

# THE CRUCIFIXION: The Story of Calvary

By LEONID ANDREYEV

**T**HE moon had risen already when Jesus prepared to go to the Mount of Olives, where he had spent all his last nights. But he tarried, for some inexplicable reason, and the disciples, ready to start, were hurrying him then he said suddenly:

"He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors."



The disciples were surprised and looked at one another in confusion. Peter replies:

"Lord, we have two swords here."

He looked searchingly into their kind faces, lowered his head, and said softly:

"It is enough."

The steps of the disciples resounded loudly in the narrow streets, and the disciples were frightened by the sounds of their own footsteps, on the white wall, illumined by the moon, their black shadows appeared—and they were frightened by their own shadows. Thus they passed in silence through Jerusalem, which was absorbed in sleep, and now they came out of the gates of the city, and in the valley, full of fantastic, motionless shadows, the stream of Kedron appeared before them. Now they were frightened by everything. From time to time they looked back at Jerusalem, all white in the moonlight, and they spoke to one another about the fear that had passed; and those who walked in the rear heard, in fragments, the soft words of Jesus. He spoke about their forsaking him.

In the garden they paused soon after they had entered it. The majority of them remained there, and, speaking softly, began to make ready for their sleep, outspreading their cloaks over the transparent embroidery of the shadows and the moonlight. Jesus, tormented with uneasiness, and four of his disciples went further into the depth of the garden. There they seated themselves on the ground, which had not yet cooled off from the heat of the day, and while Jesus was silent, Peter and John lazily exchanged words almost devoid of any meaning. Suddenly Jesus rose quickly.

"My soul, is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me," he said and departed hastily to the grove and soon disappeared amid its motionless shades and light.

"Where did he go?" said John, lifting himself on his elbow. Peter turned his head in the direction of Jesus and answered fatiguedly:

"I do not know."

And he yawned again loudly, then threw himself on his back and became silent. The others also became silent, and their motionless bodies were soon absorbed into the sound sleep of fatigue. Through his heavy slumber Peter saw vaguely something white bending over, some one's voice resounded and died away, leaving no trace in his dimmed consciousness.

"Simon, are you sleeping?"

And he slept again, and again some soft voice reached his ear and died away without leaving any trace.

"You could not watch with me even one hour?"

"Oh, Master! if you only knew how sleepy I am," he thought in his slumber, but it seemed to him that he said it aloud. And he slept again. And a long time seemed to have passed, when suddenly the figure of Jesus appeared near him, and a loud, rousing voice instantly awakened him and the others:

"You are still sleeping and resting? It is ended, the hour has come—the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of the sinners."

The disciples quickly sprang to their feet, confusedly seizing their cloaks and trefbling from the cold of the sudden awakening. Through the thicket of the trees a multitude of warriors and temple servants was seen approaching, noisily illumining their way with torches. And from the other side the disciples came running, quivering with cold, their sleepy faces frightened; and not yet understanding what was going on, they asked hastily:

"What is it? Who are these people with torches?"

Thomas, pale faced, his mustaches in disorder, his teeth chattering from chilliness, said to Peter:

"They have evidently come after us."

Now a multitude of warriors surrounded them, and the smoky, quivering light of the torches drove away somewhere the soft light of the moon. In front of the warriors walked quickly Judas Iscariot, and sharply turning his quick eye, he was searching for Jesus. He found him, reared for an instant his look upon his tall, slender figure, and quickly whispered to the priests:

"Whosoever I shall kiss, that name is he. Take him and lead him cautiously. Lead him cautiously, do you hear?"

Then he quickly moved to Jesus, who waited for him in silence, and he directed his straight, sharp look, like a knife, into his calm, darkened eyes.

"Hail, Master!" he said loudly, charging his words or usual greeting with a strange and stern meaning.

But Jesus was silent, and the disciples looked at the traitor with horror, not understanding how the soul of a man could contain so much evil. Iscariot threw a rapid glance at their confused ranks, noticed their quiver, which was about to turn into a loud, trembling fear, noticed their pallor, their senseless smiles, the drowsy movements of their hands, which seemed as though fettered in iron at the shoulders—and a mortal sorrow began to burn in his heart, akin to the sorrow Christ had experienced before. Outstretching himself into a hundred ringings, sobbing strings, he rushed over to Jesus and kissed his cold cheek tenderly. He kissed it so softly, so tenderly, with such painful love and sorrow, that if Jesus had been a flower upon a thin stalk he would not have shaken from this kiss and would not have dropped the pearly dew from his pure petals.

"Judas," said Jesus, and with the lightning of his look he illumined that monstrous heap of

shadows which was Iscariot's soul, but he could not penetrate into the bottomless depth. "Judas! Is it with a kiss you betray the Son of Man?"

And he saw how that monstrous chaos trembled and stirred. Speechless and stern, like death in its haughty majesty, stood Judas Iscariot, and within him a thousand impetuous and fiery voices groaned and roared.

"Yes! We betray thee with the kiss of love! With the kiss of love we betray thee to outrage, to torture, to death! With the voice of love we call together the hangmen from their dark holes, and we place a cross and high over the top of the earth we lift love, crucified by love upon a cross."

Thus stood Judas, silent and cold, like death, and the shouting and the noise about Jesus answered the cry of his soul. With the rude irresolution of a vaguely understood purpose, the soldiers seized him and dragged him somewhere—their irresolution they mistook for resistance, their fear they mistook for derision and mockery over them. Like a herd of frightened lambs, the disciples stood huddled together, not interfering with anything, yet disturbing everybody and even themselves. Only a few of them resolved to walk and act separately. Jostled from all sides, Peter drew out the sword from its sheath with difficulty, as though he had lost his strength, and faintly lowered it upon the head of one of the priests—without causing him any harm. Jesus, who noticed it, ordered him to throw down the unnecessary sword, and, clanking faintly, the sword fell to the ground.

Thus it remained there, until many days later children at play found it and made a toy of it.

When Jesus was led away Peter, who had hidden himself behind the trees, came out and followed his Master in the distance. Noticing another man in front of him, who walked silently, he thought that it was John, and he called him softly:

"John, is that you?"

"And is that you, Peter?" answered the other, pausing, and by the voice Peter recognized the traitor. "Peter, why did you not run away together with the others?"

Peter stopped and said with contempt:

"Leave me, Satan!"

Judas began to laugh and paying no further attention to Peter, he went farther, there where the torches were flashing dimly and where the clanking of the weapons mingled with the footsteps. Peter followed him cautiously, and thus they entered the court of the high priest almost simultaneously and mingled in the crowd of the priests who were warming themselves at the bonfires. Judas warmed his bony hands morosely at the bonfire and heard how Peter, said loudly somewhere behind him:

"No, I do not know him."

But it was evident that they were insisting there that he was one of the disciples of Jesus, for Peter repeated still louder, "But I do not understand what you are saying."

Without turning around, and smiling involuntarily, Judas shook his head affirmatively and muttered:

"That's right, Peter! Do not give up your place near Jesus to anybody."

And he did not see how the frightened Peter walked away from the courtyard. And from that night until the very death of Jesus Judas did not see a single one of the disciples of Jesus near him, and amid all that multitude there were only two, inseparable until death, strangely bound together by sufferings—he, who had been betrayed to abuse and torture and he, who had betrayed him. Like brother, they both, the betrayed and the traitor, drank out of the same cup of sufferings, and the fiery liquid burnt equally the pure and the impure lips.

He saw how the soldiers led Jesus away. Night was passing, the bonfires were dying out and were becoming covered with ashes, and from the sentry house came dull cries, laughter and abuses. They were beating Jesus. As though lost, Iscariot was running around the deserted yard, now stopping, lifting his head and then starting to run again, stumbling upon the bonfires and the walls. Then he clung to the wall of the sentry house, and, stretching himself, clung to the windows, to the crevices in the doors, and looked greedily to see what was going on within. He saw a narrow, stifling room, like all the sentry houses in the world, with filthy floors and walls. And he saw a man being beaten. They beat him on the face, on the head, they hurried him like a soft bale from

one corner of the room to the other; and as he did not cry out and did not resist, it seemed at times that it was not a live man, but a soft doll with bones and without blood.

And suddenly all became silent.

"What is this? Why are they silent? Have they guessed suddenly?"

In an instant Judas' head was filled with the roar and shout of thousands of infuriated thoughts. Have they guessed? Do they understand now that he is the very best of men? It is so simple, so clear. What are they doing there now? They kneel before him and weep softly, kissing his feet. Now he will come out here, and they will follow him meekly, crawling after him, here—to Judas—he will come out victorious, a Man, a Master of Truth, a God.

"Who is deceiving Judas? Who is right?"

But no. The noise and the shouting were resumed. They were beating him again. They did not guess, they did not understand, and they beat him more harshly, more painfully. And the bonfires were burning to the end, covered with ashes, and the smoke was just as transparently blue as the air, and the sky just as bright as the moon. Day was setting in.

"What is day?" asked Judas.

Now everything became bright, began to flash, grow young and the smoke was no longer blue but pink. The sun was rising.

"What is the sun?" asked Judas.

When the hammer was raised to nail the left hand of Jesus to the wood, Judas closed his eyes—he did not breathe, he did not see anything, he did not live—he only listened. Then the iron struck the iron with a thud, and the dull, short, low blows—he heard and then followed dull, short, low blows—he heard how the sharp nail was entering the soft wood.

One hand. It was not too late yet. The other hand. It was still not too late yet. One foot, the other foot—is it possible that all was ended? He opened his eyes irresolutely and saw how the cross was lifted and placed in a hole. He how the hands of Jesus contracted convulsively, and how they relaxed painfully, and how the wounds were growing larger.

The hands were stretching, stretching, they became thin, white, dislocated at the shoulders, and the wounds under the nails turned redder—it seemed as though the hands would tear loose.

But everything stopped. Only ribs were moving, lifted by quick, deep breathing.

On the top of the earth stood the cross, and upon it Jesus crucified.

The horror and the dreams of Iscariot had been realized—he rose and looked about him with a cold glance. And suddenly Iscariot saw as clearly as his terrible victory, also its ominous uncertainty. What if the people should suddenly understand? It was not too late as yet. Jesus was still alive. There he was calling with his sorrowful eyes.

What was it that prevented the thin covering obstructing the eyes of the people from bursting? And suddenly they would understand. Suddenly they would all move forward, in a stern mass of men, women and children—silently, without any outcries, and they would wipe out the soldiers, sink them in their own blood, tear out of the earth the accursed cross, and the hands of those who would remain among the living would lift high over the crown of the earth the free Jesus! Hosannah! Hosannah!

Hosannah? No, Judas would rather lie down on the ground and gnashing his teeth like a dog, he would watch and wait until the people would rise. But what has happened with Time? Now it almost stopped, so that he felt like pushing it with his hands, striking it with his feet, as a lazy ass; now it rushed madly as though from a mountain, taking his breath away, and his hands sought some support in vain. There Mary of Magdala was crying. There the mother of Jesus was crying. Let her cry. What mattered her tears now, the tears of all mothers, of all women on earth!

Jesus was dying. Is it possible? Yes, Jesus was dying. His pale hands were motionless, but quick convulsions ran over his face, his chest and his feet. Yes, he was dying. His breathing grew fainter. Then it stopped. No, there came another sigh—Jesus was still on earth. And then another one? No. No. No. Jesus died.

It was all over. Hosannah! Hosannah!

Judas stopped and surveyed with cold eyes the new, small earth. It had become small, and he felt as though it was all under his feet; he looked at the small mountains, quietly reddening in the last rays of the sun, and he felt the mountains were under his feet; he looked at the sky, which opened its blue mouth wide; he looked at the round little sun, which was vainly trying to scorch and to blind—and he felt the sky and the sun under his feet.

Judas had long selected a place where he would kill himself after the death of Jesus. It was on a mountain, high above Jerusalem, and there stood only one tree, bent, half decayed and tossed by the wind, which tore it on all sides. One of its crooked branches was outstretched toward Jerusalem, as if blessing or threatening it, and Judas chose that branch for fastening the noose upon it.

Within two days Jesus of Nazareth and Judas Iscariot, the traitor, left the earth.

All night Judas was dangling upon the tree like some monstrous fruit over Jerusalem; and the wind turned his face now toward the city, now toward the desert, as though it wanted to show Judas both to the city and to the desert.

## DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

"The doctor says I must quit smoking. One lung is nearly gone."

"Oh, dear, John. Can't you hold out until we get enough coupons for that dining-room rug?"

## PRUDENT ENJOYMENT.

"Have you had any trouble with your automobile rides, Mrs. Jones?"

"No, indeed; we make it a point to keep all ways near enough to a trolley line to get home."

## NEWS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Latest News of General Interest That Has Been Collected From Many Towns and Counties.

**Gastonia.**—More than 2,000 to be exact, 2,059, bales of long-staple cotton have been sold on the local market this season up to date.

**Asheboro.**—The third month of the present session of the graded school has just closed and the teachers reports show an enrollment of 449 and the percentage of attendance for the month 97.04.

**Concord.**—The census report shows that there were 219 more bales of cotton ginned in Cabarrus county to December 1, 1913, than in 1912. Last year at this date 10,319 bales were ginned and this year 10,529.

**Durham.**—Despondent over a case of typhoid fever, James W. Matthews, a young merchant of the city, shot himself one night recently about 12 o'clock and died instantly. He placed a pistol in his mouth and fired a ball through his head.

**Kinston.**—A. T. Redditt, a well-to-do broker who for many years has been a leader in politics in east Carolina, fell dead in a physician's office on Queen-street recently. Apoplexy was stated to be the cause of his death. He was 48 years old.

**Charlotte.**—The annual banquet of the Southern Power Company and affiliated interests will be held at the Auditorium Saturday night, December 27. This will include the Southern Power Company, Charlotte Electric Railway Company, Charlotte Gas and Electric Company, Catawba Power Company, Piedmont Traction Company and other concerns which have branches throughout this territory.

**Statesville.**—Over \$600,000 of revenue was collected last month through the office of Collector Watts of Statesville according to the report of Cashier Carson just issued. The collections for the month were as follows: Lists, \$1,234.65; spirits, \$1,257.30; cigars and cigarettes, \$19,189.60; tobacco and snuff, \$563,880.74; special tax, \$117.92, a total of \$525,280.22, which is above the monthly average.

**Washington.**—Senator Simmons announced recently that he would not oppose the confirmation of J. R. Swann, recommended for postmaster at Marshall by Representative Webb if the president appointed him. This means that Swann will now be named. Senator Simmons has investigated his case and decided that there is nothing in Swann's record to cause him to fight his confirmation.

**Greensboro.**—The Jefferson Standard Life insurance Company has just sold the lot on South Elm street next to Farriss-Klutz Orug Company to Mr. Frank J. Fleer of Thomasville, president of the Piedmont Amusement Company. The price for 29 front feet was \$32,000. Mr. Fleer proposes to erect on the lot a handsome playhouse to cost \$30,000 or more. Moving pictures and vaudeville will be presented.

**Asheville.**—For the first time in western North Carolina a jury will pass on a bankruptcy proceeding the Peerless-Fashion Company, against which a petition recently was filed by three of its creditors, demanding that its case go to a jury. The case has been transferred to the civil docket and will be heard at the next session of the District Court for the trial of civil cases, which convenes here January 12.

**Lumberton.**—The Robeson county teachers, 130 in number, met here recently. The exercises were held in the graded school building and was one of the most interesting meetings ever held in the county. The Boys' Corn club of the county also met, each bringing sample of what he had done. A finer selection of samples of corn would be hard to find. Over 30 boys were in attendance and the meeting was declared a great success.

**Southport.**—Telegrams have been sent to Senators Simmons and Overman and Congressman Godwin in regard to giving a delegation, from Southport a hearing in connection with the proposed new location of the lighthouse station of the sixth district which is to be moved from an island near Charleston, S. C., to some other point. Southport people believe this is the ideal place for the government to locate its station. Southport is right at the ocean and then there is railroad connection with the outside world.

**Fayetteville.**—While supposedly stealing lumber from the yards of the Fayetteville Lumber & Crate Manufacturing Co., Vassie Williams, a negro, was shot by the night watchman of the lumber company.

**Maxton.**—Miss Flossie Barnes, a nurse in the Maxton Hospital was burned to death at 1 o'clock one morning recently. She had been packing her trunk preparatory to a trip to Richmond and after preparing for bed was standing before the fire. Her night clothes became ignited and before help could reach her, they had been burned off.

**Hendersonville.**—About \$70,000 worth of good roads bonds have been sold in Henderson county and the funds are now available. The Board of County Commissioners and road supervisors have authorized the purchase of a sand dredge and a traction engine.

**Hamlet.**—The latest information from the bedside of Mr. Wilson Page, who was seriously injured in the automobile accident recently which caused the death of Mr. Earl Morrow, is that his injuries are not as serious as first thought and the chances for his recovery are good.

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moppy Bible Institute, Chicago.

### LESSON FOR DECEMBER 21

DIVISION OF THE LAND.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33.

Following the defeat at Ai we see Joshua building an altar at Ebal (ch. 8) and reading again "all that Moses commanded" (v. 35), to the Israelites and the strangers as well. Then follows an account of his campaigns. A military critic has classed Joshua with the Alexanders, Caesars, Napoleons, Wellingtons and Grants of all ages. His dealing with the Gibeonites and its after effects was one error in his campaign, for he failed to take counsel of Jehovah. At the close of the war (ch. 11) Joshua is ready to divide the long-promised inheritance, chapters 12-21.

I. Those left behind, vv. 1-5. Read carefully Numbers ch. 32 to recall the story of those who, like Lot of old, saw good grazing land and chose it in preference to that on the farther side of Jordan, that possessed by the "children of Anak." Subsequent history reveals the foolishness of their choice, for they were the first to fall before the enemies of Israel when the kingdom was broken up. The Levites (v. 4) were not to have a portion but rather they were to dwell in selected cities with suburban property.

Caleb Not an Israelite.

II. Caleb claims his inheritance, vv. 6-12. Joshua was old and stricken in years (13:1) and now Israel is before him, each of the remaining nine and one-half tribes, to have apportioned unto them a permanent dwelling place after the long years of wilderness wandering, and the more recent campaign of subjugation. Before Joshua casts the lot, however, Caleb recalls the promise Moses had made to him 45 years before (v. 10). From a comparison of v. 6 R. V. Gen. 15:19 and Josh. 15:13 it appears that Caleb was not an Israelite by birth, but nevertheless he claims an inheritance among them, based upon the promise of Moses, "the man of God," because he had "wholly followed the Lord my God" v. 9. His name literally means "a dog"—yet this dog of a Gentile got more than the crumbs that fell from the master's table, Matt. 15:26. Caleb rested upon the sure word of God, and to remember this promise was not an act of selfishness. How those events in the valley of Eschel must have stood out in the memory of Caleb and Joshua. They remembered how their companions caused the hearts of the people "to melt" Num. 14:37. That day's work was one of serious results and so shall it be for their imitators of the present day. To see the giants and not, as Caleb, to see God had brought death. In his heart, however, Caleb treasured God's word and now at eighty-five he has not alone been "kept alive," but he is as strong as on that day, when in the prime of his manhood, Moses had sent him forth with the twelve.

### Remembered God's Promise.

III. A promise fulfilled vv. 13-15. Joshua at once recognizes the justice and validity of Caleb's claim. He remembered God's promise, Num. 14:24-30; Deut. 1:36-38, therefore he is at once grants the request and adds to it his blessing. Hebron, means "joining," "union," "fellowship." Thus we see Caleb entering into all the rights, privileges and blessings of any of the descendants of Jacob. Is this not typical of our privilege in Christ Jesus? John 15:5; 14:20; I. John 1:3. See also Matt. 8:11, 12. The only condition is that of faith in God and in his Word, Gal. 3:7, 26, 29. "Thus faith in the case of Caleb is revealed as the principle which follows fully, waits patiently, asks for new opportunities for its exercise, and gains finally a victory."—G. Campbell Morgan.

The Golden Text. The essential value of this lesson is expressed in these words of our Lord. To seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first, is the matter of supreme importance and involves following the Lord fully. Frequently, constantly, this means a long postponement of the day of our visible vindication. Yet such postponement is not the result of the capriciousness of God, nor is it delayed beyond the hour necessary for the working out of the plans of Jehovah, in accordance with the very best means. As Caleb waited those 45 years his strength waxed not, and all things needful were supplied. The point is not so much that he at last gained the inheritance, but that during the period of waiting his sustenance and his raiment were provided.

All through the year we have been hearing of promises which were conditional upon loyalty to God and obedience to his will. Today we see a fulfillment of the promise made over and over again that Israel should possess the Promised Land. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman asked Gen. William Booth for the secret of his success in the Salvation Army and his reply was, "God has had all there was of me." Caleb's was a vigorous, happy old age; he had not wasted anxious thought on the morrow; he kept alive his interest in the ever-thriving present.