

The Price of Our Redemption III

Youth Instructor

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After condemning Jesus, the council of the Sanhedrin brought him to Pilate's judgment-hall, to have their sentence confirmed and executed. And there, though declaring, "I find no fault in him," Pilate gave the Saviour up to his accusers. He desired to deliver Jesus; but when he saw that he could not do this and retain his position, he chose, rather than lose worldly power, to sacrifice an innocent life. The priests "were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified." And "when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. . . . And when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

Christ was betrayed by Judas, and forsaken and denied by his disciples. He was scorned as a deceiver, and hunted down as one unfit for human sympathy. He was condemned by Pilate, and crowned with thorns. His hands and his feet were pierced with nails as he hung on the cross. Every step onward in the shameful scene was one of intense suffering.

Behold the Son of God suffering on the cross for three terrible hours of agony, enduring the penalty of transgression, in order that repentant, believing ones might have eternal life. And in the darkest hour, when the Saviour was enduring the greatest suffering that Satan could bring to torture his humanity, the Father hid from his Son his face of pity, comfort, and love. Twice, at the baptism and at the transfiguration, the voice of God had been heard proclaiming Christ as his Son. The third time, just before the betrayal, the Father had spoken, witnessing to his Son. But now the voice from heaven was silent. No testimony in the Saviour's favor was heard. Alone he suffered abuse and mockery.

In this trial Christ's heart broke. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he cried.

As the divine Sufferer hung upon the cross, angels gathered about him, and as they looked upon him, and heard his cry, they asked, with intense emotion, "Will not the Lord Jehovah save him? Will not that soul-piercing cry of God's only begotten Son prevail?" Then were the words spoken: "The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent. Father and Son are pledged to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Christ was not alone in making his great sacrifice. It was the fulfilment of the covenant made between him and his Father before the foundation of the world was laid. With

clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry.

After Adam fell, Jesus entered upon the work of redeeming man. In every part his sacrifice was perfect; for he could make a complete atonement for sin. Though he was one with God, yet he made himself of no reputation. He took upon him our nature. "Lo, I come," was his cheerful announcement of the clothing of his divinity with humanity, "to do thy will, O God!" He loved his church, and gave himself for it. "Therefore doth my Father love me," he said to the Pharisees, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

"He saved others; himself he cannot save," was the mocking taunt hurled at Christ during the agony of his death on the cross. At any moment he could have saved himself, and come down from the cross; but had he done this, the world would have been given over to the control of the great apostate. It was a marvel to the angels that Christ did not seal with death the lips of the scoffers. It was a marvel to them that he did not flash forth his righteous indignation upon the hardened, corrupt soldiers, as they mocked him, and fixed a crown of thorns on his head. But the Son of God knew that the greatest guilt belonged to the priests and rulers, the representatives of sacred trusts, which they were basely betraying. Pilate, Herod, the Roman soldiers, were ignorant of Jesus. They knew not that he was the sent of God. They thought by abusing him to please the priests and rulers. They had not the light so abundantly given to the Jewish nation. They were unacquainted with Old-Testament history. Had they known what the Jews knew, they would not have treated Jesus as cruelly as they did.

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