

The Present Wounding and Torture of Christ



Many times in the past when I have contemplated the sufferings of Christ upon the Cross and my heart is broken in sorrow for Him who has suffered so much for us, I would find comfort in the thought that Christ was now safe in heaven and no longer exposed to the cruel torture He suffered while here on earth.

The Bible clearly speaks of the one-time death of Christ for the purging of our sins.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of

things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: (25) **Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;** (26) **For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** (27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (28) **So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;** and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb 9:22-28

The Bible states that Christ was only offered once to shed His blood for us. This clearly contradicts the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation where Christ's blood and body are offered thousands of times a day around the world in the Catholic Mass. Christ's physical torture and death only took place once in the flesh. As the death of Christ took place upon the cross, the word *cross* is directly linked to the suffering and death of Christ. When we speak of the cross, our minds are drawn to that amazing revelation of God in the death of His Son.

There is a critical question we need to ask in regards to the sufferings of the cross. Was it the nails and lashes that caused the agony of Christ upon the cross? Was it the beating and tearing of His beard that caused Him so much anguish?

It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help. {DA 752.4}

The agony of the cross for Christ was a sense of the malignity of sin; the ability of sin to enslave and harden the human heart and destroy it. His agony was from a sense that He was within reach of the lost and yet most would refuse to be saved.

The critical question we must ask ourselves is this. Was the inexpressible agony of Christ's sufferings concerning the malignity of sin and the plight of sinners limited to His time upon the physical cross of wood? Does not Christ feel this sorrow even now?

Heb 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

As one with us, He must bear the burden of our guilt and woe. The Sinless One must feel the shame of sin. The peace lover must dwell with strife, the truth must abide with falsehood, purity with vileness. **Every sin, every discord, every defiling lust that transgression had brought, was torture to His spirit.** Alone He must tread the path; alone He must bear the burden. Upon Him who had laid off His glory and accepted the weakness of humanity the redemption of the world must rest. He saw and felt it all, but His purpose remained steadfast. Upon His arm depended the salvation of the fallen race, and He reached out His hand to grasp the hand of Omnipotent Love. {DA 111.5}

By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh; and as we look upon Him whom we have pierced, we mourn for the sins that have brought anguish upon Him. Such mourning will lead to the renunciation of sin. {DA 300.3}

Christ feels the woes of every sufferer. When evil spirits rend a human frame, Christ feels the curse. When fever is burning up the life current, He feels the agony. DA 823

Is it possible to comprehend the sufferings of Christ? Is it possible to imagine the agony of His soul even now? As Christ looks upon the young man enslaved to alcohol or drugs and He reaches out to him with earnest desire to help him, and the young man turns away from Him clinging rather to self-destruction, can we not see our Saviour gripped with sorrow, wishing, yearning to save and yet He is rebuffed. Christ sends His Spirit to the young woman enslaved by the music and movies of the world that fill her mind with selfishness and evil, but He is rebuffed, His beard, as it were, is torn out and He is evicted from the soul so that she can continue to destroy herself. The Spirit of Christ seeks to move gently into the hearts of men as they sit in the pub enslaved to alcohol watching men crash into each other on a big screen and hardening their souls. He pleads with them to turn from their selfishness, to go and care for their families and spend his money on worthy things. The men order another drink, tell another joke and roar with laughter and Christ once again is beaten, kicked and evicted from the men's souls.

Do we know what it feels like to be pushed aside, trampled into the gutter and spat upon? Would we continue to submit ourselves to this kind of treatment? Each time we reach out, we are humiliated and filled with great sorrow. How does Christ continue to do this for men and women? Day and night reaching out to them, calling them, pleading with them and being pushed back again and again. In the spiritual world, He is beaten, whipped and kicked, a crown of thorns is placed on His head and He is hit with a stick and taunted and mocked. His name is spoken in jest and laughter and silently He submits Himself to this humiliating spectacle. How can He endure this?

He denies Himself. This is the reality of the cross.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross,** and follow me. Matt 16:24

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. Matt10:38

Note carefully that Christ does not limit the experience of the cross to Himself, nor does He limit it to a single event. The physical sufferings of Christ once for all time, was a merciful demonstration of what Christ experiences every day and every night. Constantly pushed back, beaten and humiliated.

In grasping this reality, Isaiah the gospel prophet wrote of the sufferings of Christ 700 years before He actually came to earth and spoke about it as a present and past reality to his time.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Isa 53:3-4

In 700 BC Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. As men hid their faces from Him and turned away from Him in disgust, anger and fear, Christ was wounded and tortured in His Spirit. How long has Christ suffered this experience?

In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Isa 63:9

Christ carried humanity for all of the days of old. He was wounded from the days of Adam. As Christ watched Adam and Eve eat the fruit and chose to evict His Spirit from them, He was wounded and bruised in His heart. This is why the Bible tells us:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**. Rev 13:8

The word *slain* means *to butcher*. The heart of Christ was butchered with a holocaust of immense proportions from the foundation of the world. That reality that was invisible to the physical world was mercifully manifested 2000 years ago that all may understand what Christ was experiencing and continues to experience to this very day. We know that the Law of God was not written physically until long after the creation of the world and yet we know that the Law of God existed. So also, the seed of the cross of Christ existed from the foundation of the world and was manifested physically 2000 years ago. The agony of the suffering lamb offered by Adam in the garden with His family not only pointed forward to the physical suffering and death of Christ 4000 years later but also pointed to the immediate sufferings of Christ then and there in the garden.

Do we begin to appreciate the depth, breath, height and length of the cross? Do we begin to understand the enormity of the sufferings of Christ for us? Can we grasp the depth of the writings of Paul when he said:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Gal 2:20

How could Paul say he was crucified with Christ at least 20 years after it physically happened? It is because Paul entered into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, **and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;** Php 3:10

When Christ dwells with us, we feel what He feels for the lost, we feel His mind and heart and His sufferings and we are sustained by His self-denial motivated by His wonderful selfless agape love.

But notice something deeper in the words of inspiration

It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. **Christ was the prince of sufferers;** DA 752

If Christ is the prince of sufferers then who is the King of sufferers who has completely denied Himself and suffered incredibly in the giving of His Son 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. John 3:16

Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. **Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart.** {DA 356.2}

The sufferings of Christ are an expression of the great suffering that finds its source in the heart of God. I confess I am overcome with sorrow when I think about our precious Father. When I think of all His suffering for a world that despises Him, I feel a deep sense of admiration and love for Him. The love of God constrains me and I surrender fully to its magnetic power; the power of true love.

I pray you can see how the cross changes the hearts of men; a revelation of the selflessness and continual reaching out to every man and woman. A *daily* driving back and humiliation and yet Father and Son deny themselves, endure the shame and continue to appeal, plead and reach out until the very last possibility.

When we know that every sin, causes our Lord Jesus so much suffering, will we turn to Him and embrace His selfless love and then when we are humiliated and maligned, we will manifest His Spirit and not strike back, not become full of self-pity and turn away in disgust and frustration.

When I look at the cross in this light, I feel my sinful condition. It begins to dawn into my mind the extent of my problem with self. The brightness of His self-denial shines a bright light into my selfish condition and my will begins to move towards a decision of change. I desire to be like my Saviour, I desire to be free of self-pity and self-protection; I desire to love as He loves and in my recognition of His one-time shedding of His blood, I cling to the assurance that my sins are forgiven and that I have received of His Spirit. Hallelujah!

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom 8:1