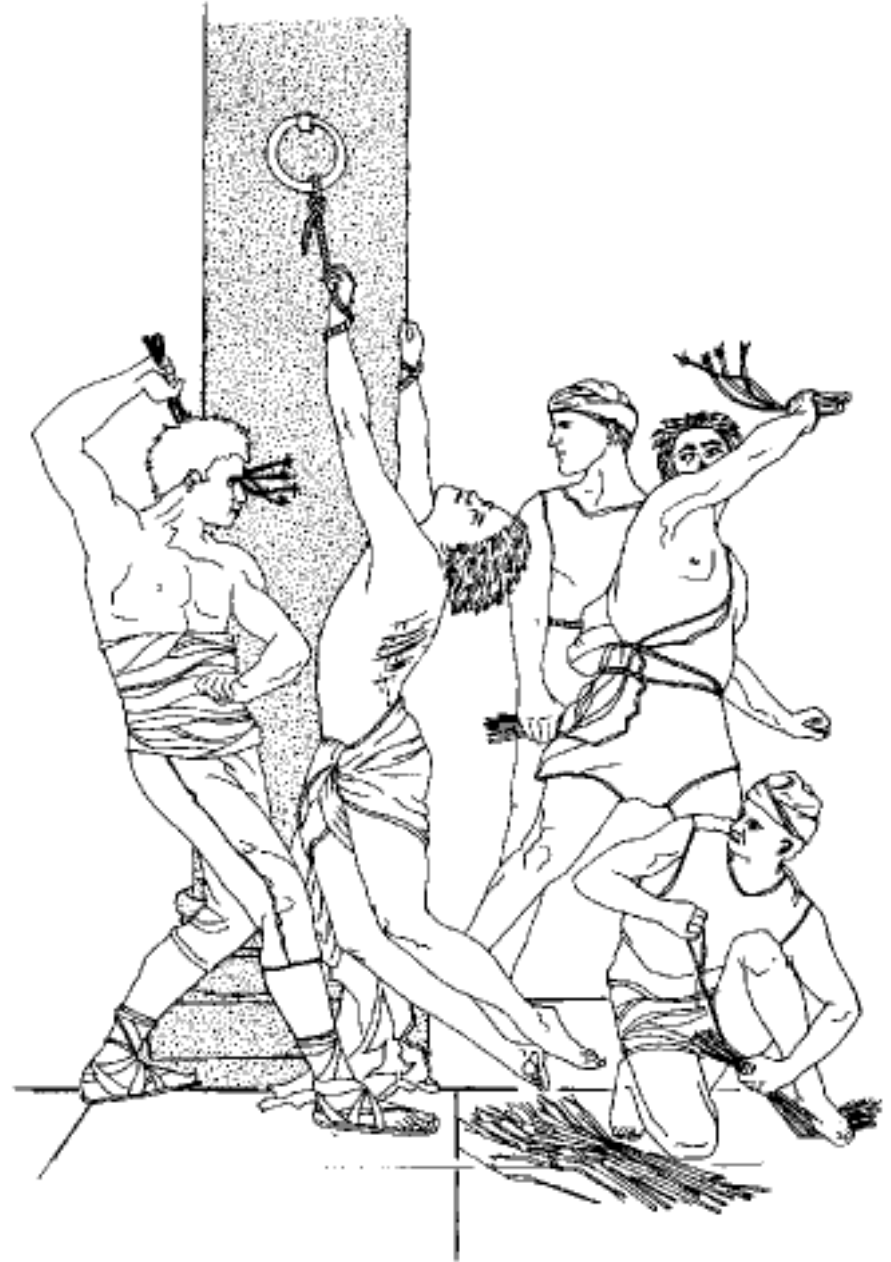




The Passion and Suffering of Jesus

E. A. Wilson



The Old Rugged Cross

*On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame,
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.*

Chorus:

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

*O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me,
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory above,
To bear it to dark Calvary.*

*In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see;
For 'twas on that cross Jesus suffered and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.*

*To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.*

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

A Man Must Die for a Man's Sin

We are in a day and time when much of Christ's work in redemption is taken for granted and the suffering that He went through is taken too lightly. I believe it is time well spent for us to once again look face to face at the suffering He actually went through to bring you and me the deliverance we enjoy today. I spent some time recently going through the Gospels and lining out the walk of Christ from Gethsemane to the Cross.

Some time back, I read an article written by a Christian medical doctor that really stirred my heart. In this article he said, "I realize that I had taken the crucifixion for granted all these years. I had grown calloused to its horrors by an easy familiarity of its grim details, and it occurred to me that, as a physician, I had not even been interested enough, even though I claim salvation by the Cross of Jesus Christ, in the suffering of Christ to study to my own satisfaction and find

what actually caused Christ's death."

We must remember some things as we study. The four Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—did not go into great detail, and there was a reason for it. In those days, scourging and crucifixion were very common. It was nothing to walk down the road toward the city and see someone suffering crucifixion on a cross. However, each Gospel writer gave some detail that points out the terrible suffering.

As we study about Christ's physical suffering, hold your mind on the thought of how awful sin is. What a price had to be paid! How much God loves us, and how much Christ loves us that He would stand sufferings beyond that which any human body ever stood up to or ever will stand up to. I know that men have suffered great things, but none has had to drink of the cup that He drank of, because there was so much in the contents of that cup. We want to answer the question of what the body of Jesus endured during those hours of torture. None of the Gospels give the entire pattern in sequence, but if you will put them together, you will get the whole walk of Christ from Gethsemane to Calvary. Gethsemane is where His torture really began. There is where He began to pay the price for our redemption. There is where the physical suffering first began to be laid upon Him as He bore the sins of the whole world.

In the Garden of Gethsemane

We begin our study in Luke 22:39-40: "And he came out [after He gave the disciples the Lord's supper], and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

Christ was beginning to fall under one of the greatest powers of temptation that man could ever know. As He got to the place of actually bringing Himself into submission to God's will, truly submitting to laying down His life and suffering the terrible death that we will study about, He began to be tempted. Even though His spirit was willing, the flesh was weak.

The same thing is true with every Christian. Every

Christian is willing to go all the way with Jesus, but we have a flesh that is weak. Second Corinthians 12:9 states that Christ's strength is made strong in our weakness. Our weakness is in the flesh. Jesus had the same kind of flesh that you and I have, and no one's flesh desires to suffer. There is just something about our fleshly bodies that if we can escape pain and misery, if we can detour any real suffering we will go around it.

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (verses 41-42). Great suffering began right here. "Remove this cup from me" was one of the prayers Jesus did not get answered.

God in Heaven knew He was suffering under great stress because He dispatched an angel right out of Heaven to strengthen Him. It is encouraging to know that if we will be true to God, no matter what it costs Heaven to give us strength and give us the victory, we can have the victory to do what God would have us do.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly . . ." (verses 43-44). Agony means great mental or physical pain. I think Paul helps with this in Hebrews 5:7-8. Many people think that Jesus was afraid to die. Friend, Jesus did not fear physical death any more than any real child of God fears physical death. There was something that He feared, but it was not physical death. "Who in the days of his [Jesus'] flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered."

The cup that He was going to have to drink of was having to die as a lost sinner dies without God. He was going to have to submit Himself unto the power of eternal death, separation from God, facing eternity without God, with God's face hidden from Him. It was not physical death that He feared—it was spiritual death.

Every child of God has more fear in his heart of spiritual

death than he does of physical death. If you will be afraid of failing God, if you will fear the thought of going into a lost eternity without God, you will not have to fear physical death in any way.

Luke was a medical doctor, and he wrote many things that John, Matthew, and Mark did not mention, because he understood medical terms. Luke was the only one who mentioned the fact that Jesus' sweat became as drops of blood. Luke wrote (verse 44), "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." What agony! What suffering!

Too many times, all we can see in Jesus' suffering is a whip and a sword, but there was a deeper agony. Certainly, the whip and the sword were bad enough, but there was a deeper agony—agony of soul. Isaiah wrote that He laid down His soul as a sacrifice (Isaiah 53:10).

There was an agony of heart and mind and soul, and as He began to pray, He was under such great pressure that His blood began to come out in His sweat. Medical documents state the fact that there are cases on record, though very rare, that men put under strain, in great pain and great agony, have actually had blood come out with their perspiration. Medical science says that the body can be under such pressure, such agony, and such mental stress that the small blood vessels that run close to the sweat glands burst and the blood runs out through the sweat glands. The Word of God lets us know that Christ began to fall under such agony. What troubled Him? Your sins! My sins!

Medical science says that the process of being under great mental stress was alone enough to produce marked weakness and possible shock, but that was just the start. "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow" (verse 45). There are two ways a burden will hit you. If you are not as spiritual as you ought to be, it will put you to sleep. If you are spiritual, it will cause you to pray.

We follow the sequence in John, Chapter 18. Now, it was the middle of the night. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron,

where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples" (verses 1-2). The Bible says that Jesus and His disciples spent many a night in this garden, because the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head. Judas knew where the garden was.

Judas had been dismissed from the feet-washing service after Jesus washed his feet and was so kind to him and then told him to go do what he was going to do quickly. Judas walked quite a few miles back into the city and there sold the Savior for thirty pieces of silver. He brought the crowd back because he knew the place.

This is the reason that apostates can hurt so badly. They know the ways, the manners, the customs, and the places of the saints. This is why an apostate, one who ceases to follow Christ, is a worse enemy to the true cause of Christ than the out-and-out worldly man who never knew God. The apostate knows the ways of the saints, and he knows how to attack.

"Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lantern, and weapons" (verse 3). Every time I read that, I think how blind men are in sin. It is kind of strange to go out with lanterns and torches and weapons after the Light of the world and the Prince of Peace.

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him [He knows the end from the beginning, and notice how He acted knowing all the things that should come upon Him], went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? Then they answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them" (verses 4-5). Judas was once Christ's disciple and stood with Him, but now he was standing with a group that had come to kill Jesus. Saint, just open your eyes a little bit. You can watch where people stand when truth is at stake and know whether they are true disciples or apostates. Judas had stood with Jesus, one of the first twelve that He had chosen, but here he was with a band of bloodthirsty Roman outlaws that could not care less for anything. Crucifixion meant nothing to them. They did it day after day.

"As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they

went backward, and fell to the ground" (verse 6). There is power in that "I am." When God sent Moses to deliver His people out of Egypt, Moses asked, "Who will I tell them sent me?" God said to tell them, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). When Jesus opened His mouth and said, "I am," they fell back as dead people on the ground. I think that is recorded in the Bible to let us know beyond the shadow of a doubt that He gave Himself up willingly. They had no power. The devil has no power against the Son of God and the power of His Word. He did not strike them, but there was enough power in the "I am" that they fell backward upon the ground as dead men. He spoke them to the ground, and He could just as easily have spoken them to hell, without another opportunity to get right, but He did not do it.

"Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (verses 7-8). And they let them go. Jesus was in command. He did not beg them. He told them what to do. He was not at their mercy. They were at His mercy. Let us stay right with the Bible as it is. People get the idea that the devil just comes in and takes over. The devil does not come in and take over anything. God is in control, and His Word will be fulfilled as He said it would. "That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none" (verse 9).

"Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus" (verse 10). Historians agree that Peter was not after Malchus. He was after Judas. However, he was not a swordsman. He was a fisherman, and he could not guide a sword as good as some people.

This was before Pentecost. It is taught by some people that the disciples were born-again men before Pentecost, but truly born-again people do not act like that. The world was still under the legal dispensation and the Gospel was just breaking forth. The price of redemption had not been paid, and the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. So when Judas led the group out there, I can see Peter saying, "Why, you dirty devil! You worked with us for three years. Jesus fed you and clothed you

and made you everything that you are, and now will you stand right there with that group of bloodthirsty men? I'll fix you!" But he missed Judas and took off the high priest's servant's ear. (Luke recorded that Jesus put the ear back and healed it.)

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him. And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people" (verses 11-14).

In the Palace of the High Priest

"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple [John]: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art thou not also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself" (verses 15-18).

Peter was so angry with Judas for what he had done that, according to history, he was ready to cut his head off, but he turned right around within an hour and denied the Lord himself. You will notice that the Scripture says that Peter stood with them, the same bloodthirsty crew that he had been so stirred at Judas for standing with.

Paul said to let every one that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). It is very easy for us to become very stirred with what someone else does, but not a one of us knows what is ahead of us. Peter never intended to deny Jesus. However, if a Christian allows himself to get in the wrong place with the wrong crowd, it is very easy to compromise.

"The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of

Before Pilate and Herod

His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I even taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing" (verse 20). He said that because they were trying to prove that He was setting up a secret society, intending to take over the Roman Empire.

"Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: Behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:21-23.) Little by little, Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled. He answered truthfully, but the servant was stirred because of the pressure of the hour, and he smote Him. When that one hit Him, it stirred up something. They all took the liberty to slap Him in the face, as we find recorded in Luke 22:63-65: "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him, And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." Matthew 26:59-68 tells more of what happened at the high priest's palace.

To think that One so loving and kind and had never done anything but good, One who came to bless mankind, would be so mistreated, shoved, beaten, and persecuted and take it all for you and me! Don't you ever forget that every slap He took, every spit of that was put in his face was for us. They ground Him down, made fun of Him, spit on Him, kicked Him, slapped Him, and like a sheep dumb before the shearers they fleeced Him of every bit of pride, reputation, and anything that a man could have, but He opened not His mouth to pay the price for you and me. Thank God for Jesus! Thank God for One that loved me that much to pay the price for my redemption!

Philippians 2:7-8 tells that He humbled Himself to become a man, and then He humbled Himself and came down to the Cross. He humbled Himself to the place that every bit of human pride was laid aside. He let men spit on Him, beat Him around, buffet Him, kick Him, and mock Him, when within Himself He had the power to deliver Himself from them.

All this drinking of the cup of suffering began in Gethsemane and had lasted all night long. "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matthew 27:1-2). All night long He had suffered. With His body beaten, battered, bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, He was taken to Pontius Pilate.

It stirs up a deeper appreciation in me for Jesus Christ. Revelation, Chapter 5, relates that God looked all over Heaven, all over the earth, and under the earth to find a man who was willing and worthy to pay the price of redemption, and He could not find one. Everyone was dying for his own sins. Thank God, the Lamb of God prevailed to open the great plan of salvation for mankind. We are studying what it cost Him to open up salvation. He had to drink a cup, not for just an hour or so on a cross on Calvary's hill, but He drank a cup all throughout the night and the next day until late in the afternoon. He drank that bitter cup for you and me.

As far as I am concerned, false religion is one of the most hateful things on the face of the globe. All the dirty work done to Jesus was done by religious folks. It was not bar operators and racetrack owners that called this counsel. It was the chief priests and the chief religious men in Jerusalem. No people are any more hateful than religious folks without real salvation.

"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgement [going to Pilate]: and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgement hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28). What do you think of that? I want to show you what tradition will do for you. They had murder in their hearts, planning to murder the Son of God, and that did not bother them a bit; but according to an old tradition, if they go into a Gentile's house during the days of the Passover, then they cannot eat the Passover, because they would be ceremonially unclean.

That is a picture of people today. They will fight for

doctrine. They do not want anything to do with you if you teach doctrine a little different than they, and they think they would defile themselves if they came and sat in a building where you are preaching, but they have a heart full of hatred all the time. Read 1 John 3:15. They do not fret a bit about the hatred, but they do not want to overstep that doctrine! We had better take a lesson from this.

You will read in Acts that Pilate is in hell today over the decision that he made. Just as Jesus was brought to Pilate, Jesus is being brought to every one of us, and we are going to have to decide something about it. Pilate was like a lot of people today. He let his job get in the way. He was fearful of losing his job as a Roman procurator. His own conscience told him what he needed to do. His good wife sent him word what he needed to do. He knew what he needed to do, but for fear of losing his position he sent Jesus to the Cross, and he sent Pilate to hell.

Luke, Chapter 23, goes into more detail about Pilate. "And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. [they lied right there, because He taught and practiced to render to Caesar what belonged to Caesar, and to render to God what belonged to God]. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean [Pilate found a loophole]. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time" (verses 1-7). In other words, by an old-fashioned passing of the buck, he was going to shift the responsibility.

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him" (verse 8). Here was a man who had

already begun to drink the cup bearing the sins of the whole world until His sweat became as blood, and He had been beaten from head to foot, and Herod said, "I am glad that you are here. I have heard about these miracles that You have pulled. Could You pull one for me?"

"Then he questioned with him in many words: and he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (verses 9-12). Did you ever see anything like it? People who cannot get along will join together and become good friends to fight truth and God's man. Those spirits that Jesus faced are still in the world, and the church of the living God, the body of Christ, is running into them the same way. If God would allow, they would crucify the Son of God afresh today, just as they did then.

"And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, Said unto them, Ye brought this man unto me, as one that perverted the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof you accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise [scourge, beat] him, and release him [that was Pilate's judgment]. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.) Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go" (verses 13-22). As far as Pilate was concerned, a good beating was all that was coming to Him. According to the Roman law, He was to get thirty-nine lashes for what He had done if He were guilty.

"And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He

might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (verses 23-25).

In the Hands of the Roman Soldiers

It was getting to be about noon. Pilate had already passed judgment that Jesus must be scourged. I would like for all of you to look up what a Roman scourging was like. It will cause you to appreciate Jesus more. In a scourging, a prisoner is stripped of all of his clothing, and his hands are tied to a low post, so he is bent over. The Roman legionnaire takes a flagellum, which has many strips of leather on every strip. There are two round lead balls about so big within three or four inches of the end. According to the law, they are to receive thirty-nine lashes, or forty save one.

Isaiah said that by His stripes we are healed. Think on that! They began to whip Him. With that leather and those lead balls, it cut into His skin, first just breaking the hide, and then on into the meat until the historians say that by the time they had given Him thirty-nine lashes, He had strips of flesh torn out of His back, hanging clear down over His hips. By the time they had finished whipping Him, His poor, weak body had fallen on the stone. Historians say that He lost a good part of His blood in that whipping from the blood vessels that were opened in His back.

Then the Roman soldiers saw a chance for a good joke. We read in Matthew 27:27-31 that the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall (He could hardly walk, beaten to a frazzle) and gathered unto Him a whole band of soldiers. They took that battered body of Jesus that had been whipped almost to death, stripped Him of His clothes again and put a scarlet robe on Him. They gathered thorns that were bundled and sold for starting a fire, unbundled the thorns, platted a crown, and put it on His head. They picked up an old stick, a reed, lying on the ground and put it in His hand for a scepter and bowed their knees before Him and mocked Him, saying "Hail, king of the Jews?" They spit upon Him and took

the reed and smote Him on the head.

I want you to get the picture. His body was beaten from head to foot. The thorns had pierced His brow and the blood was running from His head. His back was lacerated. His face was black and blue from being beaten with the fists and hands of the soldiers. He had been spit on. His face had been in the mud. If that robe was on Him for ten or fifteen minutes, it sealed itself to all those wounds, and just like tearing off a bandage unmercifully, they jerked that robe back off. It opened all the wounds and caused them to bleed more profusely than ever before.

History states that when they let Him loose, He fell, because His strength was gone; but they picked Him up and took Him outside. When they got outside, they told Him to pick up His Cross. According to history, they did not make the prisoner carry the whole cross, just the top crossbar, weighing from a hundred pounds to a hundred and twenty-five pounds, cut out of a green log. He could not even pick it up.

The Crucifixion

"And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots" (Matthew 27: 31-35).

I cannot, even in my mind, get the depth of the picture of this beaten, bleeding, sweaty man, with the shock of death on Him, walking that distance to Golgotha. When they reached Golgotha, the Scriptures say that they stripped him again of His raiment, all but a loincloth, and the crucifixion began.

Simon was ordered to lay the Cross down on the ground, and Jesus, with His back already lacerated, was thrown

backward on the Cross. I know the Bible says hand, but historians tell us that He was not nailed through the hands, because there is nothing in the hand whatsoever to keep the nails from pulling out. At that time, they considered the wrist as a part of the hand. The spikes were put through His wrists, where they would hold. His feet were pulled together, one on top of the other, and nailed right through the arch. After they had nailed Him fast to the Cross, those big men all got together and set that heavy Cross up and into a hole with a thud, letting his body come down and tearing His wrists and His feet.

As He hung there, the weight on His hands sent excruciating pains into His brain. As you know, when any part of the body suffers, a message goes to the brain. A terrible pain goes to the head when a foot suffers. When He put His weight on His feet, it would send pains. When He would try to release the weight off the feet, it would send pains. When He would try to release the weight off the feet, it would hang on His hands. He tried to shift the weight from one hand to another.

When people hung on the cross stretched with their weight on their hands, they could inhale, but stretched like that, they could not exhale, so they had to put some weight on their feet to release the muscles around the lungs so they could exhale. In order to breathe, they keep switching their weight from their hands to their feet.

As Jesus hung on the Cross, He uttered seven short sentences. In Luke 23:34, when He looked down from the Cross and saw those soldiers rolling dice for His garments, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." In Luke 23:39-43 we have a picture of one thief on the cross looking over and belittling Him, but the other thief recognized Him as the Son of God, and he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus turned sideways to him and said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." While He hung there, He looked down and saw His mother weeping. He said, "Woman, behold thy son," and He looked over to John and said, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:26-27). In other words, He was saying, "Take her home, John, and take good care of her. She is your mother

from here on out." The next thing that He spoke is found in Matthew 27:46, a fulfillment of Psalm 22:1, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting to find any relief, going up and down from His feet to His hands in order to breathe, and the great loss of blood caused Him to let go another cry. It is found in John 19:28, "I thirst." They gave Him vinegar on a sponge, but He would not take it. In John 19:30, Jesus now felt the chill of death coming over Him, and a tortured whisper came forth from His lips, "It is finished." A mission of atonement had been completed, and with one last surge against the nails to exhale and gain one more breath, He said (Luke 23:46), "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." And that was the end.

The Physical Cause of Christ's Death

It was necessary that they clean up for a Sabbath day. They must not leave anyone on a cross, because it was wrong to leave crucified men on the cross for a Sabbath day. You will read that they broke the legs of the two thieves, for they were still alive. When they broke the legs of the thieves, they could not raise up to exhale, and they suffocated in seconds. Psalm 34:20 states that not a bone of Christ's body would be broken. (See John 19:36.) If He had still been alive, His bones would have been broken just like the thieves, and there is a reason why His bones were not broken. When they came to Jesus, they did not need to break His legs because He was already dead. Therefore, He did not suffocate.

The Word of God, together with medical science, declares that Jesus did not die the usual death of crucifixion, death by suffocation, but He died from heart failure due to shock and constrictions of the heart. He died of a broken heart for you and me.

He Did It All for You

We have taken a glimpse of the height of evil that man can exhibit toward God and toward men. In Christ's suffering, we see a love that cannot be fathomed, a love that will not

quit. And He did it all for you and for me. We also see the suffering that sin caused.

It ought to awaken you, sinner friend, to what suffering lies ahead if you fail to take Jesus as your substitute. Beginning in Gethsemane, He started to suffer what a sinner will suffer in hell. He became sin for you. When He began to drink that cup in Gethsemane, even God was moved to send an angel. How are you going to take it in hell with no angel to come and help you? The rich man woke up in hell in torment, in agony just as Jesus went through.

Jesus took my place. I should have been beaten. I should have been spit on. I should have been slapped. I should have been whipped. I should have died without God. I should have gone to hell. That was the cup that was coming to me and coming to you, but He drank it.

The suffering of Christ was so great because it was the terrible torment of the judgment of sin that awaits every sinner. I want to emphasize that unless you take Jesus Christ as your substitute, you will face that suffering, and there will be no angel to come and strengthen you, and there will never be a time when you can say, as Jesus did, that it is finished. Your suffering will never be finished. Forever and forever and forever, throughout ceaseless eternity, you will suffer the torments of an eternal hell, without God. How glad we are to tell you that the price has been paid! You can be delivered!

Oh, what a price Christ paid for my redemption! That is why it is precious to me. That is why my experience is valuable to me. Jesus suffered! It helps me a whole lot when I have to do some suffering and the enemy makes me feel it is unbearable, if I can tune my mind in on what Christ suffered for me. He drank the dregs of that cup, but He left a very few drops in the bottom for you and me to partake of to show forth our love to God.

There Was a Fountain Opened

The legionnaire took his spear and rammed it between Christ's ribs in His side, and out flowed blood and water. The blood is for cleansing from all sin and uncleanness, and the water is the water of life, a type of the Spirit that brings new

life into every one that will believe in Him.

When that centurion rammed that spear into the side of Christ, little did he know what he was doing. He was just answering a fit of anger, but he was opening up a fountain in the house of God for sin and uncleanness (Zechariah 12:1).

William Cowper wrote quite a few songs when he was a Christian, but he was not always a Christian. He was an alcoholic and a gambler. He lived deep in sin, and he tried to kill himself more than once. Several times he tried to jump off a bridge and lost his nerve. He bought a revolver and held it to his head one whole evening and could not get the nerve to pull the trigger. God was being merciful to him. One evening, he fixed a glass of poison and had it there to drink, and the same God that had kept him from killing himself before, burdened the heart of a Christian who lived close to him to go and look him up. Late in the night, he found him still sitting in a chair with a glass of poison in front of him, trying to get up enough nerve to commit suicide, and the Christian told him about Jesus. William Cowper gave his heart to God, and three o'clock in the morning, before the sun ever came up, he penned these words:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, tho' vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more.*

