by others, for he was paralyzed. And, in a spiritual sense, so far as anything in the nature of good works is concerned, sin has paralyzed man altogether. Indeed, it has taken his very life away from him so that he is truly said to be "dead in trespasses and sins."

Sin is also a disease which frequently becomes loathsome. In some men who have had the opportunity of indulging their evil propensities and passions to the utmost, sin has become so loathsome that even their fellow men have had to put them away by themselves. What are our prisons and many of our asylums but moral morgues where we have to shut up leprous men and women lest they should 'contaminate the whole race.' I said that sin is a disease which frequently becomes loathsome—I meant loathsome to men—for it is always loathsome to God and to the holy angels. I suppose that the most lascivious ulcer which ever sickened the pitying gaze of a sympathizing onlooker could not be so disgusting to the mind of the most delicate man or woman as the slightest sin is to the mind of God. His righteous soul loathes and abhors it and He says of it, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!"

Frequently, also, sin makes men a source of danger to others. It is really always so, although we do not always know it, for every evil example is contagious, every foul word is infectious and there is something about even the most moral man which it would not be safe for others to copy. Certainly, if he has that dreadful disease of unbelief in his heart, it would be wrong for any other person to imitate him in that respect, whatever excellences may stand side by side with it!

In some cases this disease of sin becomes very painful. I wish it were painful to every unhealed man and woman, for they might then be anxious to be cured of it. And let me tell you that there is no disease to which our flesh is heir that can bring such pain to a man as sin can, when once his conscience is quickened by the Holy Spirit! I think I know, as well as most men, what physical pain means, but I would sooner lie bedridden, suffering all the pains that could be crowded into a human body and lie like that for 70 years than endure the tortures of a guilty conscience, or the pangs of a soul under sentence of condemnation! I know that when I was under conviction of sin, I could sympathize with Job when he said, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life." It is a terrible thing to see yourself as in a mirror with all your wounds bleeding and to feel that you must say, "They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." It is a truly awful experience to see a devil in each wound and to realize that you are, yourself, the worst of devils—and to hear the curse of God, like distant thunder, rumbling far away, yet constantly coming nearer and near-er—and to live in dread of the storm of everlasting wrath beating upon your unprotected head! Yes, the disease of sin is painful to the last degree to men whose consciences are not "seared with a hot iron."

Worst of all, this disease causes death. There is no human being in whom sin has not already caused spiritual death—and no one in whom it will not cause eternal death unless God, in His Almighty Grace, shall prevent it. "The soul that

sins, it shall die," is a declaration that is only too terribly true! What that death will be, I shall not, at this time, attempt to show, but such words as these, coming from the lips of Christ, may tell you—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment," "into the fire that shall never be quenched; where their worm dies

not, and the fire is not quenched." May none of you ever have to endure that death which never dies—that dread eternal death of which the Lord of Life so positively speaks! Yet, as surely as God lives, you will experience even that dread doom unless this mortal malady is healed!

II. Now, turning from the disease, let me point out to you THE MEDICINE MENTIONED IN THE TEXT—"With His stripes we are healed."

Brothers and Sisters, you know right well that the medicine here meant is the substitutionary suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on His people's behalf. I cannot imagine how anyone can read the chapter from which our first text is taken without seeing that "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all," "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." This is strange medicine—that the wounds of Jesus should heal the wounds which sin has made—that the wounds upon His back and shoulders where the cruel scourge struck Him, should, by their blueness, bring spiritual healing to us—yet so it is. And this is the only remedy for the malady of sin. There have been many remedies recommended by various quacks—some have come with their so-called "sacraments." Some with their ceremonies, some with their philosophies—but they are all quacks and their medicines have no healing power! The only cure for the wounds of sin is to be found in the stripes of Jesus!

Let me put this point very plainly before you. Jesus Christ stood in the place of the sinner and bore—that the sinner might not have to bear—the righteous anger of God because of the sinner's guilt. They who say that we represent God as being angry and only to be appeased by the sufferings of His Son, know that they altogether misrepresent the Truth of God that we believe. What we say is that the Infinitely Holy God could not righteously have pardoned sin without having first vindicated His Justice and the majesty of His Law. I do not think that the enlightened conscience of man could ever have been contented without an atoning sacrifice. There is a necessity, not only with God, but also with us, for a sacrifice for sin—we must have it, or else our conscience cannot rest. This was the question I used to ask when I was in the depths of soul trouble—"How can God be just and yet forgive my sin?" I wanted Him to forgive me, but I did not want Him to do it unjustly, for, if I could have obtained the forgiveness of my sin at the expense of His Justice, I do not think that such forgiveness could ever have appeared to me to be consistent with the Character of God!

It was only when I understood that God could be both just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus that my soul rolled herself upon that blessed Truth of God and enjoyed such a luxury of rest as she had never even dreamt of before! Yes, God is infinitely just! His Justice is as stern as if it had never been blended with His Grace, yet He is as merciful and gracious as if justice had never been one of His attributes! This wonderful blending is gloriously manifested in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, where, mark you, God Himself—for Christ is God, as He says, "I and My Father are One"—God, Himself, the righteous Judge, becomes the innocent Sufferer, standing in the culprit's place and sheathing in His own heart the gleaming blade that must, otherwise, have been bathed in human blood! O Sirs, it is what Jesus bore that will heal you—what Jesus bore when He stood in the place of sinners and offered to Infinite and inflexible Justice a full recompense for the crime, guilt, sin and transgression of all who believe in Him!

Look away from your sin to the great Sin-Bearer! We will not trace Him through all His sufferings, but begin with the "stripes" He endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. Can you bear to look upon that terrible agony, to hear His piercing cries and to see His copious tears? Above all, can you bear to look upon His bloody sweat? His three favored disciples could not, for, "He found them sleeping for sorrow." Can you bear to look upon Him as the rough men, guided by Judas, the traitor, seize Him and lead Him away to the

various halls of judgment and charge Him with sedition and blasphemy? Can you endure to see Him forsaken by every friend He had and denied by that impetuous follower who had said, not, long before, "Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You"? Can you bear to see Him surrounded by the brutal Roman soldiers—maltreated, mocked and spit upon by the unfeeling mob of railing legionaries? Can you bear to gaze upon His crown of thorns? Can you bear to listen to the blows from that awful scourge as they fall in quick succession upon His blessed back and shoulders?

I must not go on to tell the sad, sad story at full length—it is too sorrowful to relate—but you know how, at last, they fastened Him to the tree of the curse, then lifted Him up upon the Cross, dislocating all His bones as they dashed it into the socket in the earth which they had prepared to hold it. You have read of the fever which came upon Him till His

mouth was dried up like an oven and His tongue clung to the roof of His mouth. Yet, after terrible as all this was, it was only the shell, the externals of His bodily suffering! The suffering of His soul was the very soul of His suffering. It was by the smiting of His body and the more terrible smiting of His soul—the suffering of His entire Manhood in unison with His Godhead—that He took away the sin of His people and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers!

Let me urge all of you who are diseased through sin to go for healing to those blessed wounds of Jesus! Long ago I learned the secret of this wondrous way of healing and, now, whenever my wounds bleed afresh, I go again to the—

"Fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins"— for it is "with His stripes" that I am healed.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to say a little about THE HEALING HERE MENTIONED.

Our second text speaks of it as a thing that was done in the past—"By whose stripes you were healed," so I would like you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, to remember when you were healed years ago. Do you recollect the place where Jesus met with you? I remember, to a yard, where He revealed Himself to my soul. Some of God's saints do not, but that does not matter in the least! A living man must have been born, at some time or other, even if he does not know when his birthday was. And as long as we have been healed, we need not be anxious to know when it took place. Still, it is helpful if we can recollect when God gave us healing through the wounds of His beloved Son.

Let me try to describe the process of healing. First of all, the stripes of Jesus heal us by taking away the guilt of sin. That is the all-important work. By nature and by practice, too, we are guilty. But when we look to Christ's stripes, we see our guilt laid upon Him and, as it cannot be in two places at one time, we know that it is not on us any longer. The moment that a poor sinner sees Christ bearing His burden of guilt and trusts Christ as his Burden-Bearer, his burden is all gone. We sang, a little while ago, that blessed hymn about Substitution in which one line says—

"Now there's no load for me." There was a load on me, but Jesus took my load upon Himself, so—

"Now there's no load for me."

That was the grandest of all God's transactions, when He took sin off the sinner and laid it upon His sinless Son! As the Prophet Isaiah says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Or as the Apostle Paul says, "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Yes, the sinner who believes in Jesus is no longer accounted guilty by God! Though black as night, before, the moment he looks to Christ, he becomes white as the newly-fallen snow. Though he was a stranger to God and condemned for his sin, as soon as he believes, he becomes "accepted in the Beloved" and he may shout with the Apostle Paul, "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us!"

The stripes of Jesus are also an Infallible remedy for the disease of despair. What thousands of men and women in this world have been ready to lay violent hands upon themselves while under a sense of sin! They never had even half a glimpse of comfort till they were told that Jesus took their sin and carried it, in His own body, up to the tree and there forever made an end of it, that they might be saved! I should like those who do not believe in Christ's substitution for sinners to have to deal with some troubled souls who have come to me. Ah, you may evoke, you may charm, you may use fine language and talk about the "moral influence" of the Sacrifice of Christ—but what use will all that be to those who are on the borders of despair? Will you take from us, who have to deal with sin-sick souls, the only balm we have to give them? I have done with Christianity, I have done with the Bible, I have done with all preaching if you can once convince me that the Substitution of Christ is not a fact! This Truth of God is, to me, the kernel, the core, the marrow, the vital essence of the Gospel! With this remedy in my hands, I can turn despair into confidence! But, take this away and there remains nothing for me to preach to the despondent and the despairing. Let the man who can disprove it—if disproved it can be, and that I do not believe—recollect that he will have taken away from the sky of many of us the only sun that shines and from our life the only joy we have, for, if this Truth of God is gone, all is gone! O bleeding Savior, if You did not suffer in our place, it would have been better for us if we had never been born! But we know that Your stripes do heal the disease of despair, so we will still pass on the remedy to all whom we find in that terrible condition.

Bring the stripes of Jesus home to a man—they heal his soul of a thousand other ills, such as this—the idea of trifling with sin. That is a very common disease. It is incidental to sin that men sin and think nothing of it. "Oh," they say,

"What is sin? We are poor frail creatures and we make mistakes, but what of that?" That is man's estimate of sin, but, O You bleeding Son of God, when we once get a clear view of Your wounds—

"Sin does like itself appear."

See God's only-begotten Son dying on the Cross that sin may be put away and you will never again think it a trifle! The Sacrifice of Calvary was upon a scale so vast that there is no human method of measuring it. God, the Creator, Provider and Judge of All, has taken upon Himself our Nature and made expiation for our sin by His own death in the midst of the utmost ignominy, shame and agony! Now, sin could not have been a little thing to need such an Atonement as that to put it away—and the man who believes in Jesus, henceforth looks on sin in the right light and never trifles with it again.

It also corrects his estimate as to eternal things. The other day he said, "What do I care about Heaven or Hell? What is the Day of Judgment to me? These are bugbears to frighten children! What is it to me whether God is angry or not? Eternal things are for old women to think about—I mind the main chance and make all the money I can." Ah, but a sight of Christ on the Cross cures all that! Now eternity seems to be everything and time insignificant! Now to be reconciled to God, to live to His Glory seems to be the one thing necessary! The Cross of Christ is the great rectifier of human judgments. We trifle no longer with eternal things, but they become of infinite concern to us.

Then, next, the wounds of Jesus cure us of the love of sin. By nature, we love sin, but when we understand what sin cost Christ, we cannot love it any longer. If you had a very favorite knife which you prized much, but someone took it—and with it murdered your mother—you would loathe the instrument with which so foul a deed was done! And sin that you prized and played with has the blood of Christ on it. It cut Him to the very soul! So now you hate it. You say to yourself, "How can I love that cursed thing that made my Savior bleed?" There is no cure for the love of sin like the blood of Christ!

And it cures us, yet again, because it awakens the dull, inanimate soul which had long been indifferent to God, into life and love. When a man knows that Jesus died for him, he must love Him and serve Him. He cannot help doing so. You may tell him about the punishment of sin in terms of terror and you may describe the Glory of God in the most glowing language, but you cannot win a human heart. The deaf adder will not hear with such charming, but, O Jesus, if You say to a sinner, with Your own lips, "I love you and I have given Myself for you," the iceberg-soul thaws into feeling, the granite begins to throb and the man says, "Love You, my Savior? Oh, how can I have lived so long without loving You? Love You?"

"Yes, I love You, and adore— Oh, for Grace to love You more!"

Nothing cures the hearts of coldness towards God like a sense of blood-bought pardon—and that will dissolve a heart of stone!

And so, let me add there is no form of mischief which sin takes, but the stripes of Jesus, when we come to know them, will heal us of them. If you love the world too much—yes, if you love it at all—come and drink from my Master's cup and it will make you feel yourself a stranger in the earth and you will set no store by this world any more. If you have been redeemed, you must have been a slave, so you will bow yourself in the dust with gratitude to your Redeemer. We see advertisements of medicines which are said to cure all diseases, but this is a medicine which will cure all ills. There is no form of the disease of sin upon which the stripes of Christ have not been tried—and the wondrous medicine has healed in every instance! Oh, whom has it not healed? We have seen the harlot healed and she has become a joyous Magdalene singing chastely and sweetly the love song unto Him that washed her from her sins in His own blood! We have seen the thief touched with this sacred heal-all and he has become a saint amidst the seraphim above! We have seen a persecutor who has but taken a draught of this medicine and he has begun to preach—and he has preached right on and he has said, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Yes, we have seen men lying at the very gates of Hell, in their own estimation, despairing, feeling the serpents of remorse twisting their desperate coils about them everywhere and the venom coursing through their blood—and they have lifted up themselves and smiled—and the serpents have dropped off them, as they have looked to the Son of Man, as the bitten Israelites looked to the bronze serpent—and they have been healed at once! I would that any here who doubt this, would try it for themselves. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good," for there never was a soul yet that received this medicine of the stripes of Jesus who was not thereby healed!

IV. Now, to close, WHAT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GET THIS HEALING?

The answer is, first, you must believe this to be true. You must believe in the wondrous mystery of God Incarnate. There were many witnesses to Christ's Incarnation and death and there are four narrators of the story of His life and Sacrifice. There were many who saw Jesus risen from the dead and saw Him till He rose to Heaven—they knew that they saw Him and many of them died as martyrs because they said

so. They were simple, honest witnesses—not ecclesiastics trained in twisting language and inventing fictions. They were fishermen and, many of them, poor men, with a few of another rank, but they all saw Jesus and they saw His miracles. They saw Him tread the sea and they saw Him die—and saw Him after He was risen—and they tracked Him till He went up into Glory! And they received His Spirit and, in His name, they worked miracles—and they were quite sure that what they testified was true. Some of us have believed their testimony and we have been healed by this medicine. And if you would be healed, you must receive it yourselves.

I think I hear you say, "Why, I have always believed the Bible to be true." Well, then, next, you must take the medicine. What does the physician put at the beginning of his prescription? A great "R," which stands for the Latin word, "Recipe." What does that mean? "Take." "Take of such-and-such a drug so much, and of another, so much." That is what the Gospel says—"Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That word I leave with you, Recipe—take—receive. Take what? Why, take the sufferings of Christ to be instead of your sufferings! Trust in Him to save you now because He died for all who trust Him! Rest yourself on Him now!

"Suppose I should trust Him and He should not save me?" Ah, Soul, that were to suppose Him to be a liar—and that cannot be! He that believes in Him is not condemned. Or, as He put it Himself, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." You have to come to Him just as you are and trust Him to save you, relying upon the merit of His blood and righteousness to stand for you before the Justice of God. Can you do that? "Why," says one, "it seems so simple!" And are you going to quarrel with it because it is simple? Are you as foolish as Naaman who would not wash in Jordan because it was so simple? He wanted the Prophet to perform a great many ceremonies, but he would not at first bring himself down to wash, that he might be clean! Surely, my Friend, you are not such a fool as that! I will give you credit for more sense. "But do you really mean that if I trust my soul with Christ, believing He can save me, I am saved?" Mean it? Mean it? If that is not so, I am not saved myself, for this is where I stand! I have believed in Jesus Christ and rested myself on Him. and if He does not, cannot, or will not save me and I should ultimately be ashamed of my hope, I must be damned—for I have not a second hope! You have heard of the fox that had three holes to run to—but the Christian has only one—and if that is stopped up, "There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I do not know what you think about sermons. Perhaps you imagine that preaching is very easy work. It is not so to me. After having been laid aside sick, I tell you that if I could crawl to this pulpit on my hands and knees, it would be a delight to me to once again proclaim my Master's Gospel! But, at the same time, I feel that I may have very few more opportunities of preaching and, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, my anxious desire is that every time I preach, I may clear myself of the blood of all men—that if I step from this platform to my coffin, I may have told at least all I knew of the way of salvation! I wish you unconverted ones could bring yourselves to take this Word of God home to yourselves, for, some day you will hear the Gospel for the last time—you will listen to the last invitation—and this may be the last time you will hear the story of the dying Savior.

Will you have Him now, or not? With some of you, it is now or never! Hark to the ticking of the clock! As the pendulum swings to and fro, it says to some of you, "Now or never! Now or never! Now or never! Now or never!" Will you trust your soul with Jesus? If you will, the soft persuasions of His blessed Spirit are guiding you that way. Cast your guilty soul on Him and you are saved! But if you will have another Savior,

or be your own Savior and reject Christ, I am clear of your blood! And when we stand before that dread tribunal when Heaven and earth shall shake, and reel, and pass away like a mist before the rising sun, you will have no one but yourself to blame that you are lost! God save you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: MATTHEW 27:27-54.

Verses 27-30. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. Ridicule is very painful to bear at any time and soldiers have been masters of that cruel art when they have been encouraged in it by their leaders. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, who it was that bore all this shameful treatment from these brutal men—your Lord and the angels' Lord—the Maker of Heaven and earth who had deigned, for a while, to veil his Deity in human flesh! And there He stood, to be "set at nothing"—to be made nothing of—by those rough Roman legionaries, the creatures of His own hands whom He could have destroyed in a moment by a word or a wish! What matchless condescension our gracious Redeemer displayed even in His own deepest degradation and agony!

31, 32. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; he they compelled to bear His Cross. And I think that he must have been a glad man to have such an honor thrust upon him, yet you need not envy him, for there is a cross for you, also, to carry. Bear it cheerfully. If anything happens to you by way of ridicule for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, bow your shoulder willingly to the burden and, as knights are made by a stroke from a sword held in their sovereign's hand, so shall you be made princes of the realm of Christ by bearing the Cross after Him!

33. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull We do not know why it was so called. There have been many conjectures concerning the name, but they are only conjectures. It was probably just a little knoll outside the gate of the city—the common place of execution for malefactors. The special points to be noted are that Jesus suffered outside the gate, in the regular place of doom—the Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalem—and so was numbered with the transgressors.

34. They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall A stupefying draught was usually given to the criminals who were crucified, to mitigate their agony. But Christ did not wish for that to be done in His case.

34. And when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink He came to earth that He might suffer and He would retain all His faculties while suffering. He would have every nerve made into a straight road for the hot feet of pain to travel over, for He would drink, even to the last dregs, every drop that was in the cup of suffering for His people's sin.

35, 36. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched Him there. Some of them gloating their cruel eyes with the sight of His suffering. Others watching Him out of mere curiosity. But there were some, hard by the Cross, who stood there to weep in sympathy with Him—a sword piercing through their own hearts while the Son of Man was being put to death.

37. And set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And so He is. When will the Jews acknowledge Him as their King? They will do so one day. Perhaps they will do so when Christians begin to think and speak more kindly of them than they usually do. When the hardness of heart on our part towards them shall pass away, it may be that their hardness of heart towards Christ will also pass away. Long have they been despised, oppressed and persecuted in many lands, so that, by some means, they might be brought to look, in penitence, upon Him whom they crucified—and to claim Him as their Lord and Savior!

38-40. Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, You that destroyed the temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. That is the devil's old Doctrine—"Save yourself. Look out for yourselves. Live for yourselves. Be selfish." But Christ could never act like that. He came to live and die for others. "Save yourself," was not the Doctrine that He either preached or practiced. And this is another old taunt of Satan and those who follow him—"If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and we will believe in You." There are plenty who would be willing to believe in Christ, but not in Christ Crucified. "He was a good Man," they say, "a great Prophet, no doubt far in advance of His times," and so on. But, if you talk like that, you are not on safe ground, for if Christ was not the Son of God, at any rate He professed to be and He made people think He was—and if He was not, He was an impostor and not a good Man at all! You must either repudiate Christ altogether, or take Him with His Cross—it must be Christ Crucified, or no Christ at all.

41-44. Likewise also thee chiefpriest mocking Him with the scribes and elders said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also. Those who were crucified with Him and were sharers of His misery.

44-46. Which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabach-thani? That is to say, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This was the climax of His grief—not merely to suffer intense agony of body, not only to be mocked alike by priests and people—but to be forsaken of His God. Yet this was necessary as a part of the penalty that was due to sin. God must turn away from anyone who has sin upon him, so, as sin was laid upon Christ, God had to turn His face even away from His well beloved Son because He was bearing His peoples' sins upon the accursed tree.

47-49. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calls for Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let Him be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him. Mocking Him even in His prayers, for they well knew the difference between Eloi and Elijah!

50. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost You know what He said when He cried with a loud voice—"It is finished."

51-54. And, behold, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks split; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with Him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquakes, and these

things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly that was the Son of God.

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