

## CHAPTER XIII.

### JESUS TASTING DEATH FOR EVERY MAN

*2.9. We behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour; that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man.*

**H**ERE we have the one great reason why it was meet that Jesus should be made a little lower than the angels. It was that He might taste death for every man. In the counsel of divine grace, and in the great plan of redemption, this was one of the first objects of the incarnation – the birth was for the sake of the death. Without that wonderful birth,– THE WORD, that was God, made flesh,– the death would not have profited us. Without that wonderful birth the death would have availed us little. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Let us beware of exalting the one at the expense of the other. The birth and the death are two inseparable parts of the one process by which He was perfected as the Firstborn from the dead, and became our Deliverer and King. The humanity and humiliation of Jesus was needful for His death for or on behalf of every man.

And what was the meaning of this death? And wherein lies its efficacy? In Scripture there is a twofold aspect in which

the death of Christ, as our Head, is set before us. The one is that *He died for sin*, bearing its curse, and suffering death as God's righteous judgment on account of it. His death opened up the way to God for us. It did for us what we cannot and need not do; it wrought out a finished salvation, which we have but to accept and repose upon. According to the other aspect, *He died to sin*. His death was a proof of His resistance to sin and its temptation, of His readiness rather to give up life than yield to sin; a proof that there is no way of being entirely free from the flesh and its connection with sin, but by yielding the old life to death, in order to receive afresh and direct from God a life entirely new. In this view His death was an act of infinite moral and spiritual value,— the consummation of the work God wrought when He perfected Him through suffering.

The former aspect, the death for sin on our behalf, has its value from the second, which reveals what constitutes its true nature and power. And, even so, the faith in the death for sin, must lead us into the death to sin. The one view is that of substitution: Christ doing what I cannot do. The other that of fellowship: Christ working in me what I see in Himself. The former is a finished work, and gives me boldness at once and for ever to trust God. The latter is the power of sanctification, as the death and the life of Christ work in me.

Both views are found in the Epistle in perfect harmony. See how clearly the former comes out in this chapter. It is **because of the suffering of death**, that He has been crowned with glory and honour. "He was made a little lower than the angels **that He might taste death for every man,**" might drink the cup of death, as the fruit of sin, for all. Some men die

without tasting the bitterness of death; Jesus tasted its bitterness, as the curse of sin, in full measure. Then we read, ver. 14, that He became man, **that through death He might bring to nought Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who were subject to bondage.** His death accomplished for us what we never could, what we now need not do. And ver. 17 tells us that His being made Man was that He might be a High Priest in things pertaining to God; *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* All these expressions – suffering death, tasting death for all, bringing to nought the devil, making reconciliation for the sins of the people – refer to the finished work which Christ wrought, the sure and everlasting foundation on which our faith and hope can rest.

In its subsequent teaching the Epistle will show us what the building is that rests on that foundation, what the heavenly power and life, the blessed nearness and service of God, to which the High Priest, our Forerunner and Leader, brings us in fellowship with Himself in the way He opened up. But it would have us begin here and strike the roots of our faith deep in the work which Christ, as our Substitute, wrought on Calvary. Let us study the words carefully, and remember them well, and believe them fully: Christ hath tasted death for all, and emptied the cup; Christ hath brought to nought the devil; Christ hath made reconciliation for sin. Death and the devil and sin: these have been put away, have been brought to nought. A complete deliverance has been effected. The sufferings and death of Christ have such an infinite worth and preciousness in God's sight that no soul, who is resolved to have nothing more to do with sin, need any longer fear, but may with boldness meet its God. The death of Christ

hath wrought with mighty power in heaven and earth and hell. It has satisfied, and delighted God; it has conquered death and sin and hell; it has redeemed and delivered mankind. Let that death live in thy heart; it will work there its mighty wonders too. And thou shalt find Jesus in thine heart, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour.

*1. The first Adam tasted the forbidden fruit, and won death for all. The Second Adam tasted this death, and brought life for all. To all who accept Him, the power, the indwelling, the energy of the life is no less true and real than that of sin and death has been. "We see Jesus for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour."*

*2. Jesus tasted the bitterness of thy sin and death, O my soul; that thou mightest taste the sweetness of His life and love. O taste and see that the Lord is good.*

*3. "By the grace of God taste death for every man." "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly, that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life."*