

Christ died for us; and we died with Him.

AS come into the world and incarnate here, the Lord Jesus was always the sacrificial Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. i. 19). Yet He did not always suffer here as the Lamb. The only Gospel in which He is named as the Lamb for sacrifice (*amnos*), is the only one in which we find no express reference to His atoning sufferings at all.

The passover lamb in the type was to be "without blemish, a male of the first year," and "kept up" four days before it was slain. In this we see intrinsic fitness in the Antitype, not weakness and suffering, characterizing a provision for sacrifice.

With the eye of faith the Baptist discerned in Jesus, the Lamb which God had provided to take away the sin of the world, and bore witness to His personal and divine glory as the One on Whom the Spirit rested, and Who, as a divine person, would baptise with the Spirit. Yet he never once spoke of Christ suffering, save in the prophetic announcement that He is God's Lamb Who (ultimately) takes away sin. Nor does scripture anywhere speak of Him as the Lamb suffering, save as slain in death. As the Lamb of God He was seen "coming," and on the day following "walking" to an unnamed place of retirement (John i. 29, 36), to which He again retired (x. 40); but in nowise as the Lamb *then* undergoing suffering. At the last passover feast when He was about to be delivered up, and to be slain as the passover Lamb, we hear Him saying to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you *before I suffer*" (Lk. xx. 15). We conclude then, that a suffering lamb laid up to be slain as a sacrifice is not the teaching of the divine Word.

By incarnation—in partaking of flesh and blood the Lord prepared Himself to become the Surety for His people (Heb. ii. 14). He became their Surety when He received from His Father's hand the cup of wrath which was given Him to drink. By man He was slain (Acts ii. 23). By man His life was taken from the earth (viii. 33). He bowed to all His sufferings at the hand of man as being His Father's will and God's appointment for Him. Yet in none of these sufferings, so far as they were inflictions from the hand of man, was He forsaken of God, or suffering vicariously and atoningly as the bearer of sin.

Though man, energized by Satan, became the willing instrument in effecting the death of Christ, it would be impossible to conceive that the power of making atonement attached to any work of man or of Satan. Hence, when the

perfect hatred of man's heart towards Him had spent itself to the utmost, and culminated in the cross, then divine wrath was poured out upon Him as the bearer of "our sins," and He was forsaken of God. As our substitute He suffered for our sins. He suffered under the hand of God on the cross because of our sins, before He died. As our substitute also He died for us; He passed through "the suffering of death" (Heb. ii. 9). For though man was the instrument of it, Christ's death was consequent on His own act of laying down His life for us.

The infinite majesty and holiness of God, affronted by sin, demanded an infinite satisfaction. Therefore, to meet it, a sacrifice of infinite worth was required. By His atoning sufferings on the cross under God's hand for our sins, and by His death for us, Christ met the whole requirement of divine majesty and holiness offended by sin. He "suffered for sins, just for unjust" ones (1 Pet. iii. 18), and while we were yet sinners, He "died for us" (Rom. v. 8). All may therefore come to Him assured that in His sufferings and death for sins and for sinners there is a full provision to meet their deepest need. Christ's work of infinitely atoning worth is done, and God has borne witness to it by raising Him from the dead. On this sure ground the gospel is preached to all.

The blood of the all-efficacious sacrifice is now before God in the holiest. It is there as propitiation for the sins of His people (Heb. ii. 17). Christ suffered for sins, He bore the accumulated weight of our sins in His body on the tree, and died to put them all away. Not one was forgotten by Him when He confessed them as His own. Not one now remains to burden the conscience once purged by His blood. Yet the atoning virtue of His mighty sacrifice—His precious blood—immeasurably transcends, and is greater than all our need. Nor could the full untold extent of human guilt exhaust its power. Christ's atoning work proclaims that God is just and the Justifier of the ungodly believing on Him. By His sufferings and death God has been infinitely glorified, and His throne established in righteousness towards all for eternity.

We died with Christ.

In His death *for* our sins, Christ died *to* sin. He died "once for all," that is, to die "no more" (Rom. vi. 9; Heb. x. 26; Rev. i, 18). "Dying to sin" is language less exact than the phraseology of Scripture, in which we find "died to sin" and "dead to sin" only. "For in that He *has* died," says the apostle, "He has died to sin once for all" (Rom. vi. 10). By

dying *for* our sins He “tasted,” that is, proved the reality of death (Heb. ii. 9). By His death *to* sin He entered into a changed and fixed relation to sin, to have no more to say to it sacrificially for ever.

We also died to sin and to the law. We have “become (or ‘been made’) dead to the law through the body of Christ,” in order that we “should be” —the apostle does not say, raised, but—“joined to another, even to Him Who was raised from the dead” (Rom. vii. 4). For neither as “dead to sin,” nor as “dead to the law” are we, in any conceivable sense, raised up.

In a moral sense we have died in “our old man” condition and relations, and thus we have put off “the body of the flesh” (Col. ii. 11), or “body of sin” (Rom. vi. 6). We have put off (morally) the body which represented our old man condition and relations, the things which pertain to man as a fallen being. This is what the apostle means by putting off our old man, “which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit” (Eph. iv. 22). We are thus made free from the *thralldom* of sin “in (virtue of) the circumcision (*i.e.* death) of Christ,” and delivered from our condition of bondage through what God did for us, when (by an offering) “for sin” He “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). For “sin in the flesh” constitutes the very principle of his being, who, in a moral sense, is in the flesh and a child of Adam.

The Ephesian saints as taught in Christ, and having received the truth “as in Him,” put away concerning their former manner of life, the “old man;” and being renewed in the spirit of their mind, put on the “new man” which after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth. This is the practical putting away of the “old” man, and the putting on of the “new,” and is consequent on the reception of the truth as “*in* Jesus,” that is, as subsisting in virtue of Him (Eph. iv. 21-24). God has judicially dealt with “our old man” by means of the cross of Christ; our old man has been crucified with (not in) Him, and we (believers) being quickened and raised up, as we enter into our new condition “with” Him, become dead *to* the things which pertain to our old condition. Concurrently we put off the old and put on the new man.

Thus the whole question of our old man condition and relations has been finally and for ever settled by God Himself. Our “old man” has been crucified, the “body of sin” annulled by death (Rom. vi. 6), and consequently put off by us (Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9).

The “new man” which is morally “after God” (that is, according to God), is put on in our new creation condition in

Christ. For this end, we, who in ourselves were spiritually dead, have been quickened and raised up with Christ. Our "old things," that is, our old condition and relations, have "passed away." In Christ "they (our relations) have become new." In Him "know we no man after the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 16, 17). Our entire history *after the flesh* has been terminated by the cross.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). He died for our sins that we might not die for them. God's verdict upon and judgment of our sins at the cross and in the sacrifice of Christ, was morally His verdict and judgment upon sinners, that is, upon us. "Knowing this" we (believers) can add "that our old man has been crucified" with Christ, and consequently, "*we* died with Him" (vi. 6, 8), died *to* sin and in other relations.

Jewish and Gentile believers who were dispensationally apart are now quickened and raised up "together" as common subjects of grace, and thus associated "with" Christ (Eph. ii. 5, 6). As sealed, they are also *in* Him. They died with Christ—died to sin, when they ceased to be "bondsmen of sin." They ceased to be bondsmen of sin when they obeyed from the heart the form of teaching into which they were instructed, and became bondsmen to righteousness (vi. 17, 18). They put off the old, and put on the new man practically, when (as individuals) they were saved, that is, quickened and raised up out of their fallen condition (Eph. ii. 5, 6, 8). They are thus associated with Christ in their new condition, and share with Him His relation to sin, the law, etc. By the indwelling of the Spirit they are united to Christ, and "of Him" (1 Cor. vi. 17; Rom. viii. 9), and being thus of the new race of which He is the Head, they are "in Christ" in contrast to being in Adam.

Whilst we may do many things which practically deny that we are dead with Christ, in Scripture we are nowhere exhorted to witness that we are "practically dead" (?) with Him. On the other hand we are enjoined to yield ourselves unto God as alive from among the dead (Rom. vi. 13). We who were alive to sin and dead towards God, now reckon ourselves dead to sin *and* alive to God in Christ Jesus. As the apostle "believed" (ver. 8), so we "reckon" (ver. 11). By a similar operation of faith, in view of the truth that Christ has died to sin once for all, and now lives to die no more, we, as having died with Him, account ourselves to be not only dead to sin but "also" (ver. 8) alive to God. We are now in these changed relations to sin and to God, in Christ Jesus.

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