

THE MEANING OF THE CRUCIFIXION

(Apostle Arthur A. Oakman, 1956)

I've long believed that at root Latter Day Saintism is devoted to a Person. I don't believe it's basically conformity to an idea, or a formula, or a theory, or even an ideal. I think at root it's devotion to a Person.

It began with the words "Hear ye Him." And I believe that we shall be listening to Him throughout the countless ages of eternity. I think you'll agree with me that to know Jesus is to love Him. I remember my father some years ago talking to a group of ministry. He was not a man of many words, but he was a man of words that he chose very carefully. And upon this occasion he arose and addressed the assembled company of ministry and said, "Gentlemen, I've known Jesus quite a long time. He's never done anything but good to me, and I commend Him to you." My friends, there is no pursuit in which we can engage more profitable or significant than our endeavor to remember the Lord Jesus. And in this day when assorted commercialism seeks to detract/attract our attention to every conceivable theme that will patter to the appetites of the flesh, this question of remembering the Lord Jesus becomes a discipline. I'm happy tonight that we've come together to consider this Jesus and what He did for us.

I'm to talk to you about the meaning of the Crucifixion. I don't know whether I'm going to be able to say what I want to. I know I won't say it adequately, but I trust that what shall be presented shall have the vindication and testimony of the Spirit. As we've traveled to-and-fro upon the face of the earth we have seen companies of actors springing up doing what they call Passion plays here and there. And men have brought the gifts and talents that they have had and given the best they could to an interpretation of this most significant act ever performed upon the earth—the Passion and death of our Lord. But to one who has seen such things with the eyes of the Spirit, marvelous and beautiful as is such acting, it falls short of that which can be revealed by the Spirit.

It is natural for men to be self-centered. It is supernatural for them to be altruistic. Human nature as we know it does not have the power in itself to exhibit the selfless love which was manifest in Jesus Christ and was the keynote of His life—was, indeed, not only the keynote of His life—was the life-giving power itself to which He sought to give expression. Human nature as we know it has become corrupt and cannot inherit the Kingdom. If we are ever to substitute our righteousness for the righteousness of God it must be by supernatural means. I've said before and say again, we talk a lot about agency; we prize and treasure it, as we should. My dear friends, whatever agency has the power to do for us and in us, it does not have within itself the power to deliver us from ourselves. No man can lift himself off himself, the center. We are free, yes. We are free, for the origin of our actions is ourselves. But we are bound hand and foot because from ourselves there is no deliverance.

When creation rolled forth from the presence of God—in His own Being, it was—the words came from the bosom of eternity, "Let there be light." And there was light. The words accomplished the end to which they were sent. They were one with what they told of, and they brought into being the thing to which they were addressed. It was then that some sons of the morning shouted for joy. "And God," it is said by the poet, "beholding, saw The fair design, which from eternity His mind conceived"—He saw that

accomplished—“and, well pleased, His six days’ finished work most good pronounced.”¹ “Let there be light.” And there was light.

Now compare that with this scripture: “And He was parted from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt. And being in agony, He prayed the more earnestly; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.” God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Then in the meridian of time, “being in agony, He prayed the more earnestly.” Between these two quotations lies the difference for God in creating a world and changing the selfish heart of a stubborn man into a selfless heart. The divine utterance fulfills itself. “I, the Lord, utter My voice, and it shall be obeyed.” No particular obstacle there. But to convert our hearts from their natural, selfish bent, make them like His own, cost God agony; bloody sweat; and the death of the cross. “For I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer, if they would repent; which suffering caused Myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.”

My friends, tonight I bid you to come with me to Calvary in the power of the Spirit. It won’t be a pleasant sight. It’ll hurt you. But if you’re brave enough to stay, you’ll never be the same again. The center and the meaning of the universe, the center and the meaning of the universe rests in a Figure on a cross, so dreadful in His solitude and spiritual loneliness, so marvelous in His willing submission to those who killed Him and for whom in His agony He prayed, and so altogether glorious in His utter dependence upon His Father, who did not leave His soul in hell but delivered Him. Can the Church in this day bear the sight?

Recall the movements which led up to Calvary with me, will you? This I know to be true because in the Spirit one day I was there, at Caesarea Philippi. I saw the disciples—Peter. And in the imagination of my soul I heard Him say, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” They gave the conventional answers. Some of them were very superstitious. Herod believed that Jesus might have been John the Baptist or one of the prophets risen from the dead. But in His soul Jesus asked, “Has the mystery of My person—with which I laid deep in their souls on the morning that I created them—has the mystery of My person penetrated their sin?”

“Whom do ye say that I am?” No more significant question could be asked, and the answer to that question is fraught with tremendous importance. “Whom do ye say that I am?” And then St. Peter, his mind a kaleidoscope of his past experience, in one fleeting glimpse when all his experience was fused with divine light, with wonder in his voice and glory upon his face, said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said, “Blessed art thou, Simon; flesh and blood has not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven, And I say unto thee, thou art Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone.” Jesus was referring to the Urim and Thummim into which the Priest used to look once a year to find the revealed will of God. “Thou art Cephas, which is by interpretation, a seer, or a stone; and I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of God; and upon this rock”—the rock of humanity confessing the divine plane, the rock of the revealed knowledge of Jesus Christ—“upon this rock I will build My church.”

¹ “The Course of Time,” Book II, a poem by Robert Pollok

Do you know Jesus? I mean, or do you know something about Him, or do you know Him? I don't know very much about Him, but what little I do know has changed my whole life. And remember, the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ can only be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.

What a glorious morning! And then Jesus, content in His soul, begins to speak in a strange way. Here, the Mount of Transfiguration. Here, the great confession. And now, "the Son of Man must suffer as it has been written of Him." And Jesus puts in motion those forces and powers by which He presided over His own execution. Nobody stole Him away! Nobody tripped Him up! Everything that was done from that moment on was done under the presidency of the God of the universe; was ordered and fulfilled in Him.

You're not looking at a poor, unfortunate fellow who was innocently killed through misunderstanding. You're looking at God as He eternally is, submitting Himself to the sin of men and bearing it in His own body and burying it there! How else can we be delivered from sin? But we, what do we do? Every time a brother is overcome in a fault we must tell it. And every time anyone injures us, instead of bearing in our own soul that injury and believing in those who have injured us in spite of themselves, we must bear to them the same spirit they have borne to us. That's why Zion isn't redeemed. Why, bless your soul, we've got enough money; we've got enough men; and we've got enough land to build Zion today. But there is too much sin in the Church, and we haven't known our Lord Jesus Christ and the glory of His crucifixion! Zion will be built when this Church realizes that the instrument of love is sacrifice. Every time we want to raise money for something we have to have a pie social—

And so He begins. He tells His followers that there's going to be a triumphal procession, but it won't look like one. Notice how carefully He plans it. Have you wondered why? There was mystery: "You go into the city and meet a man that's leading a donkey. You go to a certain man who is in a certain place and tell him the Master hath need of this upper room." Why, if Judas had known, the first Lord's Supper would never have been inaugurated. I cannot begin to imagine what marvelous restraint—

We talk about intelligence. The most glorious thing that was ever done was exhibited in that week before Christ was killed! He said it won't look much like a triumphal procession; it will look like a bunch of condemned criminals leading their leader to the gallows. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up His cross." Jesus was in dead earnest. The Crucifixion wasn't something to be joked about. It was a dreadful figure.

And then, the upper room. You know this story, as well as I do. With very, very, very great care He plans the Last Supper. Judas was permitted to do what he did under the protecting glance of our Lord. "That thou doest," He said, "do quickly." Had Peter known what was in the heart of Judas when he left that chamber, he would have been killed then and there. That's why Jesus spoke in a parable. And Judas, misunderstanding—thinking perhaps that by forcing the issue and betraying his Lord he would bring the thing to a climax; with the best of intentions in the world, like we do, attempt[ing] to do the work of God. The treasury was low; they needed food; they had been traveling; they'd left their secular occupations. And even if the Lord was to be delivered, my friends, "if He was to be delivered into the hands of His enemies," says Judas to himself, "thirty pieces of silver will come in handy. After all, Jesus will be delivered anyway. Let the Scribes and Pharisees pay a little."

Then, then comes the most profound rebuke that was ever administered to a group of men—the ceremony of the washing of the feet. Here the Apostles had been fussing as to who was the greatest—who shall sit

here, who shall sit there? A great contention arose among them. As the shadow of the cross got deeper, and darker, and longer, the best they could do was to fuss as to who was to sit—one at the right hand and one at the left—precipitated by the innocent question of a good mother about her two sons. And I can imagine the Apostle Peter making his claim heard, telling his brethren, “If anybody should sit at the right hand of our Lord, I should. You men remember at Caesarea Philippi I was the one that voiced the revelation that He was the Son of God.” Yes. Jesus with His heart broken [said], “With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you. I have chosen these twelve that they might be with Me.” And now, in the hour when He most needed them, they were most lacking.

And so, after the supper He girded Himself with a towel, and He washed their feet. When He came to Peter: “You’re not going to wash my feet, Lord.” No rebuke. Jesus said to him, “Peter, unless I wash thy feet, thou hast no part with Me.” And then Peter, determined to be the outstanding of apostles, said, “Well, not only my feet but my hands and my face, too, Lord.” He was going to be first anyway. So human! Still no rebuke: “He that hath his feet washed by Me hath not need to have his hands and his face washed. Knowest thou what I have done to thee? I have performed the most menial ministry that is ever performed by one man when he’s a host to his friends.” (When the traveler came from the dusty roads of Palestine into the house of his friend, traveling as he did with sandals, his feet were tired and hot and dirty. And the lowest servant in the house met him at the front door, sat him down, kneeled down, loosed his sandals from his feet and washed them before he was presented to his friend.) “I say unto you,” He said, “among those born of women, there are none greater than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Jesus, our Lord, the least in the kingdom, making Himself of no account.

And after He had performed this ministry to them they [sang] a hymn, went out to the Mount of Olives, and there, swiftly, the drama was enacted. Jesus, I say, was not robbed of His life. He laid it down. Every step of that journey—from the hillside to the courts of Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from Pilate’s Hall up Via Dolorosa to Golgotha—every step of the way the God of Israel was presiding! “Thou couldst have no power over me at all,” He told Pilate, “except it was given thee from above.”

And then when He hung in His agony upon the cross— And, my friends, remember that that agony was not only the physical tearing of the nails in the flesh, which I doubt whether our Lord felt. It was the utter, awful, solemn loneliness, feeling Himself slipping away from the one thing that had stayed Him from the time He could remember His earthly life. He was beginning to taste spiritual death. For if men were to be won to His Father, who [men] had passed through the body and gone, how could they be taught except God Himself should pass through the body and go where they were?

Have any of you men ever tasted the utter, awful loneliness when you have been ministering in the Spirit and, for some reason or another, the Spirit has been withdrawn from you? You’re away from home, you’re not among friends; and for just a little moment you are left to yourself? There you have but just a taste, a glimpse of the agony. And what must it be when such moments are prolonged into days, into weeks, into months and into years! What must it be for men who have consciously sinned away their day of grace? What must it be for men who have wasted their heritage; who are conscious of the fact that they are separated from their God and conscious of the fact that that separation is just? Yet, even for these Christ died. There is no love to me like the love of Jesus we see.

Isn't it marvelous? Everything anybody said to Jesus that week—even when wicked men in their wrath reviled Him—everything that was said to Him was the Word of God, and they didn't know it! "He saveth others; Himself He cannot save." They mocked at Him, but the very words they spoke were an eternal truth. If He had saved Himself there would have been no salvation for anybody. And when Caiaphas said to his followers, "It is better that one man die than that a whole nation shall perish," he was uttering the Word of God. And when they taunted Him at the cross— And the Roman centurion—when he saw this man die, the foundations of the Roman Empire began to crumble in his soul; and he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God." Never had man lived like this! Never had man died like this!

And then at the last His concern about His mother. Fancy a man about to give up the ghost. He said to His most trusted friend, "Son, behold thy mother; Mother, behold thy son." And from that time, John took Mary into his home. I wish every son showed that concern for his mother.

And after that, what was left? "I thirst." And they offered Him myrrh and vinegar, which was a drug given to those who were dying to kill pain. And when He tasted, He refused it. Why? On no account would He yield Himself to any power that would rob Him of self-consciousness. He would at the last moment do the one supreme thing which the drug would have prevented Him doing: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." In His humiliation, His judgment taken away. Sure, all His life He had trusted in His Father. Now He couldn't understand it. "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" the cry of a Redeeming Humanity for a humanity not yet redeemed! And the Father stood by with averted face and permitted that thing to happen in His own Being. (Somebody said, "Whoever suffered most—the Father, or the Son—in the Crucifixion?" People that ask that question don't know very much about love, do they?) And the Father stood by with averted face and permitted that thing to happen because the Son willed it so, and because the Father willed it so. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish; but have everlasting life."

What does it mean? I don't know if I can answer that question. I'm beginning to see some answers for myself. I pass them on to you for what they're worth. If it doesn't commend itself to you, don't accept it. But the meaning of the Crucifixion rests, first of all, in the fact that God is Creator. Who creates the mind of a scientist—of an Einstein, or a Shute, or an Eddington, or a Faraday? Who creates that mind? You know the answer—God, the Creator. For when men of science—and Hear me; this is not my saying; it comes from one of the greatest scientists of all time, Sir Thomas Huxley—when men of science sit down before the facts of the universe as a little child, God blesses them. And any glory that man achieves is borrowed under the blessing of the Almighty, both to achieve and to will, and to accept and to use that which He has offered them.

Last night, Apostle Gleazer talked to us about the liberation of power. Every atomic or hydrogen bomb that is detonated exhibits the power of God. Every desolation in the midst of the earth—great, gaping scars in fair cities of ancient renown—have been made there in harmony with the prophecy: "Behold what desolations the Lord makes in the midst of the land." Men take the riches of God, the intelligence of heaven; and as they are obedient to the laws governing the reception and use of such intelligence, God is bound.

And beauty; what shall we say of beauty? In this field my education is limited to music. But I know, somehow or the other, that every sweet concourse of sound—which is a reflection of the human struggle

for existence, which ends in peace after the dissonances—somehow is related to the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every great work of art has come forth from twisted, tortured souls and bodies who have been men big enough to take and use their limitations for the glory of God!

Art. Why do men paint beautiful pictures? Why do they build a Parthenon and a Delphic charioteum? Why do they make marble look like a symphony sounds? Why do the poets take the words soiled with human intercourse and under some great spell and magical touch make it tell the truth? Section twenty-eight says, in the Book of Covenants, that there are certain people that never will be saved. Just about like that, but Robert Browning said there are some that go to “some sad, sequestered state Where God unmakes but to remake the soul else first He made in vain: which must not be.”² Or read some of the Shakespearean sonnets. Can you imagine a Zion without the music of the spheres, without the arts, without the sciences? I cannot But yet, all these things are made possible because God Himself is intelligence. And His glory is intelligence because God Himself is a God of beauty.

But the one thing sinners need to do, God has never done. Do you know what that is? Go against their own will! All of us are sinners. We are sinners, not because we do wrong things; we are sinners because we put ourselves on the throne of God in ourselves! We have plans for ourselves which we have carved out of our imagination, and then we take and use all the gifts of God to us to get our own way. Now you and I and everybody else in this world is either now committing that sin, or we are about to commit it, or we’re repenting from it. And the one [place] where we need God’s help most, He has never walked. Did you ever hear of God going against His own will?

There are people who say, you know, “Jesus came here to be an example.” But that’s sheer nonsense and rubbish! What good is an example to me that was lived two thousand years ago, eight thousand miles away under different social and economic conditions? An example only has power as it is lived in contemporary situations. Some people say Jesus Christ was simply a great moral teacher. Rubbish! People haven’t listened to Socrates and Plato and Confucius. Why would they listen to Jesus?

Why did Christ come in the first place? Jesus Christ came here for one purpose and one purpose alone—and that was to die for us! The death of Christ isn’t something that happened to Him in the course of preaching the gospel. The death of Christ is the gospel! “I deliver to you brethren that which I have also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” “The Son of Man must suffer as it is written of Him.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” And when they came to Him and said, “We would see Jesus,” He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall to the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bringeth forth fruit.” Jesus was the seed of the Kingdom of God, which fell out of the bin of humanity into the soil of the human soul, and there it died. And had it not died, there would have been no Kingdom of God.

There are some people who do not believe in the physical resurrection of our Lord. They say it was mass psychology. Why, then, did Christ have the two thousand souls come and put their hands into the wounds in His body? Simply to add to their sense of sight and hearing, the sense of touch. And you know what happened after that experience—there were two hundred years of Zionite conditions. They knew! For, my friends, Zionite conditions are based upon the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the primary gift of the Spirit. And these who say that the resurrection of our Lord was mass psychology have no sure

² The Ring and the Book, “The Pope”, a poem by Robert Browning.

hold on the destiny of the physical universe. For I testify to you, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, tonight—and it's seldom that I use that term—that every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is anti-Christ!

He had a body just like we have. It was nourished by the processes of the earth just as ours is. He hungered; He thirsted; He was weary; He was happy just as we are. He earned His living as a carpenter just as we earn our living. And into His mind, also, was crowded the inheritance from the past. He partook of our nature physically, morally, mentally, and spiritually. And when I say “morally,” don't misunderstand me, make me an offender for a word. I mean it in the sense that morally, truly, He partook of our sins in sympathetic understanding. And, my friends, this physical body to which I have reference was so wrought upon by the glory and the majesty of that Life that the cells of that body were transformed! And the body of the Christ could have laid in the tomb from that day to this and never would have decomposed. “Thou didst not suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.” And that body was taken by our Lord Jesus Christ and translated into heavenly places. And, my friends, in the experience of God there is a human life.

Now if God became man, then He could subject the flesh to the Spirit. Daily, He could have the experience of not doing what He wanted to do, but doing what His Father wanted Him to do. The Crucifixion of our Lord was a logical, inevitable climax of a life lived perfectly, freely, in subservience to the love of His Father. And love is the only power known in the universe by which a man can retain his agency and do the will of God. If any of you men have ever been in love with a young lady—and I presume you have—you have known something of the delight that comes when you freely and willingly do what the loved one requests, even though it's what you don't want to do. (Of course, we do that when we're first married. We soon lose the knack, unfortunately. But we never need to lose the knack! We can stay in love with our wives, and that love can increase and increase and increase until it is sanctified in the power of the Spirit. But that's another sermon.)

Love is the only power known by which a man can remain fully free and surrender his own will. And in Jesus Christ, our Lord, our human life—yours and mine—was subjected to the will of the Father. And forever in the midst of the universe there is a record, a testimony of His love. And just as we partake of His intelligence or glory as we analyze the physical world; just as we reflect His beauty in line, in color, in song and in those things which have come to our hands by the power of the Spirit to do in the field of beauty; just as we partake of the experience and the nature of God in these things, so we can share in His death. That's why Christ died. He died that there might be a death in which we could share.

Listen. Any of you Latter Day Saints know that your Christian experience began when you determined to have done with your own way and accept the way of God. You know that. At the beginning of every Christian life there is an act of self-abnegation, and it is impossible to experience the Christian life without it. It is not merely that God requires us to do certain things He wants. It's simply the inevitable way of going back to Him. There is no other way back to God except through a surrender of the self.

You know, there are some pusillanimous philosophers who say that humanity needs education and enlightenment. “All we need is for the process of evolution to continue a little longer, and eventually, there will evolve a super man.” What utter rubbish! Men are not uneducated, imperfect creatures that need

education and enlightenment. Men are rebels! They need to lay down their arms and surrender themselves to God.

We are in rebellion against the order of the universe, and that is a terrible thing. The gospel is not the gospel of Jesus Christ because it promises forgiveness to those who repent. It's the Gospel of Jesus Christ because it promises repentance to those that sin! And when you're repentant, you're living the life of God. That's why Christ died. We share in His humanity, and that goodness has infected the whole human race.

From the time that Jesus expired upon the cross, God has governed the universe from the cross. Ladies and gentlemen, the cross of Jesus isn't a reflection of the glory of God. It is the glory of God! There is no other glory than that. When you're living the life of sacrifice, you're living the life of God. You don't sacrifice that you can get some petty reward. The ability to sacrifice is the reward and the only reward God had to offer to anybody! Why can't we see it? Listen. It isn't easy. Christianity claims to be telling about another world. Geology, Paleontology—any other science you care to mention—isn't easy. Why would you expect Christianity to be?

The Russian writer, Dostoyevsky, has invented a fable about Christ who returned to the world in the Middle Ages in Spain, during the Inquisition. As He was here when He first came, He went about doing good. He healed the sick, spread joy in the place of care and sorrow. And then one day on a cathedral square in front of the cathedral He met a funeral procession. (This is a fable.) He stopped the funeral procession and restored the boy to his widowed mother. Just at that moment the cathedral doors opened and the Grand Inquisitor, ninety years old, came out and saw what was done. He wasn't clad in the great imperial robes of the Cardinal as he was the day before when he had condemned a number of heretics to be burned, but he was clothed in a plain cassock. He had two guards with him; and when he saw what was done, he said to the guards, "Arrest him." And Jesus was taken and thrown into a dungeon.

That night the old man visited Jesus, and Jesus was silent to all he said. "I know why You've come," said the Inquisitor. "Thou art come to repeat Thy great mistakes in the wilderness and to spoil our work. What did the Great and Wise Spirit offer Thee in the wilderness?" he said to Jesus. "Just three things by which men can be controlled—bread, authority, and mystery. He bade Thee make the stones bread, for men will follow one who can spread a feast of fat things. Men will be obedient to those who promise peace and plenty. But," the Grand Inquisitor said to Jesus, "Thou wouldst not. Men were to follow Thee out of love and devotion, or not at all. We have had to correct Thy work, or there would now be none to follow Thee."

"The Great and Wise Spirit bade Thee assume authority; and men will obey those who reward the obedient and punish the disobedient. But Thou wouldst not. Men were to obey Thee out of love and devotion, or not at all. We have had to correct Thy mistake, or there would have been none to follow Thee.

"He bade Thee show some marvel: 'Throw Thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee.' He bade Thee show a mystery. Men will believe those who are wrapped in mystery. They will follow the marvelous and the erotic, the eccentric. But Thou wouldst not. Men were to believe Thee and serve Thee out of love and devotion, or not at all. We have had to correct work in this, also, or today there would still be none to follow Thee. And now Thou art come to repeat Thy great mistake and spoil our work. But it shall not be, for tomorrow I will burn Thee!"

The Inquisitor ceased and waited, but no reply came. Instead, the Divine Prisoner crossed the cell and kissed the old man on the lips. The doors of the dungeon opened. “Go!” said the Inquisitor! So Jesus passed out into the night and vanished. And the old man? Like fire, the divine kiss burned in his heart. But he didn’t alter his ways nor change his opinion.

My friends, tonight the divine fire has burned in our hearts. Are we going to change our ways, or alter our opinions? Is the fable entirely fabulous? Can we not refuse the appeal of love? How can Jesus Christ have a righteous man without the man’s consent? And how can the devil have a man except he first destroys everything that makes him a man? There’s the dilemma; and upon the horns of that dilemma, Jesus went to Calvary.

How shall we respond to the appeal of love? Tonight, in the midst of history, in the hearts of those who have the courage to ask, there stands an awful Figure, a Figure awful in spiritual loneliness and solitude, marvelous in His submission to those who killed Him, and yet praying for them the while; and altogether glorious in His utter dependence upon His Father. My friends, if ever Zion is to be built it will be by the principles of the glory of God revealed on Calvary!

We are sinners. Christ did die for us. And that means He died for me, and He died for you, you, you, and you. And the love of God is such that while there is yet one soul away from Him, He would willingly subject any one of us to the death of our cross in order that that one might be won back. We talk about celestial glory; we realize what it is. If you want to know what celestial glory is, go to Calvary, for there it is.

May the Church arise in the strength of humility, in the glory of sacrifice, in the beauty of holiness. And as She does, remembering the Lord Jesus Christ, the promise is: “If ye always remember Me, ye shall always have My Spirit to be with you.” If we have not His Spirit to be with us always, we know the reason why. It is because we forget our Lord. Yea, in the midst of history, for all time, equidistant from each end of the course of time—in the center or meridian of time—there is a testimony that God Himself came down among the children of men and demonstrated the Kingdom of God in its individual mode. His teaching, His life, His works, were all germane to, and led up to, and found fulfillment in the cross. Yea, may God bless us.

Shall we offer a word of prayer, every head bowed, every eye closed, please?

We have come tonight, O Lord, by the power of Thy Spirit again, in the imagination of our hearts under the impulse of Thy Spirit to the place where Thou wouldst have us come and learn of Thee. We cannot think, here, that our sins do not matter to Thee. For when we insist upon our own way, the better self, which is in Jesus, dies. But when we remember Thee and in Thy power put ourselves upon the cross, then do the angels of heaven rejoice in Thy glory once more manifest.

O God, give Thy people the blessing of the spirit of sacrifice. Let there be no fulsome praise of men. Let there be no congratulations on men’s achievement here tonight, O God, but the solemn, silent recognition that in the utter stillness of eternity, Thou still doth whisper from the blistered lips of the Altogether Lovely One, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you the intelligence of heaven, and ye shall find rest to your souls.” Bless the Church in this hour, O God, we pray, with the spirit of Calvary, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.