

A CRY FROM THE CROSS

(Sermon by the late Rev. I. F. Keirstead. Printed by request of Rev. Mrs. Kierstead.)

"My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me."

May not this be spoken of as the greatest of all wonders. Jesus was we are sure the elect of God, spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. He in whom the soul of the Father delighted. He had come forth from the realms of glory to do the Father's bidding. His childhood life had been stainless and he had developed into manhood and took upon himself the sterner responsibilities of life. He had broken no commandment, shirked no responsibility, come short in no duty either towards God or man, and now when the chief priests and rulers begin to plan to take away His life and He sees the Cross ahead, He does not draw back but sets His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. Judas has betrayed Him. The mob has come out against Him and though He could have used His divine power in calling twelve legions of angels to His help and deliverance, He submitted to go to the cross on behalf of a lost world. The crown of thorns has been placed upon His brow, they are crushed into His temples and with the blood flowing down over His face and beard, he has been smitten by the reed, the nails have been driven into His hands and feet and He has been lifted by the soldier and the cross plunged into its socket. The passers-by rail at Him, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save". The angels came to strengthen Him in the garden. Will they not come to hush the cruel mockers now that He is bleeding and dying upon the cross? No, the angels seem to be absent when the King of glory is dying. But will not that voice of the Father again be heard? That voice which spoke at His baptism, saying "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased". No, the Heavens seem brass above Him and dense darkness has settled over all the land, this physical darkness adding to the spiritual darkness which swept over the soul of the Son of God, for Jesus being perfectly human as well as divine, is effected by this phenomenon of nature as we should have been. Yet it is not the darkness of nature but the withdrawal of that deep sense of the presence of the Father which caused Him to cry out in the deep agony of His soul "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me."

But did the Father actually recede from His son and leave Him alone in that awful night of testing? Or can it be that in the climax of His great suffering the reason of Jesus gave way and His mind was carried off by an illusion? Oh no! There is not the slightest evidence of anything like that having taken place. Jesus was in perfect command of all His faculties. The Father with an aching heart really turned His back upon His Son and left Him for the time to struggle through that awful moment alone. Why? I dare to think that it was because He could not bear to look upon that pitiful sight. The form of the Son of God marred more than any man. Did we not see His face" said the Father to the angels.

But the greater reason why God the Father hid His face from His son, may be explained by the fact that Jesus had been chosen as the sin offering. John the Baptist pointed Him out to the disciples as he walked by the Jordan, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." What was the sin of the world which Jesus was to bear away- I think it was selfishness. H. Ward Beecher once said, "Sel-

fishness indulged in at the expense of the happiness of others, is demonism". Selfishness was the predominating sin of that age in which Jesus lived. It is the sin of this present day, also selfishness is the sin which has been responsible for bringing on the depression from which we are now suffering and the principle thing that is in the way of it clearing up. Take selfishness out of the world and that day spoken of by Isaiah will dawn inside of twelve months. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid". Remove selfishness out of the world and we shall have more happiness than we know what to do with. Jesus was bearing this sin of the past and present ages on His own body on the tree. For it is written "God hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" God cannot look upon sin with the least of allowance. Hence He turned away from the Son of God at that dark hour and left Him to bear the sin and sorrow of the world alone. Jesus was forsaken of God that we might not be forsaken in our sins. God comes to the help of the sinner and "all have sinned" and come short of the glory of God". The sinner however must be willing to part company with sin. Sometimes that is not easy. Sin has become strongly entrenched in our natures. It has taken hold on every vital power of the soul. It becomes a disease which we seem powerless to shake off. But as the Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look upon the serpent of brass lifted upon the pole by Moses and be healed, so we may by faith and self-surrender, turn our eyes to the Cross and see Christ suffering there on our behalf and again hear His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the power of sin will be broken. The desires of the flesh and the mind will be crucified so that we may no longer be controlled by the baser desires of the flesh which bring forth fruit unto death. As we members once again commemorate the sufferings of Christ, may we not bow low in repentance and contrition of sin when we think, as I trust the Holy Spirit will enable to, of the sins we have committed which helped to nail Him to the accursed tree, and may our repentance be a repentance which needeth not to be repented of, a repentance that will lead us to seek that transformation of heart and that fulness and endowment of the Holy Spirit which will fit us for leading others away from the sins that caused the Saviour to bleed and die. Away from the sins that separate man from God and man from man. And may we appropriate by faith the benefits of the atonement receiving from Him that sanctifying grace which will bring us all into that oneness of Spirit and purpose, prayed for by the Master Himself in His high priestly prayer, John 17 : 17 to 21. "Sanctify them that they all may be one".

OBITUARY

Aaron B. Craig, of Millinocket, Maine, formerly of Hartland, N. B., passed away March 25th, at the age of 80 years.

Surviving are his wife, one sister, Mrs. John Glass, of Hartland, N. B., and five children.

Brother Craig was a member of the Hartland Reformed Baptist Church, having united with that group in 1909.

Funeral service was held from the home in Millinocket and was conducted by Rev. G. J. Bolster.

To those who mourn we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

SUNSET

W. Edmund Smith

The setting sun proclaims the dying day;
His glowing rays make beautiful the sight.
To lighten other lands he speeds away;
Soon we are wrapped in sable robes of night.

He says, "Good-night. Of darkness have no fear,
But dream sweet happy dreams and sleep and
rest;

I soon shall break the darkness with my cheer,
And brighten all the sky from east to west."

Sunrise, noontide, sunset and darkening night—
All are included in the time called Day;
The darkness always flees before the light,
Which makes the flowers bloom along our way.

My sun is setting in the western sky;
I long have passed the threescore years and
ten:

The lengthening shadows say, "You soon must
die."

But faith cries out, "My sun shall rise again."

For Jesus is my Hope, my Light, my Sun;
The Sun of Righteousness in truth is He
This setting sun but ends this life's short run.
My Sun shall rise for all eternity.

OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

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minor key; we have no miseries of lamentation. In spite of faults and failures that God can see and others can see more than we, we shout for joy and rejoice in our security through faith, that "neither heights nor depths nor angels, nor principalities nor powers nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord."

I want you to understand me. I am not preaching anti-nomianism which is the poisonous doctrine of those who pervert the Pauline teaching of being in Christ. I am preaching our glorious privilege in grace of having filled out to the full of God's absolute standard of perfection in Christ, all our defective service through the limitations of our judgment and knowledge. The other day I read from a sermon of George Whitefield's that "all of our best deeds are but splendid sins in the eyes of God." I am sure that Abel and Enoch and Paul and Wesley and all other saints great and small did not please God with splendid sins. Every holy man is conscious when he pleases God and God gives him a present reward for even a cup of cold water given to the way-faring man. But in spite of this every holy man offers all his works to God through the blood of Jesus, whose perfect active and passive righteousness fill out to the full God's demand for absolute perfection.

How humble it makes one feel to be really in Christ by a warm living evangelical faith!

All honor and glory and dominion belong unto Him who hath made us meet to be inheritors with the saints in light. Paul said: "Jesus came to save sinners of whom I am chief". Did that mean Paul was living then in sin? Oh no! But Paul's humility would not allow him to forget what he once was and how sin bound him in its slavish chains. Neither can we forget.

We can see so plainly what we could be in reverting to the old life unless we cling to Jesus and abide in Him by faith. We glory not in our own righteousness, or merit; we glory in Jesus "who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."