

most wonderful fact!—he did. He—the Son of the Highest—left the throne of heaven, assumed our nature, was found in fashion as a man, and dwelt among men. He submitted to poverty and labour, to weariness and privations, to indignities and reproach, and every species of persecution. He was apprehended as a malefactor, and, on the false accusations of suborned witnesses, condemned to an ignominious and cruel death. “He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting.” His hands and feet were fixed by nails to the cross; and, thus suspended betwixt heaven and earth, he was left gradually to expire under nature’s exhaustion and the pure intensity of pain, consciousness never deserting him to the last. In his dying hours, moreover, as well as on numerous previous occasions, he was subjected to the malignant and bitter assaults of Satan,—assaults which, though they could not possibly prevail to seduce him into sin, might (we can easily conceive) occasion the greatest distress to his holy human spirit.

But the principal element in our Lord’s sufferings,—that which rendered them most bitter to him, and which it is most essential for us to take into account,—remains to be noticed. I allude to the circumstance of his Father’s face having been hid from him. Compared with this, all that he endured of common physical pain, and all the shame of the cross, and all the distress that resulted from the temptations of the devil, were but as little rills contributing their scanty waters to swell the bulk of a mighty and overflowing river. In order that Christ might fully satisfy divine justice, he required to bear the direct outpouring of his Father’s wrath; and this he did undergo. He was “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” He was “made,” writes the apostle Paul, “a curse for us.” None of us know,