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— Sermons —

A PRESENT INCARNATION.

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Christ liveth in me.—GAL. ii., 20.

GOD deals with man as the wise teacher with his pupils. The teacher constantly asks: How may I reveal enough truth to excite the eager desire of the pupil to know; and how so limit the revelation that the pupil's own powers of investigation may be employed?

It is this very problem that the teacher of man as a spiritual being—belonging to an invisible world—must solve. How bring spiritual things into the limitations of the material, that men with eyes may see just enough to incite them to examine with closed eyes the deeper verities of religion? How reveal enough truth to the senses to awaken man's interior powers to behold the unseen, feel the intangible, and to know the world forever to mere sense unknowable.

That man Jesus, the great teacher, the divine teacher, was, in His incarnate life, a manifestation, an epiphany of God, and of the elements in man which make it possible for him to be God-like and subject to the divine. Jesus Christ came into the flesh to call attention of men in the flesh to that vast world outside of the world of vision and touch and taste; a world of invisible energies; a world that was before the world of sense; a world deeper, vaster, worthier than the world of sense; a world with wider outlooks, more comprehensive wisdoms, mightier potencies, and more resplendent glories than the world of sense; a world that, as it was before, will be after

A COMMUNION DISCOURSE.

GETHSEMANE IN PROSPECT.

BY B. M. PALMER, D.D., FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour.—ST. JOHN xii., 27.

THIS world is a world of grief, and its history a record of sorrow. The new born infant begins its career with a cry of distress, premonitory of all it must suffer between the cradle and the grave ; and the moans we are accustomed to hear in the chamber of sickness show how hard it is to die. To many life is a large inheritance of anguish ; as, for example, the martyrs, who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds, and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy.” (Hebrews xi., 36, 37, 38.) But among these forms of suffering there rises up one before us, pre-eminent above the rest ; whose style and title is, “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”—“His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” (Isaiah lii., 14; *ibid* liii., 3.) There is a pathos, a simplicity and dignity in the Scripture narrative of Christ’s sufferings, such an absence of all exaggeration as is at once attractive and commanding. How pathetic the cry put into His lips by ancient prophecy ! “Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in unto My soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, were the floods overflow Me.” (Psalm lxix., 1, 2.) How full of melancholy is His declaration, “Reproach hath broken My heart: and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none.” (Psalm lxix., 20.) It was in the foresight of these sufferings that the text presents Christ in this perturbation of His spirit—“Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour.” We are met to-day that we may have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and remember Him in His death. Let us put off the shoes from our feet, and behold the angel of the Lord in the flame of fire, in the midst of the bush. Let us with cautious and reverent hands lift the veil from those terrible sufferings which once made the rocks to rend, and broke the slumbers even of the dead.

Ah ! it was not the anticipation of corporeal anguish which wrung this expression of amazement from the Master’s lips. It was not the scourging; it was not the crown of thorns ; it was not the burthen of His cross, as He reels beneath its weight up the steep of Calvary ; it was not the cruel spikes, nor the soldier’s spear ; nor the raging thirst—represented as one of the

peculiar tortures of this mode of death—that wrenched from His lips this mournful complaint. There have been martyrs who have suffered superior tortures even to these—martyrs who have been broken upon the wheel, whose limbs have been torn from their very sockets—martyrs who have been dislocated in every joint upon the rack—martyrs who have mounted to heaven in a chariot of fire—who yet have borne the extreme of physical anguish, not only with composure, but with a holy joy, counting it their glory that they were accounted thus worthy to suffer for Christ. And shall the Perfect Man, in the foresight merely of physical sufferings, lose His equipoise? Shall He exhibit, in the foresight only of physical pain, less fortitude than many have shown who have been strengthened with His strength, and, without a murmur, have gone up with their testimony and laid it before the throne above? No, my hearers, we must pass by the physical torture; we must go down into the darkness of our Lord's spiritual anguish—"Now is My soul troubled." He is anticipating the hour when, in the language of the twenty-second Psalm, He exclaims, "I am poured out like water and My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels." It will be profitable for us, as the theme of our meditations this morning, to ascertain what are the elements of the Lord's amazement of soul here so pathetically described—"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

I. I MENTION, AS THE FIRST ELEMENT OF THE PERTURBATION OF OUR LORD, AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE TRUST WHICH HE HAD ASSUMED. We recognize amongst ourselves those to be the most worthy of responsibility who the most feel its pressure. There are men in every age who rush into office without appreciating its solemnity—men without sensibility and without conscience, prepared to take all responsibilities upon themselves, merely perverting these to private ends; and they are always, through all history, the open scourges of their race. But the men who deserve to bear trusts in life are the men who, under the pressure of those trusts, shrink even from the honors which accompany them. Here is the physician, bending over the bed of his patient in the extremity of mortal disease: how his hand trembles as he administers the potion—filled with a sense of awe, because the issues of life and death are in that instant depending upon his skill! There is the advocate at the bar, looking upon his client pale with fear at his side: how he rises with dread, lest he should prove inadequate to the defence! How often would the Judge, seated upon the bench, lay down the spotless ermine with which he is clothed, that he may escape the severe pain which he encounters in the equal administration of the law! It is not necessary to go into these higher spheres to find illustrations of that responsibility which rests with dreadful pressure upon the soul. In our domestic circles, when we are happy amidst the endearments of home; when our little ones gather, in their frolic and in their glee, around our firesides, and we open the chambers of the heart, and let all the love flow out in the joy which they provoke: how suddenly the stern thought overshadows us,

that here, in the midst of all this pure joy, we encounter the fearful responsibility of training these young immortals, and whether we have the wisdom for it or not, are compelled to shape their destinies for the world to come. The responsibilities of life press with their heavy weight upon the human heart wherever we turn ! And, in proportion to the perfection of our nature, just in so far as our sensibilities and our affections are educated—and we are brought in equal symmetry and proportion to fulfil the functions to which we are called—do we, by reason of that very education, shrink from our trusts.

And now, what is the trust which is assumed by the Lord Jesus Christ, which in the anticipation throws its sorrow upon His heart ? He stands upon the earth to represent the sinner. " He was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." " He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteous of God in Him." (Galatians iv, 4, 5; II. Corinthians v., 21.) Here He stands upon the earth before His Father and before the holy angels, to represent sin in all its vileness, in all its guilt, in all its shame ; and the responsibility of that trust was enough of itself to crush any human heart into the dust. Then He stood upon this earth to represent the purity and the justice and the truth of Almighty God in their dealings with the sinner : standing here upon this platform, erected expressly for this design, that He may, in the shape of the creature, with all the attributes of the creature, represent the tremendous perfections of the great and awful God—represent the divine holiness in all its splendor, the divine justice in its inexorable demands, the divine truth as it holds fast to its solemn declaration, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And, mark, the Lord Jesus Christ comes, not merely to be the expounder of these divine attributes to the creature—for it is an inconceivably shallow view of the adorable Redeemer to regard Him only as a prophet, standing upon the earth with simple and cold words to expound the Deity to man—but He stands upon this mountain of sacrifice and bares His bosom to all the bolts of the Father's vengeance; kneels upon the mount of sacrifice and opens His heart, as He hears the voice of that Father exclaiming from His throne, "Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow; smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." (Zechariah xiii., 7.) The peculiar function of Jesus Christ upon the earth was that He should actually bear, in His mysterious person, in their full out-working and activity, all that the attributes of God could possibly express. It was not merely in language to say to us that God is just, and that God is true, and that God is holy : but it was that God might work out His justice, work out His holiness, and work out His truth, in all the deep and bitter experiences of His spirit.

Brethren, God has never revealed Himself by simple didactic exposition of his perfections. He is not satisfied with sitting upon His throne, and there, in audible voice, proclaiming to the creatures what are the perfections of his nature. His plan has been, in nature and in grace, to reveal them in their effective operation : He speaks, and it is done ; He commands, and it stands fast. **As**

the Creator, He put all His attributes into action ; and you behold the entire Deity, in the activity and strength of His nature, by the word producing worlds. This mode of the divine exposition holds in the sphere of grace, as in the sphere of nature. When God would show His justice, His holiness, His truth, His mercy, His compassion, and His love, He does it not in language, but by deeds—by producing these energies of His own nature, and putting them into play. He sends His own Son from His own bosom, to stand upon the earth as the only Being capable of sustaining upon His person these amazing energies of the everlasting God. Oh! my brethen, what a responsibility, when Christ stands upon the earth, a spectacle, not only to man, but to the entire universe ! As the angels, from the battlements of heaven, look down upon Him with feelings of amazement and of awe, they behold the only Being who could sustain the justice of God without being consumed ; the only Being who can reveal, by actual suffering, the whole passionate love of the Father for the guilty and lost of our race. Under the sense of this responsibility, when the burthen rests upon Him only in the anticipation of it, He exclaims in the text, “ Now is My soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour.”

It may, perhaps, occur to some of you that as the Lord Jesus Christ was divine, it was easy to sustain this pressure, and, therefore, you are surprised at the amazement which He exhibits. But this responsibility was borne in His human nature. It is as man that He pours out His soul like water, and His heart is melted like wax within His bowels. For He was made of a woman, made under the law ; and as made of the woman, the woman's seed, He must encounter these dread responsibilities. There is this antithesis in human experience: that trusts rise up before the eye in their solemn grandeur, and fill the soul with a holy joy in their contemplation—and yet those trusts which fill the soul with the measure of their own greatness do sometimes oppress it with fear. It is, indeed, grand to live in order that we may sustain responsibilities. It is a solemn joy to stand beneath the burdens of life, to do the great works which the Master has commissioned us to achieve. And yet there are seasons when we are so conscious of our insufficiency in ourselves, that we would gladly strip ourselves of the joy and the glory that come from trusteeship, in order to escape the responsibility which consumes us. Here, then, is the first element which I mention as entering into our Lord's amazement in the text—the overwhelming sense of responsibility, in view of the mediatorial trust which He had assumed.

II. IN THE SECOND PLACE, THERE WAS GREAT HORROR OF SOUL, IN VIEW OF DEATH AS THE PENALTY OF THE LAW. The dread of death is natural, simply because it formed no part of the constitution which God originally gave to us. Whatever belongs to our nature God makes pleasant to us. Hence sleep, the twin sister of death, its very image and reflection, steals, with its gentle influence, over the body, putting sense by sense to rest, and limb by limb ; and yet we experience, in our surrender to repose, nothing but enjoyment, because, from the first, it was part of the constitution He gave to us,

that man's body should be refreshed by sleep. And so food, by which we replenish the flux and waste of these particles of the body, always comes as a source of enjoyment to us in our healthy and normal condition. It may, therefore, be accepted as a law, that whatever God ordained as part of our original constitution, He, in His wonderful goodness, makes a source of gratification. But death is horrible, because it has supervened upon that constitution. According to the testimony of the Apostle, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin"—coming in surreptitiously through sin, which opens the door for its entrance—"sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans v., 12.) We have no sympathy with the flippant tones in which men sometimes talk of death: affecting a hard stoicism, and looking upon it only as inevitable fate; and, because it is a doom from which none can escape, shrugging the shoulders, and speaking about it as mere destiny. Be it destiny or what you will, it never comes upon man save as the last enemy; and no man whose nature has not been dreadfully warped, can contemplate it with any other feelings than those of recoil. And yet no one of our race, perhaps, ever passed through death, encountering all that is dreadful in it as the penalty of the law. As to the Lord's people, the sting of death is taken away, and they all die with greater or less degrees of comfort and of peace. There are men who rise even to rapture; who anticipate the song which can be sung, in its highest emphasis, only in the morning of the resurrection: "Oh, death! where is thy sting? Oh, grave! where is thy victory?" "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Corinthians xv., 55, 56, 57.) Multitudes of the redeemed, who pass through the agonies of nature's dissolution, exclaim, in the exquisite language of Adrian's ancient hymn,

"Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O the pain, the bliss of dying!"

As to these, whatever be the emotions with which they depart from life, the dread and the sting and the terror and the anguish of death, as the penalty of the law, are effectually removed. Even in regard to the wicked, who die in their sins, God, in His wonderful mercy, does not allow the full terror of death, in its penal aspect, to take hold upon the conscience. Multitudes are surprised by it, never knowing the short passage through which they pass to meet the realities of another world. Others are racked by pains and disease, the very form of the disease oftentimes blunting the faculties, and rendering them incapable of exertion. And so, in one way or in another, even the wicked pass through death, and do not experience all that is terrible and dreadful in it.

But what I wish you to observe, in contrast with all this, is that the Lord Jesus Christ was the only member of the human family who was born expressly of a woman to pass beneath that penalty, and to undergo death as such. He was the only member of our race who was born expressly that He might die; and who was born, not simply to die, but to die that kind of death

which the law threatens against the guilty. So that He in passing through it experienced what it is impossible that we shall ever know—all that was terrible, all that was inconceivably dreadful to the thought, in the death which He underwent. He dies under the Father's judicial displeasure, under the anathema, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." He dies, as the substitute of sinners whom the law condemns. The cup is put into His hands by His Father's hand, and He must drink that cup even to its dregs. Therefore, nothing that is awful in death was eliminated from the experience of our blessed Lord; and nothing consoled Him but the certainty of His resurrection: "My flesh," says He, "shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (Acts ii., 26, 27.) There was this horror of soul in the Lord Jesus, as He recoils from the death which the law so sternly inflicts. There was felt by Him what none of us, through His infinite grace, shall ever be allowed to know. This constitutes the second element in the amazement that is expressed in the text.

III. THERE WAS IN CHRIST A RECOIL OF SPIRIT FROM THE SINS WHICH WERE LAID UPON HIM, THE PUNISHMENT OF WHICH HE WAS CALLED TO BEAR. I am afraid many of us have superficial views of the sin-bearing of Jesus Christ, as though it were simply a fictitious reckoning of our sins to Him. The language, both of the Old Testament and the New, in reference to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, never can be exhausted until you come to see that Jesus Christ did stand in the exact stead of His people; that, literally, He bore our sins in His own body; that our iniquities were laid upon Him, so that, by His stripes, we might be healed. He so assumed our sins as to feel the burthen of them, and all the shame and reproach and agony and anguish. All that sin can possibly effect in the consciousness of guilt entered into the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." Standing under His Father's law as a reputed sinner, the whole weight of a world's guilt lay upon His heart, and thoroughly penetrated into His experience. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ was, in His sorrow, a pre-eminent sufferer, by reason of the weight and shame and reproach of these sins as they were laid upon Him: "Reproach hath broken My heart." Therefore it was that, when they began to break the legs of those that were crucified upon Calvary, He was found already dead. The reproach that fell upon Him as He was the substitute for the guilty and the lost had broken His heart.

This gathers emphasis when you remember that Christ, as a man, was perfectly sinless; and hence there must have been an instinctive recoil from all the sin which He was called to assume. Why, my brethren, those who are in any degree sanctified upon the earth feel the pain of the sins with which they are sometimes brought in contact. These oaths which fall from the lips of profane men, as every day they tread the glory of the Blessed God, whom we love and serve; beneath their tongues—how they smite upon the Christian's ear and make him sad. Although he has no responsibility for

the sin, yet there is within him, through divine grace, an exquisite sensibility so that he cannot even come into contact with the sins of others without experiencing the recoil. When, at times, there is spread out before the eye some enormous transgression, some form of sin, in which God's law is most outrageously broken, I suppose all of us have been conscious of the soul's drawing in upon itself with a feeling of horror, which finds no language that can possibly describe its emotion. How, then, must it have been with the Perfect Man—with Him who was holy, harmless and undefiled—when the sins of all His people, in all the generations that have lived or shall yet live upon this globe until the consummation of time, were in solid bulk, laid upon Him, that He should bear them and atone for them? They are sins from which we recoil in our thought, and yet He must bear them in His own body, upon the tree, in order to a satisfactory expiation of the same. And in the anticipation of all this sin which He must really assume, you can understand some of the amazement of Christ's spirit when He exclaims, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say?"

As a branch of the same thought, remember that Christ not only bore the sins, but also the sorrows of His people. "Surely," says the Prophet, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." The two are tied together by a bond which cannot be broken. Sorrow is born of sin; and while sin remains, the sorrow must abide. Therefore, he who went down into the depths of human sin went down also into the depths of human sorrow. He, according to the language which we have already cited, "was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He knew the sorrow just exactly as it sprung out of the sin. He knew the sorrow in all its terrible connection with the sin of which it was born. He knew sorrow in the absolute essence in which that sorrow is condensed. He knew sorrow exactly in its original force, and without any of the abatements which lessen it to us. There are times in our bereavement when we say that we are *alone*. Oh! the utter desolateness of the spirit, when you come back from the graveyard where you have buried your dead, and as you walk through the chamber of your house, and your eye rests upon all the memorials of your dead! Oh, Lord! Thou knowest, and Thy suffering children understand, that desolateness of soul when, in the absence of those whom they loved, they feel that they are *ALONE*. But when was there ever loneliness like the loneliness of Christ? Forsaken by His disciples, rejected by the earth, cast out of Heaven, forsaken by His Father—nailed up, as it were, against the wall of the sky, between the heavens and the earth, His feet not touching the one nor His head the other—hung up, a mournful spectacle of loneliness and woe, before the gaze of the assembled universe, as though cast forth of all worlds, because He there lay under the anathema and curse of the Father—and even that Father, in whose bosom He had always lain, turning away His face, and provoking the bitter cry with which His heart was broken, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Here is loneliness of which one can speak; or, rather, it is loneliness of which one cannot speak. He bore that sorrow, as He bore

the sin that produced it; and hence the perturbation and amazement of His spirit when He said, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

IV. YOU FIND, AS AN ELEMENT OF OUR LORD'S DISTRESS, HIS ANTICIPATION OF CONFLICT WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. It was an old quarrel, long ago begun, away back in the far eternity, before the sons of God shouted for joy, or sun or moon or stars were created; when Lucifer, the son of the morning, lifted the standard of rebellion against the glorious throne, and was cast out with all his allies, and, as Jude describes it, "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Adam's fall in the Garden of Eden, under the temptation of the original adversary, was but the continuance of that quarrel. And here this earth of ours is thrown into space, and fitted up by the hand of God as the theatre upon which might be fought out to its awful conclusion the mighty battle between holiness and sin, between the powers of the adversary and the omnipotence of God. It is the significance of this earth, which gives the clue to all the interpretation of earth's history, that this globe is the theatre, the world of worlds, the erected platform where, before the whole universe, might be solved forever and for all the worlds, and for all beings in all worlds, through all the eternities that are to come, the awful problem of sin, and how the God of holiness and the God of justice shall deal with it. Satan deals with his compeers in the heavens above, when he enters into the conspiracy against the holiness and power of God there; and he deals with a being inferior to him in dignity and glory, when he whispered his temptation into the ear of our first mother and brought our guilty parents into sin. Now, he has more than his equal; now there comes out of the bosom of eternity—now, from the very arms of the adorable Trinity, springs forth the Conqueror, God's eternal Son, made of a woman, "found in fashion as a man," put here, a man, upon the earth that He might stand face to face with the devil, that He might enter hand to hand in conflict with the devil, that He might wrest from the devil his sceptre and upset his throne—wrench from him his usurped dominion, and bind him a captive in chains, and hurl him into the pit of despair, built expressly for him and for his angels. For, while it is stated in Scripture that "the wicked will be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God," God did not make hell at first for man. The fearful sentence proclaimed against the guilty in the day of judgment is, "Depart from Me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And now, think you, that when the conflict between the serpent and the woman's seed draws to its close, our blessed Redeemer does not, in the holiness of His spirit, recoil from the direful contact? Do we not know something of the terribleness of striving with the devil? Have you no acquaintance with Satanic agency and Satanic power? Did he never, in any moment, assail you with awful blasphemies? Did he never come, at moments of surprise, and inject into your mind horrid thoughts of God and of yourself, and fill the whole screen before your eye with images of appetite and lust, to debauch the conscience

and make you utterly vile? And as we advance in the divine life, and are more conformed to the image of God, how much more dreadful become these conflicts with the adversary! And now Jesus, the pure and spotless, in His divine blessedness as Son of God, in all the purity and sinlessness of His perfect humanity, must undergo this conflict with Satan. The struggle, begun in the temptation, must be finished in Gethsemane and upon the cross. He finds that adversary gathering his hosts and marshalling them into battle: hence, in the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, He says, "They compassed Me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them." Think you that, in the anticipation of this conflict with the powers of darkness, the Saviour could not well exclaim, "Now is My soul troubled!"

V. I mention but one element more in our Lord's perturbation. I can only name it, for there is no language in which to describe it. IT WAS THE SENSE OF THE FATHER'S WRATH—HIS ANTICIPATION OF THE SUSPENSION OF THE FATHER'S LOVE. It does seem to me that we vacate the whole atonement if the Lord Jesus Christ did not bear the penalty of the broken law—not its equivalent, nor something which, more or less, nearly approaches it. He was made a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Awful mystery as it is, the Lord Jesus Christ did go down into the very bowels of the curse; He did endure the displeasure of the Father; He did bear the essence of the penalty; and He signalizes it in that cry of last distress which pours from His lips, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" How mysteriously that wrath pressed upon His spirit in the very moment when the Father most loved Him! When He is engaged in the most sublime act of obedience to that Father's will, the Father must turn away His face in judicial anger and leave Him alone; for He must tread the winepress of His wrath alone, and of all the people there shall be none with Him. My hearers, it is not in this world that we shall know what the wrath of God is; and may God save you and me from ever knowing it in the world to come! It is not this side of that fearful pit where He will forever punish the wicked that we can comprehend what is implied in the word. But whatever there is in that wrath, Christ endured. Well might He, in His human nature, recoil from the prospect of that suffering, and say, in the language of the text, "Father, save Me from this hour!" Beautiful expression of the truth of our Lord's human nature, to give out the cry that calls for relief in the anticipation of suffering! "Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."

And now, my brethren, as we gather around the table to hold fellowship with Christ in these sufferings, and to remember Him in His death, that I may not disturb your meditations at that sacred moment, let me close this discourse with just two reflections, which you may profitably revolve as you are seated at His board.

I. ALL THESE SUFFERINGS JESUS CHRIST ENDURED FOR US, AND THEY ARE THE EVIDENCES OF HIS LOVE TO US. Greater love can no man show

than that a man lay down his life for his friend. Ah! for his friend! Human love does not go beyond that pitch, to die for one's friend; but God commendeth His love to us in that "Christ died for us." He that came on the earth, the just for the unjust, and voluntarily passed beneath these woes, holds out from His cross the evidence of His love; and He asks you and me to gather around His table to-day, and to behold Him crucified in the midst of us, that we may know the greatness of that love. He spreads before us, as He spread before Thomas, His hands, and says, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and know how much I have loved you." We love Him because He has loved us; and these terrible sufferings are the proof that He loved us even unto death.

2. THEN WE SEE IN THESE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST THE AWFUL DEMERIT OF SIN. We have light thrown upon it which enables us to abhor it; and, in our abhorrence of it, to bring it to this table to-day and confess it; and then, as we lay our sins anew at the feet of Jesus, ask Him in what way we shall reciprocate His love. As we confess upon these emblems, which represent His body broken and His blood shed, He not only shows His love, but asks for an expression of our own; and if we love Him, let us tell Him that love. In our humility and penitence, with all the sense of shame which we may feel, let us pour into His secret ear the whispers of our love, as we gather around His table to-day; and then, as we rise from it, let us remember that as Christ shows His love to us through death, we are to show our love to Him through life. Because He loves us, He dies for us; and because we love Him, we live for Him; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." This is the proof of our love which Christ asks—not that we shall die, but that we shall live—live His life, and show the power of that life in the fruits of holiness which we produce.

CHRIST'S AGONY.

He knelt, the Saviour knelt and prayed,
When but His Father's eye
Looked through the lonely garden's shade,
On that dread agony;
The Lord of all above, beneath,
Was bowed with sorrow unto death.

He proved them all; the doubt, the strife,
The faint, perplexing dread,
The mists that hang o'er parting life,
All gathered round His head;
And the Deliverer knelt to pray;
Yet passed it not, that cup, away.

The sun set in a fearful hour,
The stars might well grow dim,
When this mortality had power
So to o'ershadow Him!
That He who gave man's breath, might know
The very depths of human woe.

It passed not, though the stormy wave
Had sunk beneath His tread;
It passed not, though to Him the grave
Had yielded up its dead.
But there was sent Him from on high,
A gift of strength for man to die.