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THE GLORIOUS GALILEAN
The Suffering of the Saviour
And the Reality of the Resurrection

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A PICTURE ARTHUR E. BARKLEY WITH THIS PUBLICATION

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DEDICATION

To Rev. Charles W. Snyder, my old pastor, who brought me to know and appreciate the
Christ of this booklet, and helped me to get a start in the work of the Lord, this book is dedicated.

Arthur E. Barkley

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Chapter 1

THE SUFFERING OF THE SAVIOR

Let us transport ourselves in imagination to the land of Palestine, and back into antiquity almost two thousand years. It is between the hours of eight and nine, on Friday morning, and a Galilean peasant is being led from Gabbatha to Golgatha. The word Gabbatha means a "pavement." It was the ornate floor of vari-colored stones on which the chair of a Roman judge was placed. Seated on this chair on Gabbatha, in the old palace of Herod on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, pronounced sentence of death against the eternal Son of God.

Golgotha is a Hebrew word, which literally means a skull; the Latin name for this skull-shaped hill is Calvary, and historians tell us that the place was strewn with skulls of criminals who had been executed on the spot.

Jesus was led forth from Gabbatha, surrounded by a company of Roman soldiers, under the command of a centurion. On the way they halted in front of a prison, from which two condemned robbers were dragged forth to die with the Nazarene. A little farther on, three crosses and three boards were produced; the crosses were made of two piece of timber framed together. The boards were white with black letters telling a culprit's name and his crime. On the shoulders of each man a cross was placed, and a board was suspended over his breast by means of a cord around his neck.

Look at the mournful procession as it moves along! First, we see a squadron of a soldiers. Then come the condemned men, two soldiers on either side of each one. Behind these march the rest of the military detachment. Look at the soldiers! They show no more piety for the condemned than for the stones on which they are walking. See the robbers! They are brutal looking wretches who seem to have followed a long course of crime and bloodshed. Look at Jesus! He can hardly move under His heavy burden. He staggers as though He would fall. His garments are torn and stained with blood; His feet are bare, and leave bloody splashes on the stones. A crown of thorns has been pushed down hard upon His head, making deep wounds from which trickle drops of blood and course down His face and neck. His cheeks are bruised and bleeding; His hair and beard are streaked with spittle, and matted with blood and dirt. His face is pale and sorrowful, but calm and sweet. No sound escapes His lips, either of anger or complaint.

Behind the soldiers, and pressing on either side, so as to get a look or hurl an insult at Jesus, is an immense mob of people. The millions of Jerusalem's citizens and Passover visitors seem to be in the streets. There are priests and Levites, with the high priest at their head, gloating with great glee over the downfall of their hated rival. Revenge was sweet to these men, and they were making the most of the occasion.

There were the members of the Sanhedrin who condemned Him to death, but had not the power to execute their sentence. They laugh for joy to see the Nazarene in the hands of the Roman executioners. There are also a great number of Jews who hold no office -- Jews from Judea, Jews from Antioch, Jews from Alexandria, Jews from Rome, Jews from Spain, Jews from Britain, Jews from the ends of the earth -- The whole Jewish race has risen up to bathe its hands in the blood of the Son of God!

There is the city mob, moving and raging like a troubled sea casting up mire and dirt. There are servants and camel drivers market men and menial slaves; thieves and gamblers and cut throats, and every shade of poverty, ignorance, vice, and brutality. That tremendous multitude seems to have one gigantic throat, like the throat of some enormous wild beast, and through its open jaws it yells and hisses and screams: "Away with this King of the Jews!" "Death to the defiler of the Temple! Kill the blasphemer of God!" "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Jesus is alone. Here and there in the edges of the throng is a man or woman who feels, but dares not express sympathy for His anguish and suffering. He who once ministered consolation to every form and degree of sorrow, has no one to wipe the sweat from His brow or whisper a word of pity in His ear. The Savior of men must suffer alone for the sins of the world.

Suddenly the procession stops. The soldiers face about and press the crowd back with the points of their spears. Jesus has fallen to the ground. For twelve hours He has not had a wink of sleep, or a morsel of food, or a moment of rest. He has been dragged about the streets, abused by the rabble throng, mocked by the soldiers, and has just undergone the hideous torture of the scourge. Exhausted nature gives way and He falls fainting to the ground. Some would have us think of Jesus as a weakling, but He must have possessed a strong body to endure this treatment as long as He had endured it.

Who is to carry the cross? No one of the soldiers will carry it for Him ; that would mean a lowering of their dignity. No Jew would carry it for fear of being polluted, and being made unfit for the Feast of the Passover. Jesus cannot bear the heavy burden. What shall be done? They see a man named Simon, a Negro coming in from the country. Commanded by the soldiers, he picks up the fallen cross and bears it after Jesus to Calvary. God's blessings on the black man forever! Behold the picture: Simon, the Cyrenian bearing the cross on which the world's Redeemer is to die! The multitude counts him disgraced, but to me his seems the highest honor ever conferred on mortal man. To bear the cross after Jesus is a greater honor than to wear the crown of the mightiest empire on the globe.

From Gabbatha to Golgotha, so far as we know, Jesus spoke but once. On the roadside He saw a group of women who were filling the air with loud lamentations and wailings. Touched with their expressions of sympathy, He said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep rather for yourselves and your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, blessed are the childless; For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Soon the ghastly hill of Golgotha was reached. The crosses were flung upon the ground near three holes which had been dug to receive the bases. The soldiers cleared a circle around them with their spears, and preparations were made at once for the execution of the condemned. Let us fasten our mental vision on those three crosses and try to think what Crucifixion must have been.

Crucifixion was the most diabolical invention of a dark and bloody age. Compared with crucifixion, death by hanging, or beheading, or poisoning would be almost a pleasure; while to be

roasted at the stake would be a milder and more merciful punishment. Crucifixion was of Eastern origin. It was invented by a woman -- Semiramis, queen of Nineveh. The Assyrians practiced it centuries before the beginning of the era. From them it spread to the Persians, Egyptians, Carthaginians, Greeks and Romans. Alexander the Great borrowed it of the Phoenicians, and practiced it upon two thousand of their citizens whom he captured in the siege and fall of Tyre. The Roman Emperor, Augustus, made it the legal mode of execution by crucifying six thousand prisoners of the serf class taken in one of the civil wars. Crucifixion was never a Jewish punishment; their method was stoning, but it was in perfect keeping with the fiendish cruelty and brutal taste of the old Romans. And yet they set it apart for the worst of criminals, highway robbers, rebels, traitors, and slaves who had committed shameful and horrible crimes.

The victim of this mode of execution, having been scourged until covered with blood, was stripped of clothing and nailed to the cross, and lifted up between heaven and earth to die by inches. Usually death did not come until several days had passed. Men put to death in this manner have been known to drag out more than a week of unspeakable agony on the cross.

Death by crucifixion seems to have contained in itself everything which is horrible in every other form of death. The unnatural position made the slightest movement perfect torture. The lacerated nerves and muscles throbbed with fiery agony. The wounds irritated by the cruel nails became inflamed and corrupt. The arteries and veins, swollen and surcharged with blood, were turned into avenues along which the galloping pains flew back and forth between the heart and the extremities. Above all these pains were added the pangs of burning fever and raging thirst. Together, these horrors made death, usually so dreadful to human kind, seem the sweetest of pleasures.

The criminal, utterly wretched compelled to endure a punishment too awful for man to bear, forsaken, yet conscious to the very last, would entreat the executioners and spectators with heart-rending cries, to put an end to his misery by killing him outright. Oh, to think of the awful ways men have invented of inflicting pain upon their brothers! To such a shameful and excruciating punishment our blessed Christ submitted Himself, for your sake and mine.

Now, in the view of that vast concourse of people, the brutal and blasphemous executioners stripped off His garments, leaving but a cloth around His loins. Then they threw Him upon the cross on His back and stretched out His arms along the transverse beam; and they drove a nail, or large spike, into each palm, deep into the wood. Next they drew up the legs till the soles of the feet lay flat on the upright beam, one above the other and one long spike was driven through them both. Last of all, the cross with its writhing burden, was lifted from the earth and its base dropped into a deep hole with an awful thud which brought the entire weight of the body upon the nails, tearing the tender hands and feet, and sending extreme pain through every limb and nerve.

It was at this point that Jesus uttered the first of His eight recorded sentences on the cross. What did He say? What would you expect Him to say at such a time, and in the hearing of such an assembly? Did He pour out curses on His enemies? Did He consign Pilate and Caiaphas to the hell where they deserved to go? No! Such words never came from His blessed lips. He prayed for His enemies; lifting up His eyes toward heaven, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

At the moment of His keenest suffering He prayed for the soldiers who drove the nails, for Pilate who signed the death-warrant, for the priests and Pharisees who drove Pilate on to the crime for which -- heathen though he was -- he shrunk. Jesus also prayed for Jerusalem, whose millions so eagerly thirsted for His blood. Who but a God could forgive like that?

One slight favor was granted to the suffering victims of death by crucifixion. According to a historian, the wealthy women of Jerusalem had provided for wine, mingled with some sort of stupefying drug to be given the victims of such a death, and the soldiers gladly permitted it to be done, since it would make the task of crucifying smoother and easier. When this sedative was offered to Jesus, He refused it, and we feel that if we had been there at Calvary we would have said, "Oh Jesus, drink this cup! Thou hast suffered enough." But Jesus wanted nothing to cloud His mental vision. He would look the King of Terrors straight in the face and suffer for us all that the cross could inflict upon Him. Had His spirit been deadened in insensibility, men would have asked, "Did Jesus actually know what He was doing when He went to Calvary?" If He had drunk that cup we would never have had the story of the pardon of the penitent thief, and the example of Jesus' concern for His mother.

Meanwhile the thieves had received their crucifixion, and the holiest man who ever lived was "numbered with the transgressors," as God had said He would be almost seven hundred years before. Jesus was hanging on the middle cross as though He were the worst of the three, and one writer has said that Jesus was crucified because He was too good, and the thieves because they were too bad. Both were considered enemies of society.

The next act in that terrible and bloody drama was the affixing of the title above the head of Jesus. This was done, and the multitudes mockingly read: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This title was written in the three languages common in that day -- Hebrew, the language of the religious people; Greek, the classical language of the aristocratic; and Rome's language, Latin, the language of law and the business world. It would seem that all men of that day could be able to read it in their tongue, or in a tongue which they knew more or less fluently.

When we are in severe pain it is a consolation to have some friend by our side to breathe words of love and sympathy in our ear, and to wipe the perspiration from our brow and minister to us in various ways, but this was denied the Son of God and Savior of the world. He could see no friendly human face; no angel was permitted to come to His aid. All about him were His enemies, breathing out their hatred of Him. They said everything that Satanic suggestion could invent to wound His feelings and aggravate His pain. The rulers and the rabble cried, "He saved others; let Him save himself if He be the Christ. The soldiers offered Him their sour wine in mockery of His kingship, saying: "Ha, Ha, Save thyself if thou be the King of the Jews!"

The chief priest, with the high priest at their head, had sunk so low that they could taunt their fallen foe and shout with devilish glee: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver him now, if He will have him: for he said I am the Son of God." Others still, wagged their heads, and said, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Community of suffering generally makes friends of strangers and even of enemies. We might therefore expect that the thieves would show some sympathy for the innocent companion of their pains, but even they hurled insults at His head. They repeated the reviling of the mob, and added these bitter words: "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." Doubtless they were more anxious to have Jesus get them out of the hands of the executioners than anything else.

With what tenderness we preserve the garments of our departed loved ones! How carefully we sometimes divide the possessions and clothing among those who survive their departure into the land of shadows! What was done with the garments of Jesus? Were they divided among the twelve apostles? Were they given as mementos of love to the family at Bethany? Were they sent, with words of tenderness and sympathy, to the mother of the dying man?

I am almost ashamed that I belong to the human family when I answer your question concerning the disposition of the raiment of our blessed Redeemer. Those hardened soldiers who had driven the nails through the hands and feet of Jesus, sat down under His cross and gambled for His clothes. The outer robe they ripped up into four pieces, each man taking one. But the inner garment, woven like the robes of the priests, without seam, became the property of him who won in the game of dice. This soldier unknowingly fulfilled a prophecy more than a thousand years old: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."

Meanwhile the fiery rays of the sun beat down upon the crosses, increasing the fever of the inflamed wounds, and kindled the tortures of a raging thirst. The last time Jesus had drunk was probably Thursday night at the last supper with the disciples in the upper room, but no word of complaint escaped His lips. With the most sublime heroism and patience he drained to the dregs the cup which our sins pressed to His mouth.

As the day wore on, and the Jews grew tired of their mockery and derision, some began to stream back into the city. Then the friends of Jesus dared to draw near the cross. There was John, the beloved disciple, and Mary, His mother, and Mary Magdalene, and Mary, who was Jesus' aunt, besides others who loved Him. Oh, how those names, John and Mary were honored! If your parents gave you one of those names you ought to consider yourself highly honored, and feel bound, by your name to stand as close to the cross as you can. Do not disgrace your name by being less than a whole-hearted disciple of your crucified Master.

There were still those who loved Him, and Jesus saw and recognized His friends, but did not ask help or comfort from them. He seemed to forget Himself in His solicitude for their welfare. Fastening His eyes upon His mother, and then on John, His disciple, He said, "Woman, behold thy son!" and "Son, behold thy mother!" The words were understood, and from that time forth John was a dutiful son to Mary, and she was a mother to him.

Jesus was nailed to the cross at nine o'clock in the morning. At noon a supernatural and awful darkness gathered over Golgotha and Jerusalem and the surrounding country. It seemed that Nature was mourning and sympathizing with her suffering Lord and Creator, and the sun refused to shine for three hours, causing consternation and terror to those assembled there. They knew it was more than an eclipse of the sun, for the Chaldeans had been able to foretell an eclipse over two

thousand years before the birth of Christ, and the only way to account for this darkness was to consider it as a miracle. Jesus had worked many other miracles; doubtless some thought He would miraculously come down.

As the end drew near one of the thieves, writhing on the nails, twisted himself around toward the middle cross and began to curse the Nazarene. The other, who hours before, had helped him curse, now rebuked him in the name of God, and confessed the justice of their punishment. Then turning his dying eyes toward the Savior, he prayed: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The prayer was very short, but into it the dying man put all his soul and his trust. Jesus heard. The cross had won its trophy, and the dying Redeemer rejoiced over the first-fruits of a mighty harvest which the on-coming ages would yield to the labors of His soul. That moment He began to see "the travail of His soul" and to be satisfied.

Christ's sufferings on the cross were not merely physical. He did not suffer just as an ordinary man. He suffered more than the thieves who were put to death with Him. They suffered each for himself; Jesus suffered for every human being who had ever lived, or ever should live. He suffered all through the years which preceded His death. The cross was only a climax of a long martyrdom. He was born into the world for this purpose -- to die. The shadow of the cross was ever before Him; it was His burden by day, and His bed by night.

Just what His sufferings were, we cannot entirely understand but the Bible says, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." He bore the weight of the accumulated guilt of the entire human race. All the sins and crimes and abominations which the human family had committed since Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, and all which should be committed down until the end of time were heaped together and placed upon Jesus. In that mountain-like mass were your sins and mine. On the cross His pains were as though this great world, eight thousand miles in diameter, and twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, had been hung about His neck until the weight of it all pulled the nails deeper. We cannot imagine fully what He suffered for us there at Calvary.

But the bitterest part of the bitter cup was yet to be drank. Previously His Father's presence had been with Him every moment; no cloud had ever come between Him and heaven. In all His weariness and persecution, and rejection and anguish, His human soul had felt the joy of communion with God. Even in Gethsemane when He almost died of sorrow, the Father was with Him. But now the Father's presence must be withdrawn; Jesus is taking the sinner's place, therefore He must suffer as the sinner would -separated from God and left alone. And so the Father turned away His face. Abandoned by the world, abandoned by His friends, He was now abandoned by God! Such agony was His as the universe has never known, and will never know again. It was worse by far than hell. The agony of hell is the agony of a sinful soul cast off from a God who is not loved; the agony of Jesus was the agony of a holy soul utterly deserted by a God who was perfectly adored. This subject is a deep one, too deep for us. We must check our words and keep to the inspired account which has been given to us by the four writers of the Gospels.

Suddenly an awful cry bursts from the Savior's lips: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani -- My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The next instant He spoke the only word of physical suffering which His long tortures produced, "I thirst!" Someone among the spectators, who had a

spark of mercy in his soul, ran and dipped a sponge in a vessel of sour wine which the soldiers had brought with them, and raised it with a reed to the lips of Jesus.

In a moment more all was over. The light of His Father's face returned. With a loud voice, as if uttering a shout of victory which should resound through all the succeeding ages, He cried, "It is finished!" Then more gently He added: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." A shudder passed through His frame; His head fell upon His breast, and He was dead. His sufferings at the hands of wicked men were over. "It is finished". . . . close the Temple, ye sons of Aaron; the types and shadows with which you have had to do have done their duty, now that the Substance has appeared. Lay aside the band from your foreheads, and the breastplate, ye ministers of the sanctuary; for now another justly adorns Himself with both, and your priesthood has reached its terminations."

The great scheme of redemption was fully accomplished. The old dispensation was ended; the new was begun. The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down; the Aaronic priesthood was abolished. The last chapter in the plan of salvation was written. Henceforth every member of the human race could come for himself into the immediate presence of God.

At that moment the priest, who had gone into the holy place of the temple to burn the incense of the evening sacrifice on the golden altar, witnessed a startling sight. Before him hung the great veil of purple and gold, dividing the Most Holy from the holy place. Instantly it was split in two from the top to the bottom, as if torn by a mighty unseen hand, and the Holy of Holies was laid bare. Outside the temple still more awful things were seen. A mighty earthquake shook the ground. The rocks around Golgotha were rent and spilt into yawning chasms, and many graves were opened. The bodies of many dead Old Testament saints came forth in the sight of the frightened people, and three days afterward were still walking the streets of the city of Jerusalem.

All who saw these exhibitions of divine power were greatly moved. The soldiers about the cross were filled with fears; nothing like this had ever happened at an execution before! The centurion cried out. "Certainly this was a righteous man! This was the Son of God!" The people who had been looking to see the Nazarene die were sobered by the earthquake, and returned to the city, conscience-stricken, and beat upon their breasts and wailed. Perhaps they had begun to see that they had insulted and murdered the Son of God, the Hope of Israel.

Now that Jesus was dead, what should be done with the body? According to the Roman law the corpses of the crucified were left to rot on the cross, or to be devoured by the birds of prey. That **COULD NOT BE THE CASE WITH THE BODY OF JESUS**, for Prophecy had said that He would make His grave with the rich in His death, and the Jewish law forbade that the dead body of a criminal should hang over night. The priests **FORGOT THE PROPHECY**, but remembered the **LAW**. Those hypocritical men who had not shrunk from bathing their hands in the blood of the immaculate Son of God, were so conscientious that they could not let the body of their murdered Victim stay above ground over night, lest the holy city and the temple be defiled. So they went to Pilate and begged him to have the three bodies removed. He ordered them to do as the Jews desired. Finding the thieves still alive, they hastened their death by breaking their legs with an iron mallet.

When they came to Jesus they found Him already dead, so they did not break His legs, and fulfilled another prophecy fifteen hundred years old: "A bone of him shall not be broken," but one of the soldiers, to make doubly sure, raised his spear and drove it deep into the Savior's side. Immediately two streams gushed out of the wound, one of blood, the other of water, and that man who drove the spear unknowingly fulfilled ANOTHER PROPHECY made about Jesus long before, "They shall look upon Him whom they pierced."

On the surface one might wonder why that a man, in the prime of life, and in perfect health, should die when he hung on the cross but six hours, and very often men lived for days. Pilate could not believe that He was dead, and it is certain that the crucifixion alone did not kill Him. The mingled flow of blood and water seems to solve the mystery. Around the heart is a sac, called the pericardium. When, for any cause, the heart is ruptured, the blood flowing out into the pericardium, is separated into two fluids -- a colorless fluid like water, and a deep red fluid like blood itself. The extreme mental agony which the Savior suffered ruptured the heart and caused the blood to flow into the surrounding sac. Then the two fluids escaped through the incision made by the spear. This is the opinion of many eminent scientists. So Jesus literally and actually died of a broken heart!

Did you ever stop to think that your sins and mine broke our Savior's heart? Let us loathe our sins which caused such grief, and turn our eyes, bathed in penitential tears to Jesus on the cross, and say:

"Let the water and the blood
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure."

Meanwhile, many loving hearts and willing hands had gathered around the cross. Among them was a wealthy and honorable man named Joseph, of Arimathea, who carried a permit from Pilate to remove the body of Jesus. Nicodemus was also present, and we do not know how many more. Tenderly, lovingly, they took down the cross and drew out the nails, and closed the gaping wounds, and washed away the blood, and wrapped the body in a linen cloth with a hundred pounds of spices after the ancient manner of embalming, hoping to finish the matter after the passing of the Jewish Sabbath.

Where should He be buried? Near Golgotha was a garden, the property of Joseph. In the garden was a new tomb, which had been hewn out of the rock for the last resting place of the owner himself when God should call him away. At the insistence of Joseph the body of our Lord was to be given burial there. Jesus must have the best, and now he is trying to do something for Jesus, even though he did not do much for Him while living. So Joseph's tomb received its precious treasure, and huge stone shaped for the door was rolled into its place against the entrance. The men departed, but the women could not leave the spot. In the gathering twilight they sat as mourners before the tomb, and wept for Him whom they thought forever lost to Israel and to them.

Slowly the great full Passover moon rose over Olivet and shed its soft light upon the garden. But the women and the moon were not long alone. Soon harsh voices and heavy steps and

the clank of armor was heard, and a glow of torches was seen through the trees. The women fled in terror, and sixteen fully-armed soldiers stood before the tomb.

The soldiers had been sent by Pilate, at the urgent request of the Jews, to guard the place, and prevent anyone from stealing the body of Jesus, making it appear that He had arisen from the dead. Surely this guard of soldiers could take care of any trouble that might be forthcoming. First they sealed the stone with wax, and stamped it with the governor's signet ring, then the representative of the high priest placed his seal upon it, and the soldiers posted themselves as sentinels and prepared to pass the night.

Jesus was dead and buried. Pilate was glad to be rid of a troublesome case. The priests and Pharisees rejoiced over the fall of their hated rival; the rabble caroused with Barabbas, whom they had preferred to the Son of God; the disciples were plunged into dark despair. Hell seemed to have won a great victory, but the angels must have rejoiced greatly because they knew that man was redeemed.

That was Friday night after the crucifixion was over. Sunday morning two angels leaped from the throne of God into Joseph's garden. Instantly an earthquake shook the place, opening the tomb, and Jesus came forth alive, a conqueror over Death. He showed Himself to His disciples ten times in the space of forty days, and then went up to heaven, where He stands today before His Father's throne, making intercession for us.

"Living He loved me, dying He saved me,
Buried He carried my sins far away;
Rising, He justified freely forever,
Some day He's coming, Oh, glorious day!"

What does the crucifixion mean to you? It means Eternal Life if you will believe, and accept this great salvation.

There were two parties in Jerusalem that day long ago when Jesus was crucified, and only two; there could not have been a third. In one group were His friends and the thief who died praying for mercy. In the other group were Judas, and Caiaphas and the rabble, and Pilate, and the executioners and the thief who died cursing Jesus. There are two groups also today. In one are those who now open their arms and their hearts and take Jesus as their Savior and King. All others reject Him and spit in His face, and cry "Away with Him." "Crucify Him!" To which party do you belong?

Do you feel that if you had been in Jerusalem that day you would have boldly stood by the side of Jesus in Pilate's hall; that you would have spoken in His defense; that you would have walked with Him to Golgotha? But you do not know yourself. That same heart of unbelief which causes you to reject Christ in the midst of this gospel age, with the record of nineteen centuries of His wonder working power before you, would have caused you to stand with the mob that day which clamored for His death.

This very moment you take Jesus to be your Savior from sin, or you are crucifying Him afresh by your sins. Your heart either cries, "Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all," Or else you are saying, "Away with Him." You are either His true disciple or His murderer. Which is it? In the name of God, which SHALL it be?

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Chapter 2 THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION

Jesus is dead! In the dense darkness when the sun hid its face at the passing of Light, the friends at the foot of the cross whispered that He was dying; a moment later they sighed that He was dead. To make certain of His death a Roman centurion pierces His heart with a lance. How wonderfully effective is a Roman execution. Nothing can survive a crucifixion!

As the lengthening shadows of the three crosses cast their sinister sadness over the retreating figures, many a man and woman in Jerusalem that day took away sweet memories of Him, for often more flowers are scattered at our death than during our life-time. Two men lacked courage to declare their affiliations while He was living, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, brought perfume and spices to embalm the body of Jesus for burial.

His enemies remembered that He had said that He would rise again but they were certain that He would not. They were afraid that the disciples would come and steal away His body so that they could say their Messiah had risen from the dead. So to guard against such deceit they went to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, asking him to set a detachment of soldiers about the tomb for three days. In addition, they attached their own official seal to the stone which was placed over the entrance, and in the most ironic sentence of all literature, St. Matthew tells us: "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." They took every precaution against fakery, but could take none against divinity.

The apostles kept the memory of a beautiful kingdom, which, like Moses, it seemed they were to see with their mind's eye but never to enter. Now that death had come, and Life had gone, back to their nets and boats they decided to go. Three years before this, the Great Master had called them from fishing to become fishers of men; now they once more would become fishers of fish. Had not He whom they hoped would restore the throne of David died on a tree, with only thorns for a crown, nails for a sceptre, and a yelling mob for His subjects? There was just one word to express their attitude -- a human word with a human implication: Christ is DEAD!

And now a week has passed, and many things have happened in the meantime; the high priest has returned to his judgment seat, Pilate to his basin of water, and the fishermen to their nets. It was evening on Galilee. The lake was flecked with white from the shimmering light of the stars, and the moon sent down its rays like silver grappling hooks to move its tides. In the harbor of Capernaum, several fishing boats with their slanting sails, high rudders, and worn seats lay at anchor waiting to put out on a fishing trip.

Simon Peter called down the shores to Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John and two others, and said: "I go a fishing!" And they answered back, and the hills echoed it again, "We also go with thee." Entering into the boat they put off; labored all night and caught nothing. At early morn, as the sun came forth in the golden chariot of the dawn, and began to crimson the Galilean mountains, they started to row to shore. As they came near they saw a stranger standing on the shore who seemed to be waiting for them, but they "knew not who it was."

His voice rang out like a silver trumpet as He called to them: "Children, have you any meat?" And they answered, "No! If you are planning to do some fishing, you might as well not come. We haven't had any luck at all!" Then the Stranger said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship," and when this was done a great multitude of fish filled the net until they were unable to draw it in.

They all began to tremble as the memory of other days awoke within them. "It is the Lord!" whispered John to Peter, and instantly the warm-hearted enthusiast leaped into the water and swam the hundred yards or so which separated them from Jesus, and cast himself at the feet of the Master. The others followed in the boat bringing their strained net, which was yet unbroken, but filled with 153 fishes.

A wood fire was burning on the strand, lighted by the Light of the world. On its glowing embers were some broiled fish and bread, -- a meal prepared by the Creator of the Universe in the midst of His creation. They would not have needed their freshly-caught fish, and why, I wonder, did they take the time to count them in the joy of seeing their Lord? Material possessions seem to have a way of getting hold of us still Jesus said to them, "Come and dine, and none of them who were at meat durst ask Him: Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord."

Then for the triple denial of Jesus by Peter the night of the trial, our Lord drew forth the triple promise of love. But that was not all. He reminded Peter that love was the key to the meaning of death and life, and that love is not a thing of earthly life, but a love of death; that is, he would love the cross as his Master had. He foretold the kind of death Peter would undergo himself. Jesus was saying, "Because I love you they killed me; yet for your love for me, they will kill you too. The reward of your labors will be a cross, but it will be more -- it will be Life Eternal."

From now on Peter understood as he had never understood before, and the other apostles understood too. It was the tremendous lesson of the resurrection that every follower of Christ may understand until the end of Time; the lesson which means unlearning all the world ever taught, or ever will teach; and that lesson which today thrills our hearts is this: **IT WAS NOT CHRIST WHO DIED -- IT WAS DEATH!**

Even though at the very beginning they heard Jesus speak of His resurrection, saying that in three days He would rebuild the temple of His body which men would destroy; even though they had heard Him say that like another Jonah He would be "in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" they still adhered to a narrow, human, and worldly outlook on life and death, and were unable to grasp the idea of a resurrection from the dead by the Lord Jesus. Judas felt that since death would end His life, he might even profit by His death, as he had profited by His life, so

for thirty silver coins he sold his Master. Then when Judas saw that Jesus really was going to let them kill him, he tried to undo the bargain but it was too late. He did not perform a miracle and escape; He died on the cross, and was buried.

The Resurrection was a fact. He said that He would rise again, and He did rise again! The apostles were not victims of a wild delusion; all those who saw Him later had to be convinced that it was really the Lord. **THEY WERE NOT EVEN EXPECTING A RESURRECTION.** The absence of the disciples at the crucifixion, and their despondency and despair after His entombment prove to us that they thought death ended all.

On Easter morning the women went to the sepulcher, not to meet the risen Christ, but to finish embalming His dead body; and their greatest worry was who would roll away the stone from the door of the tomb. And when they found it rolled away they did not think of His resurrection, but only a shameful theft of the body. The message of the angel did not at first inspire them with hope and faith, but rather with fear and horror. And when the women returning, announced the resurrection, instead of the others being impressed, regarded their words as "idle tales and believed them not."

The followers of Jesus were so far from the idea of seeing Him upset the human conception of Death that when they first saw Him thereafter they thought they had seen a ghost; Mary Magdalene thought He was the gardener; and the disciples on the Emmaus road did not recognize Him until the breaking of bread, and when they told the others their story they were not believed. When Jesus appeared in Galilee, Matthew tells us that some doubted; and some of His disciples would not believe their own eyes until they saw Him eating, and Thomas would not be convinced until he had put his finger in the print of the nails and seen the mark of the spear on Jesus side. If the followers of Jesus had been expecting Him to rise they would have believed at once, but they had to be convinced, and **THEY WERE CONVINCED!** The weight of eternal evidence was too strong to resist. Christ was not dead, but alive!

If Jesus did not rise from the grave, then the tomb far away under Palestinian skies was the grave of a man, and there was no Son of God ever born into the world; if He did not rise, then He did not atone for sin, and in all the world never a single guilty stain has been washed from a single human soul. If He did not rise from the dead then our faith and our preaching is in vain.

Christ was alive! Men had to admit that their views on death were wrong, and the world and its ideas had to be remade, for here was a force greater than nature! Nature received here the only serious blow it ever received -- the mortal wound of an empty tomb. Enemies had not finished accounting for Him, for they who slew the Nazarene found they had lost the day. Humanity has not finished accounting for Him, for He came from a stranger's grave, loving men enough to die for them, and then live in order to be able to love them eternally. Men had to learn that what they called life was only death, and that bodily life is not true life, and that he who gives up his life for the sake of Christ shall find his fullest life in Christ, and that "Whosoever shall save his life must lose it." Really, it was not Christ who died, -- it was Death!

The cycles of the years whirl away into history, but it has ever been the same note of deathlessness that went up from the hearts of men throughout the church age. Each generation has

repeated it in its own way, so that never have men been without the glad tidings of the victory of Jesus over death.

In the days of the Roman persecution, when Nero published his famous ordinance: "Let there be no Christians!" He, and his successors, with no fear of God to restrain their cruelty, and a great army to administer it, set to work to destroy the gospel of the risen Savior. The swords of the executioners, blunted with slaughter, no longer fitted their sheaths and wild beasts were fattened with the blood of Christians. From a thousand throats there came the cry: "Christians must die!" And the river of the Tiberias ran red with blood, as if already one of the angels of the Apocalypse had poured his vial into it which will turn the waters of the earth into blood. A day finally came when Rome thought that it had silenced the last tongue that would testify for Christ, or breathe His name.

And yet, what is the verdict of history? Caesar was certain that he had conquered, and the cause of Christ was dead. It could never survive the Roman sword. But,

"Who were the victors, the martyrs or Nero?
Or the Spartans who fell at Thermopye's tryst,
Or the Persians, or Xerxes, his judges or Socrates,
Pilate, or Christ?"

The verdict of history is the verdict of the empty tomb. It was not the Christians who died, ultimately and inevitably, it was the ROMAN EMPIRE!

Now, it seems to me that we can well afford to come closer to our own times. What of the church and modern civilization? The end of the nineteenth century marks the great upward climb of man divorced from God. In the educational world, God was reduced to a mental symbol and then explained away psychologically; man was reduced to an animal and then explained away biologically; life was reduced to chemicals and then explained away mechanically. The miraculous was identified with the superstitious; Christ was considered a mere social reformer like Buddha and Confucius; the church was degenerated to a social club, offering a social gospel rather than a saving gospel, and man was believed to be on the way to being called a miniature God.

But just at the moment when the world boasted of its superior organization, and its faith in the material and its doubt in the spiritual, the modern man who was taught he was only a beast, acted like one, and the nations battled against one another in the great World War I. With two world conflicts in twenty-one years, and the prospect of a third World war as I write, it is easy to see that governments have failed, and institutions have not accomplished their purpose; but there is one thing that has not failed, and that is the church, the true church with a testimony for Christ. Its message is still the message that hungry hearts are seeking after.

There is no need for our modern world to set up new laboratories to test new faiths; there is nothing new to be tried. We have tried all the experiments of the ancients: we tried science, and it fed our minds and starved our hearts. We weighed the earth, took a census of the stars, set our

thermometers in the very heart of the sun, and in the end we had new measures, greater numbers, fancy names; but we still have our heartaches and our sins.

We tried the experiment of law, and did not obey the law but changed it to suit our moods and called it progress; We have tried the police and we have the underworld; we have tried force, and we have filled the earth with fear.

We tried the economic, and we have world-wide depression. It pierced our hands as we leaned upon its staff. We tried the experiment of beauty, and found that it vanished as we touched it, and grew old as we embraced it. We tried the experiment of wealth and found ourselves poor; the experiment of power and found ourselves weak; the experiment of pride and found ourselves humbled. We have tried electrons and chromosomes and ductless glands, and scrapped morality. There is only one experiment the modern man has not definitely tried, and that is the love of God as shown forth in the teachings and the life of Christ.

So it was not the church which died, It was the Modern World! It might not be a bad plan to go back to Calvary and try the religion of Jesus Christ.

Now let us enter into our own personal lives. I believe we can make an individual application of this thought if we will. You have heard the Glorious Galilean calling to your own heart, and beckoning you on to His Way, His Truth, and His Life. You felt that it would be a lowering of your self respect if you knelt before Him for forgiveness, and that it would be much to do to give up the world for Christ. But then you took the step, and made the adventure, and something happened! God came into your heart and life and made all things new!

When you thought you were losing everything you found everything, and when you thought you were in the dark, you were walking in the newness of life. The whole experience of conversion, confession, repentance, restitution, sanctification, seemed in the beginning to be only death, but it was only a new verse to an old tune, it was struck on the chords of your soul by the fingers of God: It was not you who died -- IT WAS SIN!

"Galilean, thou hast conquered again!" Christ lives. His truth abides! The world, and the things that are in it, will, one day like an Arab's tent, be folded away. There is nothing that endures but God! The way to God has been made through Christ; why then, do we not recognize Him, and embrace Him as our own?

"Speak to Him now, for He heareth,
And spirit with spirit may meet;
Nearer is He than breathing,
Closer than hands and feet."

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THE END