

The Sufferings of Christ

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From the "Bible Treasury," 1858-9.

<07008E> 139 {file section c.}

204 Notice of earlier opinions on the subject.

I said I would take notice of the quotations from ancient writers on the point of Christ's vicarious life and living sufferings. What I have already said will have proved that views of His sufferings, in which (what I avow is to me more precious than clearness) true piety may be found, not only fail in clearness, but are superficial in their nature. And this is real loss; for, far from losing the piety and the holy affections which should accompany the thoughts of Christ's sufferings, a deeper scriptural knowledge of what they were gives seriousness to our spirits, and makes Him more prominent in our thoughts, emptying us of self. What we have to seek is, that everything our mind is engaged in should be filled with Christ, or rather the fulness of the truth of Christ be that in which our minds are engaged. All other things are thus judged, received as belonging to Him, or we are freed from them. This enlarges and sanctifies the mind, for, indeed, He fills all things. We lose ourselves thus even in Him, and there is very real enlargement of heart. If we have peace and a single eye, scripture does thus feed the soul; sets before it a scene that embraces all things, according to the divine view of all things; gives a large, divine view of things in contrast with, and to the exclusion of, a fleshly, narrow one, of which self and the worldly mind and its narrow and confined interests and apprehensions are always more or less the centre; and, moreover, because scripture is the word of God, this gives submission and certainty to the mind, and clearness of judgment as to the walk.

205 I avow, I could not tie myself to any of the ancients, nor own their authority in any way. I may *learn* from them (I would, I trust, gladly from any one), and own thankfully, what was given them of God. I see in Luther an energy of faith for which millions of souls ought to be thankful to God, and I can certainly say I am. I may see a clearness and recognition of the authority of scripture in Calvin, which delivered him and those he taught (yet more than Luther) from the corruptions and superstitions which had overwhelmed Christendom, and through it the minds even of most saints. But present these to me as a standard of truth — I reject them with indignation. They were not inspired. Their teachings are not the word of God. To this I hold fast tenaciously. It is the safeguard and guide of the Church and of the saints under grace at all times, and especially in these days. The gifted men I respect, when presented to me as such, would become a horror to me if they were in any way substituted for, or made to compete with, the word of God.

I am not surprised if eminent servants of God, not vessels of inspiration, did not all at once cast off every trammel, in which all Christendom, save a few persecuted ones (at that time almost rooted out by persecution, but precious in God's sight) had been bound up. I thank God heartily for the light and courage He gave them. But no one can say they were freed from everything that had overburdened the truth. I do not see that these eminent men were so free from human views, and what governs human judgment according to this world, when they were framing systems for the countries they belonged to, as when they were wielding truth for the deliverance of souls from error. I do not wish to dwell upon the evil which accompanied so much good — evil for which man was responsible, because I do not see that it would be edifying; but I do not wish to blind myself where history shews me facts which ought to have their weight with my conscience. I am writing in peace, because God has delivered us through the instrumentality of these men, some of whom laid down their lives for the gospel and their love to Christ and to souls. I have no wish to depreciate them or the work in which they were engaged — I wish I had the faith of many of them: but do not bring their doctors or their systems to me as authority. You are trenching on the authority of the word of God. Am I to believe consubstantiation? Am I to believe in baptismal regeneration? No honest man can deny that it was, generally speaking, the reformed faith, or at least the faith of the reformers, and that forgiveness of sins was obtained in it.* I may be told, But they preached justification by faith, so that it cannot be. They did preach justification by faith for the deliverance of souls, and taught baptismal regeneration when establishing a system, and tortured themselves to reconcile both. The evangelical party among the reformed have, at the present day, cast baptismal regeneration off, as freer in their ecclesiastical habits. The stricter Lutherans, at least confessional Lutherans, torture themselves to this day to reconcile both. In England everyone knows where we are as to it.

{*It may be alleged this is not the case in Scotland. But their Confession was a hundred and thirty years after the Reformation; and even there it is really taught as to the elect. "Grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed," they say, "that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerate"; but this is to save election. They say, "The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred by the Holy Ghost* to such, whether of age or infants, as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsels of God's own will, in His appointed time." So that, according to this teaching, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is conferred by the Holy Ghost in God's appointed time. Yet this is the efficacy of baptism. The grace promised is not conferred in baptism; yet, by the right use of this ordinance, in which it is not conferred, it is conferred at some other time by the Holy Ghost. And yet it is the efficacy of baptism. This is a singular effort to reconcile the truth felt as to vital partaking of the divine nature, and tradition as to ordinances.

Here is the Catechism of Calvin: "Baptism is to us as an entrance into the Church of God; for it testifies to us that God, whereas we were strangers to Him (*estrangers de luy*), receives us for His servants. The signification of baptism has two parts; for the Lord represents to us in it the remission of our sins, and, besides, our regeneration or spiritual

renewal. Not that the water is the washing of our souls, for that belongs to the blood of Christ only, but by the sacrament that is signified to us. The water is in such sort a figure that the truth (reality) is found with it; for God promises nothing to us in vain; wherefore it is certain that in baptism the remission of sins is offered to us and we receive it. This grace is not accomplished indifferently in all; for many destroy it by their perversity. Nevertheless, this does not hinder the sacrament having such a nature, although it is the faithful only who experience its efficacy. This grace is applied to us in baptism, inasmuch as we are then clothed with Jesus Christ, and receive then His Spirit, provided we do not render ourselves unworthy of the promises which are then given to us." An explanation, though happily less precise than the Westminster or Scottish, equally unintelligible to me, I avow. We receive His Spirit, provided we do not render ourselves unworthy of the promises given in it. Render ourselves — when? Do we then receive it or not?

The Catechism of Heidelberg, in general use among the Reformers, says, "Why does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration and the cleansing of sins? To teach us, not only that, as the filth of the body is cleansed by the water, so our sins are effaced by the blood and by the Spirit of Christ; but much more to assure us by this sign and by this divine pledge that we are not less interiorly purged of our sins than we are washed outwardly with the visible water."

I need hardly cite less important witnesses of what I allege. The lesser catechism of Luther thus states it:

"What does baptism exhibit (praestat) or confer?"

"It works the forgiveness of sins, frees from death and from the devil, and gives eternal blessedness to all and every who believe what the words and divine promises promise.

"How can water effect so great things?"

"Water certainly does not effect such great things, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith which believes in the word of God added to the water: because water without the word of God is simply water, and is not baptism; but, the word of God being added, it is baptism, that is, the saving water of grace and life, and the laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost; as Paul says in Titus 3 (quoted). "What this faith is I may cite from the greater catechism, which is a violent defence of his views." These leaders of the blind (who said faith alone saved and that externals were of no avail) will not see that faith must necessarily have something which it may believe, that is, on which it rests, and supported by which it endures. Thus now faith clings to the water (aquae adhaeret) and believes that it is baptism in which pure blessedness and life is, not by virtue of the water (as has been abundantly said), but through this, that baptism is united with and confirmed by the word and the divine ordinance, and ennobled by His name." He founds it all on "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

The Dutch services teach the doctrine of regeneration by baptism as clearly as possible. See the second point in the address at the beginning of the formulary and the thanksgiving at the end. It is asserted in these places without any question or condition.

Calvin is far less positive in his Institutions, with a great deal that is confused, and in my judgment erroneous, as to the identity of the baptism and ministry of John with that of the apostles. He says that the knowledge and certainty of purging and regeneration are given in it. Purification is promised by baptism, but none other than that which is by the blood of Christ, which is figured by water by reason of its power to cleanse. But for sins committed afterwards, we are to look back to the certainty given us in baptism, which is not only for past sins, for the purity of Christ is offered to us. That always flourishes — is undone (*opprimitur*) by no spots. He says, "Therefore it is *thus* to be judged; namely, that in whatever time we may be baptized, we are washed and purged once for our whole life," and hence, if we fail, are to recall our baptism. We know how earnestly Luther preached justification by faith — how Calvin taught it — how English martyrs laid down their lives for it; yet all in their catechisms taught that forgiveness was received by baptism, so that men were to look back to it if they fell afterwards. I had often remarked the contradiction in the two aspects of the Reformation in England; so that I could not understand how a man could sign his acceptance of both. If he believed the Articles, he denied the Prayer-book which he usually signed (this was the evangelical position). If he believed the Prayer-book, he denied the Articles, or signed them with a reserve; he had his own explanation, as the other had for the catechism and baptismal service.

What I now notice it for is, that this remark applies to the whole Reformation. The preachers of truth proclaim justification by faith. The same men, when they form national Christianity, teach it to be identified with ordinances. The phenomenon attaches itself to the whole circle of the Reformation. The more the formative side is clung to, the more they approach Rome in giving life and salvation by ordinances. The more they seek souls in grace, the more they depart from it. I am satisfied that a great deal of this arose from confounding the Church as the body of Christ, and the house formed on earth with the responsibilities of the Church of God attached to it, but having quite a different aspect from that of the body of Christ. Then baptism was made to be incorporation in the body of Christ, which the scripture never speaks at all of its being — on the contrary, declares that by *one Spirit* we are baptized into one body — a baptism which is never for a moment in scripture confounded with that of water. On these points, the Reformers clearly have not scripture to warrant their statements. Nor are they alone in this. The language of the English baptismal service and catechism is too plain to need comment. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption and to incorporate him into thy holy Church." "We call upon thee for this infant, that he, coming to thy baptism, may receive remission of his sin by spiritual regeneration." And the catechism, "My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." And in the service for Confirmation, "hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins." On this last point I will quote a passage of the Homilies, to shew the deliberate view of doctrine as to

a sacrament, which governed the minds of the Reformers in England. "And as for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a sacrament, namely, for the visible sign expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sin, and of our holiness and joining in Christ; there be but two, namely, baptism and the supper of the Lord." "For although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin; yet by the express word of the New Testament, it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign, which is imposition of hands. And though the ordering of ministers hath this visible sign and promise, yet it lacks the promise of remission of sin," etc. This is precise enough. Nothing is a sacrament which has not remission of sin annexed and tied to the visible sign. I quote all these, not for the purpose of controversy, but of demonstrating what the doctrine of the teachers of the Reformation was as to sacraments, and particularly baptism. It does not weaken my value for their work, but it does affect their authority as a standard of doctrine.}

208 But (to refer to the points which engage me at this moment) it is remarkable enough that the term "righteousness of God" is not found in Luther's New Testament — the most unfaithful translation I know. He always says the righteousness which is valid before God — die Gerechtigkeit die vor Gott gilt. Calvin is quoted as an authority to shew that Christ's living sufferings went to make up righteousness by atonement; that His life, as well as His death, was needed to complete our righteousness. But if I take his doctrine, I cannot stop here; I must believe that His suffering the torment of hell (dreadful thought!) was needed too.* These are his words: "Nor indeed is it right that the descent into hell should be omitted, in which was what is of no little moment for the effecting of redemption . . . Nothing was done if Christ had departed by only a corporal death; but it was, at the same time, of consequence (worth while) that He should feel the severity of divine punishment . . . whence also it was proper that He should struggle hand to hand with the powers of hell and the horror of eternal death. We have lately cited from the prophet, that the chastisement of our peace was put on Him; that He was smitten of the Father for our crimes; bruised for our infirmities; by which he signifies, put in the place of surety for the wicked; and therefore He was bound, like the guilty, to pay and satisfy all the penalties which were to be exacted from them." Am I in this to adopt Calvin's view of what made out a believer's righteousness? or is it true that by one offering He has perfected for ever them which were sanctified?

{*It has been suggested to me that, though unwisely using the expression in the creed, Calvin only meant to distinguish suffering wrath from the physical act of death, as I have done. This he does distinctly in the passage here quoted, and I have no doubt rightly; the only difference is, that I have avoided the misapplication of the creed, where hell does not even mean the hell of the damned.}

210 But it is alleged, I am to receive his doctrine as to the vicarious merits of His living sufferings. Here are Calvin's words: "Furthermore, as a curse because of guilt awaited us at the heavenly tribunal of God, in the first place is related His condemnation before Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea: that we may know that the penalty to which we are liable was inflicted on the Just One. We could not escape the horrible judgment of

God; and Christ, that He might snatch us thence, submitted to be condemned before a mortal man, yea, a wicked and profane one. Nor is it merely to secure credibility to His history that the name of a governor is expressed, but that we may learn what Isaiah teaches, "the chastisement of our peace was upon him, by his bruises we have been healed." Previously, this made hell necessary, not scourging by an unjust judge — which is right?. I must confess that such a statement as to the sufferings of Christ is very far indeed from carrying any moral weight to my spirit — our deserving God's wrath met in any way by His standing before a human judge. Does this, in any sort of way, meet or correspond to God's wrath against sin? And when it is said that with His stripes we are healed, does any person taught of God for a moment suppose that this refers to a bodily scourging by the soldiers of Pilate, or Pilate himself — precious as this may be in our eyes? I avow (while fearing to say an irreverent word, while touching on such a subject) such interpretation is, to my judgment, and I am persuaded to every rightly taught mind, in the highest degree revolting, whether we think of the true character of Christ's sufferings, or of the true deserts of sin.

Witsius states it more simply and less offensively, yet as a system of doctrine more strongly. "Still more specially do Isaiah 53: 5, and 1 Peter 2: 24, assert that our healing is due to the scourging of Christ, as a part of His sufferings, when they say, By His bruises we are healed. For by that dreadful scourging, by which the whole body of the Lord Jesus was disfigured, as by one bruise, joined with other sufferings, He has merited for us, that we should be free from the buffetings of Satan, and the rod of divine burning wrath." . . . He adds, that "besides healing by example, there remains in the scourging of Christ a demonstration of the righteousness of God."

211 You have now, reader, the statements which are relied on to prove that Christ's living sufferings were vicarious and atoning. The proof drawn from Calvin and Witsius is, that "with His stripes we are healed" refers to His scourging by Pontius Pilate, and that He was judged before a tribunal of man to meet our being arraigned as guilty before God. I do not feel that this requires an answer with any sober Christian. The word "stripes" does not even mean scourging, but the lividness left by blows. Such teaching is simply deplorable.

A passage of Isaiah is quoted, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," quoted by Matthew 8: 17, "And he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Now I believe that in the sympathetic exercise of His power in love, Christ never remedied an ill that He did not bear it on His spirit. But this is not atonement. That atonement may be righteously necessary, that He might sympathize with sinners, in respect of what was the fruit of sin, I can well understand; but bearing on the heart in sympathy is quite another thing from atonement. To apply the principle of atonement here is simply nonsense. Was Christ sick in our place when He made atonement on the cross? He did suffer wrath and bore our sin so as to come under it. But in these healings He was exercising power. He healed, it is true, not indifferently; He entered into our sorrows when He relieved us. Thus the passage is as precious as it is intelligible; but the only act referred to is His healing by His

power. What did that atone for? Was healing vicarious to make up for our not healing? Will it be said, for our want of health? But then He should have suffered the consequence of it Himself. What was *healing* an atonement for? Nay, infirmity and sickness were not to be atoned for. It needed what the compassionate Lord accomplished — healing. To say that His healings, shewing that He bore our sickness, means that healing was vicarious, has no kind of sense.

The truth, moreover, is that the word is not at all that which is used for bearing sin as a burden imputed. Nor would the Spirit here accept the LXX translation, which has *amartias pherei* — bears our sins. It is the word employed in Romans 15: 1; "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Was this atoning? The quotation of such passages shews only the extreme poverty of scriptural intelligence, to be borne with when produced in the first dawn of light, or held in systematic and traditional piety; but when reproduced as pretending to the dogmatic maintenance of truth, is as poor as it is unfounded. "The miracles themselves were the manifestation of His sinbearing work and character." This language shews the real character of the statement and the force of what I have said. If sin be borne before God, man must suffer; but was the exercising power of love bearing sin? It is not said in Matthew's explanation, He bore sin, but took our infirmities, which are not sin, and bore our sicknesses. *Wrath of God* is due to sin, if it be borne; healing the sick is not bearing the wrath of God. What Matthew says may be a proof of Christ's entering in the fullest way into the sorrows of those who are healed; I believe it is. But this doctrine would destroy all the gracious, sorrowing sympathies of Christ in love; they are but bearing wrath upon Himself.

212 Isaiah 53 is the recognition by the converted Jew, in the latter day, of the way they had treated Christ, which we, of course, anticipate, but is literally applicable to the Jew. It looks at all Christ's course and appearance in the flesh, His sorrows and the way He was received. He was despised and they esteemed Him not. He bore Israel's griefs and carried their *sorrows*, but besides that, He was wounded for their *transgressions*. Was that healing the sick? The Lord laid the iniquity of them all upon Him, so He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was He stricken. This remark is connected with His death. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when he shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." "Because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many." The chapter speaks of His sorrows, and in doing this goes to their full extent, and speaks of His being cut off for sin, and connects His death with this bearing of sin in the most explicit way. This is not saying that all His sorrows were sinbearing. To say that His healing the sick was His own being wounded for our transgressions, is introducing confusion into all truth, and neutralizing the value of Christ's death.

213 Besides, "the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." On whom? On Christ, Jehovah's servant. But then He was the Christ before it was laid on Him. Further, "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin": why "when," if it was always? Besides, who offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God? The divine

person in heaven? Clearly not. If Christ was always the sin-bearer, He did not *offer Himself* through the eternal Spirit of God; He was always by position under sin. The free love of Christ — man — in offering Himself is entirely set aside. This is a very important point. Isaiah 53 gives the general picture of the sorrows of Christ, so opposite to the unbelieving nation's estimate, and pursues them up to that great truth, that He was numbered with transgressors and bare the sins of many.

The statement as regards Dr. Owen is a mis-statement. It is said that he shews that Christ's strong crying and tears which He offered in the days of His flesh were "concomitants of His sacrifice," and in his Exposition of the Hebrews he enters fully into this, shewing that "the days of his flesh" means His life on earth though especially consummated in Gethsemane. These life-time prayers he calls sacerdotal prayers. He quotes the psalms already quoted in proof of his averment, and shews that thus it was with Him "not for a few days, or a short season only, but during His whole course in this world." I do not agree with Dr. Owen in many things on this point, but it is here stated that he calls His life-time prayers sacerdotal prayers. And that it was thus with Him during His whole course in this world.

Now, Dr. Owen states, "There was no time wherein He was not, as to His human nature, the king, priest, and prophet of His Church . . . but, as to His priestly office, He neither did nor could enter upon the exercise and discharge of it, until the end of His prophetic ministry." He speaks of unction in incarnation, declarative unction at baptism. Then, thirdly, to both these there succeeded an especial dedication to the actual performance of the duties of this office; and this was His own act which He had power for from God. "This Himself expresses. (John 17: 19.) . . . In that prayer therefore of our Saviour (John 17), do I place the beginning and entrance of the exercise of His priestly office." Not only so: where Dr. Owen states that from His cradle to His grave He bare all the infirmities of our nature, etc., he adds, as to His sacerdotal prayers, "But yet respect is not had here unto this whole space of time." That is, he declares exactly the contrary of what he is made to state. Whoever reads the Thirty-first Exercitation may easily see that the whole doctrine of Dr. Owen is opposed to what is stated. "His oblation was at the same time and in the same action with His blood-shedding." His entering into the holy place "was consequential to that offering of Himself whereby He made atonement for us." "His obtaining eternal redemption for us was by the sacrifice of Himself in His death. For redemption was by price and exchange. And the Lord paid no other price for sin and sinners but His own blood (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

214 As regards 1 Peter 2: 24, it is alleged that its true meaning is that Christ bore our sins up to the tree — not on it. He carried our sins during the whole of His humbled state. This is only want of acquaintance with the use of the expression; and the passage is only an additional proof of what I feel to be important for our souls in this matter. *Anapherein epi to* is a sacrificial expression, signifying the proper offering up of the victim on the altar. Peter here compares Christ to a victim hid on the altar as our sin offering with our sins upon it. The reader has only to consult Genesis 8: 20, or Leviticus 3: 5, 11, 16; and chapter 4: 10, 19, 26, 31, where he will find the formula of *anaphero epi to* exactly what there is in Peter used for *hala* and *katar* in Hebrew; that is, the positive

offering up on the altar as a sacrifice — the causing it to ascend to God, or burning it. The words do not mean at all what they are stated to mean. The cross was as the altar where the victim was consumed by the fire of the proving and just judgment of God about sin; and all was a sweet savour, though also for sin.

In result, this doctrine of an expiatory sin-bearing life (I will touch on the righteousness farther on) is built on no scripture ground. It sets aside the declaration that without shedding of blood there is no remission. It denies the offering up of Christ by Himself, when a man, to be a sacrifice — a most vital truth; for, according to this system, He is it all His life. It perverts, in the most shocking way, such passages as "with his stripes we are healed," and casts at once both Christ's sufferings under divine wrath, as the wages of sin, and His living sympathies into the shade, by confounding them together; making death and blood-shedding to be essential to the first, and turning the latter into sufferings for sin under God's hand. And see the fruits. "If Paul could say, 'I die daily,' how much more Christ? His life was a daily dying. He was always 'delivered unto death.'" Was Paul suffering for sin, then, in so dying, and in an expiatory way? What an absolute proof of entire confusion of mind, as to the very nature of these things, is here displayed! We are told a whole undivided life is our expiation. Mark that, reader: — life an expiation. I ask, if such a statement be not in opposition to the universal testimony of the word of God. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." So that "without shedding of blood there is no remission." It separates redemption from expiation, or gives redemption without blood. No sacrifice is needed for expiation. And what is death when it comes, but the consummation of a life, *the same in legal character* as itself? He was born "under the law"; He lived "under the law"; He died "under the law." Is, then, one keeping the law in life, so as to be in the perfectness of divine favour, the same thing as being under the curse of the law, because it had been broken? But it will be replied to me, But we say, that He was under that during the whole course of His life. Yes, but scripture says quite the contrary; it declares that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. I admit fully an obedience running through life, always perfect, and unto death, when it was consummated; I admit that Christ was in death perfectly agreeable to His Father. The question is not there, but in this — what expiates sin? Is wrath, and the curse, and the cup the Lord had to drink on the cross, the same as His life?

215 Reader, the word declares that the wages of sin is death.; and Christ died *to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*. If the corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground and died, it had remained alone. He was once offered *to bear the sins* of many. We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Where were we without redemption? And this is forgiveness. Where would you be without that? He hath *once* suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh. If *death* be not written on the old man, you must be judged for its deeds. But it is only in Christ's dying it is so. "Now, once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

216 One passage I would yet desire to refer to. God "has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Who knew no sin? Does it speak of the eternal Son before His incarnation? Clearly not. That would say nothing. It was Christ incarnate in this world. It was when by His path through this world, in which His sinlessness was put to the test, it could be said He knew no sin, then it was He was made sin. God did not make the Eternal Son sin in His becoming a man, in the word being made flesh. It would be hard to say which would be worse, the absurdity or the evil of such an assertion. If not, it was when Christ had been fully tested, and in result it could be said He knew no sin, then He was made sin. It is alleged that "during His life He was made sin for us." When? And, remark, being made sin is clearly as an offering.

It is asked, In what sense and for what purpose was He made under the law, if from His very birth He were not the very substitute on whom our sins were laid? Scripture will answer, "He was made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Besides, He magnified the law and made it honourable — a matter not without its moral importance. It was of moment to honour the law, the measure of God's requirement from His creature, at the moment He was going to take him entirely from under it, to deliver him from it. But this touches on the ground of righteousness, which I reserve for another paper.

I thank you for sending me the query as to the paper on the sufferings of Christ. It was my desire to send a few words to you on a danger to which saints may be liable, through the enquiry which has been raised on this subject. This question of your correspondent C. affords me the ready opportunity of doing so. But for the circumstance of the words "To be continued," being omitted, through a very immaterial mistake, the paper would not have appeared to be closed without a signature, which would have left on the writer all the responsibility of the views contained in it.

The danger I have alluded to is double. First, that the whole doctrine as to Christ, which has been promulgated, should so alarm Christians that they should be afraid almost of dwelling on the sufferings of Christ, and giving them their full human reality, lest they should trench on the perfection of His Person and position before God. The tendency of the mind to being overbalanced by the fear of one extreme, and running into another, is a well-known infirmity of human nature. If the enemy could lead the saints to shrink from a full contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, because of the heartless blasphemies which have been mixed up with the teaching on the subject, he would have gained a point of the utmost consequence. There is no subject more full of blessing and profit — if the divine nature and perfectness of Christ be fully maintained — than the true humanity and real sufferings of our Lord. It is the channel and expression of His love to us, where the heart meets it most near to us. If this be weakened in the soul — and it has been weakened by orthodox persons, the link of the heart with the blessed Lord is seriously weakened. I remember, at the time when Mr. Irving was promulgating his errors as to the person of Christ, a religious newspaper insisting that Christ's learning obedience by the things which He suffered meant His teaching it. Now this, though rightly intended in resisting

fatal error, sacrificed precious truth, and tended to the very injurious practice of forcing the word of God. There is the danger of losing — through a just jealousy of the abominations which have been stated as to the blessed Lord — a full practical sense of the reality of His human sufferings.

217 But this danger has another side for every heart that occupies itself with it. It is clear that the peculiar value of this touching part of the Lord's history is that the wretched and cold heart of man may be touched, the affections engaged in a sanctifying way with Christ, and brought up to what is divine, the soul attached to Him, while a reverent sympathy is awakened in the soul with all He went through, and the heart carried with Him into those better scenes into which His sufferings lead Him. Now, the truth has to be guarded; but a diligent dissection of all we ought to feel is very apt to destroy all feeling as to what we dissect; the power of the sufferings of Christ is lost in the effort to be precise as to them, and to guard the integrity of doctrine as to His Person and work. The real guilt of this would be with those who brought out the hateful doctrines which have given occasion to hedge around the truth with precautions. But it is the wisdom of those who respect the Lord so to deal with the subject as to keep alive (in all their freshness, and with the bloom of first ripe fruit) the sense of the sufferings of Christ, and the simplicity of holy and reverent affections with which they have been first dwelt upon. Such I desire for my own soul, such I desire for my brethren. It is well and very important to have the truth clear, and to guard it — especially when it concerns Christ — with holy vigilance. But it is well to have the heart free and fresh. "In that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Let us never forget that. He laid His hand upon the leper, which if another had done, he would have been defiled; but it was not to contaminate Himself, but to drive away what was contaminating from the defiled one. The immutability of His holiness enabled Him to enter in love into the proximity of sin, and all the miseries and sorrows of sinful men, as nothing else but such a holiness could. It was just the blessedness and divine perfectness of His work, when alive here to do so. God was here revealed, and none but God could have done this, and in grace to the fallen.

218 The mistake of your correspondent — and I am very glad of his jealousy of anything which could have in it a particle of the doctrine that has been and is spread abroad — is, that he confounds sorrows with the cause of sorrows. First of all, to dispose at once of his first question, "Was He Himself chastened in respect of sin?" It scarcely needs an answer, because He had no sin, in respect of which He had to be chastened. He was not chastened in respect of sin, nor by anger applying to His Person in respect of sin. But we must not confound voluntary sympathy with sorrows, and entering into them in love, with lying under sorrow by His own position. If He lay under the chastening Himself, He could not enter into it in voluntary love, alive as a man on earth, because in that case He was under it already Himself. Here is just the danger — denying the entering into, because of the fatal doctrine of His being necessarily under. It is just the doctrine of Christ's being necessarily and by birth, when a man, under these sorrows and chastenings for sin, which renders impossible the truth of His graciously and freely entering into them in *love*; which is just what gives all its value to these sufferings. He could not, as a man

on earth, enter in grace and tender goodness towards us into that by sympathy, which He was lying under by necessity in His own Person as man, or more than other men were.

219 This point is cleared therefore. But sufferings endured by others can be fully entered into and endured by the will and love of an individual, which they are not in the smallest degree subject necessarily to, and could cease to undergo, at any moment, if they thought fit. A mother could enter into prison with a child, and suffer the disagreeableness and discomfort of the prison in love to her child, and to win his heart to what is right, to whom it was no penalty for a fault, and from which she was free to go out at any moment, if she were disposed. She may enter into all his circumstances, and endure the pain and misery of a prison life, and feel that it is, for him, a penalty for his faults, without the smallest sense, whatever, of its being a penalty on herself — as indeed it is not. She is gone there in love. It is no penalty. She is not there, at any time, as in a penal condition herself, nor can she have the sense of its being a penalty on her, as if she were in the same case as her son. Yet, in fact, she is enduring all he is, feels it much more herself (for her natural and moral feelings are much more delicate), and she feels all the shame and misery of it as a penalty *on him*, without its being in the smallest degree such on her. Not only so, if she were there by the law imposing it on her (even because she was the mother of him who had incurred it), she could not feel in the same way for him. Instead of our being under an evil being a cause of sympathy — so far as we are under it ourselves, we cannot in simple and true love sympathize with one who is. We must morally be out of the evil to feel freely for those in it. The sufferings *as to the facts* were experimentally the Lord's own, and He entered in spirit and thought for His people into the causes of them, and did so, and could do so, exactly, because the causes of them had no application whatever to Himself. The scorn and rejection of the Gentiles He underwent; so will the remnant of Israel; but they have been the guilty parties, and are there because they are, though now in heart repentant, and turned away from them. The terror of God's judgment was before Christ in Gethsemane: so it will be with the remnant of Israel in the last day. They will indeed escape it (which He did not, because of our salvation). Rejection and scorn on the part of the Jews were His portion; so it will be of the remnant. And thus with all this character of sufferings, as treachery, desertion, and scorn.

220 Now, all this is quite a different thing from atonement, where the wrath of God is endured. That the remnant (though they, as ourselves, have deserved it) will never undergo. All these sufferings will form the moral state of the remnant — come upon them as a penalty; they will and ought to feel it as such. They are the fruits of their faults and sins, though at the same time of their integrity, as expressed in the Psalms; but in Christ, while the present fruit of His integrity, they are in no kind of way of His fault, nor is He dealt with as faulty in it by God — quite the contrary. He voluntarily enters into it all in grace.

It may be asked, But how could He enter into the sense of wrath in this way? Nothing can possibly be simpler. Israel is under it because they have deserved it, and (though they are encouraged, and in a measure comforted in hope, yet, not being yet acquainted with the fulness of redemption in Christ) they cry out of the depths under the sense of sin; and the hand of God upon them bears with it the sense and dread of wrath

because of sin. Christ felt this, not because He had earned it in any way, or was necessarily under it by birth amongst those who had, so that He needed mercy and some means to escape it; but (exactly the contrary) because, when He was not subject to it, but the delight of His Father, He was going to take it in grace voluntarily all upon Him. He could anticipatively feel what He was going really to undergo, and cry unto Him who was able to save Him from death. They could groan under the dread of the same wrath, which (when rightly and for their own good taught the truth of it, so that there might be truth in their inward parts) they are not finally to undergo at all. I am not here speaking of the degree and spirit in which He suffered, for here, notwithstanding grace in them, the difference will still be great. The truth is, that, so far is sympathy from the being in the same state, the sympathies of Christ are exercised when He is in no suffering at all. He has a nature cognizant of the same sorrows, as sorrows, and hence capable of entering into them. But the spirit and mind in which He enters into them may be as different as possible. His Spirit works in the remnant according to what is to take place from His hand — that is, judgment. He feels and enters into their sorrows, for He has gone through the sorrows. His feelings under them were purely gracious. When they suffer, He is going to judge, and His Spirit works the looking for this judgment. The Church alone has, properly and fully, as to their nature, like thoughts with Jesus Himself. On this side also her privilege is great. We cannot estimate it too highly.

221 Since I sent my reply to some previous questions on the paper on the "Sufferings of Christ," two further questions have been sent to me. After the explanation I have given in reply to the former, a short answer will suffice. The enquiry made is, What is the difference between the doctrine of the paper and Mr. Newton's? The question shews the need of making the matter clear to those who have been occupied with it. The answer is very simple. The doctrine of the paper is exactly the opposite of Mr. Newton's. Mr. Newton taught that Christ, as born an Israelite and a man, was at the same distance from God as Israel and man, because He was one of them, was exposed to the consequences of it, and passed through the experiences an unconverted elect man ought, escaped much of what He was exposed to by being in their position, by prayer, obedience, and piety; but still had the fierce displeasure of God resting on Him as born one of the people. Hence He listened with glad attention to the gospel under John the baptist, and passed then for Himself as from the law to the gospel. Most of this terrible anguish to which He was exposed, as born one of the Jews and of the children of Adam, was before His baptism by John.

I believe, on the contrary, that though suffering from man and feeling for all the sufferings of man and Israel, and the sorrow of love resting continually upon His heart, the sunshine of God's favour was on Him and was His delight and His joy continually, and thus there was no divine displeasure resting on that Holy One, nor was His frame wasted by the anguish of it. I detest it as a false abomination. But I believe that in grace, at the close of His history, when His life-work, as presented to Israel according to promise and gracious service towards man, was brought to a close, He, the object of divine favour, entered into the sorrows of His people.

Your correspondent has said in a short parenthesis "(unless anticipatively);" but what is Israel's sorrow in the last day unless anticipative? They will not undergo wrath at the close. Christ felt it in Gethsemane anticipatively, because He was about to undergo it. But He did it anticipatively; that is, He did feel what Israel will feel, only far more deeply. And He felt it in grace, because He was not under it personally; whereas Israel as to his own position will be; and if Christ had been under it personally, because born a Jew, He could not have entered into it in grace. If the whole family are held under the penalties of high treason, and the mother I have supposed in my previous answer in prison necessarily though not personally guilty, she cannot go to partake of her son's sorrow in *love*, for the simple reason that she is there by the necessity of her own case. She is not free to go out because she has gone voluntarily in. Christ could have asked for His twelve legions of angels and have been free. Mr. Newton's doctrine was that *He was born under it* and sought to *escape* it by prayer, and obedience, and piety, and partially did; mine, that He was *not* born under it all, but, instead of having to seek to escape it, entered *into* the sorrow in love and grace for the deliverance of others. That is, one is exactly and essentially the opposite of the other. The question of "How long?" is as to this in itself immaterial; but the point that He was entirely free as born into the world, His state the opposite of what Mr. Newton says, and that by grace He entered into it, makes the difference of a false Christ and a true one — a true one who, being free, perfectly free, can care for others; and a false one who, being subject to it himself, must think of himself and not of others in love.

222 Mere attacks on my statements I should not notice, as I see no Christian profit in it. I leave them, where the will of man is at work in them, to Him whose will is above all human wills. I have always found it a happy course, and the way to be really sheltered from any and every attack. "Thou shalt hide them by thy presence from the pride of man, thou shalt keep them secretly in thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues."

I am uncommonly thankful that the papers on the "Sufferings of Christ" have awakened the enquiry they have. I have no doubt it was needed when the question once was raised. In itself the raising of it would be a cause of regret to me, for fear of the destruction of holy and reverent affections on such a subject. But we all know that it was raised, and a large class of persons in the Free Church of Scotland, and elsewhere were more or less affected by it. The original root in both England and Scotland, was the deadly wickedness of Irvingism. The attempt to meet that in England by explanation led to the statements which have now become notorious. In Scotland it was a more direct result of softened down Irvingism itself. When the English form of the doctrine being put to shame lost its blasphemous virulence, though never given up, it tended to coalesce with the softened and pious remains of Irvingism or semi-Irvingism in Scotland. This is the present phase in which the influence of this doctrine appears. It has sought to support itself by old opinions, and to make use of phrases employed, as is constantly the case, in a general and inaccurate way, when the question was not raised, and no such thought was in the mind of the writer, to sustain a system of doctrine which he, whose words are quoted, never thought of; but its birth and true nature is a distinct false doctrine as to the relationship of God to Christ, which is not Irvingism, but which affects both the person

and work of Christ by views which have flowed from Irvingism, or been the result of contending against it without the Spirit of God.

223 But my object now is not to pursue these thoughts farther, but to say that when the humblest saint is honestly exercised on the subject, or troubled by any statements which it cannot clear up for itself, I am bound and ready to explain, and make the truth, or my own meaning, clear as far as I can. I suppose the replies I have made to your correspondents, C. and another from Manchester, will serve as a general reply to any honest difficulty; but as more than one request for explanation has reached me, I would meet the particular points contained in some of these and clear up what may have been obscurely expressed in my own statements on the subject. The Psalms afforded more especially occasion to that part of the subject which remains obscure to many. This is not surprising. The subject is new to most, and the bearing of particular psalms or parts of psalms in many cases new to my own mind; so that, though perfectly clear as to what I reject and what I hold, it is not surprising if I have not made all clear to my readers. Something doubtless is my own fault, but much of it the newness of the subject to themselves.

I got one paper stating that my language is to the effect that Christ suffered from God apart from atonement. This surprised me somewhat, and I looked at the papers and I found, "But the moment He [Christ] is suffering from God because of the atonement for sin, it is exactly the contrary"; and a little farther on, "Christ has only drunk that cup, because He suffered from God — entirely apart, totally alone." Indeed one of the objects of the papers was to shew that Christ's suffering from God was a distinct thing, even if at the same time, from His suffering from man — that the former brought grace and redemption to man, the latter, judgments; and that this distinction was carefully kept up in the Psalms. In one place it is said, in the preceding articles, that He was smitten of God. This, however, is the language of the psalm, and my remark is introduced in connection with it, though the question may remain how far it applied to Christ, how far to the remnant. No one, I suppose, at least no believer, has ever doubted the general application of Psalm 69 to Christ. The knowledge of the degree of its application to Him, or its being exclusively so applicable, must be, as of all scripture, the result of divine teaching.

224 A simple saint is kept, by what he does know, with certainty of the truth of God, from being misled by what is obscure; but we may remain ignorant of many such points till God in His grace carry the soul on to further light and spiritual apprehension. I think it a great mistake to suppose (as is stated, if I remember right, in Horne on the Psalms) because an expression is applicable to Christ or used by Him, that the whole psalm is so applicable. His Spirit speaks in all and throughout each, and in general in reference to the life of a godly Jew. Where an expression served to give utterance to His own perfect piety and sorrow, He could use it, though the whole psalm could by no means be assigned to Him. This is a very important principle to keep fast hold of. There are some psalms, of course, which are positive personal prophecies of Himself.

That, in Psalm 69, Christ is in the mind of the Spirit of God, though not exclusively so, is, I suppose, hardly necessary to prove to Christians, seeing it is one of the most vivid

descriptions of His outward sufferings on the cross. It is in respect to the remarks in my papers on the "Sufferings of Christ," which arose out of the consideration of this psalm, that difficulties arose in some pious minds. These difficulties I respect, and delight in the jealousy which would not bear anything that they thought touched the divine perfection and relationship with God His Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever expression might throw a cloud on that, or if any did, I condemn it already: I am sure I have no doctrine which does. I hold His cloudless relationship with His Father, save in the act of atonement, to be an essential truth. It was to make this clear that I drew attention to His sufferings from man which brought judgment on man, and His sufferings from God (that is, atoning sufferings) which brought forgiveness and peace. This clearly distinguishes a life of communion, and the forsaking and wrath on the cross, and denies distinctly and unequivocally, in whole and in part, the doctrine of Christ being subject to the displeasure of God as a born Israelite and a born man. He never was but His delight. He was not by birth subject to what He sought to *escape*, and did partly escape from by prayer, obedience, or any other virtue or quality. All this is fundamentally false, makes a false Christ — not the true one at all, let it be vicarious or not vicarious. The former indeed is absurd, if He is subject to the displeasure of God by birth and position as the necessary consequences of these; for He is in it whether He delivers others or not — in it by His own position, not therefore for others. But vicarious or not, it is false; it denies, before the question of vicariousness can arise, the true being of Christ and His true relationship to God, which alone made His gracious work for others possible.

225 But then another enquiry presented itself. Did these two statements, of Christ suffering from man and suffering from God in atonement, explain or rather express all that the Psalms contain in reference to the sufferings of Christ? They do give all that we have to say to as Christians, and hence the difficulty many Christians find in entering into anything further. It is true that in the indirect comfort of a soul under law a certain application of the Psalms may be found. I remember when the only passage in scripture which comforted me was Psalm 88, because no ray of comfort was in it; yet I was sure it was a saint who penned it, and I might be a saint though in like anguish. There is a certain truth in this, but it is needless to pursue it farther here. But it is important to give all its value to scripture, without in any way turning aside or shrinking from receiving its full force. God is certainly right. And when the saint holds fast the truth which He has been taught of God, and where a passage is obscure waits humbly till God teaches him, he will not go wrong. But to meet effectually a heresy which uses scripture, we must give their full value to the scriptures of which the heretic avails himself. This frees the spirit of him who respects scripture, and is troubled, inasmuch as what he cannot receive (because he sees it contradicts known truth) seems to have a foundation in some unexplained passage. It will be found universally that heresies are founded either on some obscure and difficult passage, the true sense of which not being known, it is easy to trouble many minds with some apparent sense of it, or on some truth neglected by the Church. The practical neglect of the true humanity of the Lord, of the presence of the Spirit, and the coming of the Lord, laid the Church open to the wild pretensions and dreadful doctrines of Irvingism. So the true interest which the Lord takes in Israel as God's people being lost sight of, and His sorrows applied only to salvation and to the Church, the scriptures

applicable to Christ's connection with that people remained open to all manner of interpretations.

226 Christ died not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. But He did die for that nation as such. What God is displaying in that nation (though no blessing can be without atonement) is His government, not the Church's place and portion. These form, besides individual salvation and relationship to God, the two great subjects of scripture, its heavenly and its earthly parts: in heaven the display of infinite grace in the Church; on earth God's government, in result the display of blessing, under the direct government of the Lord in contrast with man's misrule and Satan's power. The Church is, in union with Christ, the centre of the heavenly blessing, and rules with Him; the Jews, the centre of the earthly blessing, the royal nation in the midst of which Christ governs. In all these (individual salvation, the Church, and the earth's resurrection through the fulness of Israel) Christ must have the preeminence; but to have it, man being a sinner, He must suffer (Heb. 2: 10) and glorify God (John 17) where man has dishonoured Him. First of all, everything is based on atonement — the perfect infinite glorifying of God as to good and evil: that which, if it saves us, angels desire to look into. This, as a moral foundation, is the centre of all blessing, and makes the blessing dependent on it immutable. It is not the founding of blessing on creature responsibility — as was the case with angels, Adam, and Israel under the law, but on God's having been already perfectly glorified in respect of every moral question which could be raised. In virtue consequently of this work, man in the Person of Christ is raised up and set at the right hand of God in power, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and set over all the works of His hands. Now Christ must glorify God in every respect in which the divine majesty required it and in which He was to take a place in glory. As regards His life, this was done, not by being in distress under God's hand, which would have glorified nobody, but the contrary — would have been the mere subjection of Him who was without sin to the consequence in His soul of the power of evil and divine judgment without a cause, and effacing the divine judgment of good and evil and confounding altogether what had to be cleared up.* He knew all that was due to God in a divinely perfect spirituality in the midst of evil, and walked in it. To meet this with displeasure would have been the contrary of a display *of God's* way as to good and evil.

{*However derived from Adam our sinful nature may be, and we lost in him, the divine word is careful to add, "and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," *eph'o* the condition on which it hung, though not its first cause.}

227 God was glorified in Him in life by His maintaining, in spite of all temptation and trial and sorrow, undeviating communion with His Father, perfect always towards God, and as to the circumstances through which He passed, and equally undeviating obedience to His will.

This God did not visit with His anger and hot displeasure. It would have confounded, as I have said, all good and evil. It was met by what the Lord says, "I knew that thou hearest me always." Just as angels and men left their first estate, the creature fell

untempted, or tempted in the midst of blessing. Christ kept His as man, and in spite of the efforts of the enemy maintained Himself in His place of communion and obedience, though in the midst of sorrow and loneliness of walk. He overcame the strong man, and could spoil his goods, and did, walking sinlessly in communion with His Father. The essence of His position as a living man was, that He did keep that first estate so that He remained "that holy thing." Dependence, confidence, communion, and obedience, according to the Spirit of holiness, formed His life towards God. As He knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him, so the Father knew Him and He the Father. The very essence of His position in contrast with Adam was, that He was with God, and never got away from Him or the relationship He enjoyed with Him. The question of good and evil was resolved in the world by the power of godliness in life, in walking in the midst of evil, and overcoming through every temptation, and by goodness dependent on God.

228 But evil and sin had come in, and if any one was to be saved of the evil race, that evil must be dealt with — the true judgment of good and evil maintained according to what God is. This was done in the wondrous work of the cross, where perfect love to the sinner was at the same time displayed. Here, consequently, the very opposite to communion found its place — the forsaking of God. The Lord Jesus drank that dreadful cup, and made atonement for sin and obtained a place for man in the purpose of grace, which is displayed in the fullest way in the Church united to Him, though all salvation and every blessing depends on it. His position was the closest relationship of enjoyed favour in life, and forsaking made only more terrible by it in death — these formed the two characteristic conditions of the blessed Lord with God and His Father. This faithfulness in all was made good in spite of every obstacle and all the power of evil in man and Satan. So that the whole work was complete.

But there was another side of Christ's service, besides its aspect towards God, glorifying Him in life and in death — the interest He took in His people; spiritual or earthly, His sheep or Israel. They, in the *path of life*, have to go through temptations and trials: His sheep, trials of one character; Israel, of another. His sheep have trials of temptation, persecution, sorrow, and the hatred of the world, sustained by communion with God, when in the relationship with God by grace in which Christ Himself stood when on the earth. John 17 fully develops this position (indeed chapter 14 partially so too). This, consequently, Christ went through. He is their example in it on the one hand, and on the other has the tongue of the learned to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. We have His sympathies as well as His example. With all this, with more or less clearness, the hearts of His saints are familiar.

In general the subjects I have hitherto spoken of are connected with salvation and the Church, rather than with the government of God, although there be something of this mixed with our sorrows and temptations. But Israel is the centre of that government, and in this Christ must have the preeminence too, must secure the glory of God, and comfort His people with His sympathy. The atonement is the basis of this as of every blessing. It has its own unchangeable character. Christ died for the nation. This was towards God *for* them. His sympathies with them have yet to be enquired into. It is this point that has

exercised the minds of some — how He could enter into the sorrows of Israel, when we view them as smitten of God.

229 I have already spoken of not merely the difference, but the mutually exclusive nature of being subject to these sorrows Himself as born a Jew, and His entering into them in grace. One is subversive of the other, and they are mutually so. I do not pursue this any farther; my object is to explain how He did enter, how, in a fuller personal sense than was once said of Him as Jehovah, "in all their afflictions he was afflicted." If they are to be accepted; if they are renewed in heart, and at the same time dread the wrath of God, which they have deserved, and see death before them, and hostility without the fear of God around them; if they trust God, and yet fear what is before them; if Satan's power is to be let loose against them, and death and judgment still press upon their spirit; if all this were from the hand of God, though human beings be the instruments, Christ (to sympathize with them and by His spirit suggest the right feelings as to it) must pass through their sorrows, not because they are resting on Him in His position, but because they are resting on them, and He will enter into their sorrows. He could say, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children, for if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"* Had He need of repentance, or anything to repent of, when He was baptized with the baptism of repentance, in order to walk with the true residue of Israel in the path marked out for them? He was fulfilling righteousness when they were owning sin; but He did come to be so baptized, and it was part of the path of His righteous obedience to do so. He took this place with them, and took it because He was not in it. This was its true character — the gracious and blessed place of answering to God's call, which gave a place and a name to the residue. Still He entered into their position, though exactly from another cause, and in the opposite way to theirs. Theirs was confession of sin, His fulfilling righteousness; He came from heaven, having a title to have a will, into obedience, but we from sin, and a will with no title to it; but He came into the path of obedience in which His people had to tread, and walked in it: when they had to be baptized of John, He too, though He had no sin to confess, He would be with them.

{*I am aware we read, "if they do these things," *poiousin*. But Luke so uses, very often, the active third person plural for the simple existence of the fact. The outward instruments were, of course, men, and particularly Israel; but I am persuaded that is not the sense here. If any one prefers so taking it, I have nothing against it.}

230 This part of the path was indeed quite different in character from what I would now explain. He could walk *with* them here. When the other part had to be trodden, He must do it alone. They, hereafter, will have the comfort of its being said, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his distress." If their piety will be shewn in looking on all as coming from the hand of God, whatever the instrument, so Christ, too, had to receive all at the hand of God, and so to look at it as entering into their sorrows, though He was perfectly free in His soul towards God. He bears their sorrows, though He was not the cause of them for Himself, as they had been, and looks at them as coming on them from God — on them from whom He would not be separated till all was accomplished for them.

Nor was this merely sympathetic feeling.* Because, though government and atonement for sin are two distinct things, yet that government and the wrath borne in atonement would coalesce necessarily if atonement were not already made; for what can finally the government of God, as to a sinner and his sins, be? But till Christ had wrought the atonement, this separation between wrath and government remained, as to the work that wrought it, unaccomplished. What makes the sorrow only discipline for the remnant, when they are not yet brought into the sense of divine favour, was before Him then really (though this be not all the truth on this point, as we shall see) as wrath and the hand of God in wrath. What they dread vaguely, as not yet set free, He underwent in the highest and fullest sense. They are renewed in heart, trust in Jehovah, yet cry out of the depths, and see God's hand upon them. Christ, always perfect in heart, trusts in His Father, yet cries out of the depths, and sees it is a cup which His Father has given Him to drink. I speak now specially in respect of Israel. If the nation was to be spared and restored, His strength must be brought down in His journey, and His days shortened, and that of God. They are not yet delivered from the sense of wrath, though hoping in God; Christ was looking forward to the wrath He was really going to undergo. To Him government became wrath, for He was going to make an atonement, to go through what was needed for the deliverance of the nation, and He was looking forward to this, though not then accomplishing it.

{*This is one of the attacked passages. I have only to urge the reader's earnest attention to it.}

231 Hence, when Peter smites one of the crowd come to take Him, He says, "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" He said this in peace, because He had gone through the whole agony with God in perfectness, and from man He took nothing, though not insensible to his hatred in it. When Israel thinks of it as coming from God, peace not being attained, they mix up enemies and wrath (so to speak) all together. God's hot displeasure is in the human trials themselves. This was not so with Christ. He takes up the thought of *wrath wholly with God*. The smiting is entirely God's, and in His case is not separate from that in which atonement is wrought; and taking death as He did, and ought to have done, from the hand of God, He could say, "They persecute him whom thou hast smitten."

Indeed, having given Himself up to the work of the cross, before He was actually crucified, He goes as a sheep before His shearers. He looks at Himself as the smitten One. For His faith the cup is already given Him. He had only now to say, "That thou doest, do quickly." Jesus having bowed to this, men availed themselves of it to trample on Him. As long as *His hour* was not come, He passed through the midst of them and went His way. Now His hour was come, and, though not actually drinking the cup, He had taken the position of drinking it, taken it into His hand, so to speak, does not expect God to interfere, has been to God about it, and knows it is to be — hence does not answer those who interrogate Him, nor reply. They could have no power at all against Him, unless given them from above: but now the hour for Him to suffer was come. It is not the time for the divine Porter to hold the fold open and free in spite of all; but for the good and divine Shepherd to lay down His life for the sheep. Jehovah was just going to smite the

Shepherd, and He had given Himself up to it.* Did men not profit, yea Satan, by this non-interference of God, as He stood with that cup just taken into His hand, though in perfect peace and power, so that when He said it was He, they went backward and fell to the ground?

{*The persecuting "Him whom thou hast smitten" is literally applicable in Psalm 69 only to what was done to Him on the cross. (See verses 20, 21.) Still surely in spirit all that passed from Gethsemane, or when He had given Himself up to the suffering of death and rejection, has this same character. It may be remarked, in connection with this, that Psalm 69 gives the whole course of Christ's suffering life, closing in this solemn bowing to death at the end, His being in the depths. The zeal of God's house ate Him up. It was for the God of Israel's sake He suffered reproach and was alienated from His mother's children. All His grief and holy service made Him the song of the drunkard. Then, verse 14, He turns to what He was brought into at the end, which is the great subject of the Psalm; and the circumstances of the cross are spoken in detail. There we know was the true smiting. It was written, "Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered"; but the moment after, in Gethsemane, He had given Himself up to this, all partook of this character morally, though the fact of smiting had not actually taken place. There were the instruments of this as to the outward act; but I need hardly say whose word ordained "Smite the Shepherd," and to whom Christ because of His perfection looked. (See Matt. 27: 31.) I shall further on take up the truth that atonement was not all the sorrow of death to Christ. The reader should distinctly remark that the subject to which Psalms 69 and 102 are applied is the blessing of Zion and restoration of Israel. (See Psalm 69: 35, 36, and Psalm 102: 13-22.) [This note is part of the original tract.]}

232 The difference between Christ and the remnant in the latter days, even as to anticipated sorrow, is this: He goes, when the hour is come, directly and perfectly to His Father about it. It is then that the dreadfulness of this smiting of God, of the cup He had to drink, is all gone through in the agony of it with His Father, in prayer. He is to drink it. Man's will in it and Satan's will in it have disappeared — it is God's will. He enters into no temptation; power and liberty are there; His enemies go backward and fall to the ground. He then offers Himself freely, saying, "Let these go their way"; so that not one sheep is touched, but they are scattered from the Shepherd, whose portion now is smiting. Then Christ let men do what they please with Him; and what did they please? Oh! what a tale it tells of what man is, left to himself. That is, for Christ personally, even the anticipations of God's wrath and man's persecuting are wholly apart. He has gone, as to trial in spirit, through all wholly with God, and then freely offers Himself to man's ways to accomplish His Father's will.

233 Not so Israel: they have not peace with God. They see, because renewed in heart, the smiting of God's hand; but it is all mixed up with the enemy without, the transgressor and oppressor within, the sense and the legal sense of the sin for which they are smitten, and the sense and dread of His wrath. Yet they have hope towards God by grace, through divine teaching as to Jehovah's mercy, though peace-making atonement be not fully known as yet. Hence they can cry and do, as to *themselves*, "*They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and speak to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*" God

in the last days is smiting them, but, in virtue of the atonement, for their good, "till the pit be digged for the ungodly." "Blessed [it is then said] is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law."

Hence we find in the Psalms, pleas of integrity; and from Psalm 25 confession of sin, of the people's past sins and of their own confident trust in Jehovah, yet almost despair under a legal sense of sin: the claim to be viewed apart from sinners and a sinful nation, yet the profoundest interest in the hopes and history of Israel. The atonement being made, they have the sympathies of Christ, who, though personally in another way, has entered into their sorrows. Something analogous to their state may be seen in the condition of a soul under the law. But this part of Christ's history is not that in which He learned sympathy for us, and sets us an example, save in the fact of bearing evil patiently. For this reason: we have full knowledge of atonement; we sit in heavenly places in Him, with the full favour that rests on sons.

Now the enjoyment of that full favour as Son was His condition through His life, before His hour was come. The divine favour rested on Him and on His walk; and persecutions and trials were such as we in principle may expect to find. We cannot, if on really Christian ground, be in presence of the wrath of God as that the dread of which is not yet passed away, nor be crying out of the depths, because Christ has taken us out of them. Now the remnant of Israel, on the contrary, cannot be in the place of Christ's living delight in Jehovah and comfort in His favour, come what would, because they are not yet assured of this favour as a present relationship, though hoping in mercy. But, on the other hand, no depth of distress that they can go through can reach that which Christ did in Gethsemane, though not yet actually drinking the cup. All the circumstances they are in answer to His at the close as to the state of the people, and heathen oppressors. But Christ, being in perfect divine favour, and perfect in His ways and thoughts, could separate the anticipation of divine wrath and the malice of men, as He did, and present Himself to that malice for the accomplishing the purpose of God; but He could (as having passed through the experience of a cup given Him to drink, in which the Shepherd was smitten, and the use man made of His being in this position) fully enter into the sorrows of those who had brought it on themselves, as He, save by giving Himself, of course, never did. Hence He can sympathize with them and supply to them the thoughts and feelings which suit their state, although they be not the same as that which He felt when passing through His sorrow.

234 When entering on the path of sorrow after the last supper, which led to the atonement, He (though accomplishing a work in which He must be alone wholly and altogether, yet in the path which led to it and even in the fact of death as rejected of man and with wicked hands crucified and slain) could in His sorrows enter into the sorrows of Israel under the government of God in the last days, when their blood too will be shed like water on every side of Jerusalem. It could not be said to them as to us, "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," because they are not in our place of union with Him and liberty; but He could enter into the sorrows they will be under, and though what He then felt towards His enemies is not what they will, for He was not only perfect, but entered as in the divine favour, though through agony, into the divine mind,

yet He will enter into their sorrows and supply by His Spirit (as He has done in the Psalms) the feelings suited to *them* as having passed through, as to suffering and sorrow, all they can do. If He had not, who should help them?

But atonement is not the whole aspect of the death of Christ as suffering. And, indeed, in the Psalms, which are not a directly doctrinal part of scripture, and occupy themselves with Messiah and Israel, it is scarcely viewed in this light, though the facts in which it was accomplished are fully prophesied of. All the present hopes of Israel (as indeed of man), and the accomplishment of all the promises, were connected with Messiah. He was, if Israel had received Him, the crown of all their blessings. But all this must be given up; He must be delivered up, even into the hands of the Gentiles, and be put to death. Did the Lord not feel this as to His beloved people? This is what was expressed in His weeping over Jerusalem — there indeed in sympathy. He was the Jehovah who would have gathered them; but if He was, still He took it all as the obedient man from the hand of Jehovah. This is seen explicitly in Isaiah 50, where this subject is treated. The Lord God had given Him the tongue of the learned. Even what He suffered from man He took from the hand of God when thus given up to suffer, yet even here with no breach in His entire confidence in God, or thought that His portion was uncertain, as has been blasphemously stated. "He is near that justifieth me" are His words when He was under the suffering. So in Psalm 22, He owns Jehovah's hand in His sufferings, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." So in Psalm 102, "Thou hast lifted me up" — that is, as man into the place of Messiah and glory — "and cast me down." "Thou hast weakened my strength in my journey, and hast shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days."

235 But these passages shew another truth of the deepest interest. Christ felt it, not only as to the ruin of beloved Israel; He felt it as to Himself, and He received it at the hand of Jehovah. The setting aside of every present joy and hope, of the present accomplishment of all promises, typified in the giving up of Isaac by Abraham; all ending, not in figurative, but in real death: all this Christ's soul passed through. His obedience was tried in it. His devotedness to His Father, His submission in giving up all, entirely up in death. Was it nothing, when every promise and blessing was His natural portion, to find death instead, and the loss of all? Surely He shall have all in a more blessed and glorious way, founded securely on that death and resurrection, the sure mercies of David. Still then He had to give it all up. It was His piety to look to the hand of God in all this, and He did so.

No doubt that, when the Shepherd was smitten, atonement was made for sin; but that smiting was a great and solemn fact, besides the atonement which was accomplished in it. God's Shepherd was smitten instead of feeding His beloved flock. Further, death itself was fully felt as such by the Lord. He, with strong crying and tears, made His supplication to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. It was no light thing to Him to have death instead of life for His portion as a man — He who knew what life was as a true possession of God. But all this has nothing to do with Christ's being subject to it as born into the world. It is exactly and diametrically opposed to that doctrine. Christ's life was the witness of a holy life in divine delight

through every temptation to which we can be subject — a life in which, as regards His Messiahship, He exercised the fullest power, and disposed of all hearts, so that His disciples in going forth needed nothing. Now He says, "But now I say unto you, Let him that hath a sword take one; for this that is written concerning me must yet be accomplished, He was reckoned with the transgressors. For the things concerning me have an end." His path was changed from the active exercise of power in love, to the patient suffering the will of God. Not that He had lost the power, as Malchus's healing shewed; but that He was arrived where other things written concerning Him were to be accomplished. HIS HOUR WAS COME.

236 As a man with death before Him, and as the Messiah of Israel, with the loss of all that belonged to Him, His being cut off and having nothing, He came into a place of sorrow, destined to Him, but not previously the path in which He served God. This He felt as at God's hand. It was His perfectness and piety to do so. He was heard in that He feared. Yet, till forsaken of God, the work of atonement, the wrath that worked it out in the forsaking of His soul, was not yet in accomplishment. He was till then in communion with His Father, pleaded with Him, was heard in His plea. Yet the smiting of God was the present thing before His soul; for, though the outward instruments were men, and the power of darkness at work, He would not stop at secondary causes, nor take the cup from any but His *Father's* hand. He does not say God's hand. His Father's giving, and the bright joy of obeying was, though going through conflict, the portion of His soul. In atonement itself this could not be. But the difference here is evident. He never asked any other cup to pass. Men had often shewn their malice and sought to kill Him who had wrought many good works amongst them (and surely His heart grieved over this); but He was not given up to them of God, so that His soul looked to His hand in it. Now He did. It was from divine counsels the word had gone forth: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts," though the wounds in His hands had been made in the house *of* His friends. And the Lord felt it all, as well as (when it came) the all-absorbing cup of the forsaking of His God.