

## A Good Friday Sermon

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TEXT—"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." Matthew xxvii, 50.



In one of the older commentaries on the Bible, we once met the question, Why did Jesus Christ die? Which was answered by a series of reasons, some of which are remembered and some forgotten, the whole however, making an impression which was never lost. This impression was that no other explanation of his death is satisfactory, or even possible, than that he suffered as a substitute for guilty men.

We have been trying to recall some of these reasons while meditating on the transcendent event commemorated on Good Friday.

(1) His death occupies the foremost place in the New Testament. There are, for example, twenty-eight chapters in the Gospel of Matthew, and eight of them, at least, or more than one-quarter of the whole, is taken up with the story of his crucifixion and the events immediately leading up to and following it. About the same proportion is seen in John's gospel, to say nothing of the emphasis laid upon his death in the epistles of Paul and the book of Revelations.

(2) His death awakened the greatest interest in Heaven as well as on earth. Since in Peter's first epistle, Chapter 1, 12, he tells us that "these things the angels desire to look into." Moreover, when Moses and Elijah, brought back to earth, were conversing with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was about "His decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." (Luke ix, 31.)

(3) It was the central object ever present in Christ's own thought and teaching. Men come into the world to live, but he tells us that he came into the world to die. "The son of man, said he, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx, 28.) In another place, with application to himself, he says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii, 24.)

(4) His death was voluntary. In John VII, 30, we read that at a certain crisis, "no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come." And again he himself said, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John x, 17, 18.) Furthermore, it is specifically said that in his death he "yielded up the ghost." In other words, the passing out of his spirit from his body was the act of his own will.

(5) At the same time he died with peculiar agony, not merely that of a physical but a spiritual kind, crying out, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Whoever heard of God forsaking a martyr to his truth? And if Jesus were forsaken in any sense, must it not have been as a substitute for us?

(6) There were wonderful phenomena accompanying his death as of no other man,—the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went unto the holy city and appeared unto many." (Matt. xxvii, 51, 53.)

(7) It was a predicted death. A way back in the Garden of Eden it was pointed to in the words addressed to the serpent, "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." (Gen. iii, 15.) Isaiah, the prophet, spake of Christ seven or eight centuries before his birth, saying, "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." (53, 5.) And Daniel said he should be cut off, but not for himself. (9, 26.)

(8) It was a predestined death, since Peter says, "Yet are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world."

(9) Finally, it was a death which has been commemorated by an observance that never can be hid or explained away, namely, the communion of the Lord's supper, in which Christians eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of his dying love.

This is the reason an inspired apostle is able to say, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (Rom. x, 13.)

## HOME TOWN HELPS

### AS A MATTER OF BUSINESS

The Beauty and Orderly Keeping of One's Home Town Should Appeal to Every Resident.

"The cities of Europe," declares an expert, "consider civic beauty an absolute asset in cash. Paris, for example, invariably has an eye to the beautiful in whatever it does. Paris would never dare to lose its prestige as the most beautiful city in the world. That would be bad business."

"We ought to consider it a ruinous business policy for one of our cities not to protect its beauty. Take the railroad problem in our cities. At present some railroads are beginning to brace up and do splendid things, but for a long time wherever we had a railroad in a city it was death and desolation so far as beauty was concerned."

"We ought to do the same in other things. Here each fellow has gone ahead for himself, without regard to others. A city ought to be a unity. Each citizen should be allowed to do what he pleases only in so far as he does not hurt the city as a whole. As soon as he does that he should be stopped."

In conclusion he said: "No one man is competent to plan a city. Such a task needs a combination of men. The problems of city planning today are not L'Enfant's nor Sir Christopher Wren's. What we now have to face is far more complicated."

"City planning should be undertaken by architects, landscapists, traffic experts, and the various types of engineers working together. All these men, before making plans for the rebuilding of cities, should give special study to the various difficulties of civic improvement."

### DATE PALMS IN CALIFORNIA

County Supervisors Are Planting Them Along Roads and the Work Is Applauded.

The board of supervisors of Los Angeles county have authorized the county forestry commission to purchase 500 date palms at a cost of a dollar apiece to be planted along the San Fernando road. There is a great deal of work of this kind to be done in southern California. It was naturally a treeless section until the horticulturist came in and adorned it with millions of revenue-producing fruit trees. The highways are still neglected to a large extent, a thing that should be remedied with all possible dispatch. Every line of country road should have its ornamental trees, and the main thoroughfares should be parked with grass plots and parterres of flowers well cared for. We must not forget that this is the playground of the continent, and that tourists seeking enjoyment desire to have the sense of sight delighted above all things.—Los Angeles Times.

Never Need of Ugliness. No town is so small that it need be ugly. A little railroad "whistling post" could be attractive with trees. Some time the railroads of the west will send out their "arbor specials" as they send their good roads trains. There is little excuse for the habitations of men along the track to be usually the single unlovely thing in the Kansas railroad journey.

Have you noticed that where fine trees form a park in the air the people below have holiday manners? The people under the trees seem to be enjoying life. They are not satisfied with sullenness. The accompaniment of nice lawns and pretty, well kept houses and clean streets is a tribute to the example of the trees. Even to be lazy under arching branches is the nicest sort of laziness. When you loaf in the shaded streets of towns like Lawrence and Manhattan you invite your soul. The "good, pray poet" would have liked these Kansas towns.

### Heat City With Electricity.

It is planned to electrically heat the dwelling and business houses of Stavanger, Norway, and the board of directors of the electric light plant at that place has asked permission from the city council to make contracts up to a consumption of 100 house power. It has been suggested that the price for the current thus used shall be \$6.75 per horse power (744 watts) per year. It is also planned to heat the government and city buildings in that manner. The population of Stavanger is 25,000, and the city has water power facilities to furnish 25,000 horse power for electrical purposes.

### Hypocrisy of Cities.

The hypocrisy of cities lies in the fact that their front yards are clean and their back yards are dirty. The front yards are spread over with emerald grass shaved smooth by a lawn mower, and are often attractive with flowers, rich markets for the bees. The back yards are slatternly with ash heaps and refuse and many of them are never cleaned up. The front yards with their pleasant grass and their daffodils daffodilling and their crocuses croaking, are a pretense. They pretend that the whole premises are equally clean.—Vancouver Sun.

## Do the Wicked Continue Sinning After Death?

By REV. J. H. RALSTON,  
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TEXT—"He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still." Rev. 22:11. A. R. V.



Do the wicked cease sinning when they die? Probably the vast majority of those who ever consider this question without deep thought say they certainly do, for men are to render account to God for the deeds done in the flesh, and when a man dies his account is closed. Is it not wise to

matter a little carefully? Our thoughts are presented from the evangelical standpoint as to the nature, manifestation, and outcome of sin. The widely prevalent modern, though erroneous, view of sin makes it rather an advantage than a disadvantage, Adam's fall being upward rather than downward.

One of the first suggestions is that sin is self-perpetuating. It is a common saying that one sin leads to another—that sin follows sin somewhat automatically. Sin, however, is not to be considered as consisting chiefly in outward transaction, but in the motive that is behind it. When a man dies his personality with its stamped character continues, and reason would say that his course of action with respect to the moral law is to continue. Professor Denney says: "The very conception of human freedom involves the possibility of its permanent misuse, or what our Lord himself calls 'eternal sin.'"

The punishment of sin is not today held up before the transgressor, but rather the sin itself. Is not the sin really the great evil? It may be said that if a man can cease from sin outwardly in this life, sin may not become permanent. But this ceasing from sin is by almighty power alone, and this power is denied after death. If it is further said that man by the mere force of his own will can cease from sin, we reply that the ceasing is only in the outward manifestation, and not in the real sinning, which belongs to the motive.

Meager light is thrown on the activity of the wicked after death, but we know the scripture teaches that men who die in sin go to dwell with the devil and his angels. What is the employment of the devil? Does any one who believes in a personal devil believe that he does not continue to sin? Is he not intensely active, the instigator of all the cruelty, oppression, wars, abominations, lies and wickedness in the universe? If so, what about those whom scripture calls his children? Jesus said they do the deeds of their father, and are they any less children after death than before?

There is no evidence that after death there is a cessation from sin if we consider the employment or experiences of the inhabitants of the other world. As to heaven, about which we know much more than about hell, we learn the employment of the righteous. There is no intimation of sinning, there is consequently no gospel preaching, mission work, social regeneration, or anything of that kind, but the inhabitants of heaven are engaged in the praise of God, in worshipping him in his glorious majesty, and doing his behests whatever they may be. In the text we read that he that is righteous is to do righteousness still, and he that is holy, is to be made more holy. Some one might say, "If the conditions in this life have a tendency to perpetuate themselves, will not Christians who show imperfection by sinning, continue to show their imperfection in heaven in the same way?" We might admit that if we did not have the direct teaching of scripture that there is no sin in heaven, nothing that defiles, that works abomination or makes a lie. From analogy we would conclude from the employment of the inhabitants of heaven, the employment of the wicked will be unrighteous or sinful.

The teaching of scripture, though not abundant, seems to be clear. Jesus said (Mark 3:29, A. R. V.) that if a man sin against the Holy Ghost he shall be guilty of an eternal sin, a sin that continues in action forever. Revelation 22:11 seems to leave the matter beyond dispute, and it is well to observe that this teaching comes at the very close of the Bible. "He that is unrighteous let him do unrighteousness still, and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still." The marginal reading suggests the phrase "yet more" for the word "still" in each case. Here, certainly, the employment of the wicked is clearly presented.

What a sad fate, doomed to eternal sinning! The only escape is to have the motive to sin removed by the indwelling life of Christ. Then the habit of doing righteousness will establish the character that does righteousness, and the future is safe.

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