

African-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii:32.

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EASTER THOUGHT: THE MAN OF SORROWS

By Rev. Edward W. Carpenter

"A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."—Isa. 53:2.

The entire prophecy, commencing in the preceding chapter, and extending through the whole of this, from which the text is taken, is a description of the character, sufferings, and atoning work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Although written ages before His coming, it seems now, after His mission has been accomplished, more like a history than a prediction, so minute and definite is it in all its various particulars; indeed we may say, with strict propriety, that, by its fulfillment in every point, it has actually become a portion of the true history of the great Redeemer of the world. It describes him as He was, when, having been made flesh, He dwelt among us; and in respect to the particular statement in the text, His whole life is one affecting illustration of the truth that He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

I. You will observe, then, that the language of the text does not describe the case of one who encountered only the ordinary or the average amount of the trials which belong to human life. It is only a brief sketch which the sacred writers furnish us; a mere outline of those things which were more immediately connected with His official character and work; and if it is true, of men in general that "every heart knoweth its own bitterness," it was especially true of Him on whom were laid the iniquities of us all, that He had causes of anguish which are wholly beyond our comprehension, because wholly unlike anything in our own experience.

II. Of all the griefs of the Redeemer in His human life, He Himself neither needed nor deserved to bear one. At every step of that mournful path, that path so sown with sorrows and with tears, which it was given Him to tread, He could pause and say, with absolute and unquestionable truth, "It is not for my good that these pangs must be endured; it is not for any demerit of my own that this sore anguish is inflicted!" In this respect, as well as others, the Man of Sorrows stands alone. His is a case without a parallel in all the records of humanity.

III. All the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, so painful and so entirely unnecessary and undesired on His own account, were endured with unwavering fortitude.

All the facts of His personal history go to establish the position that He did feel as exquisitely the trials and the griefs through which He passed as any other human being could have felt the same.

And yet he never faltered. He was to the last moment of His life a willing sufferer. When human nature, almost overcome by the weight of anguish, prompted the petition, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," the unbending strength of moral purpose, the enduring energy of perfect self-devotion, at once dictated the addition, "Father, thy will be done!" He cordially acquiesced in every instance in which the cup of sorrow was put into His hands.

IV. In all the griefs and sorrows which the blessed Saviour suffered, His mind was chiefly occupied with the good results in which His sufferings were to issue. We have said that He suffered not for His own sake; but He did not therefore suffer to no purpose. He deliberately entered on His singular career of humiliation and self-sacrifice, for the good of man and the glory of God. He undertook to suffer, that, by what He, the sinless, should endure, the way might be opened for the pardon and restoration of the sinful, who must otherwise perish without hope. And thus

it was, that it was not so much the trials by which He daily suffered, as it was the end for which His sufferings were endured, that engaged and absorbed His thoughts.

We will now turn to some of the practical lessons which the whole subject naturally suggests.

1. If even the Son of God, when on earth, was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, we certainly should not think it strange that days of trials are appointed unto us.

2. A second thought suggested is, that if our blessed Lord felt keenly what He suffered, and was even moved to tears, we need not reproach ourselves because we feel deeply our trials, and cannot but weep in the fullness of our grief.

3. A third thought claims our notice. If Christ was a willing sufferer, deliberately choosing to suffer for the good of others, we surely should consent to suffer for our own advantage.

4. If our blessed Lord and Saviour made less account of what He suffered than of the good results that were to follow, it is wise at least in us to do the same.

And oh! that all of you, my readers, may find it in your hearts to think often of the Man of Sorrows, and to study well His Divine example! What a mighty debt of love you owe Him, that He bore so much for you! How complete His qualification to be your tender, faithful, everlasting Friend! How consoling is the knowledge that out of His own deep experience of grief He can sympathize with you; when bowed with anguish, you should lean upon His bosom.

Then shall we enjoy that most appreciable hymn written by C. E. Keith:

"O Jesus, we adore Thee,
Upon the cross, our King;
We bow our hearts before Thee;
Thy gracious name we sing;
That name hath brought salvation,
That name, in life our stay;
Our peace, our consolation
When life shall fade away.

Yet doth the world disdain Thee,
Still passing by Thy cross:
Lord, may our hearts retain Thee;
All else we count but loss.
Oh, Lord, our sins arraigned Thee,
And nailed Thee to the tree:
Our pride, O Lord, disdain Thee;
Yet deign our hope to be.

O glorious King, we bless Thee.
No longer pass Thee by;
O Jesus, we confess Thee
Our Lord enthroned on high—
Lord, grant us thy remission;
Life through Thy death restore;
Yea, grant us the fruition
Of life for evermore."

TO DRAMATIZE PEACE

Already becoming known as a "peace axis—Canada, United States, Mexico," an undertaking is being sponsored by the International Council of Religious Education and the World's Sunday School Association to educate the youth of these three nations in behalf of world peace by dramatizing the peaceful conditions existing in North America.

Placing peace flags on the international borders, holding peace festivals, and carrying, by Sunday school pupils of Canada and the United States, of a peace emblem from coast to coast along the border—these are three of the methods proposed.

One ship drives east and another west
With the selfsame winds that blow.
'Tis the set of the sails,
And not the gales,
Which tells us the way to go.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Truth is one,
And in all lands beneath the sun,
Whoso has eyes to see may see
The tokens of unity. —Anon.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PASTORS' INSTITUTE

Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky,
February 28 - March 5, 1938

Report of Findings Committee

The week that we have spent together, as a group of pastors of the Presbyterian Churches (U. S. and U. S. A.), studying the work of the churches in the town and open country, has been a most profitable one. The fellowship through discussion and the exchange of ideas has been the means of increasing our appreciation of the responsibility of the leaders in these neglected areas of our country. And, for this privilege, we wish to acknowledge our sincere debt of gratitude, first of all, to Dr. Henry W. McLaughlin, Director of Country Church Work in the Presbyterian Church, U. S., who has so splendidly led us in our thinking; also to the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the Executive Committee of Religious Education, Department of Country Church Work, U. S. Furthermore, we wish to thank the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary for the use of her splendid equipment during our stay here, which has added to our comfort and enjoyment. And, most of all, we are indebted to all those who have brought us messages of information and inspiration, and have led us to see in a new light the work of the town and country pastor.

Although we are aware of the many problems that face the worker in these open areas of our country, we are thankful that we have been made conscious of the many agencies today that are available in helping to solve them. The part that the Agricultural Departments of the State Universities are taking in the aid of the country church work is most significant. They acknowledge that the life of the people on the farms is dependent upon the moral and spiritual factors as well as upon the better economic conditions. These two forces go hand in hand, and to neglect the one or the other will not lead to the abundant life. Therefore, the churches have found a real friend, and not a rival, in the Departments of Agriculture, and we would urge the pastors to cooperate with these leaders to the fullest extent.

The town and country churches occupy a strategic place in the religious life of America. It is within these areas that we find the largest families, a larger number of young people and yet more unchurched people. Here we find the most fertile field of labor for the Christian church. To neglect these fields is to fail to cultivate the very source of supply of the city church. To serve these people of neglected areas is to follow the method of Jesus, of whom it was said, "The poor (and neglected) have the gospel preached to them."

We, therefore, commend the Lord's Acre Plan to the rural churches as a spiritual force that binds up together the life and religion of the people and as an opportunity of sacrificially doing the will of God, thereby building them up socially, spiritually, and economically.

Finally, we recommend this type of conference to the town and rural pastors as a helpful means of further preparing them to serve the people in these places. So, we urge the promotional agencies of the two Presbyterian Churches to hold such a conference next year.

Signed:
J. T. STEWART
M. L. CLEMONS
JAS. W. Mc NUTT.

Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee
The Presbyterian Church,
March 9, 1938

Rev. William T. Byrd,
Fee Community Center,
Nicholasville, Kentucky.

My dear Brother Byrd:
Here is the roll which Mr. Paul Watson gave to me. I

have made a copy of this and will not need it back.

I thought that we had a very pleasant week together at Louisville and I am very glad that I had the pleasure of knowing you. We had very little time for personal contacts but what we did have at table and in the classes and lectures were very helpful.

I came back feeling that I want to study the whole rural church question more carefully.

With best wishes to you in your work at Nicholasville and hoping that I may see you again I am,

Sincerely yours,
JOHN B. LINDENBERGER,
Pastor.

Enrollment, Town and Country Pastors' Institute

Brandenburg, D. T., Route No. 3, Springfield, Ky., Pleasant Grove church, U. S.

Byrd, William T., Fee Community Center, U. S. A. (Colored) Nicholasville, Ky.

Clemens, M. L., Cedar Springs church, U. S., Knoxville, Tenn.

Caudill, O. V., Presbyterian church, U. S., Whitesburg, Ky.

Cramer, Samuel N., Scott County churches, U. S., Georgetown, Ky.

Cooper, W. L., Stuart Robinson School, U. S., Blackey, Ky.

Crabb, Cecil, Presbyterian church, U. S., Carlisle, Ky.

Deaton, Benton P., Wooten Community Center, U. S. A., Wooten, Ky.

Ellis, Dorsey D., Presbyterian church, U. S., Sikeston, Mo.

Kirschner, J. G. W., Presbyterian church, U. S., Gerald, Mo.

Lindenberg, John B., Presbyterian church, U. S., Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.

McNutt, Jas. W., Presbyterian church, U. S., Caledonia, Mo.

Mills, Wylie K., Presbyterian church, U. S., Bloomfield, Ky.

Ray, J. T., Jr., Presbyterian church, U. S., Sharpsburg, Ky.

Rotenberry, A. G., Missionary Logan Presby., U. S. A., Bowling Green, Ky.

Stewart, J. T., Presbyterian church, U. S. A., Greensburg, Ky.

Tackett, J. R., Presbyterian church, U. S., Atoka, Tenn.

Thompson, Geo. B., Presbyterian church, U. S., McAfee, Ky.

Watson, Thomas, Presbyterian church, U. S., Crocker, Mo.

Watson, Paul M., Presbyterian church, U. S., Wilmore, Ky.

TREMBLING SAINTS

In the early days of emigration to the West, a traveler once came for the first time in his life to the banks of the mighty Mississippi. There was no bridge. It was early in winter, and the surface of the mighty river was sheeted with ice. He knew nothing of its thickness, however, and feared to trust himself to it. He hesitated long, but night was coming on, and he must reach the other shore. At length with many fears and infinite caution, he crept out on his hands and knees, thinking thus to distribute his weight as much as possible, and trembling with every sound. When he had gone on this way painfully, half-way over he heard a sound of singing behind him. There in the dusk was a colored man driving a four-horse load of coal across upon the ice and singing as he went!

Many a Christian creeps trembling out upon God's promises where another, stronger in faith, goes singing through life upheld by the same word. "Have faith in God."—Author Unknown.

"The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

By Rev. Charles A. Ward, D. D.

And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.—Luke 23:33.

And he bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him.—John 19:17, 18.

Dante pictured Mt. Calvary as the center of the habitable earth. Edwin Holt Hughes said: "In some strange and mystical way, Calvary is in the geography of the infinite, and the crucifixion is in the calendar of the timeless." Certainly to Christians who are the faithful followers of our blessed Lord, Calvary or Golgotha is the most sacred place on earth. The cross symbolizes our faith; it occupies the central place in our worship. No one can estimate the influence that "the green hill far away" has had upon the world's civilization.

We observe, first, that the suffering of our blessed Lord was real. His suffering was borne in the body that was prepared for Him. He knew the fierce strife of pain and the sting of physical agony. In the words of our catechism, "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever." "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"—Tim. 2:5. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."—John 1:14.

Second, the presence of suffering cannot be denied. Jesus experienced the agony of the garden, the tragic hours of trial, insult, mockery, cruel scourgings, betrayal and denial. He is condemned as a common criminal; crucified between criminals, and compelled to witness a merciless mob, surging to and fro like maddened beasts. The Roman soldiers gamble at the very foot of the cross. He is challenged to come down from the cross while His tormentors continue to hurl taunts and insults, while all the while His physical agony and suffering are intense, until He is forced to cry, "I thirst." All this was real and borne by a real man. In the midst of the darkness He is heard to exclaim: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The suffering is borne, the anguish endured, the victory won—and there is the final exclamation, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Third, these sufferings were for us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath made to light upon Him the iniquity of us all." Paul declares, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is the vicarious suffering of the Son of God that qualifies Him as the effectual Saviour of men. He was the spotless, blameless Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

Fourth, sin made necessary Christ's suffering and death. Sin had involved us in death. "As by one man sin entered into the world."—Rom. 5:12. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her: and he did eat."—Gen.

3:6. Again the catechism, "All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever."

The cross is an illustration of the intense suffering that sin entails. Only the Lord Jesus could fully appreciate the nature of sin. He knew its origin, its fruits, its consequences and its penalties. He saw man's awful plight and therefore chose deliberately the way of the cross because of the world's sin. Sin called for death. Only Christ, the second Adam, could succeed where the first Adam had failed. He must pay the price and make that death adequate for others.

Fifth, in the passion of Christ we see God's supreme demonstration of the divine love for sinning man. Jesus Christ climbs Golgotha's hill, carries the cross, endures the shame and humiliation, suffers the agony, and pours out His life blood to pay the debt of the one loved. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we shall be called the sons of God." "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Sixth, it is a complete provision of grace, perfect. God is left free to receive sinners without compromising His holy character. Christ brings reconciliation between God and man. The penalty has been discharged, satisfaction has been made, perfect obedience has been rendered. Completeness of satisfaction rendered is seen in the words of Paul, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

When Bunyan's Pilgrim came in sight of the cross the cords which held the bundle on his back snapped and the burden rolled from his shoulders into the open sepulchre and he saw it no more. For a long while he stood before the cross weeping, laughing, wondering—for he could not understand how the sight of the cross could ease a guilty man of his load of sin. But it did, and so it does to-day. The atonement which Christ made may be a mystery, but we are certain that it is effective in our hearts and lives.

What should be our response to the cross of Christ? Let Isaac Watts answer:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

IN BEHALF OF A CHRISTIAN HERO

A vigorous protest against the imprisonment of Pastor Martin Niemoeller in a concentration camp has been made by the Federal Council of Churches through its executive committee. In spite of its "profession of loyalty to Christianity" the German government, according to the protest, by its conduct is "depriving our German fellow Christians of rights essential to the effective practice of their religion."

The "high-handed process by which the National Socialist government of Germany has thwarted the action of its own secret court by holding the heroic Pastor Martin Niemoeller," the statement says, "dismays the executive committee 'many of whose members have had long personal contact with the German Church.'"

"God give me eyes that I may see,
And so I never will
Pass by somebody's Calvary,
And think it just a hill."
—Unknown.