

The Sufferings of Christ

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"The Lord has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned" (Isaiah 50: 4).

In verses 2 and 3 He speaks plainly of His Godhead glory but in the verse quoted above it is the same blessed and powerful Person brought before us in a different condition. No longer in the conditions proper to His Godhead but rather in those of lowly Manhood. the glory of His Person thus introduces His humiliation. He took the place of the Learner — the Disciple. Why? "That I should know *how* to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

He took the Learner's place in order to acquaint Himself experimentally with that which his people were to pass through. He would experience, sympathetically, the trials of their way. They so often, because of their sinning, suffering under the chastisement of the governmental hand of God — He, their sinless Messiah, feeling for them acutely, as has been said by another, "He first bore in His spirit that which he removed by His power." "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63: 9). Read also Isaiah 53: 4, 5.

He suffered also so often at the hands of wicked men on account of who He is, with all His acute and holy sensibilities, even when they did not inflict actual physical suffering upon Him. The words of Proverbs 18: 14 may certainly be applied to Him. In this connection read Mark 3: 5. How could He be ought but a sufferer in this world gone far from God, and where sin was reigning unto death? This was not sympathetic suffering, for He felt the contumely with which He was treated. He was indeed, "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53: 3). He did suffer actual indignities at their hands and from their tongues — see Psalm 69: 7-9, 19, 20; and Isaiah 50: 6; Isaiah 52: 14.

He so obviously and often suffered for righteousness sake at the hands of His enemies; and apart from their repenting, this will bring deserved judgment upon them. But He also suffered for sin, sacrificially and judicially, at the hands of God and this only "on the tree." And this secures blessing for men as it has secured glory for God.

1. He suffered because of Who He is.

2. He suffered sympathetically with a suffering people — thus He learned *how* to succour them in their time of trouble.

3. He suffered for righteousness' sake at the hands of men.

4. He suffered for sin actually upon the cross. For there He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us.

We shall praise Him for evermore: and God has exalted Him to His own right hand. Shortly God shall display Him to the universe — just answer indeed to all His suffering here.