

The 1858 Great Controversy Chapters 7-9.

Chapter 7. The Betrayal of Christ.

I was then carried down to the time when Jesus ate the Passover supper with his disciples. Satan had deceived Judas, and led him to think he was one of Christ's true disciples; but his heart had ever been carnal. He had seen the mighty works of Jesus, he had been with him through his ministry, and yielded to the overpowering evidences that he was the Messiah; but he was close and covetous. He loved money. He complained in anger of the costly ointment poured upon Jesus. Mary loved her Lord. He had forgiven her sins which were many, and had raised from the dead her much loved brother, and she felt that nothing was too dear to bestow upon Jesus. The more costly and precious the ointment, the better could Mary express her gratitude to her Saviour, by devoting it to him. Judas, as an excuse for his covetousness, said that the ointment might have been sold and given to the poor. But it was not because he had any care for the poor; for he was selfish, and often appropriated to his own use that which was entrusted to his care to be given to the poor. Judas had not been attentive to the comforts and wants of Jesus, and to excuse his covetousness, he often referred to the poor. And this act of generosity on the part of Mary was a most cutting rebuke of his covetous disposition.

The way was prepared for the temptation of Satan to find a ready reception in Judas' heart. The Jews hated Jesus; but multitudes thronged him to listen to his words of wisdom, and to witness his mighty works. This drew the attention of the people from the chief priests and elders, for the people were stirred with the deepest interest, and anxiously followed Jesus, and listened to the instructions of this wonderful teacher. Many of the chief rulers believed on Jesus, but were afraid to confess it, fearing they would be put out of the synagogue. The priests and elders decided that something must be done to draw the attention of the people from Jesus. They feared that all men would believe on him. They could see no safety for themselves. They must lose their position, or put Jesus to death. And after they should put him to death, there were still those who were living monuments of his power. Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. And they feared that if they should kill Jesus, Lazarus would testify of his mighty power. The people were flocking to see him who was raised from the dead, and the rulers determined to slay Lazarus also, and put down the excitement. Then they would turn the people to the traditions and doctrines of men, to tithe mint and rue, and again have influence over them. They agreed to take Jesus when he was alone; for if they should attempt to take him in a crowd, when the minds of the people were all interested in him, they would be stoned.

Judas knew how anxious they were to obtain Jesus, and offered to betray him to the chief priests and elders for a few pieces of silver. His love of money led him to agree to betray his Lord into the hands of his bitterest enemies. Satan was working directly through Judas, and in the midst of the impressive scene of the last supper, he was contriving plans to betray Jesus. Jesus sorrowfully told his disciples that all of them would be offended because of him, that night. But Peter ardently affirmed that although all should be offended because of him, he would not. Jesus said to Peter, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee; that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

I then viewed Jesus in the garden with his disciples. In deep sorrow he bade them watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation. Jesus knew that their faith was to be tried, and their hopes disappointed, and that they would need all the strength they could obtain by close watching and

fervent prayer. With strong cries and weeping, Jesus prayed, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. The Son of God prayed in agony. Large drops of sweat like blood came out of his face, and fell upon the ground. Angels were hovering over the place, witnessing the scene, while only one was commissioned to go and strengthen the Son of God in his agony. The angels in heaven cast their crowns and harps from them, and with the deepest interest silently watched Jesus. There was no joy in heaven. They wished to surround the Son of God, but the commanding angels suffered them not, lest, as they should behold his betrayal, they would deliver him; for the plan was laid out, and it must be fulfilled.

After Jesus had prayed, he came to see his disciples. They were sleeping. He had not the comfort and prayers of even his disciples in that dreadful hour. Peter who was so zealous a little before, was heavy with sleep. Jesus reminded him of his positive declarations, and said unto him, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Three times the Son of God prayed in agony, when Judas, with his band of men, was at hand. He met Jesus as usual to salute him. The band surrounded Jesus; but there he manifested his divine power, as he said, Whom seek ye? I am he. They fell backward to the ground. Jesus made this inquiry that they might witness his power, and have evidence that he could deliver himself from their hands if he would.

The disciples began to hope as they saw the multitude with their staves and swords fall so quickly. As they arose and again surrounded the Son of God, Peter drew the sword and cut off an ear. Jesus bid him put up the sword, and said unto him, Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? I saw that as these words were spoken, the countenances of the angels were animated. They wished then, and there, to surround their commander, and disperse that angry mob. But again sadness settled upon them as Jesus added, But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? The hearts of the disciples sunk again in despair and bitter disappointment, as Jesus suffered them to lead him away.

The disciples were afraid of their own lives, and fled one this way, and the other that, and Jesus was left alone. O what triumph of Satan then! And what sadness and sorrow with the angels of God! Many companies of holy angels, with each a tall commanding angel at their head, were sent to witness the scene. They were to record every act, every insult and cruelty imposed upon the Son of God, and to register every pang of anguish which Jesus should suffer; for the very men should see it all again in living characters.

Chapter 8. The Trial of Christ.

The angels as they left heaven, in sadness laid off their glittering crowns. They could not wear them while their commander was suffering, and was to wear a crown of thorns. Satan and his angels were busy in that judgment hall to destroy humanity and sympathy. The very atmosphere was heavy and polluted by their influence. The chief priests and elders were inspired by them to abuse and insult Jesus, in a manner the most difficult for human nature to bear. Satan hoped that such insult and sufferings would call forth from the Son of God some complaint or murmur; or that he would manifest his divine power, and wrench himself from the grasp of the multitude, and thus the plan of salvation at last fail.

Peter followed his Lord after his betrayal. He was anxious to see what would be done with Jesus. And when he was accused of being one of his disciples, he denied it. He was afraid of his life, and when charged with being one of them, he declared that he knew not the man. The disciples were noted for the purity of their words, and Peter, to deceive, and convince them that he was not one of Christ's

disciples, denied it the third time with cursing and swearing. Jesus, who was some distance from Peter, turned a sorrowful, reproving gaze upon him. Then he remembered the words which Jesus had spoken to him in the upper chamber, and also his zealous assertion, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. He denied his Lord, even with cursing and swearing; but that look of Jesus melted Peter at once, and saved him. He bitterly wept and repented of his great sin, and was converted, and then was prepared to strengthen his brethren.

The multitude were clamorous for the blood of Jesus. They cruelly scourged him, and put an old purple, kingly robe upon him, and bound his sacred head with a crown of thorns. They put a reed in his hand, and mockingly bowed to him, and saluted him with, Hail king of the Jews! They then took the reed from his hand, and smote him with it upon the head, causing the thorns to penetrate his temples, sending the trickling blood down his face and beard.

It was difficult for the angels to endure the sight. They would have delivered Jesus out of their hands; but the commanding angels forbade them, and said that it was a great ransom that was to be paid for man; but it would be complete, and would cause the death of him who had the power of death. Jesus knew that angels were witnessing the scene of his humiliation. I saw that the feeblest angel could have caused that multitude to fall powerless, and delivered Jesus. He knew that if he should desire it of his Father, angels would instantly release him. But it was necessary that Jesus should suffer many things of wicked men, in order to carry out the plan of salvation.

There stood Jesus, meek and humble before the infuriated multitude, while they offered him the meanest abuse. They spit in his face--that face which they will one day desire to be hid from, which will give light to the city of God, and shine brighter than the sun--but not an angry look did he cast upon the offenders. He meekly raised his hand, and wiped it off. They covered his head with an old garment; blindfolded him, and then struck him in the face, and cried out, Prophecy unto us who it was that smote thee. There was commotion among the angels. They would have rescued him instantly; but their commanding angel restrained them.

The disciples had gained confidence to enter where Jesus was, and witness his trial. They expected that he would manifest his divine power, and deliver himself from the hands of his enemies, and punish them for their cruelty towards him. Their hopes would rise and fall as the different scenes transpired. Sometimes they doubted, and feared they had been deceived. But the voice heard at the mount of transfiguration, and the glory they there witnessed, strengthened them that he was the Son of God. They called to mind the exciting scenes which they had witnessed, the miracles they had seen Jesus do in healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the deaf ears, rebuking and casting out devils, raising the dead to life, and even rebuking the wind, and it obeyed him. They could not believe that he would die. They hoped he would yet rise in power, and with his commanding voice disperse that blood-thirsty multitude, as when he entered the temple and drove out those who were making the house of God a place of merchandise; when they fled before him, as though a company of armed soldiers were pursuing them. The disciples hoped that Jesus would manifest his power, and convince all that he was the King of Israel.

Judas was filled with bitter remorse and shame at his treacherous act in betraying Jesus. And when he witnessed the abuse he suffered, he was overcome. He had loved Jesus, but loved money more. He did not think that Jesus would suffer himself to be taken by the mob which he had led on. He thought that Jesus would work a miracle, and deliver himself from them. But when he saw the infuriated multitude in the judgment hall, thirsting for his blood, he deeply felt his guilt, and while many were vehemently accusing Jesus, Judas rushed through the multitude, confessing that he had sinned in betraying

innocent blood. He offered them the money, and begged of them to release Jesus, declaring that he was entirely innocent. Vexation and confusion kept the priests for a short time silent. They did not wish the people to know that they had hired one of Jesus' professed followers to betray him into their hands. Their hunting Jesus like a thief and taking him secretly, they wished to hide. But the confession of Judas, his haggard and guilty appearance, exposed the priests before the multitude, showing that it was hatred that had caused them to take Jesus. As Judas loudly declared Jesus to be innocent, the priests replied, What is that to us? See thou to that. They had Jesus in their power, and they were determined to make sure of him. Judas, overwhelmed with anguish, threw the money that he now despised at the feet of those who had hired him, and in anguish and horror at his crime, went and hung himself.

Jesus had many sympathizers in that company, and his answering nothing to the many questions put to him amazed the throng. To all the insults and mockery not a frown, not a troubled expression was upon his features. He was dignified and composed. He was of perfect and noble form. The spectators looked upon him with wonder. They compared his perfect form, his firm, dignified bearing, with those who sat in judgment against him, and said to one another that he appeared more like a king to be entrusted with a kingdom than any of the rulers. He bore no marks of being a criminal. His eye was mild, clear and undaunted, his forehead broad and high. Every feature was strongly marked with benevolence and noble principle. His patience and forbearance were so unlike man, that many trembled. Even Herod and Pilate were greatly troubled at his noble, God-like bearing.

Pilate from the first was convicted that he was no common man, but an excellent character. He believed him to be entirely innocent. The angels who were witnessing the whole scene noticed the convictions of Pilate, and marked his sympathy and compassion for Jesus; and to save him from engaging in the awful act of delivering Jesus to be crucified, an angel was sent to Pilate's wife, and gave her information through a dream that it was the Son of God in whose trial Pilate was engaged, and that he was an innocent sufferer. She immediately sent word to Pilate that she had suffered many things in a dream on account of Jesus, and warned him to have nothing to do with that holy man. The messenger bearing the communication pressed hastily through the crowd, and handed it to Pilate. As he read it he trembled and turned pale. He at once thought he would have nothing to do in the matter; that if they would have the blood of Jesus he would not give his influence to it, but would labor to deliver him.

When Pilate heard that Herod was at Jerusalem, he was glad, and hoped to free himself from the disagreeable matter altogether, and have nothing to do in condemning Jesus. He sent him, with his accusers, to Herod. Herod was hardened. His murdering John left a stain upon his conscience which he could not free himself from, and when he heard of Jesus, and the mighty works done by him, he thought it was John risen from the dead. He feared and trembled, for he bore a guilty conscience. Jesus was placed in Herod's hands by Pilate. Herod considered this act an acknowledgment from Pilate of his power, authority and judgment. They had previously been enemies, but then they were made friends. Herod was glad to see Jesus, for he expected that he would work some mighty miracle for his satisfaction. But it was not the work of Jesus to gratify his curiosity. His divine and miraculous power was to be exercised for the salvation of others, but not in his own behalf.

Jesus answered nothing to the many questions put to him by Herod; neither did he regard his enemies who were vehemently accusing him. Herod was enraged because Jesus did not appear to fear his power, and with his men of war, derided, mocked and abused the Son of God.. Herod was astonished at the noble, God-like appearance of Jesus, when shamefully abused, and feared to condemn him, and

he sent him again to Pilate.

Satan and his angels were tempting Pilate, and trying to lead him on to his own ruin. They suggested to him that if he did not take any part in condemning Jesus, others would; the multitude were thirsting for his blood; and if he did not deliver Jesus to be crucified, he would lose his power and worldly honor, and would be denounced as a believer on the impostor, as they termed him. Pilate, through fear of losing his power and authority, consented to the death of Jesus. And notwithstanding he placed the blood of Jesus upon his accusers, and the multitude received it, crying, His blood be on us and on our children, yet Pilate was not clear; he was guilty of the blood of Christ. For his own selfish interest, and love of honor from the great men of earth, he delivered an innocent man to die. If Pilate had followed his conviction, he would have had nothing to do with condemning Jesus.

The trial and condemnation of Jesus were working on the minds of many; and impressions were being made which were to appear after his resurrection; and many were to be added to the Church whose experience and conviction should be dated from the time of Jesus' trial.

Satan's rage was great as he saw that all the cruelty which he had led the chief priests to inflict on Jesus had not called forth from him the least murmur. I saw that, although Jesus had taken man's nature, a power and fortitude that was God-like sustained him, and he did not depart from the will of his Father in the least.

Chapter 9. The Crucifixion of Christ.

The Son of God was delivered to the people to be crucified. They led the dear Saviour away. He was weak and feeble through pain and suffering, caused by the scourging and blows which he had received, yet they laid on him the heavy cross upon which they were soon to nail him. But Jesus fainted beneath the burden. Three times they laid on him the heavy cross, and three times he fainted. They then seized one of his followers, a man who had not openly professed faith in Christ, yet believed on him. They laid on him the cross, and he bore it to the fatal spot. Companies of angels were marshaled in the air above the place. A number of his disciples followed him to Calvary in sorrow, and with bitter weeping. They called to mind Jesus' riding triumphantly into Jerusalem, and they following him, crying, Hosanna in the highest! and strewing their garments in the way, and the beautiful palm branches. They thought that he was then to take the kingdom and reign a temporal prince over Israel. How changed the scene! How blighted their prospects! They followed Jesus; not with rejoicing; not with bounding hearts and cheerful hopes; but with hearts stricken with fear and despair they slowly, sadly followed him who had been disgraced and humbled, and who was about to die.

The mother of Jesus was there. Her heart was pierced with anguish, such as none but a fond mother can feel. Her stricken heart still hoped, with the disciples, that her Son would work some mighty miracle, and deliver himself from his murderers. She could not endure the thought that he would suffer himself to be crucified. But the preparations were made, and they laid Jesus upon the cross. The hammer and the nails were brought. The heart of his disciples fainted within them. The mother of Jesus was agonized, almost beyond endurance, and as they stretched Jesus upon the cross, and were about to fasten his hands with the cruel nails to the wooden arms, the disciples bore the mother of Jesus from the scene, that she might not hear the crashing of the nails, as they were driven through the bone and muscle of his tender hands and feet. Jesus murmured not; but groaned in agony. His face was pale, and large drops of sweat stood upon his brow. Satan exulted in the sufferings which the Son of God was passing through, yet feared that his kingdom was lost, and that he must die.

They raised the cross after they had nailed Jesus to it, and with great force thrust it into the place prepared for it in the ground, tearing the flesh, and causing the most intense suffering. They made his death as shameful as possible. With him they crucified two thieves, one on either side of Jesus. The thieves were taken by force, and after much resistance on their part, their arms were thrust back and nailed to their crosses. But Jesus meekly submitted. He needed no one to force his arms back upon the cross. While the thieves were cursing their executioners, Jesus in agony prayed for his enemies, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. It was not merely agony of body which Jesus endured, but the sins of the whole world were upon him.

As Jesus hung upon the cross, some who passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, as though bowing to a king, and said to him, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. The Devil used the same words to Christ in the wilderness, If thou be the Son of God. The chief priests and elders and scribes mockingly said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. The angels who hovered over the scene of Christ's crucifixion were moved to indignation as the rulers derided him, and said, If he be the Son of God let him deliver himself. They wished there to come to the rescue of Jesus, and deliver him; but they were not suffered to do so. The object of his mission was almost accomplished. As Jesus hung upon the cross those dreadful hours of agony, he did not forget his mother. She could not remain away from the suffering scene. Jesus' last lesson was one of compassion and humanity. He looked upon his mother, whose heart was well nigh bursting with grief, and then upon his beloved disciple John. He said to his mother, Woman, behold thy Son. Then said he to John, Behold thy mother. And from that hour John took her to his own house.

Jesus thirsted in his agony; but they heaped upon him additional insult, by giving him vinegar and gall to drink. The angels had viewed the horrid scene of the crucifixion of their loved commander, until they could behold no longer; and veiled their faces from the sight. The sun refused to look upon the dreadful scene. Jesus cried with a loud voice, which struck terror to the hearts of his murderers, It is finished. Then the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks rent. Great darkness was upon the face of the earth. The last hope of the disciples seemed swept away as Jesus died. Many of his followers witnessed the scene of his sufferings and death, and their cup of sorrow was full.

Satan did not then exult as he had done. He had hoped that he could break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by Jesus' death, he knew that he must finally die, and his kingdom be taken away and given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they must increase their efforts, and with their cunning and power turn to Jesus' followers. They must prevent all they could from receiving salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus all he could. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and overcome, at last will be rolled back upon the originator of sin, the Devil, and he will have to bear their sins, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will bear their own sins.

Jesus' life was without worldly grandeur, or extravagant show. His humble, self-denying life was a great contrast to the lives of the priests and elders, who loved ease and worldly honor, and the strict and holy life of Jesus was a continual reproof to them, on account of their sins. They despised him for his humbleness, holiness and purity. But those who despised him here, will one day see him in the grandeur of heaven, and the unsurpassed glory of his Father. He was surrounded with enemies in the judgment hall, who were thirsting for his blood; but those hardened ones who cried out, His blood be

on us and on our children, will behold him an honored King. All the heavenly host will escort him on his way with songs of victory, majesty and might, to him that was slain, yet lives again a mighty conqueror.

Poor, weak, miserable man spit in the face of the King of glory, while a shout of brutal triumph arose from the mob at the degrading insult. They marred that face with blows and cruelty which filled all heaven with admiration. They will behold that face again, bright as the noon-day sun, and will seek to flee from before it. Instead of that shout of brutal triumph, in terror they will wail because of him. Jesus will present his hands with the marks of his crucifixion. The marks of this cruelty he will ever bear. Every print of the nails will tell the story of man's wonderful redemption, and the dear price that purchased it. The very men who thrust the spear into the side of the Lord of life, will behold the print of the spear, and will lament with deep anguish the part they acted in marring his body. His murderers were greatly annoyed by the superscription, The King of the Jews, placed upon the cross above his head. But then they will be obliged to see him in all his glory and kingly power. They will behold on his vesture and on his thigh, written in living characters, King of kings, and Lord of lords. They cried to him mockingly, as he hung upon the cross, Let Christ the King of Israel descend from the cross, that we may see and believe. They will behold him then with kingly power and authority. They will demand no evidence then of his being the King of Israel; but overwhelmed with a sense of his majesty and exceeding glory, they will be compelled to acknowledge, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The shaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the darkness spread over the earth, and the loud, strong cry of Jesus, It is finished, as he yielded up his life, troubled his enemies, and made his murderers tremble. The disciples wondered at these singular manifestations; but their hopes were all crushed. They were afraid the Jews would seek to destroy them also. Such hate manifested against the Son of God they thought would not end there. Lonely hours the disciples spent in sorrow, weeping over their disappointment. They expected that he would reign a temporal prince; but their hopes died with Jesus. They doubted in their sorrow and disappointment whether Jesus had not deceived them. His mother was humbled, and even her faith wavered in his being the Messiah.

But notwithstanding the disciples had been disappointed in their hopes concerning Jesus, yet they loved him, and respected and honored his body, but knew not how to obtain it. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, had influence, and was one of Jesus' true disciples. He went privately, yet boldly, to Pilate and begged his body. He dared not go openly; for the hatred of the Jews was so great that the disciples feared that an effort would be made by them to prevent the body of Jesus having an honored resting place. But Pilate granted his request, and as they took the body of Jesus down from the cross, their sorrows were renewed, and they mourned over their blighted hopes in deep anguish. They wrapped Jesus in fine linen, and Joseph laid him in his own new sepulchre. The women who had been his humble followers while he lived still kept near him after his death, and would not leave him until they saw his sacred body laid in the sepulchre, and a stone of great weight rolled at the door, lest his enemies should seek to obtain his body. But they need not have feared; for I beheld the angelic host watching with untold interest the resting place of Jesus. They guarded the sepulchre, earnestly waiting the command to act their part in liberating the King of glory from his prison house. {1SG 64.1}

Christ's murderers were afraid that he might yet come to life and escape them. They begged of Pilate a watch to guard the sepulchre until the third day. Pilate granted them armed soldiers to guard the sepulchre, sealing the stone at the door, lest his disciples should steal him away, and say that he had risen from the dead.