Mark - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

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Mark 15:34

For myself—I speak as a man—I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!" Never until I understood that He who knew no sin had (then and there on the cross) been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that—His sorrow under the wrath of God—not being understood, that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The question of sin and of guilt have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe and been laid in a manger of an inn! The contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him, is a contrast! God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke 2:8-14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was not in the cradle but on the Cross.

The flight into Egypt, the return and settling at Nazareth of the Child, the Youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem, the hidden retirement of His early manhood—all is beautiful, each in its place, but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him (when He voluntarily identified

Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministry all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, heaven too could give its avowals of approval to Him. Yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast! and who ever felt it as He felt it, between Himself as the seed of the woman, and the race of man to whom He had come. What a contrast between Himself personally and individually, and the House of Israel, His own, among whom He had come. Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that holy thing that was born of the virgin—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, apart from sin—and yet voluntarily amid sinful men and guilty Israel, the immaculate seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness which He endured, and the consciousness that there was none that could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the messenger—sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man, but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism, nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him, was there (any more than anywhere else) that which there was when He cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Here too He was perfect; forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God. Never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there when His obedience was at the goal—"Obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." But if heaven found its delight in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others (for it was the revelation of God as the Savior God) there was, there could be (just because it was forsaking for sin, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval, nothing but forsaking. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learned somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary, learned that then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord in obedient submission to God—cup of wrath due to us only, undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to when in conscience the question is about sin or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, etc.), is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"

He bore my judgment in my stead then and there in His own body on the tree, in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete—but there alone.

The experience of His soul when He said, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was altogether peculiar and distinct from that which He had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His, as forsaken, I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.