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# The Burial of Christ (Apr 1955)

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The truth of Christ's burial is an essential part of the gospel, and is the vital connecting link between His death and resurrection. In the inspired description of the gospel there are three important elements, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He Was Buried; and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," (1 Cor. 15:3-4). While it is necessary to lay much stress on the first and the last of these facts; nevertheless, that which comes in between must never be omitted.

Through the typical teaching of the Old Testament, we learn that Christ's death and burial are inseparably linked together, "And if a man… be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree," (Deut. 21:22-23). When Christ Himself spoke of being lifted up, He referred to the manner of His death, crucifixion. This involved being held up to view as one worthy of death, and of the divine curse. According to the statement of the New Testament, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," (Gal. 3:13). Christ as the Son of Man, in taking the sinner's place and being lifted up was publicly seen in the place of sin and the curse, and in view of the above passage in Deuteronomy was considered a defilement to the land. It was undoubtedly with this same Scripture in mind that the Jews saw to it that the bodies did not remain on the cross over night. Hence we see the necessity of Christ's

burial. In this connection the Spirit of God unfolds to us a most beautiful portrait of the Son of God in various aspects of His person and work.

## The Glories Of Christ:

THE GLORY OF HIS PASSION: In this we see the fullest measure of the love that brought Him down from the highest throne in glory, not only to the shameful cross, but lower still, to the grave. How well the poet has expressed it,

“Son of God, ‘twas love that led Thee

Die our ruined souls to save

‘Twas our sins vast load that laid thee

Lord of Life within the grave.”

THE GLORY OF HIS PREEMINENCE: The Saviour was buried in, “A new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid,” (John 19:41). It was a virgin tomb, and as another has aptly said, “He who at His birth came into the world by way of the virgin womb, left it by way of the virgin tomb.” He, when He needed a colt, demanded the one upon which never man sat; even so, when He finished the work of redemption He rested in a new tomb.

THE GLORY OF HIS PURITY: Wicked men would have cast Him into the potter’s field for burial, but God ordained it otherwise. He who was separate from sinners in life must likewise be in burial. Christ died between two sinners as wicked hands nailed Him to the tree, but now that His atoning work is finished, He is taken down by clean hands, wound in clean linen, and laid in a clean tomb. His perfect nazariteship was thus preserved right to the end.

THE GLORY OF HIS PERMANENCE: It was a rock-hewn tomb, this grave. He, who was the Eternal Rock of Ages, died as the smitten Rock, and was buried in the hewn rock. He did not lie in the ground for He could not see corruption. Christ is the Everlasting One, more enduring than the rock in which His body was laid.

THE GLORY OF HIS POWER: Forth from the stone sealed tomb came the Mighty Victor, bursting the bars of death and defying not only the power of the Roman government, but the powers of darkness as well.

## The Discipleship Of Joseph

Let us now consider the vessel chosen by God to perform the holy task of burying His Son. What an excellent lesson we have here in true discipleship.

HE WAS A CONVERTED MAN: Though not recorded there must have been an occasion when Joseph came for the first time in contact with Christ, and learned something of His matchless love and worth, for we read of, “Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple,” (Matt. 27:57). We also read that Joseph waited for the Kingdom of God. This reveals him a man of character. Luke further records, “He was a good man;” therefore, he was a consistent man. He was “just” and “honourable.” His life justified his profession and proved that he was fit for his noble service.

HE WAS A COURAGEOUS MAN: It is stated in Luke 23, “The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them.” Whether he absented himself when the vote was taken to condemn Christ, or whether he dissented in person, we are not sure. Nevertheless, he was a man

true to his convictions and willing to lose his place and prestige for Christ.

HE WAS A CONSECRATED MAN: Love in all its unselfishness is manifested here. Joseph was willing to give his own new tomb, thus expressing by action the same sentiment we do by words,

“Naught that I have mine own I’ll call,

I’ll hold it for the giver.”

## The Grave And The Garden

John adds a most interesting touch in his account of the burial of Christ. He tells us that the sepulchre was in a garden. What a striking contrast! On the one hand we think of the gloom of the grave as associated with death, darkness, and despair; while on the other hand, we see the glory of the garden symbolizing resurrection life and beauty. How aptly Christ fits into this picture! The night of death fell upon Him, followed by the darkness of the tomb; but the bright morning came and He left the grave with its gloom and came forth into the garden of resurrection glory.

Our own spiritual experience has been quite similar. Before conversion we found ourselves in the grave of darkness, bondage, and death. In receiving Christ as Saviour, we heard His call, “come forth”, and we passed from death (the grave) into life (the garden).

This similarity is seen in the experiences which follow our conversion. In the death of Christ we learn that not only our sins were put away and buried in the sea of God’s forgetfulness, but that in the purpose of God we ourselves died with Him. If we want our lives to be as a garden, experimentally we must begin with the grave,

identification with Christ in death, burial, and then in resurrection as symbolized in baptism in Romans chapter 6, for in the same chapter the garden of the heart is described, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.”

There is still another angle from which we might consider this similarity. Along the Christian pathway, circumstances often arise that send us plunging into darkness, in spirit we find ourselves in the grave of despair and disappointment with no apparent ray of light. Often in the sorrow of bereavement it almost seems as if we are lying in the grave with our loved ones, but the Saviour who drew near to Mary as she wept beside the tomb and turned her sorrow into joy, is the same today. He lives to dry the tears of His own and pour into the sorrowing heart the balm of Gilead. The realization of His presence and the comfort of His words may turn our grave into a garden yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Heb. 12:11).

Finally, let us catch a glimpse of the wonderful prospect that is ours as we contemplate the blessed hope of Christ’s coming.

“Death and darkness and the tomb

Pain us only ‘till He come.”

Soon the darkness and despair of the tomb will be over. When He comes the grave of each Christian will be emptied and the triumphant song will be, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” As long as we are here there will be graves, but there will be none in heaven. All that the grave speaks of, sorrow, sin, and death, will be done away, and instead we shall

dwell forever in the sunshine of His presence, in the fair garden of His eternal paradise.

# Christian Liberty (June 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 6, June 1963.

Liberty is one of the priceless blessings of the Christian Faith. Its importance cannot be minimized in the individual life of the Believer or in the collective testimony of the Church.

Man in his unregenerate state possesses a passion for liberty that is an evidence of sin and rebellion against God, because this desire for what he calls “Liberty” is but to do his own will and to go his own way. This is the very essence of sin. His passion for liberty proves that he does not have it. The Lord Jesus said, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin (John 8:34).

## Liberty and Salvation

The Lord Jesus, as the great Liberator, came to deliver from such bondage. His mission was “to preach deliverance to the captives” and “to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18). His Gospel proclaimed liberty, and wherever it is preached today, bondage and tyranny cease. All who believe this message enter into the priceless heritage of liberty. It is the liberty of grace possessed by faith in Christ. When the truth of the Gospel is believed and Christ is received, the soul is truly set free and God’s word is experimentally true, “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” In Christ there is a present and positional deliverance from the penalty and burden of sin; a progressive and practical deliverance from the power and passion of sin, and finally, a prospective and perfect deliverance from the presence of sin.

The believing sinner is also set free from the law, both as to its bondage and condemnation. The sentence question, as well as the sin question, is settled once for all. He no longer lives as under its compulsion, but now set free through faith. He pleases God, not because the law compels, but because love constrains and grace conquers.

Finally, the believer rejoices in deliverance from Satan's power and bondage under which he has groaned as a helpless captive until set free by a mightier power. Thus, Salvation and Liberty are inseparably joined. It is one of the sweet fruits of Calvary purchased for us by the obedience and suffering of Him who as the Hebrew Servant said, "I will not go out free." Those who enjoy it sing:

"My chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken

And I am free.

O, let the triumphs of His Grace be spoken

Who died for me."

## Liberty and Self

The pathway into the practical enjoyment of this glorious freedom is clearly set forth in Romans chapter 6. There can be no such enjoyment until one is set free from Self. Here is the secret of proving in continual experience that which God intended for us through the death of His Son. It is realized on the basis of identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. This was affected Judicially in God's sight when Jesus died and rose again. Experimentally it became ours the moment we believed. Symbolically it is publicly displayed in baptism, and Practically it is

reckoned as true by faith and realized in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit as we yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead (V. 13). Thus, we enter into the divine purpose of our “being freed from sin” that we might become “servants of righteousness and servants to God” (V. 18, 22).

Both in its initial reception and in its daily realization, Christian liberty is a liberty of grace. The same grace that sought and found us, and set us free at conversion, alone can keep us free day by day from the entanglements of sin, the enticements of the world and the temptations of the wicked one. Such liberty is through the process of death and by the power of resurrection. It is freedom from Self as well as from Sin and Satan. By union with Christ in death and resurrection, there is a fourfold liberty: first, the Old Man (Self) is deceased; second, the Old Monarch (death) is deposed; third, the Old Master (Sin) is destroyed; finally, the Old Marriage (the law) is dissolved (Rom. 7). Blessed liberty!

## Liberty and Sonship

Now we enter into the positive teaching of liberty. God does not merely bring us out; He brings us in. He would have us more than servants; He would have us sons. Thus LIBERTY is closely associated with Sonship. We receive more than remission; we revel in regeneration. We are more than pardoned criminals set free from the penalty of sin and the power of Satan; we are brought into the freedom of the Father’s House. His presence is our Home. Christian liberty is filial liberty — the liberty of the sons with the Father. As such, we enjoy the warmth of the Father’s love, the secrets of the Father’s

heart, the assurance of His loving care, and the prospect of His eternal Home. We have liberty of access, able at all times to draw near, because we have received the Spirit of sonship whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.”

## Liberty and The Spirit

This brings us to another most vital aspects of our subject, that is, the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to liberty. The work of Christ for us in providing freedom from sin and bringing us into sonship would avail nothing apart from the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of sonship and has come into our hearts because we are sons of God (Gal. 4:6). Liberty and the Spirit are inseparably linked in 2 Corinthians 3:17, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Only in the measure that the Spirit has His way in our hearts and lives will true liberty be known and enjoyed. This is also true collectively.

This is a principle that demands careful attention. We must not reverse the order. It is incorrect to say that “where there is liberty, there is the Spirit of God.” It is sadly possible that our professed liberty is but the exercise of self-will, and what we may term “liberty” should be rightfully called “license,” and is foreign to the leading of the Spirit. What sad results have been witnessed as a result of failure to distinguish between the two! What differences would be realized in our gatherings for worship and for the ministry of the Word if this truth were more fully understood and put into effect! Such occasions would result in God’s being glorified and His people blessed and enriched, instead of being sent away in a state of discouragement and confusion. Let us make sure that the liberty in which we

boast is the fruit of the Spirit's presence and power in our midst and not the subtle desires and promptings of the flesh.

## Liberty and Submission

True Christian liberty is never divorced from obedience to the Word. There is an inseparable link between Liberty and Submission. James refers to the "Perfect Law of Liberty." This perfect law must be the prevailing principle which governs our lives. What we claim as our rightful liberty does not allow us to have our own way, seek our own desires, or exert our own will. Much professed liberty today savours of insubjection to the Word, and is prompted by mere emotionalism and an evident display of the flesh. Our lives are to be governed now as they will be judged hereafter by this perfect law of liberty. We need to look into this law constantly in order that our lives will be lived for His glory and for the blessing of others.

## Liberty and Service

Long ago, God declared His purpose in the redemption of His people, "Let My people go that they might serve Me." If we have experienced Liberty for Service, there must consequently be Liberty in Service. Paul insisted on this all through his ministry to the Church and to the world. He would not sacrifice it for gain or popularity of any kind. All man-made restrictions hinder and mar this fruitful and priceless liberty. The true servant still demands it today. In sacrificing this, one readily sells his conscience and his fellowship with God. 1 Corinthians 7:22-23, is still the guiding principle in all service: "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the

Lord’s freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.” “Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men.” Liberty is the blessed fruit of redemption. While it must not be abused or used as a license for disobedience to divine principles, it is a priceless treasure never to be relinquished. It is manifested both positively and negatively. There are times when the servant of God claims his right to say “yes” as exercised before the Lord. Again, with a similar exercise, he may be constrained to say “no.” He should allow the same rights to his fellow-servants.

Such God-ordained liberty is the death blow to human interference as to one’s service for the Lord. All man-made restrictions hinder and mar such exercise. The Master delights to use variety in selecting both His servants and the service given to them. He desires variety without Variance, Diversion without Dissention, Choice without Conflict. We dare not usurp the prerogative that belongs to the Master Himself and seek to dictate to another. This leads to criticism and often to ostracism; furthermore, it results in a triumph for Satan and a hindrance to the work of God. Many a true and humble servant has groaned under such bondage, even to the extent of being forced to give up that which the Lord laid to his hands. Unless it can be clearly and unmistakably proven that one’s service is in absolute disobedience to the Master’s command, let us keep our hands off, and not be guilty of the ruinous practice of robbing one of God’s faithful servants of the joy of doing his Master’s will with an honest motive and heart. Let us carefully guard against the practice of destroying this blessed liberty divinely given to those who, whether in a

great way or a small way, seek to serve the Lord Christ. The true Servant covets this blessing above many.

## Liberty and Substitutions

We have already suggested that license can be a dangerous substitute for liberty. We have a subtle foe who seeks to pervert the blessings God has provided for us. Often legality takes the place of liberty. Rules and prohibitions are enforced that bring us into bondage. The Spirit is grieved and displaced by human ordination; sectarianism appears, man assumes pre-eminence, and human tradition is substituted for truth. We must be on guard as to such legalism. If given an inch it will take a yard and creep in insiduously. If it does, it will rob us both individually and collectively of the joy of liberty, and bring us into the misery of bondage. The conventional religion all around is legalistic in its principle. The flesh, which is still in us, is unregenerate and therefore legalistic in its attitude. Legalism has, all through history, robbed the Church of liberty, power, and blessing. Unfortunately, in our Assembly fellowship this same danger exists.

This often leads to another danger. There is a reaction, and some, while refusing to be bound by human tradition, go to the other extreme which results in a fleshly Liberalism, another sad substitute for true liberty. Anything goes! Some will acknowledge no restraint or barrier, using the excuse of liberty for the extremes that are brought in, to the sorrow of many. This results in a broken wall of separation from the world as well as in a broken spirit in the Assembly. Such is most grieving to the Lord, and only leads back to that from which God in His grace has brought us out. It is a

death blow to godly simplicity and order that should characterize those who profess to gather unto the Lord's Name.

We need to be on guard. Satan always has a substitute, and whether it is License, Legality or Liberalism, all are destructive to scriptural liberty. Paul in his day, warned against the two extremes of ritualism and rationalism. The first brings in human authority and regulation; the second defies all divine authority and allows the individual to express himself in any way he chooses. He will not be bound and his mind is lawless. Both types are the product of the flesh; they can be found in every Assembly. True Christian liberty is the antidote for both extremes. These must be judged in the light of the Cross. Let us beware of a counterfeit liberty, a device of Satan. However fair and plausible it may appear, it will only bring dishonour upon the Lord and His testimony and add to the confusion.

## Liberty and Its Safeguards

There are three safeguards given in the Word to qualify and control our liberty. First, it is not to be used as an occasion for the flesh (Gal. 5:13). Second, it is not to be a stumbling block to others (1 Cor. 8:9). In this connection Paul also adds, "All things are lawful … but not expedient." Third, it is not to be used as a cloak of maliciousness (1 Pet. 2:16). The first is Selfward, the second Churchward, and the third Worldward. We are to use God-given liberty carefully and in the fear of God. In relation to Self it will destroy selfishness and result in loving service for other Saints. In relation to the Church, it will produce a sympathy for the convictions of others.

In relation to the world, it will be manifest in subjection and lead us to honour all men.

Let us seek to appropriate and enjoy this wonderful blessing of Christian liberty. It is but a foretaste of what awaits us at His coming. The liberty of grace is the pledge of the liberty of glory. “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21). We shall then enter into eternal liberty in all its fullness and perfection. Lord, hasten the glorious Day!

## The Humanity of Christ (Feb 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 2, Feb 1964.

Many pages have been written and countless sermons preached on the “Incarnation,” but we need constantly to re-affirm our belief in this cardinal truth of the Christian Faith. Let us therefore examine this doctrine and enter into this holy sanctuary of truth with reverence and Godly fear.

The Bible presents the Lord Jesus Christ as fully God and fully man. His humanity is without despite to His Deity and His Deity without prejudice to His humanity. Many cannot understand how one can be at the same time very God and very man. Others attempt to distinguish His Deity and His humanity in His deeds and words. Many wonder where the line of demarcation between the two is to be drawn. However, we are not required to reconcile the two, nor determine where one ceases and the other begins. Both are true without loss to either.

“Seek not the cause, for ‘tis not in thy reach

Of all the true prophetic volumes teach;

Those secret things imparted from on high,

Which speak at once and veil the Deity:

Pass on, nor rush to explore the depths that be

Divinely hid in sacred mystery.”

Tracing this glorious theme through the Scriptures, we have first of all, Christ’s humanity in promise. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between

thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

In Exodus 25, in connection with the Ark, we have Incarnation in portrait. The Ark was made of shittim or acacia wood but was covered with pure gold, teaching that Christ's humanity was contained within His Deity. He was God first and then became man without loss to His Deity.

In Isaiah 9:6 we see this truth in prophecy. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Turning to the New Testament we have its presentation. "Behold, thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest" (Luke 1:31-32).

Gazing on the cross we see 'Christ's manhood linked with propitiation. The words of the centurion echo down the corridor of time, "Truly this Man was the Son of God" Mark 15:39. In the Acts and Epistles we have it in proclamation.

Finally, on the very last page of Inspiration we have Incarnation in eternal perpetuity. Christ is still Jesus — "the root and offspring of David" (Rev. 22.16).

Let us now consider seven features, or a seven-fold purpose of the Incarnation.

## Christ Revealing: The Divine Portrait

"And the Word was made (became) flesh and dwelt among us." God ever dwelt in light unapproachable. No one could see Him and live. But by clothing Himself with flesh, Christ made God safely and fully observable to us, so that we need not fear to look upon God, as we behold His full glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

One has remarked, “Through the lantern of Christ’s humanity we behold the light of Deity shining. Christ came to reveal God’s heart, to translate the divine nature into the conditions of human nature and to make the Divine Being conceivable by that which is finite and approachable by that which is fallen.”

In Jesus Christ we see the complete revelation of God to man. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Exegesis, the sum and substance of all that God has to say. He said without challenge, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

Thus the Word who became flesh was not merely an emination from God, but God Himself,” Immanuel, God with us”; not only the Revealer of God but God revealed; not merely the messenger, but the message. As the former, Christ is the effulgence —the “out-raying” of the eternal God. As the parent light, so is the ray. Thus, all the glories of eternal Deity shine forth in Christ — undimmed, fadeless and eternal.

As the latter — The Word — the One who declared God, He is the “express image of His person.” The word translated “express image” means to engrave or cut into. It is used of the die from which the coin is made. The impression reproduces exactly the features on the face of the die. To see one is to see the other. Thus in the perfect humanity of Christ is set forth every equality, every resource and every glory that dwells in God.

“In Thee, most perfectly expressed

The Father’s glories shine,

Of the full Deity expressed

Eternally Divine.”

## Christ Redeeming: The Divine Propitiation

“For what the law could not do … God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Here is Deity, “His own Son,” then humanity, “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” This likeness could not be moral but physical.

In physical stature, Christ resembled His fellow men, but in moral stature, He was peerless. It is not written, “In sinful flesh,” for that would imply sin in Christ’s person, but rather “in the likeness of.” He came into the realms of sin, wearing the nature which sin had weakened and destroyed in man; but was immune to sin’s power and defied sin’s assaults, ultimately He paid its penalty as the sin offering, thus expiating the guilt of fallen man and making propitiation to God.

Here we behold our Kinsman Redeemer. Through man sin entered the world bringing condemnation and death but through another Man-Christ the Son — sin was taken away, bringing justification and life to all who believe.

“The maker of the universe

As man, for man, was made a curse;

The claims of law which He had made,

Unto the uttermost He paid.”

## Christ Renouncing: The Divine Pattern

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Phil: 2, 6, 7,). Again we see peerless humanity in all its loveliness and

lowliness. Godhead was Christ's eternal right and status and this He never relinquished and ever will be God.

The "form of God" implies all that is necessary to and inseparable from Deity. Therefore He was equal with the Father. But He did not consider this quality something to cling to. Rather, for the accomplishment of redemption, He "emptied Himself" and descended to the lowest depths.

His incarnation was the first step. He entered the world as God's bondservant. His was a voluntary emptying of Himself, possible only to one so exalted. But of what did He empty Himself? Surely, not His Deity, for Paul wrote, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Neither could He possibly empty Himself of His character. There was no abdication of His eternal Deity in the assumption of His holy humanity.

The explanation is set before us right here in the passage. "He made Himself of no reputation," He emptied Himself only of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead. Lightfoot says, "He emptied, stripped Himself of the insignia of His majesty." Paradoxically, His self-emptying consisted in taking something additional. He became what He never was before without ceasing to be all that He ever was. Ultimately He stooped to a felon's death, that of a common criminal. Such depths can never be fathomed. Such was "the mind of Christ."

This is our pattern. This is the cure for assembly trouble, dissention, disputing, murmuring and self-exaltation. This is the pattern Paul gave to the Church at Phillipi for the purpose of "working out their own salvation." Christ is the answer and the cure. Give Him His rightful place

and these ills will disappear. Rightly apprehending His lowly path of self-renunciation will enable us to heed the divine plea." Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind (His mind) let each esteem other better than themselves."

"When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the Prince of glory died,

My richest gain I count but loss

And pour contempt on all my pride."

## Christ Restoring: The Divine Purpose

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb 2:9). This is a quotation from Psalm 8; undoubtedly referring to the first head, Adam, to whom was given dominion over the works of God's hands. This estate the lost by sin (V. 8), but, when the fullness of time was come, the Lord Jesus entered into manhood, made for a little while lower than the angels, in order to restore, through suffering and death, man's lost dominion. In becoming man, He voluntarily submitted to the cross that He might put away the sin that had robbed man of the crown and sceptre. Those who are united to Him by faith will participate with Him in His glory and reign. His Glory is the pledge of man's restored dominion.

## Christ Releasing: The Divine Power

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had

the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2, 14, 15). Here Christ's humanity is 'associated with another great purpose — that of release from both fear and bondage because of the penalty of death.

There is a difference between the word "partakers" as used of the children and the words applied to Christ, "Took part of the same." The first embraces all mankind because of natural birth. The latter presents Christ taking that which was not His before, and implies His preexistence. His humanity was voluntarily assumed that He might die, and thus vanquish both death itself and Satan's power over death. Because of sin, the human race was powerless to break the devil's thrall, but the Lord Jesus came into the human race from outside it and becoming Himself subject to death, used the devil's own weapon to annul its power. Now the believer triumphantly sings:

"O death, O grave, I do not dread your power;

The ransom's paid:

On Jesus, in that dark and dreadful hour,

My guilt was laid."

## Christ Relieving: His Divine Pity

"Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren … for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 17. 18). The Lord Jesus became a man that He might experience the sufferings and sorrows of the human race. He entered into all that was common to man, apart from sin. John says, "He dwelt among us."

Thus He was while here, and is now at God's right hand, a real man, capable of rendering a perfect sympathy. He rebuked sin, and yet He sympathized with human infirmity, sorrow, and woe. He was absolutely incapable of entering into sin. He was a stranger to those temptations which are due to inherent sinfulness. "There was no traitor within the gates of His holy nature."

One has written, "Into our humbling experiences of entering into sin He cannot enter, but into our resistance to evil He can and does bring a sympathetic experience."

Because He is man, He understands our need; because He is God, He can meet our need. By virtue of His earthly experience He is able to sympathize; by virtue of His heavenly position, He is able to succour. Having passed through the wilderness experience as a real man, He knows, understands and cares. He not only "feels for us" but "with us." He is ever our faithful and merciful High Priest.

## Christ Reigning: The Divine Potentate

When Pilate asked the question, "Art thou a King then?" (John 18:37), Jesus answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." In Matthew 2:2 the wise men inquired, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" We read in Hebrews 10:12, "But this Man… sat down on the right hand of God: from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool."

In these passages Christ's humanity is linked with royalty and reign. "At the name of Jesus every knee shall

bow.” In this capacity, He is now hid from public view. “We see not yet all things put under Him.” The day is at hand when this peerless Man shall take the throne in regal splendour and majesty. Then the sobs of a groaning creation shall be hushed, its sorrows cease; all the ills of redeemed mankind will be healed and His glory spread from shore to shore.