

Twentieth Century Crucifixion

Recently, in Chicago, Fred Walcher was crucified. For reasons that are obscure he permitted nails to be driven through his hands and feet. The cross was then erected beneath the Chicago elevated tracks. The police, hearing his moaning, came to his rescue and took him down.

The Chicago crucifixion, the work of fanatics, serves to point up the difference between the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the cross and those of an ordinary man. All too often we look only at the visible sufferings of Jesus and think that they represent the real passion of the cross. Of course Jesus did suffer in a physical sense tremendously. What anguish was caused Him by the nails, the crown of thorns and the terrible thirst! But great as were his physical sufferings, they were in measure experienced by this man in Chicago. They have been experienced by many a man lying wounded on the battle field. We must look deeper to see the greater suffering of Calvary. That suffering was suffering of soul. It was the anguish of the Holy One upon whose pure and innocent being were poured the sins of men in black and awful flow. It was the anguish of One forsaken of His Heavenly Father, who could not look even upon His beloved Son while sin rested upon Him. Yes, the physical sufferings of Jesus were real, but the true, deeper sufferings of Calvary are not to be put in human speech—they cannot be imagined in human thought.

Why did He suffer so? Why did He permit men to crucify Him? Here is the answer in the language of Scripture, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14-15). Jesus suffered for others. He died as a substitute. What matchless grace! What a glorious plan of salvation! Because He died helpless, lost men may live forever. Have you received that life He died to give? Let your faith be fixed in Him today. ". . . as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

CREMATION

A small group of college professors was discussing cremation. One of them had a deep seated aversion to cremation. No known agent of destruction, he argued, is more powerful than fire. Man, he continued, has something like a soul, and since this soul is intimately connected with the body, it would be reckless to expose the soul to cremation. Embalming is safer. Of course, no one knows, so he argued, what fire can or cannot do to the soul, but it is reckless to run unnecessary risks.

Another professor pointed out that not only have many people been cremated after death, but that many have been accidentally burned to death and ashes. Think of those who have been cruelly burned to death in the war. If the Ruler of the Universe has provided for a future life—so argued this second professor—would it be reasonable that these who were accidentally cremated should lose their opportunity of Heaven?

The first gentleman replied that we do not know the laws that govern preservation for a future life. There are tragedies in this life, and it may be, for all we know, that destruction by cremation is just another unfortunate tragedy. And for safety's sake this professor hoped that he would never be cremated.

College professors or unskilled laborers—it makes no difference: if one's hope of a future life is based on such slim grounds, and if one's fears of destruction cannot better be put at rest, how miserable we all must be! How hopeless to grope in the darkness of such vague speculations! How unsatisfactory to guess at what the Ruler of the Universe may or may not have decided!

But the Christian who has heard God speak is neither miserable nor hopeless, for he is not condemned to groping guesses. God has spoken, and he has said:

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept . . . O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:20, 55).

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