

He Died for Us

Sabbath Afternoon, October 29

When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah's life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song he tells the reason why he thus rejoices: "The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day." Isaiah 38:18, 19. Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: "In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Psalm 6:5; 115:17.

—*The Great Controversy, p. 546.*

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love.

At His second coming all the precious dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Him, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come.

—*The Faith I Live By, p. 180.*

Our only hope is perfect trust in the blood of Him who can save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary is our only hope in this world, and it will be our theme in the world to come. Oh, we do not comprehend the value of the atonement! If we did, we would talk more about it. The gift of God in His beloved Son was the expression of an incomprehensible love. It was the utmost that God could do to preserve the honor of His law, and still save the transgressor. Why should man not study the theme of redemption? It is the greatest subject that can engage the human mind. If men would contemplate the love of Christ, displayed in the cross, their faith would be strengthened to appropriate the merits of His shed blood, and they would be cleansed and saved from sin.

—*Signs of the Times, December 30, 1889.*

Sunday, October 30

“From the Foundation of the World”

Plain and specific prophecies had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 222.

The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8); yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. . . . Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which “passeth knowledge”? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.

God was to be manifest in Christ, “reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become “sons of God.” 1 John 3:2.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63, 64.

Paul showed how closely God had linked the sacrificial service with the prophecies relating to the One who was to be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” The Messiah was to give His life as “an offering for sin.” Looking down through the centuries to the scenes of the Saviour’s atonement, the prophet Isaiah had testified that the Lamb of God “poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:7, 10, 12.

The Saviour of prophecy was to come, not as a temporal king, to deliver the Jewish nation from earthly oppressors, but as a man among men, to live a life of poverty and humility, and at last to be despised, rejected, and slain. The Saviour foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures was to offer Himself as a sacrifice in behalf of the fallen race, thus fulfilling every requirement of the broken law. In Him the sacrificial types were to meet their antitype, and His death on the cross was to lend significance to the entire Jewish economy.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 227.

Monday, October 31

A Preface to the Cross

When Jesus told [the disciples] that He was to be put to death and to rise again, He was trying to draw them into conversation in regard to the great test of their faith. Had they been ready to receive what He desired to make known to them, they would have been saved bitter anguish and despair. His words would have brought consolation in the hour of bereavement and disappointment. But although He had spoken so plainly of what awaited Him, His mention of the fact that He was soon to go to Jerusalem again kindled their hope that the kingdom was about to be set up. This had led to questioning as to who should fill the highest offices. . . .

The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. . . .

Very tenderly, yet with solemn emphasis, Jesus tried to correct the evil. He showed what is the principle that bears sway in the kingdom of heaven, and in what true greatness consists, as estimated by the standard of the courts above. Those who were actuated by pride and love of distinction were thinking of themselves, and of the rewards they were to have, rather than how they were to render back to God the gifts they had received. They would have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they were identified with the ranks of Satan.

—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 435, 436.

The apostle [Paul] carried the minds of the Corinthian brethren forward to the triumphs of the resurrection morn, when all the sleeping saints are to be raised, henceforth to live forever with their Lord. "Behold," the apostle declared, "I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . .

Thus the apostle, in the most decided and impressive manner, endeavored to correct the false and dangerous ideas and practices that were prevailing in the Corinthian church. He spoke plainly, yet in love for their souls. In his warnings and reproofs, light from the throne of God was shining upon them, to reveal the hidden sins that were defiling their lives.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 320, 321.

Tuesday, November 1

“ ‘It Is Finished!’ ”

The angels had viewed the agony of their loved Commander until they could behold no longer, and they veiled their faces from the sight. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Jesus cried with a loud voice, which struck terror to the hearts of His murderers, “It is finished.” Then the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks rent. Great darkness was upon the face of the earth. The last hope of the disciples seemed swept away as Jesus died. Many of His followers witnessed the scene of His sufferings and death, and their cup of sorrow was full.

Satan did not then exult as he had done. He had hoped to break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by the death of Christ he knew that he himself must finally die, and his kingdom be given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they must increase their efforts and with their power and cunning turn to His followers. They must prevent all whom they could from receiving the salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment.

—*Early Writings*, pp. 177, 178.

Moses and Aaron must die without entering Canaan, subjected to the same punishment that fell upon those in a more lowly position. They bowed in submission, though with anguish of heart that was inexpressible; but their love for and confidence in God was unshakable. Their example is a lesson that many pass over without learning from it as they should. Sin does not appear sinful. Self-exaltation does not appear to them grievous.

But few realize the sinfulness of sin; they flatter themselves that God is too good to punish the offender. The cases of Moses and Aaron, of David, and numerous others, show that it is not a safe thing to sin in word or thought or deed. God is a Being of infinite love and compassion. In the parting address which Moses gave to the children of Israel he said: “For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.” The touching plea made by Moses that he might be privileged to enter Canaan was steadfastly refused. The transgression at Kadesh had been open and marked; and the more exalted the position of the offender, the more distinguished the man, the firmer was the decree and the more certain the punishment.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 369, 370.

Wednesday, November 2

He Died for Us

Christ on the cross, not only draws men to repentance toward God for the transgression of His law—for whom God pardons He first makes penitent—but Christ has satisfied justice; He has proffered Himself as an atonement. His gushing blood, His broken body, satisfy the claims of the broken law, and thus He bridges the gulf which sin has made. He suffered in the flesh that with His bruised and broken body He might cover the defenseless sinner. The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe, and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family.

All who will can be overcomers. Let us strive earnestly to reach the standard set before us. Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day.

—**Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.**

It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became “a Man of Sorrows,” that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. . . . The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God—it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God.

But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father’s heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

—***Steps to Christ*, p. 13.**

Thursday, November 3

The Meaning of the Cross

By bearing the penalty of sin, by going down into the grave, Christ has brightened the tomb for all who die in faith. God in human form has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In dying, Christ secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. In dying, He condemned the originator of sin and disloyalty to suffer the penalty of sin—eternal death.

The possessor and giver of eternal life, Christ was the only one who could conquer death. He is our Redeemer.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 230, 231.*

In his first display of disaffection Satan was very cunning. All he claimed was that he wanted to bring in a better order of things, to make great improvements. He led the holy pair away from God, away from their allegiance to His commandments, on the same point where thousands are tempted today and where thousands fall; that is, by their vain imaginings. True knowledge is divine. Satan insinuated into the minds of our first parents a desire for a speculative knowledge, whereby he declared they would greatly improve their condition; but in order to gain this, they must take a course contrary to God's holy will; for God would not lead them to the greatest heights. It was not God's purpose that they should obtain knowledge that had its foundation in disobedience. This was a broad field into which Satan was seeking to lead Adam and Eve, and it is the same field that he opens for the world today by his temptations.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 502.*

“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23. It is faith that connects us with heaven and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every evil trait and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is still the same mighty Redeemer. Then grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this—never.

“God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

And “if God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:31, 32.

—*The Ministry of Healing, pp. 65, 66.*

Friday, November 4

For Further Reading

Lift Him Up, “Faith in the Atonement,” p. 331;

Steps to Christ, “Repentance,” p. 27.